



ISSUE
03
March
2021

ISFAR Newsletter

Contact Us

ISFAR: isfarinc@gmail.com
French Australian Review:
french.australian.review@gmail.com
ISFAR Research Fund:
alexis.bergantz@rmit.edu.au or
elizabeth.rechniewski@sydney.edu.au

Membership

To join or renew:
www.isfar.org.au/membership
Membership includes subscription to
the French Australian Review journal.

Follow us

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/FrenchAustralianRelations
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/theISFAR>

Useful links

Alliance Française de Melbourne
www.afmelbourne.com.au
Association of French Teachers in
Victoria (AFTV) www.aftv.vic.edu.au
Australian-French Association for
Research and Innovation (AFRAN)
www.afran.org.au
Australian French Association for
Science and Technology
<https://afas.org.au>
Australian Historical Association
www.theaha.org.au
Bastille Day French Festival Melbourne
www.bastilledaymelbourne.com
Bleu Blanc Rouge (Consular newsletter)
www.bbrvic.com/en
French Assist Melbourne
www.frenchassistmelbourne.org.au
French Australian Chamber of
Commerce www.facci.com.au

ISFAR resources

ISFAR provides resources to researchers
in the field of French-Australian studies,
with the support of the authors or
contributors who give their approval to
publish this material. Access all ISFAR
resources www.isfar.org.au/resources



L-R: Honorary Consul of France in Melbourne, Mme Myriam Boisbouvier-Wylie; co-editor of the *French Australian Review*, Dr Jane Gilmour; President of ISFAR, A./Prof. Kerry Mullan; Consul General of France in Sydney, Mme Anne Boillon; co-editor of the *French Australian Review*, Ms Elaine Lewis; Vice- President of ISFAR, Prof. Véronique Duch;

Message from the president

Dear ISFAR members and friends,

Welcome to our first issue of the ISFAR newsletter for 2021. We hope that you were able to enjoy a break over the summer period when the restrictions eased. As you will see from the above image, some members of the ISFAR committee recently had the pleasure of a lunch meeting with Mme Anne Boillon, Consul General of France in Sydney, who came to Melbourne for a two-day visit as soon as the borders opened in late November 2020. Restrictions meant that large gatherings were not possible, but this made for a smaller and very convivial meeting. Mme Boillon met several French associations in this way during her stay.

This issue contains an array of interesting items and news, with an update on the forthcoming 35th Anniversary Symposium of ISFAR, *Australia and France in a Regional and Global Context: Past Engagements and Future Research Directions*. The event will now be held online and all are welcome to attend. See below and/or our [Events page](#) for more details.

Other items in this issue include news of recent research funding success; details of the current issue of the *French Australian Review*; answers to the French Australian Dictionary of Biography quiz in our last newsletter; links to an article by research committee member Barbara Santich on

This issue

Message from the president p. 1
ISFAR@35 p. 2
The French Australian Review 69 p. 3
Vale Bert Peeters p. 3
The 2020 Ivan Bako prize p. 4
The Baudin Legacy Project website p. 4
Julien de Sanary p. 5
Mirka Mora exhibition p. 5
Recent publications, awards, articles and
events of interest p. 6
Answers to the quiz p. 6

the way we eat, another by former Melbourne Salon presenter Denise Fisher on the current situation in New Caledonia, and an item by contributor to the *French Australian Review* Briony Neilson on former *bagnard* and poet Julien de Sanary (1859-1929); as well as notices of French-related events of possible interest to our members.

All members should have recently received an invitation to our AGM to be held via Zoom on Wednesday 17 March from 17:30-19h Melbourne time. Members are welcome to attend and/or to nominate for a committee position. If you have not received this information or would like to receive a proxy form if you are unable to attend, please contact us at isfarinc@gmail.com.

Finally, thank you to those members who made a recent donation to our research fund. We are very grateful for your ongoing support.

Kerry Mullan
President

Thanks to Robyn Stern and Graham Neilson for the coordination and layout of this newsletter and to all the contributors. As always, if you have any feedback or suggestions for future topics or items for inclusion, please contact us at isfarinc@gmail.com.

ISFAR@35

Australia and France in a Regional and Global Context: Past Engagements and Future Research Directions

35th Anniversary Symposium of the Institute for the Study of French Australian Relations (ISFAR)

Thu 8 - Fri 9 April 2021, online

Because of the possibility of renewed outbreaks of COVID-19, we have taken the decision to hold the Symposium entirely online.

We are delighted to announce that the keynote speech '*From the French East Indies Company to the French in the 'Indo-Pacific'*' will be given by Robert Aldrich, Professor of European History at the University of Sydney and long-term board member of ISFAR.

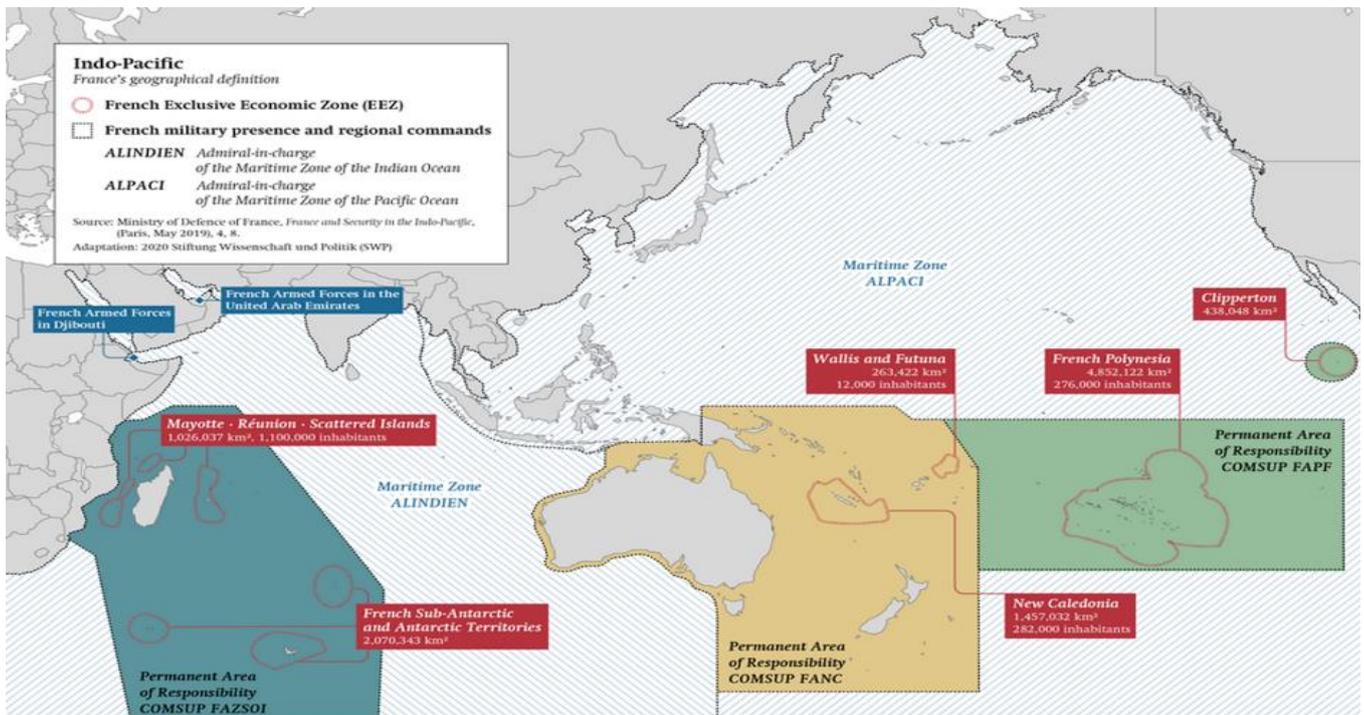
The papers to be given at the Symposium offer a comprehensive overview of contemporary research in the field of French-Australian relations. They cover a broad range of political, cultural and historical topics, from the early history of French-Australian relations to the contemporary diplomatic *rapprochement* in the Pacific in the context of an encroaching China; music, film, photography and viticulture; student educational tours and language enrichment; and aspects of the history of World Wars One and Two in Europe and the Pacific.

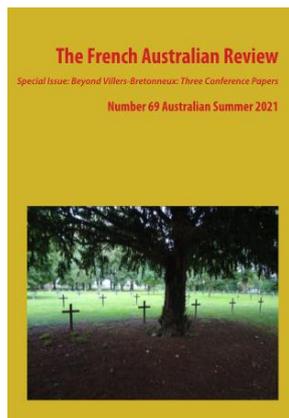
There will be no registration fees but participants should ensure they are ISFAR members for 2021. Here are the [membership details](#).

The membership fees of undergraduates, postgraduates and casual workers, and of anyone else claiming hardship, can be paid from a special grant. Simply indicate on the membership form, beneath your signature, that you request this exemption.

Further updates, the programme and information about registration can be found on the [ISFAR web site](#).

We look forward to welcoming you to ISFAR@35, Alexis Bergantz & Elizabeth Rechniewski, co-chairs ISFAR Research Committee and Symposium convenors.





The latest issue of *The French Australian Review*, Number 69, has just been published. It includes three of a number of papers presented at the Beyond Villers-Bretonneux Conference held in Canberra on 26–27 April 2019. The conference was hosted by the University of New South Wales Australian Defence Force Academy and supported by a number of institutions including the Mission du Centenaire, the France Australia Centenary Trust, the French Embassy in Australia, the University of New South Wales (Canberra), the French Trust Fund and the Institute for the Study of French Australian Relations. The proposed publication of the papers was not able to proceed so *The French Australian Review* offered to publish some of the papers, thus continuing its significant commitment over recent years to publishing research into Australian involvement in France during the First World War.

Caroline Winter is an academic whose research has focused on tourism studies. Her article explores the changing approaches to commemoration of World War 1 and examines the implication of Australia's recent focus on Villers-Bretonneux. Pauline Georgelin, who is the Secretary of ISFAR, has just completed her PhD at The University of Melbourne and her article draws on research undertaken for her thesis about the experiences of French Australians who enlisted in the French army. The final paper is by French archaeologist, Gilles Prilaux. It presents an overview and a number of examples of his extensive archaeological research following his discovery of inscriptions by Australian soldiers in the underground caves of Naours, in the Somme. Some readers of the Newsletter may have had the opportunity to hear one of his presentations about his work when he was in Australia in April 2019.

The French-Australian Encounter Number 5 describes a further link between Australia and France at the time of the First World War with an account of the 'Sunnysiders' at Kallista in Victoria and Yvonne Delacy's visit to Frank Robert's grave in the fields of Picardie.

There is an article by the co-chairs of the ISFAR Research Committee, Elizabeth Rechniewski and Alexis Bergantz, on the new membership of the Committee and its plans for future research. Wallace Kirsop has contributed a moving and appreciative obituary for Meredith Sherlock who died in November 2020 and to whom ISFAR and *Explorations*, the predecessor of *The French Australian Review*, owe so much. Finally Kerry Mullan congratulates Angela Giovanangeli for being awarded the 2019 Ivan Barko Prize, and separately reports on the events of ISFAR and the Melbourne Salon during 2020.

The Book Review section warrants a special mention. It includes reviews of Romain Fathi's recent book, *Our Corner of the Somme: Australia at Villers-Bretonneux*, Alistair Kershaw's *Village to Village*, Juliana de Nooy's *What's France got to do with it?* and Danielle Clode's *In Search of the Woman Who Sailed the World*. The editors can guarantee you will be placing orders after reading these reviews.

The issue concludes with two Book Notes and Elaine Lewis's Bibliographical Notes, an extremely valuable scholarly tool that is now in its twelfth year.

Members of ISFAR receive the Journal as part of their membership. To purchase individual issues please visit The French Australian Review on the ISFAR website.

Vale Bert Peeters

It is with great sadness that we advise of the passing of Associate Professor Bert Peeters on 22 February 2021 from incurable brain cancer.

Bert came to Australia from Belgium, with his wife Monina, in 1987 to pursue his PhD at the ANU, supervised by Anna Wierzbicka, with whom he became a life-long friend. After his PhD, he worked for many years at the University of Tasmania (as he liked to say, the southernmost university in the world), before moving to Macquarie University, Sydney in 2007. He retired in 2014, moving back to Canberra to continue researching and working with his colleagues at the ANU.

Bert's life and work were infused with a passion for French linguistics, semantics, culture, and language education. Unlike many scholars, he wrote few monographs, but instead produced more than a dozen edited books, showcasing the work of many. In his role as an editor, he mentored many early and mid-career researchers with his special blend of logic, wit, and love of words. He was also a prolific reviewer, writing nearly 100 reviews, in an effort to spark deep discussion, debate, and engagement. He will long be remembered and greatly missed.



The 2020 Ivan Barko Prize

The 2020 Ivan Barko Prize is awarded to Irene Rogers (Central Queensland University) for her article 'A Gift for France: the Australian Bluebird Nurses of the Great War' published in *The French Australian Review*, number 68, Australian Winter, 2020.



In July 1916, a group of twenty-one Australian trained nurses known as the 'Bluebirds' left Australia for the Western Front. They were under contract with The New South Wales Division of the Red Cross Society (ARC) to work for the French Red Cross Society (FRC) or the French military authorities and were called the Bluebirds because of their distinctive uniform. The Bluebirds became the only group of trained and registered nurses sent to France by any Red Cross branch in Australia during the Great War. Whilst some of their achievements have been acknowledged, little is known about the connections they made with French people, culture and institutions. Irene Rogers' article explores those relationships through the evidence they left behind in journals, diaries and letters and provides a human and personal view of their experiences.

The Bluebirds' story is unique - it is an interesting and important contribution to the story of French-Australian connections built during WWI. The article draws from research Rogers undertook for her PhD at Central Queensland University.

Dr Rogers has worked as a humanitarian nurse in many conflict and post-conflict zones around the world and continues to be a Registered Nurse. As well as other commitments she is now working as a volunteer street nurse with the growing numbers of homeless people on the Sunshine Coast.

Written in a clear, engaging style and illustrated with seldom-seen photographs, 'A Gift for France' is well worth re-visiting and is a worthy winner of this year's Ivan Barko Prize.

The annual ISFAR Ivan Barko Prize is awarded by the ISFAR Committee on the recommendation of the editors of *The French Australian Review* to the author of the best article published during the preceding year. Named after Professor Ivan Barko to mark his long and distinguished service to ISFAR, particularly as editor of *Explorations* and its successor *The French Australian Review*, this prize is intended to stimulate research in all areas of French Australian relations.



'A Gift for France: the Australian Bluebird Nurses of the Great War' may be read free of charge on the ISFAR website.

The Baudin Legacy Project website

The website (www.baudin.sydney.edu.au) was set up with the support of the French Embassy more than ten years ago in the context of an ARC grant to carry out research on the Baudin expedition to New Holland from 1800 to 1804. The primary aim was to give an overview of the expedition and to make available to researchers and the general public transcriptions and translations of the sea journals of the officers and scientists (with the permission of the French National Archives), as well as a bibliography and other material pertaining to the expedition.

The site is updated and added to regularly by the chief investigators, Professors Jean Fornasiero, Michel Jangoux, Margaret Sankey and John West-Sooby. As well as most of the journals, a virtual herbarium of the botanical specimens collected by the expedition is now to be found on the site.



Specimens from the *Virtual Herbarium* of the Baudin expedition.

With the kind permission of the French Museum of Natural History in Paris

In recent days many of the most important maps and coastal profiles have also been posted on the site (under Iconography), with the gracious permission of the Département des Cartes et Plans of the French National Archives.

One of the principal objectives of the Baudin expedition was to chart sections of the Australian coast that were either unknown or only poorly mapped. A large number of detailed maps were thus produced by Baudin's geographers. The maps posted here range from preliminary rough sketches to detailed hand-coloured maps prepared under the supervision of Captain Nicolas Baudin. Most notably, the many maps were the basis on which Louis Freycinet compiled the *Atlas* of the official account of the voyage, published in 1811. In this *Atlas* is to be found the first complete map of Australia. The map drawn by Matthew Flinders was published three years later, in 1814.

Many of the names first attributed by Baudin, who died during the return journey of the expedition to France, were altered subsequently by Louis Freycinet and François Péron. In particular, the name *Terre Napoléon* was added to part of the South Australian coast and this name appeared in the 1811 *Atlas* but was corrected in the second edition in acknowledgement that certain parts of that coast were first discovered by the English. The selection of the maps available on the website offers the public some insights into that complex and little known history.



Map created during the Baudin expedition.

With the kind permission of the French National Archives

Julien de Sanary (1859-1929)

Dr Briony Neilson has written extensively on the former *bagnard* and poet Julien de Sanary. Here she summarises his life and work and presents an extract of his poetry.

“Julien de Sanary” was the *nom de plume* of Marius Adolphe Jullien, a Frenchman transported to the *bagne* in New Caledonia in 1881. Born in 1859 in the southern French town of Saint-Nazaire near Toulon, Sanary was sentenced at the age of 22 to hard labour for life in the penal colony after assaulting a prison guard while serving a sentence for theft in a prison in the south of France. In the *bagne*, tens of thousands of kilometres away from home, Sanary began to write poetry, finding solace for his isolation in the written word. In 1917, he was given a presidential pardon for good behaviour and in 1919 an Australian woman, Wolla Meranda, a writer in her own right, sponsored his migration to her property at Sunny Corner, a small mining town near Bathurst, New South Wales. There, in idyllic and remote seclusion, Sanary would live out the rest of his days, writing poetry with Meranda. Following Sanary’s death in 1929, two months shy of his 60th birthday, Meranda gathered up dozens of the Frenchman’s poetic writings and had them published. The two volumes in French, which appeared in Sydney in 1931, represented Meranda’s final, admiring tribute to her long-suffering friend. In addition to these published poems, Sanary’s work survives also in several self-published chapbooks which circulated in the *bagne*. Poems of exile, distress and trauma, but also enduring love for his family and gratitude to Meranda, his saviour and muse, Sanary’s work provides unique insight into the life and experiences of a transported convict in the New Caledonian *bagne* who found refuge eventually in Australia.

Extract from Sanary’s poem ‘Merci’, published in *Poésies de Julien de Sanary*, edited by Wolla Meranda, Sydney, William Brooks, 1931, volume I.

III

Ah! Si je puis briser les fers de l’esclavage,
Si je peux être libre un jour,
J’irai chanter ce nom vers le lointain rivage,
Où jadis je chantais l’amour.

Et j’irai graver sur les rocs de Provence
Battus et des vents et des eaux ;
Et pour que les enfants gardent la souvenance,
J’instruirai les petits oiseaux.

Et j’irai le graver sur le plus dur des marbres,
Sur les granits et les galets ;
J’irai l’inscrire aussi sur l’écorce des arbres,
Dans les profondeurs des forêts.

*J’y ferai traverser, sous l’aile de la brise,
Les mers d’azur, les pays bleus ;
Et j’irai le chanter sous les ponts de Venise,
Aux fortunés, aux malheureux.*

Briony has published several articles on the life and writings of Julien de Sanary, including ‘Convict Suffering and Salvation in New Caledonia and Australia: the Life and Writing of French *Bagnard*-Poet, Julien de Sanary’, *French-Australian Review* 65, 2018–2019. A recent webinar presentation will shortly be available on the site www.criminocorpus.org.

MIRKA exhibition

MIRKA – an intimate, previously unseen view into the rich and fascinating life of the late Mirka Mora (1928–2018) – has just opened at the [Jewish Museum of Australia](http://www.jewishmuseumofaustralia.org.au) in Melbourne, in partnership with [William Mora Galleries](http://www.williammora.com.au) and supported by [Heide Museum of Modern Art](http://www.heidemuseum.com.au).

Mirka Mora was born in Paris in 1928 to Romanian and Lithuanian Jewish parents. Following her traumatic and life-changing experience during World War II in Paris and the French countryside, she migrated to Australia with her husband Georges and young son Philippe in 1951, settling in Melbourne. Finding themselves within a completely new cultural landscape, Mirka as a dressmaker and Georges at Snider’s Matzo Factory, both developed very rapidly into artist and entrepreneur respectively, and together as successful entrepreneurs and members of an influential artists hub.

Featuring more than 200 never-exhibited works from the private collection of the Mora family and Mirka’s studio and archives, alongside pieces from the Mirka collection acquired by the Heide Museum of Modern Art, MIRKA offers the most comprehensive picture of the artist’s life and 70-year-long career, offering fresh insight into her creativity, and allowing audiences old and new to discover her life and artistry like never before.

The exhibition runs until 19 December 2021 and tickets can be purchased from the website of the [Jewish Museum of Australia](http://www.jewishmuseumofaustralia.org.au).



Family gathering in the dream park, (Detail), 2008

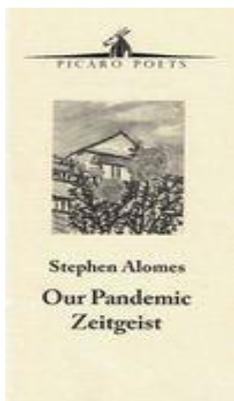
Courtesy William Mora Galleries

© The Estate of Mirka Mora

Recent publications, awards, articles and events of interest

The following two 2020 publications are by ISFAR committee member **Prof. Stephen Alomes**. Stephen, an adjunct professor at RMIT University Melbourne, has written several non-fiction books, as a cultural historian of people, nation and popular culture, and is an expressionist painter in the German and Australian traditions. In his prose poetry, in words and images, he captures our experiences of everyday life, social media in our visual era, and now of the anxieties, and the escapes from, the coronavirus (Instagram/stephenalomes).

Also a member of medical advisory committees, in 2020 he presented on patient empowerment at the University of Tasmania clinical reform conference.

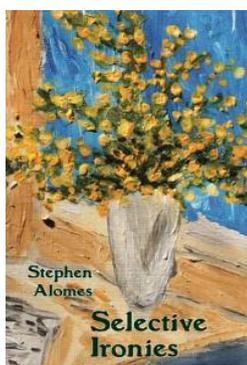


His poetry collection recording everyday experience during the pandemic, *Our Pandemic Zeitgeist* (Ginninderra Press, Port Adelaide) appeared in late 2020. Available for [purchase here](#).

Selective Ironies pursues the little and the dark ironies of everyday life and their consolations. He

explores our era of tweets, mobile phones, forms, overcrowded transport, travel and human angsts and frustrations in our strange and ever-changing global world.

'Through his art and poetry, Stephen Alomes imaginatively transforms life's little ironies, in an endeavour to make sense of it all - or not.



He converts everyday activities into artworks whilst wryly observing the intricate social and cultural changes of the twenty-first century.' - Elaine Lewis, author of *Left Bank Waltz* (2006), poetry translator and Franco-Anglais Poetry Festival (Paris) coordinator

'Witty, ironic and thought-provoking, *Selective Ironies* shares wisdom as it entertains.' - Libor Mikeska, novelist, musician and scholar, Heidelberg, Germany

978 1 76109 000 4, 80pp. Available for [purchase here](#).

Dr Alexis Bergantz, co-Chair of the ISFAR Research Committee, has been awarded an [Australia-France Social Science Collaborative Research Program fellowship](#) for his research project '*Across the Coral Sea: Australia and New Caledonia before 1940*'. The fellowship is jointly awarded by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the French Embassy. The project is an exploration of the trans-colonial history between Australia and New Caledonia and between the French and British empires in the South Pacific before the opening of an official Australian diplomatic presence in Noumea.

Barbara Santich, ISFAR Committee member, recently published '[Food in good times and bad; what did 2020 teach us about the way we eat?](#)'

Denise Fisher, presenter at November 2018 Melbourne Salon, recently published '[Why New Caledonia's instability is not just a problem for France](#)'.



Following a year like no other, this Festival season not only reflects our enduring love of French cinema but also examines love's various states and complexities. Be it love of country (*De Gaulle*), love of good food (*Delicious*), love of New Wave cinema (*Breathless*), romantic and sexual love (*Love Affairs* and *Summer of 85*), the love born from unexpected camaraderie (*The Big Hit* and *Perfumes*) or even the radical act of loving oneself (*Miss*) - there is something for everyone to enjoy and be moved by.

Returning for its much-anticipated 32nd edition, the [Alliance Française French Film Festival](#) will screen across seven Palace Cinemas and will include a range of films screening in Australia for the first time. You can [watch the festival trailer here](#).

Check your answers to the quiz from our November 2020 newsletter.

All the answers come from the entries in the [French-Australian Dictionary of Biography](#).

1. Which author published a novel under the pseudonym Noël Aimir, an anagram of their name? Marie Lion.
2. Who wrote a virulent critique of Australia in John Bull & Co.? Max O'Rell.
3. What was 'the Balloon Affair'? In 1856 a travelling adventurer by the name of Maigre claimed he would ascend in a balloon in Sydney's Domain, an entertainment for which he charged good money, even though it took place on public land. When the ascent failed, the crowd became enraged, and in the ensuing tussle a boy lost his life.
4. Who ran the Oberwyl school in Melbourne? Berthe Mouchette.
5. What did the Brown-Sequard tonic claim to cure? It was a tonic for 'nervous disorders' promoted by Marcel Crivelli.