

FOREWORD

With this issue we break new ground by presenting in different ways the imaginative work of two Frenchmen who chose Australia as their setting. Unlike their only nineteenth-century predecessor of any note, Jules Verne, they wrote not what they could glean from books and magazines, but from their own direct experience of the country. While Wenz drew largely upon his many years as a pastoralist in New South Wales, Maistre, though able to appreciate and describe the Australian bush and rural life, was at his best as a close observer of political life and social life in Melbourne. However, there is a way in which Melbourne can lay claim even to Wenz: the end of the year 1998 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the granting by the University of Melbourne of the first Australian PhD, for a thesis by Erica Wolff entitled "A French-Australian Writer: Paul Wenz".

Research on Wenz has been pursued by Dr Maurice Blackman, of the Department of French at the University of New South Wales, who gave the talk published at ISFAR's Annual General Meeting on 18 November 1997. In 1990 he edited and translated "*Diary of a New Chum*" and *Other Lost Stories* by Paul Wenz (Sydney: Angus and Robertson). He must also be regarded as one of the initiators of French-Australian studies in this country, in 1983 organizing with Anne-Marie Nisbet the symposium *The French-Australian Cultural Connection* (Sydney: UNSW and the CEEFA, 1984), which helped give impetus for the foundation at UNSW of the French-Australian Research Centre, which he directed from 1987 to 1993. He also edited the proceedings of the symposium *Australian Aborigines and the French* (held in 1988).

We apologize for the defects and errors in our previous number (22), in particular the pagination which did not correspond to that indicated on the title-page and the repetition of the same number in the endnotes to the main article. Transfers of material between computers and the printer's layout system seem to have been at least part of the cause. The editors will be grateful for any comment on the content of this issue. For any short comment or minor correction you are welcome to ring Pat (9889 2414), Jacques (9509 5895) or Colin (9857 9938), but we would prefer to have any more substantial suggestions in writing, either by mail (address inside front cover), or by fax (Jacques: 9509 7457; Pat: as above) or by E-mail:

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