

## FOREWORD

It is not often that late-eighteenth-century historical events linking France and Australia and therefore relevant to the brief of *Explorations* are given wide media coverage in twenty-first century Australia.

One such event relates to the recent discovery of what is believed to be the vestiges of the garden planted in Recherche Bay, Tasmania, in 1792 by Félix Delahaye, the gardener of the d'Entrecasteaux expedition. The discovery has created passionate debate as to whether the area that was explored by the expedition during its two anchorages at Recherche Bay, in 1792 and 1793 respectively, should be preserved and protected from logging. The argument has not been along the expected lines of the major opposing political parties but according to conflicting priorities—namely, narrowly economic or broadly cultural.

This special issue of *Explorations* is entirely devoted to the background to this debate, focusing on the French garden at Recherche Bay.

The backbone of the issue is Dr Edward Duyker's article on Félix Delahaye, the gardener, his role in the expedition and his relationship with the botanist Labillardière, to whom Dr Duyker has recently devoted a major biographical study.

Dr Duyker's paper is accompanied by an English translation of Delahaye's Tasmanian journals, also reproduced here in the gardener's original French. We owe both the transcription of the manuscript and the translation into English to Mrs Maryse Duyker, Dr Duyker's erudite mother.

The editorial team of *Explorations* is pleased to be able to offer this special Tasmanian issue to its regular readers as well as to many others who have expressed an interest in the background to this highly topical subject.

It also hopes to bring out shortly two miscellaneous numbers containing, amongst others, an article by Professor Kenneth Dutton on the shipwreck of the French barque *Adolphe* in early-twentieth-century Newcastle; a study by Jennifer Genion on nineteenth-century French popular fiction with Australian themes; and the transcription and translation with commentary of a letter written on 3 March 1788 from Botany Bay by Joseph Lepaute Dagelet, Lapérouse's astronomer, to William Dawes, the founder of the first Sydney Observatory, at Port Jackson, on the building of the observatory and other topics vital to the history of science. The manuscript of this letter, which has been held at the Mitchell Library for ninety years, has recently been rediscovered by an astronomer, Katia Smith.