

FOREWORD

ISFAR's twentieth anniversary will be celebrated, somewhat belatedly, with the publication in a few months' time of the fortieth issue of *Explorations*. The Editorial Committee hopes that this anniversary will be marked by some modest but significant changes in the form of the journal as well as in its scope and ambitions.

The present number is in the best tradition of *Explorations*, dealing with two different aspects of French-Australian relations in the late eighteenth century and the first six decades of the nineteenth century.

Kenneth Dutton's substantial paper is devoted to the life of François Girard, an early French settler and successful businessman in New South Wales. His activities centred on Sydney and the Northern rivers. As was the case with so many of his contemporaries, Girard's business career was not without its tribulations, thus illustrating the volatility of conditions in the young colony. The Girard story was going to be told jointly by Professor Dutton and Harry Morris, a descendant of François Girard, who at the time was working on a family history, but sadly Harry Morris passed away early during the project and so this study is dedicated to his memory.

Edward Duyker's study of Jean Piron, the artist with d'Entrecasteaux's expedition in the closing decade of the eighteenth century, is an interesting and original by-product of his last major project, a biography of the naturalist Labillardière. This article will appear almost simultaneously with *François Péron—An Impetuous Life: Naturalist and Voyager*, an important and much-awaited study for the Miegunyah Press of one of the senior figures of the Baudin expedition. The Piron article is not only a worthwhile contribution to our knowledge of the life and achievements of an artist who is insufficiently known but also an object lesson in archival research, since the author allows us to follow the processes of his precise and painstaking investigations straddling several continents.

The issue concludes with a book review by John Ramsland. Professor Ramsland chose to write on Kerry Greenwood's novel, *Murder in Montparnasse*, a book which, through its French connection, half fits with the increasingly popular subject of "Australians in France". This publishing phenomenon extends to both fiction and documentary writing, with some but not all of its specimens belonging to the tradition of travel literature. Would it be unreasonable to extrapolate that its popularity is a sign of the vitality of interest in French-Australian relations?

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