

FOREWORD

Explorations n° 43 is the last issue to be published under the distinguished editorship of Wallace Kirsop. One of the founders of ISFAR, Professor Kirsop has provided enlightened leadership and scholarship of unusual depth and breadth in the service of the first and only journal exclusively devoted to the study of French–Australian relations. Its continuous existence over the best part of a quarter of century is in itself a tribute to Wallace Kirsop’s vision and persistence. Readers of *Explorations* are very much in his debt and wish him well in his future scholarly endeavours.

The current issue features the recollections of Ambassador Albert Salon of his term at the French Embassy in Canberra as Cultural and Scientific Counsellor (1969–1975). He describes his years in Canberra as one of the happiest periods of his and his family’s life. They made many friends here and learnt to appreciate some Australian values such as informality and giving people a chance. The text published in this issue of *Explorations* is a translation by Colin Nettelbeck and Julia Fetherstonhaugh of a chapter in Albert Salon’s recently published militant memoirs, *Colas colo, Colas colère: un enfant de France contre les empires*.

Explorations n° 43 also contains a paper on the life and career of Joseph Lepaute Dagelet, the astronomer on the Lapérouse expedition, inspired by the recent re-emergence in Sydney of a letter written in March 1788 by Dagelet from Botany Bay to his British counterpart, William Dawes, at Port Jackson. The letter is currently on loan from the Mitchell Library to the Musée National de la Marine in Paris, on the occasion of the Lapérouse exhibition (May–October 2008) at the Palais de Chaillot. It was planned to bring this exhibition to the National Maritime Museum in Sydney until recent federal funding cuts to the Museum’s budget forced it to abandon the project. The 220th anniversary of the Lapérouse expedition’s stopover at Botany Bay also happens to coincide with a New South Wales Government review of the management of the La Perouse peninsula site, a review which might affect the future of the Lapérouse monument, Father Receveur’s grave and the more recently established Lapérouse Museum.

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