

FOREWORD

The current issue of *Explorations* is a double issue, published in two parts.

Part I features two important articles on very different subjects. Over time *Explorations* has published research on the life and work of the intriguing Céleste de Chabrillan. This former Paris courtesan was the wife of the first French Consul in Melbourne, Count Lionel de Chabrillan. After her husband's death she became an author, much of her writing having been inspired by her experiences in Australia. In this issue Dr Verhoeven gives an account of her re-discovery of some of Céleste de Chabrillan's manuscripts (believed to have been lost) of the latter's unpublished autobiographical writings. The article also analyses the significance of these memoirs, written late in life, as they illustrate her development, her greater confidence and self-assertion.

Another article in the current issue addresses the role of Australia in the *ralliement* of New Caledonia in 1940 to General de Gaulle's Free French movement. The author, Denise Fisher, a former Australian Consul General in Noumea, argues that these events in the Pacific mark the birth of Australian diplomacy as an autonomous entity. The author demonstrates that the Australian government, mindful of the country's interests, showed subtlety, flexibility and professionalism in its handling of a complex and fluid situation.

Emeritus Professor Dutton's note is a scholarly study on French explorer and surveyor Francis Barrallier and his two visits to the Hunter region in the early nineteenth century. The article contains some recently located material discovered by Newcastle researchers.

Several interesting book reviews and Elaine Lewis' now well-established 'French-Australian Bibliographical Notes' complete Part I of this issue.

Part II contains a major investigation of Dumont d'Urville's library by Adjunct Professor Edward Duyker. The analytical study is followed by an exhaustive inventory of Dumont d'Urville's books compiled by the author who is currently completing a biography of the explorer. Part II also features notes by two French cultural envoys who were formerly connected with the Melbourne Alliance Française. Edouard Mornaud's note deals with cultural exchanges between Melbourne and La Rochelle in France while Marcel Ropert reminisces about his personal experiences in Australia.

We are also pleased to announce that *Explorations* is now on-line up to n° 39 inclusive: <http://www.msp.unimelb.edu.au/index.php/explorations>.