

FOREWORD

The six-week Sydney stopover of the Lapérouse expedition in 1788 seems to generate a never-ending series of stories: in this issue we reveal the whereabouts of prismatic sandstone blocks identified by the French at Botany Bay in February 1788 and shown by them to John Hunter. Some of these blocks, reminiscent in miniature of Northern Ireland's Giant Causeway, have turned up on the shipwreck site of the *Boussole* on Vanikoro Reef, and their actual origin at Botany Bay has just been identified by local Francophile residents and is analysed here by scientist Peter Rickwood. John Dunmore, the international authority on Lapérouse, has written a most informative article for *Explorations* on the knowledge of English on board Lapérouse's ships, in reply to a question often raised, namely which language the First Fleet officers and members of the French expedition used in communicating with each other. Edward Duyker, in a biographical note on Timothée Vasse, discusses the various legends regarding this French sailor of the Baudin expedition who is supposed to have drowned at the Wonnerup Inlet in Western Australia in 1801.

A substantial article, presenting new research, by Margaret Barrett discusses the controversial career of unpopular French consul-general Jean Trémoulet who represented his government, including the Vichy government, in Sydney from 1937 to 1941 when he was required to leave Australia.

The current issue also features reports of French-related cultural events on the contemporary, and dynamic, Melbourne scene. These include an account of the creation of a Forum for French scholars from the various universities in the Melbourne region, to discuss teaching and research, a report on a meeting with the participation of the two American scholars responsible for the new innovative translation of Simone de Beauvoir's seminal work *The Second Sex*, and an account of the fifth 'Melbourne Salon' devoted to the legacy of Georges Perec, who visited Australia thirty years previously, shortly before his death in 1982. This presentation was preceded by a literary workshop demonstrating Perec's self-imposed experimental forms of constrained writing.

The issue concludes with two book reviews and a book note, followed by the usual rich and varied listings of books relevant to French-Australian links by Elaine Lewis.