

Foreword

At the outbreak of the Great War young men were not the only ones to answer the call to the front—2,498 Australian trained nurses served overseas. In this issue Irene Rogers explores the personal experiences of a unique group of volunteer nurses sent to France by the NSW Division of the Australian Red Cross. Called the *Bluebirds* because of their distinctive uniforms, their story provides new insights into the everyday experiences of Australian non-military nurses in France.

At this time, Australia did not accept female doctors for active military service. This did not stop women like Melbourne doctor, Helen Sexton, who found other ways to achieve their goals. Hannah Steel describes the ‘Hôpital Australien de Paris’ established by Sexton and her Australian friends. During its six-months tenure Dr Sexton and her team developed close personal relationships with the French doctors at the hospital and with the French soldiers they cared for. Although three of the team received French medals, there was little acknowledgement from Australian authorities and neither the *Bluebirds* nor Dr Sexton were recognised for their service on Australian War Memorials.

In the Documents section Colin Nettelbeck describes the *French Australian Dictionary of Biography*, an initiative of ISFAR’s Research Committee, and ISFAR member John Presley explores his French ‘heritage’ as part of our occasional series ‘French Australian Encounters’. This is followed by a transcript of Dr Patricia Clancy’s speech at the launch of Stan Scott’s *Chis: The Life and Work of Alan Rowland Chisholm (1888–1981)*.

Kerry Mullan reviews Robert Macklin’s *Castaway: The extraordinary survival story of Narcisse Pelletier, a young French cabin boy shipwrecked on Cape York in 1858*; this is followed by Chantal Crozet’s review of Christine Mathieu’s *Voyages Syntastiques: A Comparative-narrative Method for Teaching French Grammar to English Speakers* and Jane Gilmour’s review of *Paris or Die: a memoir by Jayne Tuttle*. Adding to the variety of books reviewed in this issue Alexis Bergantz introduces

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the handsome collector's edition, *Le Courrier Australien, 1892–1945: Creating the French-Australian Connection since 1892*, edited by François Vantomme and Bernard Le Boursicot.

The French Australian Review n° 68 concludes with the usual *Bibliographical Notes* by Elaine Lewis and a *Call for Papers* for the ISFAR 35th Anniversary Symposium, 8–9 April 2021 (Alexis Bergantz and Elizabeth Rechniewski). The editors are grateful to Alexis Bergantz for his assistance during the editorial process of this issue of *The French Australian Review*.

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