

You are invited to the Melbourne Salon at the Alliance Française.

Thursday 11th October 2012, 6 - 8.30 pm

**Sites of knowledge, sites of power:
the Paris Museum, collecting the world (1739-1832)**

The Natural History Museum of Paris, founded as “the King’s Garden” in 1635, was a site for cultivating and curating medicinal herbs. The nomination in 1739 of Georges-Louis Leclerc, later Count Buffon, ushered in a significant period of development for the institution and for Natural History as a discipline, thanks to the inspirational spirit of the Enlightenment and the positioning of France as a great world power. The Natural History Museum of Paris progressively became the centre of a world network that Buffon and Cuvier in particular were responsible for constructing. At the same time, French science came closer to those in power, associating itself, for example, with the conquests of the Napoleonic régime and with the great expeditions it sponsored (Egypt, Terra Australis). Through selected examples, this talk aims to show how imperialism supported Natural History and why this particular discipline found favour in that context.



Cédric Crémère is an historian of science. Since 2005, he has been Director of the Natural History Museum of Le Havre (Normandy), and is also general curator of the “Terre d’eaux” festival (Land of Waters) held every summer. Following his studies in philosophy and museology, he earned his PhD in 2004 with a thesis entitled *Science at the Museum. Comparative Anatomy at the Jardin du roi and at the Natural History Museum of Paris, 1745-1898* (to be published in 2013). During that time, he also trained as a Heritage Curator at the *Institut National du Patrimoine* (National Institute of Heritage). He was Honorary Research Fellow at the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at

University College London in 2004, where he conducted research into the history of mechanical obstetrics in 18th and 19th century France. Cédric was Honorary Fellow in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University in 2005. He has curated several exhibitions, including *Avant la naissance, 5000 ans d’histoire* (with René Frydman, Émile Papiernik, Jean-Louis Fischer) in 2008. In 2010-2011, he was selected as an affiliate of the prestigious *Institut des Hautes Études pour la Science et la Technologie*, with the title of “auditeur”.

Cédric is a member of the team, led by Stéphane Schmitt, that is currently engaged in re-editing and re-publishing the complete works of Buffon – one of the most prominent and influential figures in natural history during the eighteenth century.

Launch of *The Baudin Legacy Project*

The Baudin Legacy project was funded in Australia through an Australian Research Council Discovery Grant and in Belgium from the National Fund for Scientific Research (Fonds national de la recherche scientifique). The five year project commenced in 2005, with its primary aim being to provide an online archive and reference guide accessible to all those interested in the Baudin expedition and French exploration in general. *The Baudin Legacy* web site thus comprises the French transcriptions and the English translations of the writings generated by the expedition: the journals of Baudin, his officers, scientists and crew. This is supported by an iconographical archive and other reference tools such as archival sources, library holdings and bibliographies. The project team, headed by Professor Margaret Sankey, will provide a short presentation and tour of the web site as part of this Melbourne Salon.

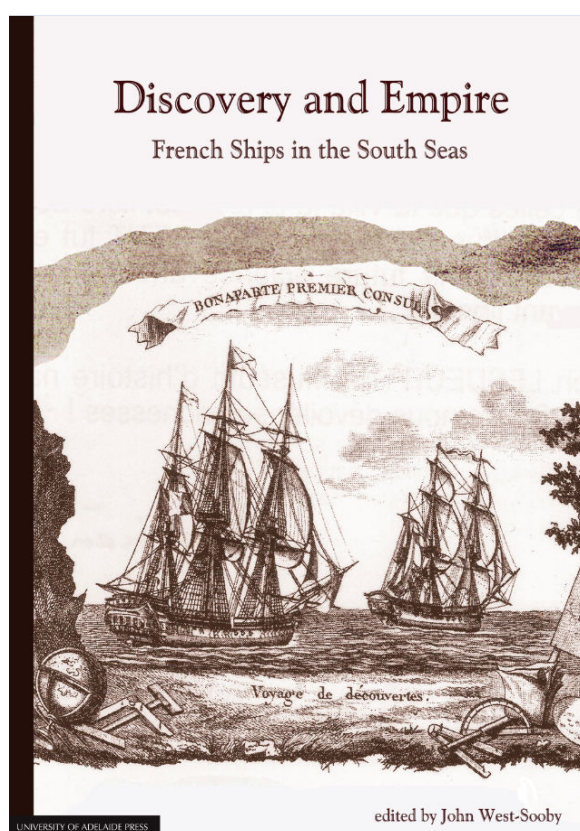


Margaret Sankey is Professor Emerita of French Studies at the University of Sydney and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, as well as an *Officier dans l'ordre des Palmes académiques*. She coordinates the *Baudin Legacy* project and has published extensively on different aspects of the expedition. Her research on the Baudin expedition is allied to her interest in early French notions of the Terres Australes and the influence of the Abbé Paulmier's *Mémoires* (1664) on the first French voyages of exploration to the Southern hemisphere. **Jean Fornasiero** is Professor of French and Head of the School of Humanities at the University of Adelaide. His colleague **John West-Sooby** is Associate Professor and Head of French, also at the University of Adelaide. They have worked extensively on the early French exploration of Australia, and in particular on the Baudin expedition. They are both members of the *Baudin Legacy* research team and have published widely on that topic. They are the co-authors, with Peter Monteath, of *Encountering Terra Australis: The Australian Voyages of Nicolas Baudin, and Matthew Flinders*, which was awarded the Frank Broeze Memorial Maritime History Prize in 2005. They are currently preparing a critical edition, and translation, of the confidential report on the British colony at Port Jackson compiled by Baudin's zoologist, François Péron.

Launch of *Discovery and Empire: French Ships in the South Seas*

edited by John West-Sooby (University of Adelaide Press)

The essays in this book, edited by **John West-Sooby**, deal with various aspects of the history of French exploration in the Pacific. The first section of the volume seeks to analyse the motivations as well as the scientific and political outcomes of the succession of voyages that were undertaken by the French in the southern hemisphere from the sixteenth century through to the early nineteenth century. It focuses in particular on the geopolitics of this period, known as the “Age of Discovery”, and on the rivalries that emerged between France and the other European nations engaged in the exploration of the southern oceans. The essays in the second part of the volume are primarily concerned with questions relating to the contact between the French voyagers and the native populations they encountered, notably the Australian Aborigines.



Associate Professor **John West-Sooby** teaches French language and literature, in particular the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as well as the mediaeval period. He has a long-standing research interest in the nineteenth-century novel, including the works of Maupassant, Barbey d'Aureville and, in particular, Stendhal. He has also identified the existence of the picaresque tradition in twentieth-century writing and has applied this methodology to another of his great interests, French crime fiction. In 2003 he was awarded the *Palmes académiques* by the French government, and in 2011 he completed a book with Jean Fornasiero on François Péron and his 'spy' document on the colony of New South Wales: *French Designs on New South Wales, a critical edition of the Memoir on the British Settlements in New Holland by François Péron*, Adelaide, Friends of the State Library of South Australia, forthcoming.

**Launch of *Aborigènes et peuples insulaires,*
*une histoire illustrée des premiers habitants de l'Australie***

by Marc Orlando (Au Vent des Iles)

Known to many of you with its original title in English, *First Australians* is also a multi award winning documentary series shown on SBS in 2009. *First Australians*, by Rachel Perkins, is the dramatic story of the collision of two worlds that created contemporary Australia. Told from the perspective of Australia's first people, it vividly brings to life the events that unfolded when the oldest living culture in the world was overrun by the world's greatest empire. Through a vast collection of images and historic documents, seven of Australia's leading historians reveal the true stories of individuals - both black and white - caught in an epic drama of friendship, revenge, loss and victory in Australia's most transformative period of history.



The author and translator is **Marc Orlando**, convenor of Translating and Interpreting Studies at Monash University. After teaching for ten years in France and New Zealand, Marc came to Monash in 2007. Marc is the Translation and Interpreting Studies representative with CIUTI, the International Conference of Universities training Translators and Interpreters. Marc is a professional translator and conference interpreter, and his area of research is primarily in the training of translators and interpreters, where academic research meets professional practice. Marc received the national AUSIT Award *Excellence in Translation* in 2007. He has translated work on Iraq and Afghanistan by journalist Jon Stephenson, who then twice went on to win the international Bayeux Calvados award for war correspondents with these translations in 2006 and 2011. Marc also translated *Mau Moko* (2010, Au Vent des Iles), a book on Maori art and culture, and *Ici*, a play by playwright Rebecca Lister (Melbourne, 2012).

**Launch of *Almost a French Australia:*
French-British Rivalry in the Southern Oceans
by *Noelene Bloomfield* (Halstead Press)**

Many Australians have only recently realised how close this continent was to becoming partly French, like Canada, with two languages and two cultures. But Australian history books neglected these early chapters of our nation's history for almost two centuries.

In a strategic battle with her perennial rival across the English Channel, France sent numerous scientific and commercial expeditions to the Indian and Pacific Oceans in the 1700s and 1800s, attempting to solve the mysteries of the legendary Terra Australis Incognita, and to locate suitable ports for trade below the Equator. Numerous French captains, officers, scientists and crewmembers died from a variety of illnesses during these voyages and were therefore unable to report their exciting discoveries directly to their King or Emperor. And the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 and its subsequent turmoil meant that France was not in a position to develop colonies in the southern oceans for many decades.

Noelene Bloomfield explains why the French, despite having claimed the western side of this country, drawing detailed charts, and making many thousands of important scientific discoveries, eventually withdrew from the Australian continent, allowing the British *carte blanche* to develop this nation and effectively block France from both Australia and New Zealand.



Noelene Bloomfield, *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, is Honorary Research Fellow in European Languages and Studies at The University of Western Australia. Noelene taught French in NSW before gaining a Master of Arts degree in the United States. She lectured at the University of Oregon before joining the staff of French Studies at The University of Western Australia from 1968 till 2002. Noelene published a textbook entitled *Voyage de Découverte* and produced a DVD and a CD-ROM on the extensive French exploration in Australian waters. She then created an exhibition entitled *A French Australia? Almost!* which has been displayed in many locations in Australia and overseas, a French version of which is currently touring in France. Noelene, who is listed in *Who's Who of Australian Women*, has recently co-authored a book on the first 100 years of the Alliance Française association in Perth, Western Australia.

Cover charge payable on the night (includes cheese and wine) – cash only please: \$15

Bookings essential: themelbournesalon@gmail.com or tel. (03) 9925 2264 (places limited).