

Laperouse

Friends of the Laperouse Museum



Members Quarterly Newsletter

June/July/August, 1990 - Vol. One, Number 2

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

We are all shocked by the sad loss of Pierre Roussel, the founder of our Museum. Our thoughts are with Carole and Philippe.

Your Committee is full of new ideas. When the weather warms a bit we will ask Professor Clancy to talk to us about his collection of Antique Maps, now hanging in the Museum. Also arriving soon is the tapestry by John Winch.

We are still negotiating with the National Parks & Wildlife Service for the restoration of the centre room in the Cable Station, known as the "Instrument Room". This is our first major project, the concept of which appears in this issue.

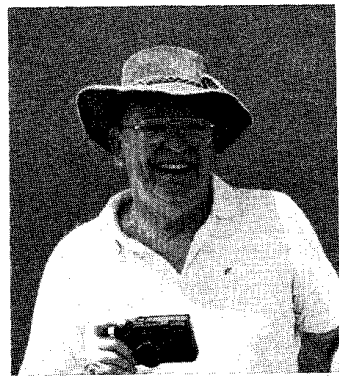
As we move to our second year, we look forward to your renewed membership and continued support.

John Holt, Q.C.

In Memoriam

PIERRE ROUSSEL

1931 - 1990



The Laperouse Museum exists not as a result of a benevolent benefactor or enlightened government but because Pierre Roussel believed it should.

Pierre made the idea of a 'Laperouse Museum' a reality. Without him, the enthusiastic support of the Committee would not have been generated and the unique skills of specialists captured and encouraged. It is a testimony to Pierre's ability as a diplomat that the conflicting concepts, inevitable in the creation of an exotic museum, were resolved to the joy and satisfaction of everyone involved.

Over the years spent in the planning and creation of the Laperouse Museum, Pierre steered a difficult course with unstinting effort, determination, good humour and a passion that overcame all obstacles.

The official opening of the Museum on the 23rd February, 1988 was a triumphant day for Pierre. No one present at the opening begrudged him the honour of centre stage among our distinguished guests.

The Laperouse Museum is tangible evidence, of which Pierre was the embodiment, that nations can be associated with peace, goodwill and respect. The Laperouse Museum is Pierre Roussel's memorial. Let us remember him and dedicate it to international goodwill and understanding.

"Si, dans la longueur des voyages de decouvertes, il est des bornes qu'on ne peut depasser, il importe de connaitre celles qu'il est possible d'atteindre ... "

LAPEROUSE, Christmas 1787

Pierre died on Thursday the 5th of July at St Vincent's Hospital and is survived by his wife Carole and his son Philippe.

JIM MACKANESS

COMING EVENTS

BASTILLE DAY

Saturday, 14th July 1990 - 11am
Annual Commemorative Ceremony
at the Laperouse Monument
- always a moving moment ! -

Professor Clancy's Presentation
to the Friends of his collection of
Antique Maps, at the Museum
-date still to be finalised-

MUSEUM NEWS *(information compiled for the benefit of the Friends by the Staff of the Museum)*

The Laperouse Museum has recently become a major media event! Television, radio and press have given us excellent coverage over the past weeks. Why all this excitement?

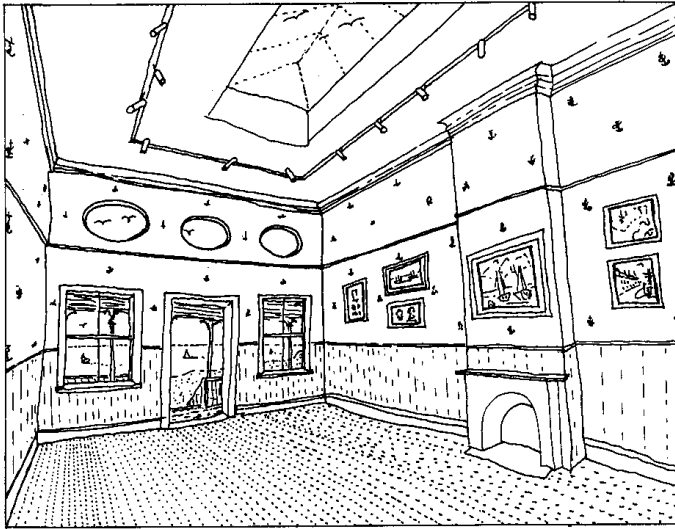
The 'Today Show', a popular morning programme, spent the afternoon filming for Museums' Week. John Dengate, media co-ordinator for National Parks & Wildlife service, and Dolla Merrillees provided the commentary. The response was immediate and enthusiastic.

We were invited as guest speakers on several radio stations, including the 'Afternoon Show' on 2BL with John Doyle and a demanding 6.00am telephone interview on 2UE. Botany bay national Park has also been inundated with reporters and film crews as a major mini-series was being produced on Bare Island entitled "Ring of Scorpio".

We also organised the 1990 John Holt Competition, which asked students to depict environmental changes in Botany Bay between the arrival of Captain Cook and today. The entries were outstanding and we thank John for generously sponsoring the awards.

THE FRIENDS' MAJOR PROJECT - The Instrument Room at Cable Station

by Guy de Compiègne, Architect



The Museum was conceived to tell a story: the epic voyage of Laperouse. Although this odyssey is a rich and colourful one, those responsible for realising the museum's scenario decided it must reach out beyond the confines of straight narrative.

And so one room was set aside for the scientific aspects of navigation, another for the political context in France in the late 18th Century.

To extend the museum's horizons, contemporary artists were commissioned to graft a modern interpretation onto the Laperouse theme: an underwater fresco of the tragic shipwreck at Vanikoro, an allegorical sculpture symbolising the encounter of different cultures and a three-dimensional "cosmic" tapestry woven in Aubusson, France.

The Laperouse Association has always sought to breathe life into the museum. Yet for lack of space, this museum remains trapped within its own image, unable to host and display visiting exhibitions.

The Friends' project to restore the adjacent "Instrument Room" is therefore vitally important to the museum's future.

With a doorway through to the reception area, this space could be used either as an annex of the museum or for independent functions.

The re-glazing of the oval windows in the east and west facades and the reinstating of the roof lantern would restore to this space its former grandeur. It is intended that the same decorating principles as in the museum be kept: two colours on the walls, the

use of stencil, sanding and polishing of existing floorboards etc...

Three lighting systems will be needed: one for mural exhibitions, another from floor level for exhibitions on movable panels and a third general ambience one for social functions.

Thus our concept for a living museum dedicated to Laperouse could be resumed as:

- * A chronological history of the navigator.
- * An historical dimension through two specialised rooms.
- * A poetic aspect from the modern works of art.
- * A breath of life from this future multi-purpose room.

Our proposed renovation plans will strictly conform to the "Instrument Room Conservation Plan - April 1990" prepared for the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

The Friends' Major Project needs your support and your involvement.

All members are welcome to submit ideas as to the proposed use of the future "Instrument Room". Please write to the Editor on this subject before Saturday, 1st September, 1990.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The Prize Winning Poem
of the UTA Poetry Competition 1988
"La Perouse to Eleonore"
by Shane Mc Cauley



THE ORIGINS OF THE BASTILLE DAY COMMEMORATION IN AUSTRALIA

by Peter Orlovich

The commemoration of the foundation of the first European settlement in Australia, established at Sydney Cove on the 26th January, 1788 by Governor Arthur Phillip, has been observed annually as a public holiday since the 26th January, 1838, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Colony of New South Wales and 18 years after Captain J. Cook claimed the Colony for the Crown.

The observance of the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille as the "Fete Nationale" was introduced in France only in 1880. The earliest occasion on which the Fete Nationale Francaise appears to have been celebrated in Australia was on Thursday 14th July, 1887, when about 30-40 guests attended a banquet held at the Cercle Francais at Wynyard Square in Sydney. The chairman of the proceedings was the French Consul, Comte de Seguier, while the guests included the President of the French Club, Mr. Lachaume. In proposing a toast to "The Prosperity of Australia", Mr. Lachaume remarked on the importance of the French market to the Australian wool industry. Dr. Laure proposed a toast to "French Art in Australia", enumerating a long list of French representatives of the various arts, such as architecture, sculpture, painting and music, who were residing in Sydney.

The 99th Anniversary of the fall of the *Bastille* was celebrated with a banquet on Saturday 14 July, 1888, in "the new and commodious appartments of the Cercle Francais", attended by almost 100 visitors and members. The French Club had been launched, as Mr Lachaume explained, on the basis of uniting the French citizens with the colonists and representatives of all nations in New South Wales; and Mr A. Beckett later remarked that, although the Club was called the Cercle Francais,

"it was cosmopolitan in its aims, the object being to increase the good fellowship and cordial feelings which ought to exist amongst all peoples." (SMH July 15, 1888)

The Sydney Morning Herald remarked in its editorial of Saturday 13th July, 1889 that

"today is one of note to France, and the Frenchmen of Sydney will celebrate it by a picnic at Cabarita and a banquet at the French Club in the evening".

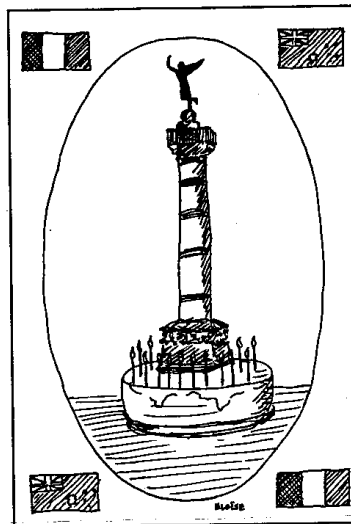
The proceedings, which were directly organised by and under the auspices of the French Consul, Mr Verleye, attracted a party of about 200, travelling mostly by steamer

from Circular Quay to Correy's Gardens at Cabarita. Mr Verleye remarked that

"the gathering was one of the most successful of the kind which they had ever had, and he trusted that this celebration of their National Fete day might prove the precursor of many similar affairs". (SMH July 15, 1889)

Dr Robert Garran, M.L.C. added that they celebrated on that day an event which had happened 100 years ago, and almost at the same time that the colony of New South Wales was founded.

"At the time the French people were pulling down the Bastille, English statesmen were trying to found a convict colony here, and whilst a prison in Paris was being destroyed, another one was being built up in Sydney. It was a curious thing that out of the pulling down of one prison, and the erection of another, there had come in each country a great expansion of political liberty (Applause). The founders of this colony had brought with them all the English traditions of constitutional liberty; and these principles had taken firm root here. Indeed, English liberty owed a great deal to France, and to the country having once been conquered by the French". (SMH July 15, 1889)



The Fete Nationale Francaise of 100 years ago was celebrated as a day of jubilation by about 250 guests at Frank Smith's pleasure grounds at the Sir Joseph-Banks Hotel at Botany on the 14th July, 1890, eclipsing the success which attended the celebration at Cabarita in the previous year. The French Consul, Mr Verleye, observed in a lengthy address that the choice which had been made of the fall of the Bastille was very appropriate and significant, as it represented the first act of wrath at the beginning of the revolution inspired, not by a spirit of vandalism and destruction, as frequently happened in the case of an infuriated crowd in a moment of political perturbation, but by a feeling of justice and pity.

The 1990 BASTILLE DAY BALL will be held at the Sydney Town Hall on Saturday 14th July - 8.00pm. Bookings can be made through the Alliance Francaise of Sydney. For reservations, please telephone (02) 267-1755.

LAPEROUSE

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Friends of the Laperouse Museum

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NOW is the time to RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP for the Year 1990-91

Please fill in the enclosed
renewal form and mail with
your remittance to: The Secretary,
Friends of the Laperouse Museum
PO Box 230, Paddington, NSW 2021

Membership Fees are as follows

Life Member	\$500
Corporate Member	\$250
Family	\$ 20
Single	\$ 12
Student	\$ 6
Pensioner	\$ 6

CURATORIAL NOTES

For the first time since the opening of the museum we are embarking upon a change of display in Room 3 "The Unknown Pacific Ocean". We have returned the exquisite Australian Bank maps but have been fortunate in acquiring on loan an equally impressive collection from Professor Robert Clancy.

The theme of this room is to demonstrate the history of cartography and the implications for the charting of Australia and the Pacific. With the new collection, we are able to maintain this theme and the continuity of the story throughout the museum remains coherent.

There are ten maps on display which range from the 1493 *Schedel* world map from the *Liber Chronicarum* (Nuremberg Chronicle), which is a Ptolemaic world map published only 40 years after the invention of moveable type, to the *Bowen Complete Map of the Southern Continent of 1744* which demonstrates fine engraving skills and contemporary geographical knowledge of Australia.

We are showing another copy of the *Montanus Pars Orbis* (1571) earliest printed cartographic evidence of a southern land mass unconnected with a "Terra Australis". The map was compiled from obscure Portuguese sources and suggests a knowledge of the Australian coastline 30 years before recorded Dutch discoveries.

Two maps by *Frederick de Wit* are shown, one also having been seen as part of the Australian Bank collection. Together, *Indiarum Orientalum* (1690) and *Mar del Zur* (1680) are excellent examples of the flamboyance and decorative flair of the Dutch during this period. Emphasis lay on graphic skills rather than precise scientific and geographic knowledge, so some maps at this time did not reflect contemporary knowledge of the southern hemisphere.

Other maps on show include the delicately coloured *America* (*Hondius*, 1623) and *Orbis Terrarum* (*Plancius*, 1594) - the first to introduce the ornate baroque illustrations which were to dominate Dutch map-making for the next 100 years.

I hope you will all have the opportunity to see this splendid collection which will be on display at the museum for twelve months.

Jennifer Carter
Curator/Manager
LAPEROUSE MUSEUM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(extracts from letters received since the publication of the first "Laperouse")

14th April, 1990

Congratulations on the return of the "pierrier" and the publication of your excellent quarterly newsletter. I would like another copy of the newsheet if you have one as I handed mine on to prospective new member. I like to keep a good record of the Museum's activities...

Best wishes for your good work.

Pamela Griffith

26th April, 1990

May I offer my congratulations on the first issue under your editorship of the Friends of the Laperouse Museum Members Quarterly Newsletter. Its attractive format is particularly pleasing.

Frank Carleton
Convenor, Pere Receveur
Commemoration Committee



30 Avril

May I congratulate the Editor of "Laperouse" for the first issue of a magnificent newsletter. Je ne voulais pas manquer de saluer cette naissance, en souhaitant longue et heureuse vie a cette publication soeur qui m'apporte a Paris une bouffée d'air marin d'Australie.

Bien cordialement et fidelement,

Francois Bellec
Directeur, Musée de la Marine, Paris