

Laperouse

Friends of the Laperouse Museum



Members Quarterly Newsletter

July/August/September, 1991 - Volume Two, Number 1

President's Message

Thank you all for making 23rd February so memorable - a moving ceremony and pleasant lunch - a fitting tribute to Pierre Roussel.

The design plans and costings for the instrument room - our major project - are almost complete. We have made a good start in funding this venture but need major and minor sponsors, with perhaps a major one with room naming rights. We are negotiating to have donations made tax deductible.

Hoping to see you on 17th November when we expect Rear-Admiral Bellec, director of the Musees de la Marine, to be with us. As we move to our third year, we look forward to your renewed membership and continued support.

John Holt

Coming Events

Sydney, 17 - 19 November 1991

"UNFOLDING AUSTRALIA"

International Cartography
Conference and Exhibition of
Early French Maps of Australia
at the Museum

How to participate? - see page 4

**It is time to renew your
membership for 91-92!**

--- Renewal form is enclosed ---

Laperouse Day - 23rd February, 91

About 150 Friends and Laperouse Museum supporters were present at the ceremony to unveil the memorial plaque to Pierre Roussel. For many of them there were happy memories of the Museum's splendid opening 3 years ago to mingle with these new solemn moments. The Hon. Gough Whitlam made his first speech as



Patron of the Friends of the Laperouse Museum. He spoke with praise and appreciation for both the Museum and its Founder.

Other distinguished speakers were Messrs René Perraud, Chargé d'Affaires of the French Embassy, John Mortimer, NPWS Regional Manager, Xavier Driencourt, Con-

sul General for France, as well as the Friend's President. The official party also included Mme Perraud, Mr Jacques Coudray, Consul for France, Mr David Anderson, a former Australian Ambassador to France and Mrs Anderson, the Hon. Ann Symonds M.L.C. and Mr Symonds, and Professor Robert Clancy and Mrs Clancy. Both the ceremony and the lunch which followed at Danny's Seafood Restaurant were well attended by many of the Museum's corporate sponsors thus showing their continuing interest in the Museum. The Friends welcomed particularly Mr and Mrs Serge Basset (BNP), Mr and Mrs Bernard Denis (Société Générale) and Mr and Mrs Bernard Stivala (UTA French Airlines). The lunch was also an opportunity for the Friends and Professor Daniel Leuwers, the recently appointed Cultural Councillor to the French Embassy, to become acquainted.

For next year's Laperouse Day plans are already afoot for a visit to Sydney from a French naval vessel stationed in the Pacific, so that there may be the customary Australian and French naval guard-of-honour in attendance at the Laperouse monument.

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FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHARTING AUSTRALIA'S COASTLINE

by Hugh Birch

The Laperouse Museum commemorates the achievements of the famous French navigator Jean-Francois Galaup, Comte de Laperouse, who was commissioned by Louis XVI to set out on a scientific voyage of discovery throughout the length and breadth of the Pacific Ocean.

The Museum also records the significant role other French explorers played not only in the exploration of the Australian coastline but in the Pacific generally. The Friends of the Laperouse Museum are anxious to gather historical material about those other French navigators who are perhaps not quite so well known as Laperouse but made discoveries of the greatest importance.

The two ships of the expedition led by Laperouse, *l'Astrolabe* and *la Boussole* were wrecked on the gauntlet of reefs that encircle Vanikoro in the Solomon Islands. It was not until the 1820's that some of the wreckage was discovered in an expedition led by Dumont d'Urville, one of France's greatest explorers, who after sailing among thawing icebergs below the Antarctic Circle claimed Adelie Land for France.

In the frigate *la Boussole* under the command of Bougainville (1729-1811), an expedition entered the Pacific in January 1768. According to Martin Terry, curator of the National Maritime Museum, Sydney, "many of the island peoples encountered by Bougainville were hostile and opposed the presence of the explorers. Although Bougainville failed to make contact with the east coast of Australia, he came very close but was prevented by the Great Barrier Reef from reaching land. On the other side of the continent however in the *St Allouarn*, sailing towards Batavia, he landed and claimed the west coast of Australia for France on March 30, 1772.

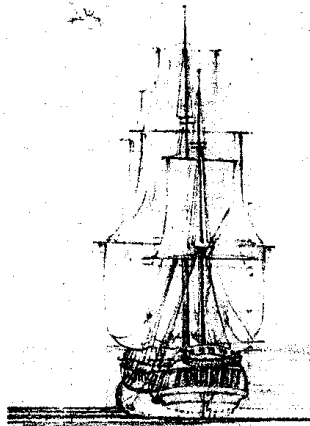
Another Frenchman, Marion Dufresne (1724-1772) led the first French expedition that landed at Van Diemen's Land. Although a welcome had been offered, the conciliatory attitude soon changed, gunfire ensued and an Aborigine died. Dufresne sailed shortly to New Zealand, where he in turn was killed by the Maoris.

The expedition sent to search for Laperouse and to conduct further scientific research, led by Brunid'Entrecasteaux (1739-1793) enjoyed a harmonious stay in Tasmania, but ended in chaos in Java with many of its crew imprisoned by the pro-royalist Dutch.

In 1798, Nicolas Baudin returned to France after an expedition to the Caribbean. There, he gathered "the richest and most beautiful collection of living plants ever brought to Europe" for Paris' Museum of Natural History. In October 1800, Baudin leading another scientific expedition, left Le Havre.

After exploring the coast of Western Australia, "arid, disagreeable and dreary" as he wrote, the expedition arrived at the south-east coast of Tasmania in January 1802. For Francois Peron, a young scientist, it was as if they were at the very centre of an encircling world of natural history.

Their arrival being welcomed, Tasmania was the site of a wide-ranging investigation of the Aborigines: the Nunonne band of Bruny Island, the Lylequonny of Recherche Bay, the Tyreddene of Maria Island and the Pydairrerm of Tasman Peninsula.



The Baudin expedition, spurred on by the Museum of Natural History was the zenith of France's sense of *omnium gatherum*. Peron wrote, "a shipment from Sydney was planned. We arranged in the most methodical manner more than 40,000 animals of all sorts and description". Included in this unusual cargo were black swans, emus, seals, rocks and minerals as well as kangaroos and platypus and an echidna.

France's relationship with the Pacific in the 18th and early 19th centuries is finely recorded in Joseph Dufour's well-known painting '*Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*'. "It epitomised the interest in both science and the longevity of the Pacific myth" as Martin Terry wrote for the *Terra Australis* catalogue.

In future issues of the Newsletter, we will relate narratives of lesser known explorers such as Louis de Freycinet during the years 1817-1820 when he visited Australia; Julien Marie Crozet, who visited Tasmania in the late 18th century after the death of his captain Marion Dufresne, who, with 26 of his crew was massacred in New Zealand; Charles-Pierre Claret, comte de Fleurieu (1738-1810) - Voyage autour du Monde 1790-92; Auguste Nicholas Vaillant - Voyage autour du Monde 1836-37 sur la corvette *La Bonite*.

(READERS CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME)

ADVERTISING RATES

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BE OUR FIRST ADVERTISER!

Museum News

The Laperouse Museum has recently gained three new staff members! Their excitement, energy and enthusiasm are making the museum a constant hive of activity.



(Right) Afonso Dugue-Portugal arrived in Australia from Brazil in 1972. His B.A. (Hons) in Prehistory (anthropology) has enabled him to work as a consultant Archaeologist with the Brazilian Government, the National Parks in Tasmania, the National Trust and the Heritage Council.

(Centre) Michelle Dickson has a B.A. (Hons) in English Literature and has worked in many facets of the educational market, including lecturing in Communication and development of educational programs. Michelle has also worked on projects involving all fields of interpretation of natural and cultural resources.

(Left) Indi Vanathathor arrived in Australia in November 1990 from England where she has lived for eighteen years. Born in Mauritius, Indi travelled to England to complete a secretarial course. She has worked as an administrative assistant for the past 17 years.

The main projects that the staff have been working on since their arrival are the production of a new Laperouse Museum brochure and an extensive publicity campaign involving much direct contact and media liaison. Many challenges lie before the museum staff and, of course, they are ready to meet them with vigour!

Discover Albi

Birthplace of Laperouse, home of Toulouse-Lautrec, Randwick's twin city, Albi is an old fortress town with a turbulent history in South-West France on the river Tam, 700 kms from Paris, just an overnight train journey.

Across the river, facing the remarkable 15th century fortified cathedral, there is the Square de Botany Bay where a recently restored historic building houses Albi's *Musée Laperouse*. It contains a finely displayed collection of rare maps, relics, documents, family memorabilia and information relevant to the life and times of Jean-Francois Galaup, Comte de Laperouse.

The town hall of Albi, adjacent to the cathedral, houses a treasure of countless paintings and drawings by Toulouse-Lautrec.

These and many other points of interest make Albi well worth a detour on the way to wherever you are going. Plan on staying a few days to enjoy the town, its surrounding countryside and the regional gastronomic delights.

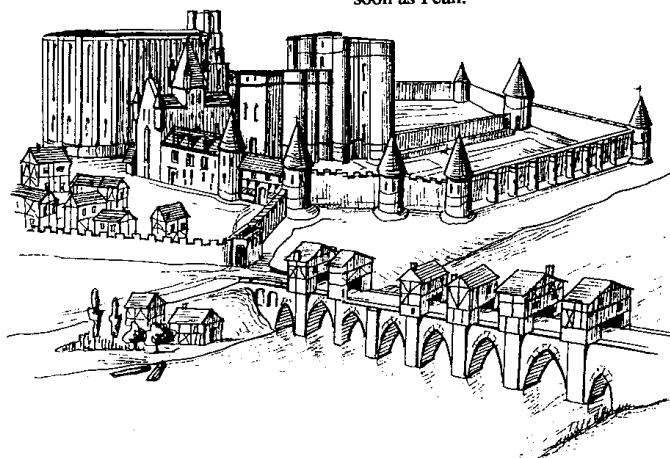
Travel Notes from Jennifer Carter

During June and July last year, I visited both Paris and Albi. Paris was wonderful as always and included visits to some of the numerous museums as well as a delightful and informative day with Rear-Admiral Bellec, director of the *Musées de la Marine*.

I met key staff and received a generous introduction to the museum displays and collections. I had planned to visit Albi for just a few days - ten days later, I reluctantly left having thoroughly immersed myself in the town of Albi and all its continuing connections with Laperouse.

I was invited to the opening of a temporary exhibition of Marine Artists at the *Musée Laperouse* which included paintings by Rear-Admiral Bellec. The *Musée Toulouse-Lautrec* was fascinating and there were interesting and controversial exhibitions of the paintings of Robert Combas both there and at the *Albi Centre Culturel*.

The town was a delight - full of unexpected surprises, and the surrounding countryside was stunning, with its dramatic 'bastides' or defensive villages perched on rocky outcrops. The people of Albi welcomed me most generously and I was very sad to leave, but will certainly be making a return visit as soon as I can.



LAPEROUSE

*Quarterly Newsletter of the
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**Friends of the Laperouse Museum
Limited** was established in 1989.

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Angela Raymond

NPWS: Malin Blazejowski
Curator: Jennifer Carter

What is AFFGM?

Last year, the Friends of the Laperouse Museum Limited joined the **Australian Federation of Friends of Galleries and Museums (AFFGM)** which is a non profit organisation, itself affiliated to the Council of Australian Museums Associations (CAMA) and the World Federation of Friends of Museums (WFFM). As a result, all our members are also members of both AFFGM and WFFM. The aim of AFFGM is to represent individuals and groups who are committed to the premise that private support and involvement are essential to the vitality, development and growth of galleries, museums, botanic gardens, zoos and libraries around Australia.

Benefits offered to visiting members of AFFGM differ in each museum and with each Society. There is no special card or sticker. Use your Friends of the Laperouse Museum membership card. **Reminder!** This card also entitles you to admission to the Musée de la Marine in the Palais de Chaillot, Paris.

Curatorial Notes

Saturday 18th May was International Museums Day and was celebrated in different ways by museums throughout the state. Thanks to the *Minister for the Environment* **Tim Moore**, the Laperouse Museum opened its doors to the public free of charge and conducted tours throughout the day for a wide range of visitors.

During the week we are attracting increasing numbers of school students and this has taken most of our time recently. It is an important and enjoyable part of our work to introduce this lesser known aspect of Australian history to school children, and to inform them of the ongoing contribution of French people and culture to Australian life.

We were delighted recently to open the museum for **Mr Curien**, *French Minister for Research and Technology*, on the evening of Saturday 4th May. Mr and Mrs Curien were accompanied by the *Consul General* **Mr Driencourt** and other guests. I would like to thank Michele de Tarlé for assisting the museum staff on this evening, at very short notice.

Currently the Laperouse manuscript circa 1788 is back on display. Because of the fragility of this item, it is removed for periods of time. It was recently exhibited at the Chapter Hall Museum as part of our contribution to the "Small Museums in Sydney District" exhibition and will be displayed in Room 6 for the next three months. In addition the 19th century print "Timbere" is now displayed in Room 2.

I invite you all to make a special trip to La Perouse to see these items and to meet the new staff. Their knowledge of the story of Laperouse and the significance of the artefacts on display increases daily and they welcome the opportunity to talk to any Friends who make themselves known to them. In turn they can learn much from your knowledge and interest. Outside the museum it is worth making a special visit to the grave site of Pere Receveur and the La Perouse Monument as they have recently been refurbished.

Jennifer Carter

**"UNFOLDING AUSTRALIA"
State Library of N.S.W.**

17-19 November, 1991

- Conference hosted by the *International Map Collectors Society* and the *Australian Map Circle* in conjunction with the State Library of N.S.W.

- Four important exhibitions of early Australian maps at

The State Library of N.S.W.
The Laperouse Museum
The S.H. Irwin Gallery
Archives Authority of N.S.W.

- **Rear-Admiral Bellec**, *Director of the Maritime Museums in France* and first Honorary Life Member of the Friends of the Laperouse Museum, will be the keynote speaker at the State Library of N.S.W. on Monday 18 November at 12 noon. He will address the meeting on the impact of Laperouse on mapping of the Australian-Pacific Region by the French explorers.

The Conference convenors have advised us that the **FRIENDS ARE MOST WELCOME** to attend Rear-Admiral Bellec's address and join the Conference for its afternoon session at the Laperouse Museum from 3-5pm.

If you are interested in attending the three day Conference, please contact:
IMCOS CONVENOR:

- **Professor Robert Clancy**
PO Box 48 New Lambton NSW 2035
Tel: (049) 26-6135 (Work)

AMC CONVENOR:

- **Mr John E Roberts**

c/- Department of Geography
University of Sydney NSW 2006
Tel: (02) 692-2552 (Work)

The Friends wish to thank **UTA French Airlines** for their generous sponsorship of Rear-Admiral Bellec's visit to Sydney so that the museum can be represented with such expertise and prestige at the "Unfolding Australia" conference. We shall also be able to enjoy his company on **AGM - Grand Piquenique Day**, to be held on 17 November, 1991.

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The Instrument Room**

The project in detail, our fund-raising plans and prospects...