PAUL MAISTRE'S FIRST FAREWELL

WALLACE KIRSOP

Readers of *Explorations* will remember Colin Thornton-Smith's long and fascinating account of the failure of Paul Maistre, then Consul for France in Melbourne, to reform the Alliance Française de Victoria in the first decade of the twentieth century and of his humiliating recall to Paris early in 1909.[1] Further information on this affair and on Maistre's career is contained in his personal file in the Archives of the Ministère des Affaires Etrangères in Paris. It is hoped that appropriate authorization can be obtained to bring some of this material to our subscribers in due course. The contrast between strong public support and the ruthless efficiency of the Consul's enemies is maintained in the new documents. However, the official records also reveal that not all of Maistre's difficulties were encountered in his second sojourn in Melbourne.

Maurice Brodzky's *Table Talk* is a remarkable source for insights into Melbourne life at the end of the nineteenth century. Given its editor's own period in France thirty years before,[2] the weekly is particularly attentive to doings in the French and Francophile community. The paragraph reproduced below is not untypical of Brodzky's careful approach. If one is aware of the negative reports Dejardin the Consul-General was in the habit of sending to the Ministry about his subordinate Maistre, the last sentence has to be seen as delicious irony. It is hard to believe that Brodzky did not have confidential advice, possibly from both the interested parties, on this tension. Sometimes the gossip columnist has to show more tact and subtlety than professional diplomats . . .

> MONSIEUR P. L. Maistre, the Vice-Consul for France at Melbourne, is leaving with Madame Maistre and family for France on January 29 by the French mail steamer, *Armand Behic*. Monsieur Maistre has been over 12 years in Melbourne, and on several occasions has been Acting-Consul General for lengthy periods. He has won the esteem of the whole French colony in Victoria as well as that of a large circle of private friends and those who have made his acquaintance officially. Following the good old English fashion his friends have determined to entertain him at a

banquet, prior to his departure, and an influential committee has been formed for that purpose, Mons. H. de Possel, manager for the Messageries Maritimes Company, being the chairman. Monsieur Maistre has considerable literary talent inherited from his father, an old French Liberal of the 1848 revolution, and who for 42 years was keeper of the archives at the French Embassy of London. When a very young man Monsieur Maistre nearly became a professional journalist, his contributions to the *Phare de la Loire*, the leading newspaper in the city of Nantes, gaining him the offer of the proprietors to become one of their leader writers. He chose, however, the Consular service, and qualified himself for the higher grades by perfecting himself in the German and Italian languages as well as English. For some years past his contributions to the *Nouvelle Revue* and the *Revue Universelle* have assured his position as a brilliant writer, and he has received special commendation from the Minister for his consular reports. He has now completed his term of service as vice-consul, and is entitled to promotion as a consul, a claim which, no doubt, will be recognised by the Minister, who has granted Monsieur Maistre three months holiday before appointing him to a new position. Much as his departure is regretted by his Melbourne friends, none regret it more or congratulate Monsieur Maistre more heartily on his change than Monsieur Dejardin, the popular Consul-General for France, who has just returned from a prolonged visit to Paris.[3]

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Notes

1. C. B. Thornton-Smith, "Paul Maistre, Vice-Consul and later Consul for France in Victoria, 1886-1898, 1901-1908", *Explorations*, n° 17, December 1994, pp. 3-47.
2. On Brodzky see Henry R. Lew, *The Five Walking Sticks. The Story of Maurice Brodzky Investigative Journalist Extraordinaire*, Caulfield North, AMCL Publications, 2000.
3. *Table Talk. A Journal for Men and Women*, n° 655, 14 January 1898, p. 2c.

BOOK REVIEWS

Anthony J. Brown, *Ill-Starred Captains: Flinders and Baudin*, Adelaide, Crawford House Publishing, 2000, 512 pp., Aust. $49.95. ISBN 1 86333 192 1.

The publication of Anthony Brown's important book on Flinders and Baudin, *Ill-Starred Captains*, comes at an opportune moment as the bicentenary of the meeting of the two navigators at Encounter Bay in April 1802 will occur this year. The work of Flinders is well known in Australia, but Baudin, who was his equal as a navigator and maritime explorer and who made discoveries that complemented those of his English rival, has received little recognition until recently in Australia or in France. This situation is currently being rectified to some degree in three states of Australia which are celebrating or will celebrate the bicentenary of the Baudin expedition's exploration of their coasts in 1801–1803 (Western Australia 2001, South Australia 2002, Tasmania 2003).

The author has drawn on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, which he lists, with useful comments, in a note presented at the beginning of the volume. In this, however, he refers to Baudin's *Journal de Mer*, published only in the English translation of Christine Cornell in 1974, as "in effect Baudin's private diary": this is somewhat misleading as the *Journal de Mer* was in fact the captain's log-book, written in this case in his own hand, in which he was obliged to note the daily record of the ship's movements and events that occurred on board while at sea. But Baudin also kept a personal journal, dictated to a secretary, written in a somewhat different style, which was illustrated by the two young artists, C.-A. Lesueur and N.-M. Petit, whom Baudin had engaged specifically for this task. This personal journal, which was not continued beyond the end of 1801, has only recently been published, with reproductions of the illustrations, by Jacqueline Bonnemains (Conservateur de la Collection Lesueur au Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Le Havre),[1] and presumably would not have been available to Brown when he was writing his book.

Ill-Starred Captains presents the story of the two expeditions in two parallel narratives with some comparisons, more especially at the end. The framework adopted is unusual in that the "factual prose of historical narrative", presented in past tenses, is interwoven with passages in the present tense, printed in italics, "to add immediacy to the

story" (p. x). In both types of text there are frequent quotations drawn from the journals of the navigators and members of the ship's company. The reader has the impression that the italicized passages are written in a freer style, giving more play to the author's imagination, though without noticeable distortion. Whether this is a helpful approach is an open question.

The advantage of presenting parallel narratives is that the reader is able to compare accounts of shared events or statements of objectives and opinions from the point of view of each of the two navigators. An obvious example is their respective accounts of their meeting at Encounter Bay, though the two accounts are very similar and are presented in separate chapters. More interesting in a way is the section devoted to the arrival of Flinders and Baudin in May–June 1802 at Port Jackson (pp. 237–244), where each was received by Governor King and where they exchanged information. Both men were disappointed to find that they had been beaten to the discovery of Port Phillip Bay by John Murray.

It is clear from these accounts that the two navigators had much in common in their outlook, not only as regards their scientific approach to their task, but also in such matters as their views on the Australian Aborigines and the treatment suffered by them at the hands of the European settlers. Flinders speaks of them sympathetically (p. 15) while Baudin wrote a very sharp letter to Governor King (with whom he had developed a genuine friendship) when a British company followed him to King Island and promptly raised the British flag to claim the territory, condemning the actions of Europeans who presume to take possession of the lands of other peoples (p. 16).

Baudin has commonly been accused of carrying out his exploration to further the political and imperialistic aims of the government of Napoleon. And certainly that view was widespread in the colony at Port Jackson, where some considered the French to be spies developing plans for the capture of the colony (pp. 274–278). It is true that the naturalist Péron, who was very impressed with the colony at Port Jackson, later offered information and advice about an attack, probably in the hope of currying favour with the regime, but Baudin's instructions were essentially scientific (p. 34) and there appears to be no documentary evidence to suggest that he had any other purpose. But the fact that Baudin had done extensive, detailed surveys in Tasmania was enough

to prompt the despatch of a British company to Risdon in 1803, thus initiating the establishment of a colony at Hobart (p. 275).

The scientific achievements of the two expeditions were considerable, despite the great obstacles and misfortunes with which they had to contend. Between them, they charted almost the whole of the Australian coastline not previously mapped and made corrections to the work of earlier navigators. According to Brown, Flinders had "completed the first close circumnavigation of Australia" (p. 311): it has to be acknowledged, however, that he sailed too far out to sea along the western coast of Western Australia to chart any of it, a task completed to a large extent by his French rival. Baudin's coastal discoveries relate principally to Western Australia, South Australia and the south-east and east coasts of Tasmania, where important corrections were made. Flinders made corrections to Cook's longitude readings along the east coast of the continent (pp. 282–284) and made a fundamental discovery in the field of compass variations (pp. 451–455). Both brought back important collections of scientific drawings and paintings, and Baudin sent back to France two huge collections of scientific specimens, including live animals and birds.

Both navigators clearly expected that the significance of their work would be recognized on their return to Europe, but Flinders, after a shipwreck and a long period of detention at the Ile de France (Mauritius) during which his health deteriorated, had to wait years for his maps and writings to be published, dying just as his *Voyage to Terra Australis* appeared. Baudin, who was an inflexible commander faced with difficult people in his ship's company, especially among the scientists, did himself the disservice of dying before the return journey ended, thus enabling his enemies to portray him without contradiction as incompetent and malicious. The recognition of each was affected in different ways by the upheavals and preoccupations resulting from the Napoleonic wars, and although Flinders was eventually recognized as a great navigator, Baudin's name was demonized and remains badly known in both France and Australia.

Despite the qualities of this book, there are some weaknesses that call for comment. The only maps provided (apart from small reproductions of some of those published in the official accounts) are two small outline maps of the whole of Australia with the broad lines of the navigators' itineraries shown. To follow the narratives carefully, the

reader thus has to use a substantial, well-indexed atlas of Australia. In describing the ships' routes, the narrative sometimes jumps considerable distances without warning: this is particularly noticeable in the sections devoted to Baudin's exploration of the coasts of Western Australia and the South Australian gulfs. Failure to identify some of the important landmarks that are described sometimes results in a lack of clarity for the reader. And in the description of Flinders's voyage from Kupang to Port Jackson in March 1803, there is no clear indication that he took the western route (around Cape Leeuwin) and not the route by which he had travelled to Kupang (through Torres Strait). As far as content is concerned, it is to be regretted that more attention is not given to the work of the artists of the expedition, some of whose paintings are reproduced in small plates. These are, however, relatively minor blemishes in a book that presents a useful account of the drama of maritime exploration in the early history of this country.

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Note

1. [N. Baudin], *Mon Voyage aux Terres Australes: Journal personnel du commandant Baudin*, texte établi par Jacqueline Bonnemains, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 2000.

Brian Andrews, *Australian Gothic: The Gothic Revival in Australian Architecture from the 1840s to the 1950s*, Carlton, Vic., Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press, 2001, 194 pp., illustrations, hardback $89.95. ISBN 0 522 84931 8.

Although there have been a number of studies of aspects of the Gothic revival in Australia, this is the first comprehensive overview of an architectural movement which profoundly affected the design of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century cathedrals, parish churches, schools, colleges, banks, government buildings and domestic residences in this country. Andrews acknowledges that French *néo-gothique* and German *Neugotik* were "parallel European ventures into neo-medievalism" which had "some impact in the antipodes", but argues that "the face of Gothic

in Australia was indelibly marked with its English pedigree" and that the spread of the movement was clearly linked to the growth of the British Empire. Yet, despite the total absence of any entry for "France" or the "French" in the index, *Australian Gothic* contains many fascinating notations of Gallic influences.

It is significant that the acknowledged father of the Gothic Revival in Britain, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812–1852), was the son of an *émigré* French artist and architectural illustrator. Pugin's designs were employed in the construction of several Australian churches, tombs, baptismal fonts and chancels; and his son, Peter Paul Pugin, designed alterations and additions to St Francis Xavier Cathedral in Adelaide. Andrews argues that "Even when French Gothic elements appeared in Australian buildings their immediate origin was generally the pages of mid nineteenth-century English pattern books, the fruits of Continental travels by English architects or more typically illustrations in English journals such as the *Builder*". He does, however, trace some direct French influence to Viollet-le-Duc's *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI^e^ au XVI^e^ siècle*, particularly in the work of the sculptor William Maxwell (who did considerable gothic carving for buildings in Adelaide and Melbourne) and George Henderson (1846–1905) and Alexander Davidson (1839–1908), who employed asymmetrical French Gothic composition in a "host of external and internal elements and details on homesteads, churches and commercial buildings" executed in the Geelong area.

Australian Gothic contains mention of still more French stylistic connections. I was interested to read, for example, that William Butterfield's and Edward John Ross's design for St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide (1869–1904), was based on a Burgundian church in Semur-en-Auxois and on Notre-Dame in Paris; that Robin Dods was inspired by "southern French medieval architecture" in Albi and Toulouse when he designed St Brigid's Church, Red Hill, Queensland (1912–1914); and that Scarborough, Robertson and Love, the architects for the imposing Scotch College Chapel, Hawthorn, Victoria (1936), were similarly inspired by Albi Cathedral. Andrews draws attention to "French elements and ideas" (including similarities with the Cistercian abbey churches of Longpont and Royaumont) in William Wilkinson Wardell's (1823–1899) ground plan for St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne (1858), the

façade of St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney (1865) and "the design and subsequent enlargement" of St Ignatius', Richmond, Victoria (1867–1884). He reminds us that "the wonderfully complex east end of St Patrick's resulting from its French plan with ambulatory and radiating chapel" moved Robin Boyd to exclaim that "the cathedral's interior presents a Gothic vision probably unsurpassed by any other building in four hundred years since the great Gothic era".

In his chapter "Continental Gothic", Andrews offers further fascinating details. He writes, for example, of the Church of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Randwick (1887–1921) as being "recognisably French, but whose Frenchness was recycled twice over". Apparently its typical "Normandy spire and its stilted arch windows" were originally designed by the London architect, Ernest Claude Lee, for the Church of St Mary, Whitechapel. After explaining how the design was appropriated by the Sydney architects Sheerin and Hennessy, Andrews tells us:

> The Randwick congregation could, however, be forgiven for imagining they were in a real French church as the Sydney sun streamed in through no less than twenty-seven stained-glass windows from the studio of L. Lobin in Tours and as they reverently knelt before the great silver monstrance replete with Limoges enamels and chiselled angels, a splendid product of the workshop of Messrs Mouret et Cie of Marseilles.

This penultimate chapter also has intriguing references to nineteenth-century Quebecois Gothic revival in the "unmistakably French" style of the Marist church of the Holy Name of Mary in Hunter's Hill, N.S.W. (1867–1904). And I was also interested to read that the Chapel of the Convent of the Sacred Heart, Rose Bay (1897–1900) was designed by John Horbury Hunt as a "Gallic-flavoured setting for the chapel's remarkable collection of néo-gothique furnishings, legacies from French convents closed as a result of anti-clerical laws passed in the first decade of the twentieth century". According to Andrews, "Noteworthy amongst the Chapel's singular néo-gothique heritage are the choir stalls, the pulpit with its tall spiky canopy and the confessional, all from the Convent of the Sacred Heart in the Rue de Varenne, Paris, now the Musée Rodin; and the organ, which had been in the convent at Quadrille near Bordeaux".

In *Australian Gothic* Brian Andrews ranges authoritatively from grand cathedrals to humble weatherboard churches with mock timber buttresses. This book is an exhilarating *tour de force*, characterized by intensive analysis of an enormous number of buildings. It is very well researched, well written and magnificently produced, with many splendid illustrations. In summary, it should be read by anyone with a serious interest in the history of Australian architecture.

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A Frenchman's Walk Across the Nullarbor: Henri Gilbert's Diary, Perth to Brisbane, 1897-1899, edited and translated by Colin Dyer, Carlton, Vic., Melbourne University Press, 2000, 195 pp., map, plates, hardback $29.95. ISBN 0 522 84916 4

Born in Nantes in 1865, the son of a shoemaker, Henri Gilbert came to Australia in 1897 as a result of a £10,000 wager by a group of wealthy businessmen apparently inspired by another Nantais: the novelist Jules Verne. But unlike Phileas Fogg, the eccentric hero of Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days* who utilized the latest in nineteenth-century transport technology to circle the globe in less than three months, Gilbert undertook to do so on foot (wherever possible) in just over five years. Furthermore, he agreed not to receive "pecuniary assistance other than what he fairly earned". Aside from lecture fees and payments for newspaper reports, he was permitted to accept free board and lodgings. Ultimately, however, he hoped to publish an account of his travels in order to make his fortune. The book appears never to have been written, but more than a century later the diary of the Australian leg of Gilbert's journey—inexplicably preserved in the John Oxley Library in Brisbane —has finally been translated and edited by Colin Dyer, Associate Professor of Romance Languages at the University of Queensland. The resulting work is both a delightful curiosity and a charming record of an extraordinary physical feat. Wherever possible Gilbert requested signed attestations from postmasters, station managers, publicans and civic officials to prove that he had indeed arrived at individual settlements on foot. In his notebook, he also pasted newspaper reports of his visits

and occasional photographs of the local personalities he met. These photographs, and the information gleaned from the attestations and clippings, have greatly enriched Dr Dyer's very readable translation and introduction.

Henri Gilbert followed the telegraph line across the vast arid plain of the Nullarbor and the individually numbered poles enabled him to maintain a steady course and calculate the daily distances he travelled. It seems unlikely, however, that he could have crossed the Nullarbor without the help of the linesman James Lawrence and several other outback folk who left advance supplies of water along the way. Having personally driven across the Nullarbor (and blown two head-gaskets and seized a gear box in temperatures which approached the mid-40°s), I can only begin to imagine the physical endurance required for Henri Gilbert's walk. But Gilbert did have limits; and the Frenchman collapsed in February 1898 and had to be taken by camel to Bookabie until he was fit enough to continue. When he finally reached Port Augusta he declared:

> My pen cannot express the joy I experience on arriving at this point, especially when thinking of the countless difficulties that I have had to overcome from Albany to Port Augusta on this bad track where, apart from fatigue, I have suffered hunger and thirst many times. But my will was of iron: I had to get through, and I did get through.

Gilbert collapsed again in Ballan, Victoria, in June 1898. His journal, aside from being a record of remarkable individual fortitude, is a valuable account of social conditions in isolated parts of Australia on the eve of Federation. It is perhaps not surprising that a Frenchman such as Gilbert should have mentioned other French speakers he met along the way. They included a Marseillais, François La Tour; a Quebecois, Jean Garrett; Reginald Pigou, a government employee in Kolendo, who was the grandson of a Frenchman; Louis Blot, another Nantais; Emile Benda and a Mauritian named Leishmann who gave him a tent and several tins of salmon in Adelaide; and Henri Millenet, a publican in Wagga Wagga.

According to the Melbourne *Age*, "At least 800 people rode with him as he stepped down Elizabeth Street to the General Post Office where he called for letters". Such was the warmth of the welcome Gilbert received that an individual named James Johnson (who spoke no French) decided to assume Gilbert's identity and accept free drinks all the way

from Seymour to Violet Town until it was realized he was an impostor and the police arrested him!

Despite the quirky charm of this book, I was disappointed that Dr Dyer has given us only the barest of explanatory notes for the text. He does provide a great deal of information (even too much), in the introduction, on Gilbert's great precursors Eyre and Forrest and their travels across the Nullarbor, but very little on Gilbert himself and the people *he* encountered. Could he not have researched the name of the mayor of Ballarat in May 1898, instead of simply telling us his signature was illegible? And what of Gilbert's fate and the mystery of whether or not he completed his quixotic endeavour? Dyer speculates: "Perhaps he never left Brisbane? We know from the Brisbane *Courier* for Saturday 7 January 1899 that there was a China Navigation Company steamer leaving for Hong Kong and Japan at 2.00 p.m. that day. We can but conjecture". Yes, but Dyer could also have checked Queensland and other state records to see if Gilbert died suddenly, fell in love and married, or was naturalized in Australia. He could also have checked Hong Kong archival records, and passenger lists published in newspapers in the British crown colony to see whether or not Gilbert actually arrived there. Dr Dyer gives us no indication of such research. He does tell us that he wrote to "every fourth one of the fifty-eight Gilberts listed in the Nantes telephone directory" in an unsuccessful attempt to learn more of the pedestrian. Why did he not write to the rest when the first quarter proved fruitless? And did he try the Centre Généalogique de l'Ouest or search for probate documents in the Archives Départementales de la Loire-Atlantique? If Gilbert did "perish in some opium den in the depths of China, or froze to death on the arctic wastes of Siberia or Alaska", as Dyer suggests, his family and wealthy backers would surely have made some enquiries of French consular representatives to discover his fate. Some clues, therefore, may lie in the AE (Affaires Etrangères) series of the Archives Nationales in Paris. Consular correspondence is a rich source of information on travellers abroad and it should be remembered that Gilbert was particularly keen to seek the apostiles of his country's diplomats while he was in Australia. It seems likely, therefore, that he would have done the same in China, Japan or Siberia if he had reached any of these lands.

Regardless of the mystery which surrounds Gilbert's fate, we should be grateful to Dr Dyer and Melbourne University Press for

bringing this historical gem to public attention in such an attractive format.

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Helen Hewson, *Australia: 300 Years of Botanical Illustration*, Collingwood, Vic., CSIRO Publishing, 1999, 240 pp., illustrations, hardback $64.95. ISBN 0 643 06366 8. Collector's Edition, $380.00. ISBN 0 643 06365 X.

A history of the illustration of Australia's remarkable flora is long overdue. But if the wait has been long, it has also been worthwhile. This is not only a very beautiful book, rich in the finest examples of the botanical illustrator's art, it is also a valuable overview of the history of botany in Australia. Dr Hewson effectively begins her account with the simple engravings for William Dampier's *A Voyage to New Holland* (1703). She then examines the masterly work of artists such as Sydney Parkinson (1745–1771), Franz Bauer (1758–1840), Ferdinand Bauer (1760–1826), James Sowerby (1757–1822), Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840), Pierre-Antoine Poiteau (1766–1854) and Pierre Turpin (1775–1840) during the era of later exploration and early colonization. In examining the methodical age of Ferdinand von Mueller (1825–1896) and Joseph Maiden (1859–1925), she reviews the impressive artistry of Walter Fitch (1817–1892), Edward Minchin (1862–1913), Ellis Rowan (1848–1922) and many others. Finally she surveys the splendours of the modern revival represented by major artists such as Rica Erickson (b. 1908), Stanley Kelly (b. 1911), Celia Rosser (b. 1930), Margaret Stones (b. 1920) and Margaret Menadue (b. 1942). Readers of *Explorations* may care to note that in the first half of her engaging account, Hewson has an entire chapter, "The French Impression", devoted to the contribution of French botanists and their artists.

Who then published the first flora of Australia? Although Daniel Solander (1733–1782) compiled a four-volume manuscript, "Plantae Novae Hollandiae", as a result of his collecting with Joseph Banks (1743–1820) during the *Endeavour*'s landfalls on the east coast of Australia in 1770, his work was not published. According to Hewson, the honour of being the author of the first published flora of Australia

belongs to the English botanist James Edward Smith (1759–1828), who described sixteen Australian species in his *A Specimen of the Botany of New Holland* (1793). But is a published work describing a mere sixteen Australian species a true flora—even if it is the first to focus on a particular region? The breadth of such a work would appear to be an important criterion. In their book *People and Plants in Australia* (Sydney, Academic Press, 1981), Denis Carr (b. 1915) and Maisie Carr (1912–1988) give the honour to Jacques-Julien Houtou de Labillardière (1755–1834) who published the magnificent two-volume *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* (1804–1806) containing 265 copperplate engravings of Australian species. As the Carrs put it: "In practical terms", the *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen* "was the first general flora of Australia". While a Frenchman, Charles Louis L'Héritier de Brutelle (1746–1800), named the first *Eucalyptus* in his *Sertum anglicum* (1788), he, like James Edward Smith, never visited Australia. Pierre-Joseph Redouté's (1759–1840) beautiful engraving of *Eucalyptus obliqua* (reproduced by Hewson from L'Héritier's pioneering work) was based on specimens cultivated in Britain from seeds or seedlings brought back from Van Diemen's Land in 1777. James Edward Smith's descriptions were based on plants and specimens sent to Britain by John White (*c.* 1756–1832), Surgeon-General to the new British penal colony in New South Wales. Significantly, however, Smith's artist, James Sowerby, appears to have been assisted by watercolours executed by the convict artist Thomas Watling (1762–*c.*1814).

Although Dr Hewson accords precedence to Smith, she certainly celebrates the work of Labillardière who served as a naturalist on Bruny d'Entrecasteaux's expedition (1791–1793) in search of La Pérouse. She also reproduces several images from the *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen*, with valuable critical analysis. I have to say, however, that I disagree with her assertion that Labillardière was born "of a wealthy family" (p. 58). Similar claims have recently been made by Jill, Duchess of Hamilton in her book *Napoleon, the Empress and the Artist* (1999). The archival evidence in Labillardière's native Alençon leaves little doubt that he was the ninth of fourteen children born to Michel Jacques Houtou, sieur de La Billardière, a lace merchant (and town clerk) of relatively modest means, and his wife Madeleine, a lacemaker.

The artist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition was a man named Piron. He too has an important place in the history of Australian botanical art and Dr Hewson has reproduced an engraving by Auguste Plée based on Piron's drawing of *Cyathodes glauca* from Labillardière's *Novae Hollandiae plantarum specimen*. Hewson gives Piron's first name as "Nicolas", but her only source for this is the 32-page catalogue for the *Dare to Know* exhibition held by the State Library of New South Wales in 1998. Wanting to know more, I was disappointed to find that no other source at the State Library could confirm the artist's first name—"only known recently" according to Hewson. Hélène Richard, author of *Le Voyage de d'Entrecasteaux à la recherche de Lapérouse* (Paris, Editions du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques, 1986), was never able to find Piron's first name despite exhaustive research. As to Piron's fate, E. T. Hamy asserted in an article entitled "Collection de dessins provenant de l'expédition de D'Entrecasteaux" (*La Nature*, 24, 1896, pp. 86–87), that he died in Java (*c.*1795) after d'Entrecasteaux's expedition disintegrated on royalist and republican lines. Hélène Richard, however, noted a comment in Jacques-Malo La Motte du Portail's (1761–1812) journal, which indicates that he was seen in Manila in 1799. Dr Hewson, therefore, has reasonable grounds to assert that Piron "survived the privations of Batavia", but she is on shaky ground when she writes of "work that Piron did back in France" (p. 58). As yet, no documentary proof has been found that he ever returned to France or even reached the Ile-de-France (Mauritius) from Java or the Philippines.

Although I may run the risk of carping, I feel an obligation to point out a number of other minor errors so that they can be corrected in any future edition of this fine book. Joseph Banks was not elected a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1766. Nor was he elected its president in 1788 (p. 22). The Royal Horticultural Society was not established until 1804. In fact, Banks was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1766 and became its president in 1778. Claude-Antoine-Gaspard Riche, zoologist on d'Entrecasteaux's expedition, did not die in 1779 (as is stated in the endnotes on p. 201 and in the index on p. 226), rather he died in 1797. Some readers may assume from the discussion about the artists Gerardus van Spaëndonck (1746–1822) and Redouté (p. 69) that the Jardin du Roi and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle co-existed. In fact, the museum was created in 1793