THE FRANCO-SCOTTISH SOCIETY of SCOTLAND

130th ANNIVERSARY EVENT

22nd October 2025 ■ Institut Français D'Écosse, Edinburgh

FRANCO-SCOTTISH SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND CONFERENCE

22 October 2025

Institut Français d'Écosse, West Parliament Square, Edinburgh EH1 1RN

FRANCO-SCOTTISH RELATIONS IN TRADE, BUSINESS AND WORK

This year, the Institut Français d'Écosse, the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland (FSSS) and the Association Franco-Écossaise in France are celebrating the close links between Scotland and France established by the Auld Alliance in 1295 and exploring what these links mean for us in today's globalised world.

The Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland founded in 1895 is also celebrating 130 years of educational, cultural and social activities which actively promote friendship and understanding between the Scottish and French peoples. We are hosting an afternoon of round table debate on Franco-Scottish relations today in trade, business and the world of work. This is an area of immediate relevance to the people of both countries, particularly those following or promoting economic and educational exchanges and those contemplating a Franco-Scottish career.

The Round Tables

What is it like to be a practitioner in the Franco-Scottish workplace today? What are the opportunities of operating across two economies, cultures and languages in an ever-changing geo-political context? What challenges arise? Key figures in different sectors will explore these questions in two round table discussions, each moderated by a highly experienced public figure and including time for questions from the floor. There will be an interval with refreshments between the round tables. English is the language of discussion. The Conference is open to members of the Franco-Scottish Society and of the Institut Français d'Écosse, representatives of the sectors taking part, students, school pupils, teachers and careers advisers and members of the general public.

Partners

The Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland welcomes the participation of Clarisse Godard Desmarest, President of our French sister organisation, ***l'Association Franco-Écossaise***. We are grateful for the generous contributions of the ***French Consulate*** and the ***Institut Français d'Écosse*** to hosting the event. The ***National Library of Scotland*** has brought together an exhibition of archive material from the history of the FSSS; the opening of this exhibition will be marked by a reception in the NLS immediately following the close of the conference.

Programme

13.00 – 13.30 Opening and Welcome

M. Stéphane Pailler, Consul général de France à Édimbourg et Glasgow

Professor Clarisse Godard Desmarest FSAScot, FRHistS, President of the Association Franco-Écossaise

Professor Lorna Milne FRSE, Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques, President of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland

13.30 – 14.45 Round Table 1: chair Peter MacMahon, writer, broadcaster & consultant

Claire Duquenne, Assistant Marketing Manager, Brand and Global Marketing, VisitScotland

Mark Kent CMG, Chief Executive Officer, The Scotch Whisky Association

Richard Mowe, freelance arts journalist & director/co-founder French Film Festival UK

Dr Emilie Pondeville, Senior Research Fellow in Entomology, University of Glasgow

14.45 – 15.15 Interval and Afternoon Tea

15.15 – 16.30 Round Table 2, chair Stéphane Pailler, Consul général de France à Édimbourg et Glasgow

Cédric Gerbier, Co-founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Locogen France

Jaclyn McKie, Head of Marketing, Isle of Arran Distillers Ltd

Angela Mathis, President, Scottish Energy Forum

Tavish Scott, Chief Executive Officer, Salmon Scotland Ltd

16.30 – 16.45 Close

Professor Lorna Milne FRSE, President of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland

17.00 – 19.00 Reception and exhibition at the National Library of Scotland George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1EW

The Franco-Scottish Society is grateful to the participants in the Round Tables who have supported this event through giving freely of their time, skills and expertise.

Contributors

Claire Duquenne

Cédric Gerbier

Clarisse Godard Desmarest FSAScot FRHistS

Mark Kent CMG

Peter MacMahon

Angela Mathis

Jaclyn McKie

Lorna Milne FRSE

Richard Mowe

Stéphane Pailler

Dr Emilie Pondeville

Tavish Scott

In 2008 ***Claire Duquenne*** came to Scotland for her studies as part of a university exchange programme and fell in love with the country. She now works for VisitScotland, Scotland's National Tourist Organisation, promoting Scotland across the world, including to French visitors, as a holiday destination with much to discover, and helping grow the sustainable visitor economy in Scotland.

Originally from Lyon, ***Cédric Gerbier*** has lived in Scotland for over 20 years. He studied engineering at Edinburgh Napier University and continued to obtain an MSc in Energy from Heriot-Watt University in 2006. In 2015, he joined the Edinburgh-based renewable energy company Locogen to set up Locogen France which he ran until March 2025. Cédric is the father of two Franco-Scottish children and takes pride in nurturing the biculturality of his family. In his free time, he loves spending time in the great outdoors, swimming, cycling and running around Edinburgh.

Clarisse Godard Desmarest FSAScot FRHistS is Professor of British Studies at the University of Picardie Jules Verne and Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Edinburgh (College of Art). She has published widely on Scottish architecture and culture. She edited *The New Town of Edinburgh: An Architectural Celebration* (2019); her monograph *Le bâtiment de la Royal High School Histoire, éducation et patrimoine en Écosse (XVIIIe-XXIe siècle)* is forthcoming with Sorbonne University Press. She held an EU Marie Curie individual fellowship at Edinburgh University from 2020 to 2022. This provided the foundation for her current research, which focuses on questions of national and cultural identity in the architecture of William Burn (1789–1870), Scotland's most prolific nineteenth-century architect and the pioneer of the Scots Baronial style.

Mark Kent CMG joined the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) as Chief Executive in January 2022. He is a graduate in Law (University of Oxford); holds a Masters degree in European Law and Economics (Université Libre de Bruxelles); has a postgraduate qualification in Business Administration (Open University); and has gained language qualifications in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, Vietnamese and Thai. Mark's long career in the UK diplomatic service concluded with his successive appointments as Ambassador to Vietnam, Thailand and the Argentine Republic. At the SWA he is focussed on securing sustainable growth of Scotch Whisky, an iconic product which is the UK's biggest food and drink export.

Peter MacMahon is a writer, broadcaster and communications consultant. He stepped down from his role as Political Editor of ITV Border and presenter of the channel's flagship politics programme, Representing Border, at the end of 2024. He spent more than a decade reporting for ITV Border on the Scottish independence and Brexit referendums and several Westminster and Holyrood elections. A former deputy editor and business editor of The Scotsman, Peter has worked as a political editor in the UK and Scottish Parliaments.

Angela Mathis is CEO and co-founder in 2007 of ThinkTank Maths Limited and its daughter company in Norway. The company improves Engineering and Business processes using novel 'Mathematical Frameworks' to deal with the complex industrial and engineering challenges required for the energy transition (renewables, digital oil and gas) and space/defence. She is currently President of the Scottish Energy Forum, a non-profit organisation committed to promoting discussion on energy-related issues within the UK. The forum serves as a national platform for individuals and organisations to share their perspectives and expertise on various aspects of the energy sector: economics, technology, policy and environmental impact.

Isle of Arran Distillers proudly own and operate two Single Malt Scotch Whisky distilleries on the Isle of Arran. ***Jaclyn McKie*** brings over 21 years of experience in marketing and promoting the global exports of Single Malt Scotch Whisky. As a French and Italian language graduate of the University of Glasgow, she has particular experience of the French market, both in importing and exporting, having previously worked in the French wine export industry.

Lorna Milne FRSE, President of the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland, is Professor Emerita of French at St Andrews University, where she has also served as Vice-Principal (Education) (2011-18) and Master of the United College and Deputy Principal (2019-2023). Her research publications focus on modern and contemporary French fiction, with a particular interest in the French Antilles. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques.

Richard Mowe is a freelance arts journalist and the director and co-founder of the French Film Festival UK. As a journalist he has contributed to newspapers, radio and television, mainly on cultural affairs and the entertainment and film worlds. The French Government has recognised his contribution to French cultural life with the award of the honours of Chevalier and subsequently of Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Richard is a member of the National Union of Journalists (NUJ); the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA); the International Federation of Film Critics (FIPRESCI); the European Film Academy; the Critics' Circle and the Académie des Lumières.

Stéphane Pailler began his diplomatic career in the Legal Department of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1999. He subsequently worked as a counsellor to the Minister of Industry and then to the Minister of European Affairs. Stéphane went on to specialise in energy and security issues, working firstly in the Nuclear Safety Authority and then as France's Deputy Permanent Representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As Head of the Environment and Climate Department at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs, Stéphane contributed to negotiations on climate change, biodiversity and sustainability. Since 2023, he has been both Consul-General of France in Edinburgh and Glasgow and Director of the French Institute.

Dr Emilie Pondeville is an expert in mosquito biology and interactions with pathogens. After gaining her PhD at the Université Pierre-et-Marie-Curie in Paris, she moved to the Institut Pasteur in the same city where she developed genetic tools to study mosquito-pathogen interactions. Now Senior Research Fellow and founder and head of the MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research, Emilie's research interests focus on understanding how mosquito biology influences the spread of mosquito-borne pathogens and on using this understanding to inform strategies to reduce mosquito-borne diseases. She co-leads Mosquito Scotland, a project to assess the risk of mosquito-borne diseases in Scotland and their responses to environmental changes.

Tavish Scott is Chief Executive of Salmon Scotland Ltd, the voice of the producers of Scottish farmed salmon, the UK's biggest food export. The organisation is a source of trusted information and represents its member companies' interests in Scotland, across the UK and internationally. Tavish holds an Honours degree in Business Management from Edinburgh Napier University. He was elected as MSP for Shetland to the first Scottish Parliament in 1999 and continued as MSP for that constituency for 20 years. During this time, he held several parliamentary positions and served as a Scottish Government Minister holding various portfolios; he is a former leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats. He was previously Head of External Affairs for Scottish Rugby (2019-20).

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The **Institut français d'Écosse** https://www.ifecosse.org.uk/#/ encourages cross-cultural exchange and presents the best of French culture: French courses, film screenings, library collections, kids' activities, festivals, talks and concerts.

L'Association Franco-Écossaise (AFE) https://www.france-ecosse.fr/ a deux objectifs principaux : Développer les liens culturels et amicaux entre la France et l'Écosse & Faire connaître l'Écosse et sa culture en France.

Le Consulat général de France à Edimbourg et Glasgow: https://uk.ambafrance.org/-Consulat-general-Edimbourg- Le consulat général constitue l'antenne écossaise de l'ambassade de France et soutient et prolonge à ce titre l'action de l'ambassadrice et de ses services.

The **National Library of Scotland** https://www.nls.uk/ looks after and shares Scotland's cultural heritage, supporting research, learning, and discovery.

BIEN CATERING

We would like to express our appreciation to **Bien Catering Edinburgh** (https://www.biencatering.co.uk/) for the refreshments and service provided mid-afternoon.

FSSS: Who we are and what we do

The Franco-Scottish society of Scotland (Scottish charity no SC002507) was founded in Edinburgh in 1895 on the 600th anniversary of the signing of the Auld Alliance between Scotland and France. The Society has branches in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, St Andrews and Stirling. We believe that the development of Franco-Scottish relations in a globalised world is as important as it has ever been. The Society fosters contacts between the French and the Scots through educational, cultural and social activities at both branch and national level – the record with regards to education is particularly strong. Through its support for cultural events the Society strengthens understanding and links between the two countries. Most social activities are organised by the branches but on occasion branch members meet for national events. We maintain close links with the Association Franco-Écossaise which began life in Paris in 1896.

Website

https://franco-scottish.org.uk/

Contact Us

For enquiries related to the Conference please contact the FSSS 130 steering committee by emailing: **FSSS130th@gmail.com**

Related Events

The **Institut français d'Écosse**, the **Association Franco-Écossaise** and the **French Consulate** have organised a number of events in October which celebrate the long history of the Auld Alliance. On 23rd October there are two lectures on history and culture related to the Auld Alliance followed by a concert of choral music in St Giles' Cathedral. On the 25th the Institut Français is hosting a Franco-Scottish Fair with a wide range of stalls offering arts, crafts and unique creations. Further information and booking arrangements can be found on the events pages of the Institut Français at https://www.ifecosse.org.uk/whats-on/#/.

Booking Your Place at the Franco-Scottish Society Conference

To book your place at the Franco-Scottish Society Conference, please go to our conference page within Institut Français d'Écosse website: https://www.ifecosse.org.uk/events-agenda/franco-scottish-relations-in-trade-business-and-work-the-franco-scottish-society-of-scotland-anniversary-event/#/.

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