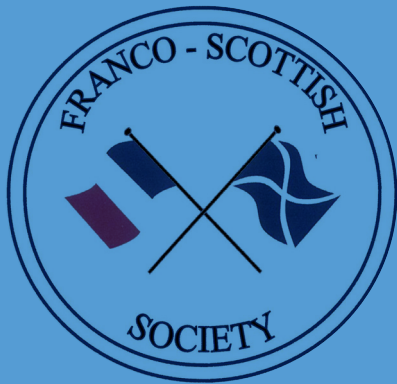


# THE FRANCO-SCOTTISH SOCIETY



# BULLETIN

2019 - 2020

Décembre 2020 No 85

## Contents

<b>Branch Activities 2019-2020 .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Aberdeen	
Dumfries & Galloway	
Edinburgh	
Glasgow	
Inverness	
Perth	
St Andrews	
<b>Society News.....</b>	<b>9</b>
Sixty years a member !	
The Annual Guest Speaker from France Lecture	
Le Concours de la Francophonie	
The 2020 AGM	
Branching Out	
Crystal Ball Gazing	
A Taste of French “pour les jeunes”	
<b>Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland Language Prize 2019 - 2020 .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Exchange Visit 2020.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>French Connections.....</b>	<b>19</b>
A French Poem translated into Scots	
Guillaume, Duc de Normandie : Bâtard et Conquérant ?	
French music during the reign of Louis XIV	
The Professor and the Poet	
<b>Obituaries .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Patrick Barron (Perth Branch)	
Anne Sutherland Mackay Gwynn (Perth Branch)	
Robert Galt MacWilliam (Perth Branch)	
Donald McGregor (St Andrews Branch)	

## Editor's Note

Chères lectrices, Chers lecteurs,

This has certainly been a memorable year and number 19 will have a special resonance for years to come with Covid-19 dominating the media. Our daily conversations are spattered with vocabulary from previously little-used words which have now become commonplace: lockdown, self-isolating, social distancing, hot spots, coping strategies. To our French vocabulary we can now add: *crise sanitaire, confinement, déconfinement, gestes barrières, quarantaine* or rather *quatorzaine*, or *les clusters* which gives rise to the usual discussion on why use an *anglicisme* when *un foyer de contagion* has existed for centuries...We have all had to adapt our daily lives and activities, especially so in the realm of culture and education, the *raison d'être* of the Franco-Scottish Society.

The yearly Bulletin covers our programme from September to August. The 2019/20 edition therefore reflects activities and support to various projects before and during the pandemic.

The sections on *Branch Activities* and *Society News* report on the monthly meetings throughout Scotland which followed their usual varied and busy pattern for at least the first six months. Some student visits to France, with support from the education fund and the award for the *FSSS Language prize*, also went ahead. The *concours de la Francophonie*, which the FSSS sponsors, was well under way by January but the March prize giving ceremony had to be cancelled.

From Mid-March branches were confronted with the challenge of no longer being able to meet in person. Like most cultural organisations, they resorted to a variety of means as they considered how best to maintain links between their members and partners while continuing to pursue the aims of the society. The increased use of virtual tools has opened up new opportunities for the present and future as witnessed in our Society News articles *Branching Out* and *Crystal Ball gazing*.

The importance of conviviality around a shared interest at our meetings, has come to the fore as well as its contribution in furthering links between branches and other organisations. The biennial *Exchange Visit* scheduled for June 2020 was postponed so we reflect on past trips and their importance in consolidating links.

The section *French Connections* contains a French poem translated into Scots followed by three articles in French or English from past talks covering a variety of topics.

My special thanks to all contributors and to Chris Lindsay and Tom Wight for all their technical help in putting together this Bulletin, our traditional means of communication with our members and friends, which has not been too severely impacted by *le Covid-19*.

Bonne lecture, and in present parlance: *Take Care. Prenez bien soin de vous.*

*Anne-Colette Lequet*

## Branch Activities 2019-2020

### Aberdeen

Numbers have remained fairly stable with 32 paid up members. Facilities at Albyn School were once again used except for the pre-Christmas meeting which was held in the Garden Lounge at Midsocket Church.

**The 2019-20 Programme:** started with a presentation in French from Michel Pérombelon of the Perth Branch who addressed us on the subject of *L'art pariétal préhistorique des grottes de Lascaux* and was followed by refreshments to welcome back members after the long summer break.

In November we were due to have a talk from Walter Perrie on *La Littérature de défi – Vercors et Eluard* but unfortunately Walter pulled out at short notice.

We were lucky that our Hon. Treasurer, Andy Gordon, stepped in to give us a talk on his travels in the former French colony of *L'Indochine*.

Member, Margaret Murray entertained us in December with another excellent *French quiz* which always tests our knowledge of France ! This was followed by a substantial buffet to which many members contributed.

In January, our speaker was Tom Wight on the topic *Guillaume Duc de Normandie et l'Écosse normande*.

This was followed in March by Elizabeth Bryant who gave us her talk *Regards sur la Normandie romane* postponed from last year.

Geoff Hare of Edinburgh Branch spoke on *Parcs et Jardins à Paris* in March and this proved to be our last talk before the Coronavirus lockdown.

We were very sorry that neither Janine Adamson could come in April to talk on *Paris à la Belle Époque* nor could we welcome back Odile Hughson who was to have addressed us on *Personnalités Royales Françaises* prior to our AGM.

**Committee Activities:** Although the Committee had discussed the Summer Outing and had been investigating various options, this also had to be abandoned.

The 2019-2020 local *AGM* was eventually held in November 2020 with papers sent out to members in advance for approval.

**Other Activities and Outreach:** In November, Rhona Bean, Hon. Secretary and Simon Oladjins, committee member, helped judge a debate organised by the head of French at *Aberdeen Grammar School* between their pupils and the pupils at *Cults Academy*.

In January, the award ceremony for the *FSSS Language Prize* winner was organised and hosted by the branch. The recipient had attended *Harris Academy Dundee* but is now studying in Aberdeen.

**Alexander Gray Bequest:** We have agreed to give grants to four university students for their studies abroad through the Education Fund.

*Rhona Bean*

### Dumfries & Galloway

A subcommittee (Colin Browning, Catherine and Geoff Hare, Anne-Colette Lequet, Tom Wight) is working on various ideas, models, and possibilities for a relaunch of both cultural events and educational projects in the area.

Positive contacts had been made before lockdown but then had to be put on hold.

These will be pursued as soon as possible.

*ACL*

### Edinburgh

Membership remains stable around 45 plus regular guests at talks.

**The 2019 – 2020 Programme:** *The Franco-Scottish year* started at the end of September 2019 with the now traditional *pot d'accueil*, which as ever was very well attended by FSSS members, guests and IFE staff.

Since the arrival of the new Consul General and Director of the French Institute, Mme Laurence País, there have been several meetings to discuss the possibilities of joint meetings. We are very pleased with the outcome and potential for future collaboration.

At the first meeting of the branch, a talk in French on *Thomas Blaikie, jardinier français à*

*la cour de France* was given by Tom Wight. The meeting was well attended and set the pattern of attendance for forthcoming meetings.

The second meeting was an introduction to the French *Film Festival 2019*, in English and French by Richard Mowe and Ilona Morisson, Directors of the annual FFF, and their team. This was a joint meeting with the *French Institute*. Richard and Ilona are willing to give presentations to members of other Branches if invited.

Walter Perrie from the Perth Branch returned as speaker on *Louis XI and the New Europe*. This highly informative talk was given in French and was much appreciated by the members and friends.

In December, a *Table Ronde* was organised and chaired by Dr Geoff Hare with three Francophone panel members. Questions were suggested by members of the Branch and the whole session was conducted in French. This was the first time such an event took place. All members were delighted by this formula which allowed them to participate actively.

In January, the *Fête de l'Épiphanie (les Rois)* replaced our *Fête de Noël*. The *National Youth Choir of Scotland (NYCOS) Edinburgh ensemble* provided the entertainment which was excellent. The event also gave members a chance to meet parents and friends of the Choir and to talk about the Society.

This was followed in January/February by two talks: one by Colin Browning from the Glasgow Branch on *Quelques aspects sociaux, décoratifs et logistiques de la construction médiévale* and the other by Sylvie Decaux, the guest speaker from France, on *Comment se portent la librairie et l'édition indépendantes en France ?*

The final meeting before lockdown was scheduled as our annual dinner but was replaced by a *members' lunch* at the *eh15 restaurant, Edinburgh College*, where the students prepared a French meal for the 20+ participants.



*Déjeuner des membres*

In April we should have welcomed Dr Geoff Hare. He will now give his talk on *Parcs et Jardins de Paris* in October 2020.

We were unable to hold our AGM in May. The committee decided to organise a *virtual AGM* before 31st August 2020 – the last day of the 2019-2020 FSSS Edinburgh Branch session. All documents sent to members by email or by post were those required by law for an AGM.

By the cut-off date, 19th August 2020, no motions were submitted, and no elections were required to take place by vote.

Tom Wight became Hon. Treasurer and Anne-Colette Lequet Chairperson.

Members showed no enthusiasm for a Zoom meeting so it was the Branch Committee who held a Zoom meeting on the 26th August 2020. Ten responses to the documentation were received: two by telephone, four by email and five during a previous meeting of the Committee

**Other Activities and Outreach:** Dr Hare, Vice Chairman, gave talks to the Aberdeen, Perth and Edinburgh Branches and to *the Literary and Geographical Society* in Corstorphine.

Tom Wight, Chairman, gave talks to the Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Perth Branches and Odile Hughson to the St Andrews Branch.

During lockdown members contributed videos, articles, cartoons, and the French Film Festival Team contributed free French films providing opportunities for viewing, listening, and reading in French.

This was much appreciated not only by our members and friends in Edinburgh but by members in other Branches.

We were able to keep in touch and continue to look forward to the day when we can resume our meetings.

**French in Schools:** (*French language ambassadors*) continues to be supported by the Edinburgh Branch with 2-hour weekly visits by the Chairman to a local school to help with the conversation practice. Suggestions for other schools and activities are most welcome although on hold at the moment.

**Alexander Gray Bequest:** Support from the Education Fund 2019-20 was requested and granted to *the National Youth Choir of Scotland* (£500) to help with their trip to Paris, and to *Musselburgh Grammar School* (£500) for a school trip to Strasbourg. (*See Society News: A Taste of French pour les jeunes*).

Part of the Lecture Fund was once again used to receive the speaker from France, Mme Sylvie Decaux from *René Descartes University*, Paris.

The rest of the fund was used for tokens to speakers whose talks were in French.

**Branch Funds:** Once more, support was given to *the French Film Festival* by contributing £250 to their funds.

The Edinburgh Branch offered the prizes (£110) for the *Concours de l'écriture créative*. Members of the Branch committee read all entries from Napier, Edinburgh and St Andrews Universities and chose the prize-winners.

The Branch also contributed £300 to the *Onion Johnnie Project*. Several members also donated privately to this project from the *Scottish Working People's History Trust (SWPHT)* in partnership with *Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN)*, the *School of Scottish Studies Archives* and the *Scottish Life Archive* to publish digitalised versions of audio material for educational use.

This project will cover a set of interviews with nine French *Ingan Johnnies* who worked the annual season in Scotland. Interviews are in French and English and will also be made available to the *Maison des Johnnies et de l'Oignon de Roscoff*.

Tom Wight

## Glasgow

**The 2019/2020 Programme:** of monthly Thursday evening meetings took off in September with an interesting talk by Gerry Toner on *Les Français aux Etats-Unis: les Cadiens (Cajuns) de Louisiane*. He looked at the history of this group, their music and their efforts to preserve their language. His powerpoint presentation included interviews of several Cadiens and we were intrigued by their manner of speaking French, their accents and some of their songs.

In October, we welcomed Claire Charlewood who led many of us down memory lane listening to *Les Chansons Françaises of the 60's and 70's* with lyrics originally in English but adapted to French by singers such as Johnny Halliday, Claude François, Charles Aznavour, Sacha Distel. We enjoyed a joyous time joining in the singing of familiar songs from our younger years !

In November, Jim Rafferty continued the musical theme with *La Chasse aux Papillons: les chansons de Georges Brassens*.

In December we celebrated *la Fête de Noël* in the Hyndland Church Sanctuary. This grand gothic revival church is now a venue for events. The pews have been removed thus creating an awesome open space. The remarkable stained-glass windows are listed. A lovely illuminated Christmas tree had been erected in the altar. The traditional *vin chaud* was served to guests upon arrival, a warming welcome on a cold and wet day.



*Cordes en Ciel, Christmas Concert*

The duo *Ensemble Cordes en Ciel* entertained us with their own instrumental accompaniment singing a selection of Christmas seasonal songs in French, of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. We were enthralled by their delightful performance and followed this with a most succulent buffet. A jolly and convivial party was enjoyed by all.

In January, James Steele gave us much insight into *Le cinéma français sous l'Occupation*.

In February, Sylvie Decaux (*Université de Paris Descartes*), the FSSS guest speaker invited from France, gave a lively and informative presentation on *Independent Publishing in France*.

**Other Activities:** Our afternoon conversation meetings *Quoi de Neuf ?* on the first Monday of the month continued to take place at the *Alliance Française*. This is an opportunity to exchange personal news as well as discuss a pre-arranged topic in a relaxed and friendly francophone atmosphere.

**Topics have included:**

- Les nouvelles technologies qui impactent fortement nos vies et deviennent parfois incontournables.
- Les traditions et festivals d'automne en France et en Ecosse.
- Noël approche et une nouvelle année suivra. Allez-vous faire des résolutions pour 2020 ? Lesquelles et... pourquoi sont-elles souvent si difficiles à tenir ?
- Janvier est l'occasion d'échanger nos vœux, de parler de nos activités pendant la période des fêtes, de nos projets pour démarrer la nouvelle année, de nos espoirs, peut-être, pour un monde meilleur au cours de cette nouvelle décennie avec les changements auxquels nous attendre.
- Aujourd'hui il est impossible d'ignorer l'importance croissante accordée par les politiciens, les activistes et dans les médias sur la nécessité de s'adresser au changement climatique.... Le 25 septembre dernier, le Parlement écossais a adopté la Loi sur le changement climatique qui, entre autres, fixe un objectif de zéro émission nette en 2045. Selon vous, quelles propositions pourrions-nous contribuer sur les mesures qui devraient être mises en

œuvre à l'échelle nationale, régionale et individuelle pour respecter ce but?

- Post Brexit, le français deviendra-t-il, ou plutôt redeviendra-t-il, la langue de travail la plus importante des institutions européennes ?

Sadly, in mid-March we opted to cancel our Thursday evening meeting due to the concerns raised by the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. Lockdown started the following week. Subsequently, our meetings in April and our branch AGM in May were also cancelled.

However, from April we organised Zoom video meetings for our monthly *Quoi de Neuf ?* conversation sessions and held the final one in July to coincide with our summer break. We were able to offer our March and April Thursday evening meetings via Zoom as well.

We welcomed Colin Browning talking on *Quelques aspects sociaux, décoratifs et logistiques de la construction médiévale* and Janine Adamson introducing us to the fascinating character, *Carême, le Prince des cuisiniers, le cuisinier des Princes*.

We were pleased to find that approximately one third of our membership of 59 joined us online for these events.

The talks were supported with slides and very well received. Following the presentations, we met in small social groups of four or five members, thanks to the *break-out rooms* available on Zoom and were delighted to chat *live* with several of our fellow members, mostly exchanging life experiences under lockdown.

Unfortunately, events that could not be offered via Zoom, such as our annual members lunch in May and our *pétanque* competition to celebrate le *14 juillet*, could not take place.

The 2019-20 Branch AGM was postponed to the next session.

**Alexander Gray Bequest:** From the Education Fund, the branch had supported visits to France by City of Glasgow Council schools over the last few years, notably the *Euroscola project*.

With the uncertainty over Brexit the City Council seems to have been caught out with its planning and although several projects were in discussion none came to fruition.

The funds have been held over for this year. A significant surplus in the Lecture Fund was transferred into the Education fund.

**Branch Funds:** From our own branch funds, we supported the *Onion Johnnies project*, helping the *Scottish Working People's History Trust (SWPHT)* in partnership with *Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (SCRAN)* to publish digitalised versions of audio material for educational use.

The material includes a set of interviews with nine French *Ingan Johnnies* who worked the annual season in Scotland.

The interviews are in French and English and would also be made available to *La Maison des Johnnies et de l'Oignon de Roscoff*.

*Elizabeth Bryant*

## Inverness



*Diner des membres*

The last *real* gathering was on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March with a few brave souls gathering for food and drink at the Waterside, now our regular venue (previously the Glen Mhor, which has bought out the Waterside to create a larger riverside hotel). COVID was lowering on the horizon already and all the hotels and restaurants closed from Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March onwards.

Prior to this, the only moment of note this year apart from our regular gatherings was the visit of French Consul-General to Scotland,

Laurence Païs, who popped up to meet with Verity Walker-Eley, Chair of the Branch, in early March and met with a couple of members having issues with National Insurance numbers and identity cards. She has been in contact during Lockdown to check on how we are getting on.

Once lockdown was imposed, we immediately had a planning discussion as a committee and decided that we would like to encourage the speaking of the French language during Lockdown. We therefore offered a series of 4 professional French conversation lessons led by Mo MacLennan, one of our members, and organised by Cécile Mettot, our Hon. Secretary, to 15 young and adult learners. We funded these from FSSS funds, figuring that if we could not spend the money on local school exchanges or speakers for our evenings, we could at least do something practical with it. The feedback has been excellent (*See Society News:Breaking Out*).

We have quite a young profile of membership which includes many single people and we realised that solitude would be a major issue. We established two *WhatsApp* groups – one informal and often humorous, one fortnightly when we discuss weightier issues. Both groups seem to spend an inordinate amount of time discussing food, recipes and eating ! They are great and are likely to continue beyond Lockdown. We feel we have got to know FSSS members better by using *WhatsApp*. It also makes meeting up for a walk, say, much easier than emailing and waiting for responses. Someone posts *anyone fancy a walk?* and the responses ping back pretty instantly from many. Highly recommended. Many members have been for tea in Verity's sunny garden which has a table conveniently over 2m long.

Not all our members feel comfortable with using *WhatsApp*, so Verity has rung round as many others as possible to check folk are OK. We also tried a session in Twitter, but few participated so we discontinued it after a month or so.

One member has had a particularly grim lockdown stuck on an oil rig off Angola and the *WhatsApp* group has helped him greatly. Another French member has seen his marriage



collapse, very sad, but he is being positive and throwing himself into Highland life.

The daily WhatsApp group has enabled members to show off their talents – we have an excellent cartoonist, some keen gardeners and many chefs, including one on an oil rig. There is also a hilarious running joke about guinea pigs (Cécile and Verity both own them) which includes various appalling ways to cook them!

In July we attempted an AGM and quiz via Zoom but people were beginning to flag by then (Zoom fatigue is very real) and there was sadly not enough interest so we decided to abandon that until we could meet up again.

However, we would like to suggest that the talk on *Onion Johnnies*, which would interest many members, is offered to everyone nationally via Zoom. It is easy to deliver a talk about any subject by sharing the screen and showing slides as one would a normal PowerPoint. It might be fun to try ?

We had pencilled in a first *gathered* meeting at the Waterside at the end of August and planned our postponed AGM and BBQ in Rosemarkie at a bistro on the beach in September, but these were foiled again by COVID guidelines.

Who knows what the future holds ? We will do our best. In spite of Lockdown almost all our regular members are looking forward to continuing in 20/21 which is heartening. Read our thoughts on 2050 !

*(See Society News: Crystal Ball Gazing)*

*Verity Walker-Eley*

## Perth

This year we attracted more members than we lost. Sadly, many of our loyal members now find it impossible to travel but on the plus side we have some new members who have brought a lot of enthusiasm and energy. Our current membership stands at 35. We gained a few extra members who found our web page and turned up on spec to our meetings.

In Perth we continue to think it is important that people contribute and so far, have persuaded many members to deliver talks on a variety of subjects in French.

**Programme for 2019 – 2020:** Our first event of the season was given by Ginette Gervais-MacWilliam on the life and loves of the formidable French novelist *George Sand*. We didn't have to look too far for the inspiration behind her choice of subject ! Ginette produced a fine handout which people were able to take with them, this is a nice idea and something we will repeat in future. Over the last 4 years we have compiled a lot of additional material like this and now find it is an extremely useful resource. Our second talk was delivered by Geoff Hare who travelled from Edinburgh with his wife Catherine. During the presentation we heard about Alphonse Daudet's eponymous hero *Tartarin dans les Alpes*. Daudet's novel is a satire about tourism in the 19th Century, although its themes are just as pertinent today. The audience loved meeting Geoff and Catherine and were grateful they had made the effort to come and visit us.

In November we had two speakers: Megan Ashley who told us about her French *séjour*, courtesy of the Alexander Gray Award and our very own Marie-Christine Graham. First Megan told us about the time she spent in Montpellier, *(See Society News: A taste of French pour les jeunes)* it was lovely to hear how the Alexander Gray Award had encouraged her to pursue her modern language studies – she is now at *St. Andrews University* studying French. We are always struck by how much the winners mature in the space of a year. In most cases the Award provides them with their first opportunity to travel independently of Mum and Dad. This is something that doesn't go unnoticed by parents or teachers alike – we were therefore pleased when Megan's teacher, Sylvia Hathaway, braved the frosty weather to come and support her along with Mum.



Megan Ashley with Perth Chair Lucyna

The second part of the evening was a talk by the indefatigable Marie-Christine Graham who has now given her 5th talk in as many years. This time we learnt about famous *French cuisinières* - French food is something guaranteed to provoke interest. Our members enjoy Marie Christine's informal style, and her anecdotes of family life in provincial France – we now feel part of the family.

I like to keep everyone involved and my husband is no exception! Christoph was tasked with preparing a presentation about *Music at the court of Louis Quatorze*. We were treated to a multimedia production, which required an awful lot of effort. It also reversed what has become our standard format, a presentation in French, and slides with English subtitles. On this occasion the French subtitles were put together by our *trésorière* Joëlle Fabre, so it was a real collaborative effort. The evening was a great success and attracted a record number of guests, and because it was just before Christmas, we ended the evening in the hotel bar.

Tradition dictates that we start the New Year with an *Epiphany Lunch*, which provides an opportunity for former members to attend. After the meal, Christine McRae a member of the *Perth Choral Society* led the singing with a few French carols.

In February we hosted the annual French speaker from France, Sylvie Decaux from the *University of Paris Descartes* who gave a talk about *Independent Publishers in France*. It turned into a feisty discussion about the effects of Globalisation on our traditional ways of life and trenchant opinions were expressed

on both sides of the argument – a truly French exchange that continued in the bar afterwards. I think we all left as friends...?

Our meeting in March turned out to be the last we hosted this season and marked the start of what seems like a never-ending period of isolation. On this occasion Walter Perrie delivered a talk in impeccable French about *Louis XI and the formation of Europe* in which he described how the territories of modern France (those that we recognise today), were established. A tale of medieval deception and treachery on a truly epic scale – which just proves that down the centuries, politics hasn't changed a bit.

One benefit of the pandemic is that it forced us to think a little more creatively about how we keep in touch and communicate. During the lock-down we held weekly Zoom meetings and Joëlle Fabre hosted French conversation classes (*causeries*). Approximately 12 people who want to improve their spoken French, participated.

The committee held the *AGM* in Ginette MacWilliam's garden where they discussed the treasurer's and secretary's reports and next season's programme. Copies of the official documents were sent to each member inviting comments and asking for approval.

Finally, on behalf of the branch I would like to thank Tom Wight for all the films and video clips he forwarded, which I distributed to our members – they were very well received ! Anne-Colette Lequet also sent some little-known facts about Paris which were really fascinating.

Despite living through this difficult and for many - lonely time, we in Perth, think Corona Virus has brought us all closer together – something we hope to build on.

**Alexander Gray Bequest:** Despite all the challenges, we managed to get three excellent students to apply for the Alexander Gray Award. They were all proposed by teachers from local schools, who have provided candidates in the past. They are Ailsa Bennet, Emma Shepherd, and Jessie Pearson – they are all aged 16 (*incredibly young*) and come highly recommended.

*Lucyna Lindsay*

## St Andrews

St. Andrews Branch members, once again, enjoyed a wide and varied programme from September 2019 until the activities and local AGM were suspended before the March meeting due to the Coronavirus lockdown with our last talk being by Sylvie Decaux, the guest speaker from France.

**Programme for 2019 – 2020:** Our programme commenced in September when we welcomed the students from *Madras College, Waid Academy* and HND students from *Elmwood College*, who had received grants through the Alexander Gray Bequest, together with their parents, teachers and course tutors. All groups gave the meeting excellent reports on their experiences in France and they all expressed a wish to return to France, some in the near future.

At the meeting in October, Angie Emler welcomed Odile Hughson, from Edinburgh who spoke to the branch about *La Provence et Marseille – Ma selection d'endroits et d'histoires*. She gave a full understanding of the area that referenced the topography, the beaches, the villages, the people, art, the city, and naturally the food. This was supported by presentation slides that completed the verbal picture. George Taylor gave the vote of thanks.

At the end of November, we were pleased to welcome Dr Emile Chabal, *University of Edinburgh*, whose talk was entitled *Laïcité, Religion and Identity in Contemporary France*. His talk was a reprise of the lecture that he delivered in November 2018 as the biennial Franco-Scottish Society lecture.

As is our custom, in December, our *pre-Christmas lunch* was held at the *Courtyard Restaurant* in Cupar. We were joined by members of the *Loches Alliance* and some retired members. An excellent 3 course lunch was provided to a high standard by the German chef. Everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable and tasty time. Some of our members attended a quiz night organised by the *Loches Alliance*. It is hoped by both committees that we will continue to support each other's French related initiatives.

January saw Dr David Evans from *St Andrews University* giving a lecture entitled, *Au-delà des*

*grands hommes; comment réécrire l'histoire littéraire de la poésie or C19th French Poetry Diversifying the Curriculum*. Dr David Evans explained how he was asking his students to consider the way poetry was presented in the current curriculum that is based on the assumption that it all relates to a small group of masters of French poetry. His challenge to his students was to look at the teaching of poetry from some different aspect and derive a proposal for a change to the curriculum and what the concept would be and to recommend new terms of reference and readings including *the role of women in French poetry* in the 19th century. His project was new to the department and he was attempting to encourage the students to examine all aspects of the current 19th century teachings. However, he did explain that if the students thought that this was not for them, then they could revert to the traditional curriculum of study of French writings and poetry.

In February, we departed from our normal programme and had two events within a week of each other. Firstly, we hosted Sylvie Decaux on her last talk of her series to the FSSS branches. Her talk on *Les bibliothèques et les éditions indépendantes en France* showed how the structure of publishing, book purchase and libraries linked together and cooperated with each other to promote reading. It revealed a complete variation from the approach and processes in the U.K. Her review of France showed that there is more protection for publishing in France and bookshops appear to be able to survive as the initial price paid is common across the marketplace. A high value is placed on reading and its promotion within the society.

The second event in February was *lunch in the Hospitality Suite at Elmwood College, Cupar*. The lunch menu, 3 courses, with multiple choices, was prepared, cooked, and presented *front of house* by the college HND students. The meal was superb and once again would equal many a high-class restaurant anywhere. The lunch was attended by most of our members together with representatives from the *Loches/St. Andrews Alliance* and included a welcome attendance by the Emeritus Professor Sam Taylor. Once again, a convivial

atmosphere and our committee wish to thank the students and staff for their efforts on our behalf.

**Other Committee Business:** In November, the then current Chairman, Alan Dunlop resigned as Chairman of the Branch for personal reasons. He had been a very active member for over 25 years. The branch is looking forward to seeing him at our future meetings. This was followed by the Hon. Treasurer, Clive Sneddon who stood down after the November council meeting, again for personal reasons. He was replaced by George Taylor who had previously been Branch Treasurer.

The membership at the end of the year was 19 but since then two members have sadly passed away: Hilda Stocks and Donald McGregor. The committee is now examining the impact of the Coronavirus and considering what actions to take to bring a new programme forward whilst at the same time protecting the membership.

**Alexander Gray Bequest:** We have had four requests for support grants from the Education Fund for pupils and students to visit France and experience French life. Only one student who went to Brussels to live with a French family and go to school there received an award that he was able to undertake before travel across Europe was suspended due to the pandemic.

*John Vaughan*

## Society News

### Sixty years a member !

The Aberdeen Branch marked the 60<sup>th</sup> year of Jean Ironside's membership of the FSSS and their appreciation of her commitment to the Branch and the Society.



*Jean Ironside*

Jean Ironside's first act when arriving in Aberdeen in 1959 was to join the *Franco-Scottish Society*, and what an asset she has proved to be to the Aberdeen Branch. Well known to many members since she has participated in almost all the joint exchange trips to France, a friend of Alex Gray whose legacy lives on to this day.

Chairperson of the Aberdeen Branch giving the benefit of her wisdom to keep us on the right path. She is a lady of honour and intellect with

a wide knowledge of the world, dutiful, reliable, a friend who will be your rock and mentor.

A leader in education, schools examiner, training language teachers, she set exam papers and succeeded, where others failed, to get even the less able pupils to make themselves understood in French. An achievement in itself but not the only one. She was invited to go to London, to the French Embassy to receive the insignia of the *Chevalier Palmes d'Or* from the French Ambassador.

So, no surprise that Jean is probably the longest serving member of our branch !

*Georgina Lahaye, Aberdeen*

## The Annual Guest Speaker from France Lecture

The invited speaker for this event, now in its eighth year, was Sylvie Decaux (left), senior lecturer at the *University Paris Descartes*, course leader for diplomas in Bookselling, Library and Information Science, and Publishing. She has worked in publishing and has done research in book history (Victorian magazines, early Victorian crime fiction, and series) as well as the current publishing scene both in France, the UK, and the United States. Her current research interests lie in environmental humanities and eco-poetics.

In February she spoke to the Perth, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and St Andrews Branches on the current situation in the world of independent publishing and distribution in France, thirty-



nine years after the *Lang law* which established a fixed price for books sold in France, and in the context of an ever-growing concentration of books being published by a declining number of large publishing groups.



Image from salon Autre Livre 2013

*Comment se portent la librairie et l'édition indépendante en France ?* gave our members a highly informative overview of the particularities of the situation in France which then opened up interesting discussions and comparisons with the situation in Scotland.

ACL

## Le Concours de la Francophonie

The competition is organised by the French Institute in partnership with the *Alliance française de Glasgow*, *Scottish Association for Language Teaching (SALT)*, *Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT)*, *University of Edinburgh*, and *TV5 Monde*. The initiative was once again sponsored by the *Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland and Total E&P*.

This school competition encourages all young learners of French and their teachers throughout Scotland to celebrate the international day of *la francophonie* by submitting a short video of a classroom activity in French.

The submissions are judged on the language appropriate to primary and secondary level learning, each divided into two categories (P1/P4, P5/P7, and S1/S3, S4/S6) as well as on the participation of the whole class and the creativity of the piece they submit.

The schools awarded second prize receive a selection of French books and games. Those who are awarded first prize are invited as guest of the French Institute to attend an immersion

day to celebrate the international week of *la francophonie* in Edinburgh, where they take part in French workshops and receive their prizes at a special ceremony.



image from IFE website

Twenty-two schools participated in this 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *concours* from various Councils across Scotland (Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, South Ayrshire, North Ayrshire, Falkirk, Moray, Western Isles), and several independent schools. The national jury included Louise Glen, Senior Education Officer, Languages, *Education Scotland*; Jim McDonald, Qualifications Manager Languages, *Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)*; Edouard Notte, Teaching Fellow, French and Francophone Studies, *University of Edinburgh*; Philippe

Sibeaud, Head of Studies and Education Attaché, *Institut français d'Ecosse*.

**The prize winners were as follows:**

**P1/P4**

- *New Elgin Primary School* (Moray Council)
- *Craigentenny Primary School* (City of Edinburgh Council)

**P5/P7**

- *Avenue End Primary School* (Glasgow Council)
- *Stewart's Melville College* (Scottish Council of Independent Schools)

**S1/S3**

- *George Heriot's School* (Scottish Council of Independent Schools)
- *Carrick Academy* (South Ayrshire Council)

**S4/S6**

- *Craigroyston Community High School* (City of Edinburgh Council)

**Special Prize for Creativity**

- *International School Aberdeen*

However, due to the uncertainty of the situation just before *lockdown*, the events and ceremony planned for 20 March 2020 had to be cancelled and all schools received their prizes by post.

ACL

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## The 2020 AGM

The Glasgow Branch of *the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland* was to have hosted the national AGM on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Arrangements had been made for the venue to be at Glasgow Caledonian University. However, this fell under

the COVID restrictions and the Society had to postpone its AGM. It finally resorted to a slimmed down virtual AGM for 2019-2020 via zoom on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

ACL

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## Branching Out

Six months into the 2019-20 session, FSSS branch activities which had been programmed till May/June were confronted with the arrival of the Covid-19 lockdown. As evidenced in the branch reports, the challenge was met in various innovative ways. Among these was a project launched by the Inverness Branch of the FSSS: a series of four professional French conversation classes by distance learning.

The project was initially publicised among the membership and supporters who filled two thirds of the places. Language teachers at local schools were contacted by phone and some language pupils signed up. Further interest was generated through posts on the branch Facebook page and on local Noticeboard places.

Fifteen people enjoyed four classes each over a month. They ranged in age from an 80-year-old to 17-year olds doing advanced Higher French.

The classes were given by Mo MacLennan an experienced teacher and long-standing member. Feedback was sought at the end of the programme and Cécile Mettot, Hon.

Branch Secretary, prepared a very useful evaluation report.

Below, some comments from the questionnaire which make both interesting and fun reading and will be especially of interest to members of other branches.

**What did you enjoy the most ? What did you enjoy least ?**

- Getting the chance to practice speaking – I'm not very confident speaking French but Mo made it interesting and fun.
- It was very useful getting Mo's hints and tips, and her different way to my school French teacher of explaining grammar which really helped me more fully understand.
- Chatting and laughing- just being able to speak French in a more informal way, as I don't have many chances to do so nowadays !
- Listening and talking in French. Gaining confidence through practice which is otherwise unavailable. Discovering a practical alternative to French grammar books. Discovering News in *Slow French* !

- I really valued having the opportunity to practise my very rusty French in a 1:1 setting, without feeling pressured or judged. I enjoyed speaking with Mo as she created a safe, encouraging environment and made the lessons fun. It was also great to have a focus during this time, especially one that built up my confidence, so thank you.
- There were a few issues with technology (Internet, sound not working very well) but they weren't anyone's fault and other than that I wouldn't have changed anything !
- Internet being bad. It kept freezing, but that stopped once I moved nearer the router so it's only a minor mishap and not anyone's fault. Apart from that, I loved all of it and thoroughly enjoyed the sessions.

**Would you consider continuing with French lessons?**

- I will definitely consider it after completing this last year at school.
- Simply because I travel a lot and I'm not really based in one place usually, I'd have to say no. However, if I was based up on the Black Isle more permanently, I would absolutely consider it.
- Yes- hoping to do so after summer.
- Possibly, although we both realised our French was better than we'd thought.

**Would you like to join the FSSS once lockdown ends and be updated on our activities?**

- Not right now, thank you.
- I'm already a member.
- If I do continue with lessons after the summer, I would be interested in joining the society, but I will wait until closer to the time to do so.
- Because of travel/ work, I'd have to say no.
- Yes please
- No thank you – our time is currently very limited.

**Do you have any activities to submit to the association? Any partnership we could offer in the Highland area?**

- A whisky tasting might be good, although not very French.

- Exploration of different areas of France. Discovering French culture – music, literature, film.
- Exploration of regional foods.
- Not at the moment, but if I have any ideas, I will pass them on !

- As a primary teacher required to teach French, I am aware that many teachers really struggle. Maybe there would be a way to connect with Highland schools (although there is already a 1+2 languages person employed by Highland).

**Would you like to do a presentation/talk about something or know someone who could ?**

- My friend's brother-in-law is French and runs a lovely wee deli/café in Inverurie (called *The Kilted Frog* !) which has a good selection of French cheeses – I don't know if he might be interested in visiting sometime.
- Not at the moment- maybe one day !
- I don't think my French is up to it !
- I might be able to work up to one on French classical music at some time in the future.

- *French trips in my motorhome* – with a more interesting title !!

**What is your favourite French word ?**

**Your favourite weird French word ? Why ?**

- My favourite/most used word is **d'accord** as it is a good buffer that gives me time to figure out what has been said/what I should say back.
- A weird French word that I like is **Co-co-rico**. What cockerels say in France ! (I think !)
- My favourite French word is **méduses** meaning *jellyfish* because I realised it comes from the Gorgon Medusa in Greek Mythology which I am obsessed with, and Medusa's head of snakes looks like the jellyfish's tentacles, so that's where the French word comes from ! Pretty cool if you ask me.
- I love the word **crevaisson** because it sums up perfectly the aggressive, ruinous, destructive nature and sound of a bicycle puncture – very onomatopoeic.
- Also, I love **sympa** which I first came across on the WhatsApp group.

- Favourite word has always been **papillon** – I love the sound of it.
- Favourite weird word is **malheureusement** – such a mouthful !
- **Tranquille**
- We loved the expression **prêt d'être prêtre** (*ready to be a priest*) – I am in training to be ordained a priest !

This project proved highly successful due to the professionalism of the teacher. Internet variability is always an issue. There was an overall desire to continue with language learning and the demand for support for primary school teachers was interesting. A FSSS Primary school kit would be really well received. There are three new prospective members and three good talks in view. This project could be repeated annually with smaller numbers.

*Verity Walker-Eley/Editor*

### Crystal Ball Gazing

In times like these it is interesting to look into a crystal ball. What will life be like in 2050, 30 years hence ? Will the FSSS even still exist ?



*Image A.Ogleznev*

#### FSSS Inverness/Highland in 2050 (10 predictions):

1. FSSS has become the main channel for providing French language learning in

the Highlands. None of the schools in Highland now teach French, although larger schools have flourishing Chinese tuition.

2. FSSS keeps a register of teacher/tutor members who offer classes, either digitally or face to face.
3. FSSS regular meetups have changed from monthly to quarterly, with members making a greater effort to attend.
4. These meetings vary in venue.
5. In between there are a whole range of optional virtual activities ranging from a French online book club with *virtual visiting authors* to special interest groups which plan outings and smaller fewer formal gatherings.
6. Virtual gatherings on *Zoom* and *Microsoft Teams* have become the norm and the FSSS Inverness branch now has members from right across the Highlands who regularly sit in on *online meetups* and *discussions*.
7. FSSS branches often share *meetup activities* – much easier when digital – and there is a quarterly *national FSSS meetup with a speaker*.
8. Membership has grown because of the more broadly-based activities. Because of this the FSSS Committee have been able to negotiate a discount scheme with online retailers and local shops for FSSS members.
9. FSSS has become much more of a social hub than it was in 2020: members are in constant contact via social media and see each other between meetups.
10. The first FSSS baby was born to a Franco-Scottish couple who met through FSSS in 2035.

*Verity Walker-Eley*

### A Taste of French “pour les jeunes”

As part of its remit to promote French language and culture, the FSSS is able to offer financial

support for educational projects undertaken by young people throughout Scotland when these events meet criteria for donations left to the Society and its Branches.



As with all activities during the 2019-2020 academic year, only those which were planned up to the Spring Term could take place.

### **A School trip to Strasbourg October 2019**

*Musselburgh Grammar School (MGS)*, a High School in East Lothian, organised a visit to Strasbourg for 30 pupils and received support from the FSSS Edinburgh Branch. The group of 15-year olds had all been studying French for at least 4 years.

**Mercredi 9 octobre** : Les 30 élèves de Musselburgh et leurs 3 professeurs de français se retrouvent de bon matin à l'aéroport d'Edimbourg. Le groupe est facilement reconnaissable car tous portent le sweat à capuche spécialement commandé pour l'occasion à l'effigie de la ville de Strasbourg. Même à 6 heures 30 du matin, les conversations battent leur plein ! Pour certains élèves, c'est la première fois qu'ils montent dans un avion, la première fois qu'ils partent en France.

En début d'après-midi, c'est l'arrivée à l'Auberge de jeunesse. Celle-ci est située au cœur du quartier historique de Strasbourg. Les élèves n'ont qu'un court instant avant de se préparer pour une promenade fluviale en bateau-mouche, une façon vraiment agréable de découvrir la ville.



*Petite France image J Martz*

Les élèves ont particulièrement apprécié le passage de l'écluse située dans le quartier de la Petite France. Cette fameuse écluse fait partie du périmètre classé au Patrimoine Mondial de l'Unesco depuis 1988. Elle est l'une des plus utilisées de France avec près de 50 activations par jour pendant la période touristique (source *Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace*, 2013). Depuis le bateau, les élèves admirent les rues pittoresques, l'architecture

de la ville, et profitent aussi d'une vue imprenable sur le parlement européen.

**Jeudi 10 octobre** : Ce deuxième jour est riche en découvertes pour les élèves de MGS. Le groupe commence par un atelier cuisine à Flam's, un petit restaurant local.



*image Flam's*

Dans la bonne humeur, les élèves assemblent leur toute première Flammekueche, un plat typiquement alsacien. La Flammekueche ou tarte flambée est composée d'une fine pâte recouverte de crème fraîche épaisse, d'oignons en rondelles et de lardons. La cuisson se fait dans un four très chaud et ne prend qu'une minute et demi. Les conversations animées des élèves ne s'arrêtent que pendant le court instant qu'il leur faut pour déguster leur plat !

La visite de la ville se poursuit par l'ascension de la Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg. Tous sont impressionnés par l'imposante cathédrale qui se dresse à plus de 140 mètres de haut. Les élèves gravissent rapidement les 332 marches qui mènent à la plate-forme. Les vues sur la ville sont magnifiques !



*Cathedrale image J. Martz*

L'après-midi est consacrée à la visite du Parlement Européen. Notre ticket nous permet de circuler librement dans le parlement et de nous assoir dans l'hémicycle et d'en apprendre plus sur le fonctionnement du parlement grâce à notre guide audio.



Le parlement européen image istock 782

La journée se termine par un saut à *Let's Jump*, un parc de loisirs, où les élèves et leurs profs s'en donnent à cœur joie sur les trampolines. Notre groupe est décidément plein d'énergie !

**Vendredi 11 octobre :** Le soleil est au beau fixe pour une journée à Europa Park, le plus grand parc d'attraction en Allemagne. Le parc à thème compte 59 attractions et est situé entre les villes de Fribourg-en-Brisgau en Allemagne et Strasbourg en France. Les élèves ont quartier libre dans l'immense parc et profitent au maximum de tous les manèges !

**Samedi 12 octobre :** Retour au centre de Strasbourg pour un tour de marché matinal. Les élèves sont ravis par l'atmosphère conviviale qui règne dans ce petit marché des producteurs. Un groupe de musique traditionnel joue pendant que les élèves découvrent les produits locaux.

Un peu plus tard, les élèves ont eu l'occasion de savourer une délicieuse glace en forme de fleur, du jamais vu ! Les professeurs se sont assurés que tous les élèves commandent bien leur glace en français ! La visite de la ville continue par un tour de la Petite France, un quartier très pittoresque, classé au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO. Les petites rues du quartier ont enchanté tous les élèves et certains ont même déclaré vouloir venir s'installer à Strasbourg à l'avenir !

Après le déjeuner, les élèves prennent le tram pour se rendre au musée du chocolat, *Le Secret du Chocolat*, un musée très interactif où les

élèves apprennent à déguster de délicieux chocolats et à identifier différentes saveurs telles que la ganache et le pralin. Un musée très éducatif qui nous a permis d'en apprendre plus sur la fabrication du chocolat.

Tous s'accordent à dire que le séjour à Strasbourg a passé trop vite, notre retour est prévu pour le dimanche 13 Octobre très tôt le matin.

S4 (Musselburgh Grammar School)

## Un Séjour Linguistique à Montpellier



©Ville de Montpellier

Je m'appelle Megan, j'ai dix-neuf ans et j'ai été élève à *Blairgowrie High School*.

L'année dernière, j'ai gagné le prix d'Alexander Gray de la Franco-Scottish Society, Perth Branch. J'ai utilisé mon prix pour voyager à Montpellier dans le sud de la France. C'était magnifique ! Je n'avais jamais voyagé dans le sud de la France et j'étais très nerveuse, mais maintenant je suis très reconnaissante d'avoir eu cette opportunité.

J'ai choisi la ville de Montpellier parce que j'avais entendu dire que c'était une ville super avec une ambiance conviviale et animée. J'avais entendu dire aussi que le collège qui s'appelle 'Accent Français' était un établissement passionnant avec un niveau élevé d'enseignement du français pour les étudiants. Le collège était génial, toute la classe était enseignée en français. Pour moi c'était très difficile mais après seulement une semaine je m'étais améliorée !

Mon séjour avec ma famille d'accueil fut un temps fort de mon voyage parce que chaque soir je dinais avec elle. Nous avons parlé en français et discuté de choses comme les différences entre l'anglais et le français et d'autres membres de leur famille en France.

Ces conversations avec des personnes françaises m'ont aidée à comprendre différents accents, les petites différences de culture en France et à apprendre plus de la vie quotidienne dans le sud de la France.

Maintenant j'étudie la langue française à l'université de St Andrews et mon séjour en France a été vraiment important et utile pour mes études ici. J'ai plus confiance en ma

capacité de parler et d'écouter le français ainsi que de comprendre les petits détails de la grammaire.

Je recommanderais que tout le monde fasse un voyage en France. Cette expérience a été une occasion unique et je serai toujours reconnaissante d'avoir eu la chance de faire ce voyage.

*Megan Ashley*

## Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland Language Prize 2019 – 2020

The prize is awarded to the student who scores the highest mark in the SQA's (*Scottish Qualifications Authority*) Advanced Higher French exam.

The 2019-2020 prize-winner was **Lily Pall** who attended *Harris Academy, Dundee*. She is particularly grateful to her French teacher, Diane Gordon, and pleased to have received this prize in her teacher's last year of service before she retired.

Lily has gone on to study medicine and is now in her second year at *Aberdeen University*.



*Lily Pall and Rhona Bean*

The prize giving ceremony was organised by the Aberdeen Branch who invited her to attend their January meeting where she was presented with her certificate and cheque for £200 by Rhona Bean, Hon. Secretary.

Tom Wight, Chairman of the Edinburgh Branch was also there as he was giving the talk, and was accompanied by Anne-Colette Lequet, Hon. Treasurer of the Edinburgh Branch.

The members were very pleased to meet Lily and enjoyed her presence at this first convivial meeting of the year. They were able to exchange ideas in French and discuss the importance of language learning.

*ACL*



*After the Event*

### **Mes sentiments sur l'apprentissage des langues.**

On dit souvent qu'en apprenant une langue, on apprend beaucoup plus que ça : maintenant je suis certaine que c'est vrai. Loin des salles de classe, on se trouve dans des pays différents, en découvrant les gens, les cultures, les expériences qu'on ne pouvait jamais imaginer. Et même « chez nous » dans notre pays, dans notre ville on peut créer des liens avec des autres francophones. Je suis reconnaissante pour le fait que je parle cette belle langue, et que j'ai pu rencontrer mes meilleurs amis grâce au français.

*Lily Pall*

## Exchange Visit 2020

***The biennial exchange visit is organised by the Franco-Scottish Society of Scotland or the Association franco-écossaise in France for members of these sister societies.***

The 2017-2018 visit took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 in Scotland (Edinburgh and the Borders) and the 2019-2020 visit had been organised to take place on the 9<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in France (Les Hauts de France). Unfortunately, this event was directly affected by COVID and has now been postponed till next year.

Instead of the report which would normally have appeared here, we reflect on how these exchange visits have reinforced links and friendships between members of the two societies over the years.

**Below, Janine Adamson a long-term member, former vice-president of the Franco Scottish Society of Scotland and former Bulletin Editor, kindly shares some of her thoughts and memories.** *ACL*

Durant la longue histoire de la Franco Scottish Society et de l'Association Franco- Ecossaise il y eut de nombreuses rencontres pour des cérémonies officielles, des conférences, des anniversaires ou de simples visites amicales, mais lors des cérémonies de nos deux centennaires (1995, 1996) les responsables des comités nationaux suggérèrent qu'il serait souhaitable d'établir un programme régulier de visites d'échanges afin qu'un plus grand nombre de membres des deux associations puissent faire vraiment connaissance pendant quelques jours passés à la découverte d'une région et de ses trésors.

C'est ainsi que tous les deux ans membres français et écossais se retrouvèrent à Paris et Edimbourg bien sûr mais aussi au Pays Cathare, dans le Ayrshire, en Franche-Comté, dans les Highlands, en Normandie, dans le vieux Royaume de Fife, dans le Poitou et les Charentes, sur les îles de l'Ouest de l'Ecosse et dans les Borders.

Au cours de ces voyages nous avons glané une moisson de merveilleux souvenirs.....une promenade en bateau sur le Tarn, l'émouvante visite des maisons de Pasteur et de Victor Hugo, les redoutables forteresses de Besançon et de Stirling, la Saline d'Arc et Senans, le vol majestueux des aigles dans le ciel d'Aran, le Bassin ensoleillé de La Rochelle, le Musée Boudin à Honfleur, les modestes églises et les superbes cathédrales, les dégustations de Bénédictine en Normandie et de whisky à Pitlochry, l'humble abbaye de Iona, les

romantiques châteaux des Highlands, le jardin d'eau à Giverny, le déjeuner chez Philippe Contamine à la Buchellerie...tant de réminiscences précieuses se bousculent pêle mêle dans nos têtes mais nous nous souviendrons toujours des conversations animées des repas partagés, du plaisir des retrouvailles et de l'émotion des départs.

La visite prévue en juin 2020 dans les Hauts de France a dû être annulée mais ce ne sera sûrement que partie remise, deux longues guerres ont interrompu les activités de nos deux Associations mais n'ont pas découragé nos membres et il en sera de même pour ce maudit Covid-19 qui ralentira nos activités mais pas nos projets futurs.



Fife



Normandie

## French Connections

### A French Poem translated into Scots

From *Three Poems* by Jacques Prévert translated by Walter Perrie based on *Paroles*, 1946

#### HAME-LIFE

The mither she knits  
the loon gaes tae war.  
She thinks; *juist as it maun be*, the mither.  
An faither, what does he dae, the faither ?  
He runs his business.  
His wife sits an knits.  
The loon gaues tae war.  
He's at his business.  
He thinks; *juist as it maun be*, the faither.  
An the loon, an the loon ?  
Whit does he ettle, the loon ?  
Naethin at aa, stowp an rowp naethin, the loon.  
The loon: his mither knits, his faither does business,  
he gaes tae war.  
An when it's aa duin wi, the war,  
he'll be in the business wi faither.  
But the war drags on, the mither gaes on, she knits.  
The faither gets on wi his business.  
The loon gets killt, he disna gae on.  
The faither an mither, they greet by his lair,  
they think; *juist as it maun be*, the faither an  
mither.  
An life gaes oan, the life wi the knitting, the  
business, the war,  
the business, the war, the knitting, the war,  
the business, the business, the business,  
an the life whaur they greet by the lair.

#### FAMILIALE

La mère fait du tricot  
Le fils fait la guerre  
Elle trouve ça tout naturel la mère  
Et le père qu'est-ce qu'il fait le père ?  
Il fait des affaires  
Sa femme fait du tricot  
Son fils la guerre  
Lui des affaires  
Il trouve ça tout naturel le père  
Et le fils et le fils  
Qu'est-ce qu'il trouve le fils ?  
Il ne trouve rien absolument rien le fils  
Le fils sa mère fait du tricot son père des affaires  
lui la guerre  
Quand il aura fini la guerre  
Il fera des affaires avec son père  
La guerre continue la mère continue elle tricote  
Le père continue il fait des affaires  
Le fils est tué il ne continue plus  
Le père et la mère vont au cimetière  
Ils trouvent ça naturel le père et la mère  
La vie continue la vie avec le tricot la guerre les  
affaires  
Les affaires la guerre le tricot la guerre  
Les affaires les affaires et les affaires  
La vie avec le cimetière

#### JACQUES PRÉVERT (1900 – 1977)



#### PAROLES COVER PAGE



## Guillaume, Duc de Normandie : Bâtard et Conquérant ?



Statue de Guillaume à Falaise

### La famille de Guillaume.

Né à la fin de l'année 1027 à la maison de son grand-père maternel à Falaise, Guillaume est l'unique fils de Robert le Magnifique, Duc de Normandie, et de Harlève, son épouse de cœur (sa concubine), fille d'un tanneur. Le mariage "à la danoise" (*more danico*) permet au chef d'avoir à la fois une épouse légitime et une épouse « de cœur ». Les enfants issus des deux formes d'union ont les mêmes droits juridiques. Ils sont élevés et éduqués sur le même pied d'égalité. Guillaume reçoit donc l'éducation d'un futur duc.

Guillaume n'est pas Viking mais son aïeul paternel, Rollo, faisait partie d'un groupe de Vikings danois qui venait s'enrichir en pillant la côte française dans les années 850-900. En 911 le roi des Francs, Charles le Simple, octroie à Rollo la terre autour de Fécamp en Normandie en échange de la protection contre les raids des Vikings qui remontent la Seine jusqu'à Paris (le braconnier devenu garde-chasse !). Rollo se convertit au christianisme et prend comme épouse légitime la fille de Charles le Simple.

Pourtant Guillaume hérite d'un pouvoir fragile. Son père est devenu Duc de Normandie après le décès mystérieux du frère de celui-ci, Richard III. La famille de Richard accuse Robert de meurtre et revendique le trône ducal pour les descendants de Richard. Ces « Richardides » sont exclus de la succession ducal, quand Robert présente le jeune Guillaume à ses

vassaux comme son héritier légitime avant de partir pour la Terre Sainte en 1035. Il confie la régence du Duché à son oncle Alain, comte de Bretagne. Sur les conseils de Robert, Harlève se marie avec Herluin de Conteville à qui elle donne deux fils, Robert de Mortain et Odon, futur évêque de Bayeux, les deux demi-frères de Guillaume qui lui seront très fidèles plus tard. Guillaume est donc « illégitime » comme la majorité de ses aïeux.

### La jeunesse de Guillaume

Guillaume grandit chez sa mère et son beau-père, Herluin de Conteville. Il devient Duc de Normandie à l'âge de 7 ans après la mort de son père qui décède subitement sur la route de retour de la Terre Sainte. En l'absence d'une main de fer qui contrôlerait les ambitions des Richardides, ceux-ci sautent sur l'occasion pour tenter d'enlever ou d'assassiner le jeune Duc.

Le tuteur, le régent et celui qui recueille Guillaume sont assassinés un à un. En 1046 les barons conspirent contre Guillaume et en 1047 le jeune Duc est obligé de s'enfuir pour sauver sa vie. Cette chevauchée fantastique ne sera jamais oubliée par Guillaume et contribuera à sa détermination de combattre ses ennemis.

### La consolidation du pouvoir ducal

À la bataille de Val-ès-Dunes en 1047, Guillaume, alors âgé de 20 ans, se voit confronté par ses barons ennemis. Henri 1<sup>er</sup> roi de France vient à l'aide de Guillaume, son vassal. Astucieux stratège, Guillaume emporte la victoire sur ses barons et Henri se retire du duché avec ses troupes. La victoire de Val-ès-Dunes apporte une paix durable et la légitimité du jeune Duc n'est plus contestée.

En 1050 Guillaume épouse sa cousine, Matilde de Flandre, à Eu. Mathilde, par sa mère Adèle, est la nièce de Henri 1<sup>er</sup>, roi de France. Elle est également petite fille d'Hugues Capet et d'Adelaïde, fille de Guillaume Longue-Epée. Le Pape condamne le mariage en raison de la consanguinité des époux. Cependant malgré l'excommunication, Guillaume maintient le mariage parce qu'il lui permet d'élargir son influence au-delà de la Normandie. Guillaume

est très amoureux de sa femme et le couple restera exemplaire toute sa vie. (Guillaume ne ressent pas le besoin de recourir au mariage à la danoise comme ses aïeux !)

En 1057 Henri 1<sup>er</sup> roi de France s'allie avec le comte d'Anjou pour envahir la Normandie, qui à leur avis, prend trop d'importance sur l'échiquier politique. A la bataille de Varaville, Guillaume, à la tête d'une troupe inférieure en nombre aux troupes franco-angevines, fait preuve de nouveau de ses talents de stratège. Il arrive à diviser les troupes ennemies avant d'emporter la victoire. Cette victoire assure l'indépendance de la Normandie.

### **Guillaume fait de la Normandie un duché puissant.**

Quand Henri 1<sup>er</sup> envahit la Normandie en 1057 Guillaume se rend compte de l'importance de la situation de la ville de Caen. Il y fait construire un palais en 1058. C'est à Caen qu'il fonde les deux abbayes ; l'abbaye aux Hommes et l'abbaye aux Dames pour amadouer le Pape et pour tenir la promesse de Lanfranc qui a négocié la levée de l'excommunication. Le site de chaque abbaye est choisi en fonction du plan de fortification de Caen afin de leur donner un rôle d'appoint. A partir de 1059 Guillaume devient réformateur et mécène. L'économie normande connaît un essor spectaculaire. Le commerce se développe et des villes nouvelles se créent.

### **Les liens avec L'Angleterre**

Les liens sont étroits entre la Normandie et l'Angleterre. En 1002, Emma, sœur de Richard II et donc la tante de Guillaume, épouse le roi d'Angleterre Ethelred II le Malavisé (Ethelred the Unready). En 1013 les Danois chassent Ethelred qui s'enfuit en Normandie pour un an avant de retrouver son trône. Ethelred meurt en 1016. Cnut, proclamé roi d'Angleterre, épouse Emma, la veuve d'Ethelred. Les deux fils du premier mariage d'Emma et d'Ethelred, Alfred et Edouard (plus tard dit « le Confesseur ») se réfugient en Normandie où ils côtoient le jeune fils de Robert le Magnifique, c'est-à-dire Guillaume.

Quand Edouard, le Confesseur reprend la couronne d'Angleterre en 1024, il est doublement « normand » : par sa mère Emma et par son éducation. Edouard vieillit, son union

avec la sœur de Harold, comte de Wessex, est sans issu. Qui est le mieux placé pour hériter du trône d'Angleterre ? Le jeune cousin Guillaume qu'Edouard a connu pendant son exil en Normandie ou Harold, le beau-frère d'Edouard, ou Harald Hardrada, le roi de Norvège ?

La réponse est évidente pour Guillaume, Duc de Normandie. C'est lui le candidat le plus légitime. Non seulement Edouard lui a promis la couronne lors de son séjour en Normandie mais Harold aurait été envoyé en Normandie par Edouard en 1064 pour renouveler sa promesse. En plus, pendant son passage en Normandie en 1064, Harold a même prêté serment de fidélité au duc Guillaume.

### **Guillaume, Duc de Normandie, devient Guillaume, le Conquérant, Roi d'Angleterre.**

Quand Harold s'empare du trône d'Angleterre, Guillaume est furieux. Il décide d'envahir le pays et se faire sacrer roi. Non sans difficulté, il réunit une armée composée de barons de Normandie, de Bretagne, de Picardie, de Flandre. Le comte d'Anjou n'est qu'un enfant ainsi que le Roi de France – alors la Normandie ne risque pas d'être envahie par ses voisins en l'absence de Guillaume. En plus, les marées pour la traversée de la Manche sont propices. Harold est dans le nord de l'Angleterre en train de combattre Harald Hardrada. Guillaume a de la chance !

En 1066 Guillaume remporte une victoire spectaculaire à Hastings. Harold est tué ainsi qu'une bonne partie de l'aristocratie anglaise. Guillaume gagne Londres et se fait sacrer dans l'Abbaye de Westminster, le jour de Noël.

Guillaume est à la fois Duc de Normandie et Roi d'Angleterre. Grâce à sa femme Mathilde, régente soit en Normandie soit en Angleterre en l'absence de Guillaume, il arrive à pacifier son nouveau royaume et à créer une aristocratie anglo-normande. Il partage les terres de la défunte aristocratie anglaise entre les barons qui l'ont aidé à occuper son nouveau royaume.

Il fait rédiger un inventaire de tous les biens de son nouveau territoire (*le Domesday Book*) et il distribue des postes gouvernementaux et ecclésiastiques à ses fidèles pour mieux garder le contrôle du royaume.



Fatigué et obèse, Guillaume meurt en 1087, veuf et en conflit avec ses enfants. Il est enterré à Caen dans l'Abbaye aux Hommes qu'il a fondé avec sa femme Mathilde.

### Et l'Écosse ?

Après la conquête de l'Angleterre, l'Écosse a accueilli des membres de l'aristocratie anglo-saxonne. Margaret, future reine et sainte, a fui l'Angleterre pour se marier ensuite avec Malcolm, Roi d'Écosse. En 1072 Guillaume et les barons normands envahissent l'Écosse. Lorsque l'armée écossaise est battue à la bataille d'Abernethy, Malcolm est obligé de signer le

traité d'Abernethy et de prêter serment à Guillaume. Au fur et à mesure, les Normands écossais (Scoto-Normans) s'installent en Écosse : les Bruce, originaires de Brus en Normandie, les Comyne, originaires du Nord de la France, les Douglas, originaires de la Flandre, les Fitzalan, originaires de la Bretagne, les Balliol, originaires de Bailleul en Picardie. Parmi eux, plusieurs deviennent Rois d'Écosse – Robert de Brus (Robert the Bruce), John Balliol, et les Stewart (descendants de Walter Fitzalan, High Steward of Scotland).

*Tom Wight, Edinburgh*

## French music during the reign of Louis XIV

### The Baroque Period

It is impossible to assign precise dates to a cultural period because it is determined by the prevailing attitudes of the people living within it, which evolve over time.

With this qualification the Renaissance was over by the end of the 16th century, and the start date for the Baroque is generally considered to be around 1600. By 1750 it had given way to the Classical.

Louis XIV was crowned king of France in 1643 and died in 1715 so my article about music from his reign places it unequivocally in the French Baroque.

### The role of music during the Baroque

Music played a significant role in every aspect of court life, from small entertainments in private settings – like the King's bed chamber – to grand spectacles that involved the entire Court.



*The King's Bedchamber, Versailles*

Many events like the operas were so lavish, they had to be conducted in the palace courtyard or in the Écurie – the king's stables.

There was no purpose-built theatre at Versailles until 1770 more than half a century after Louis' death, despite his love of opera.



*Staging Lully's Alceste, Versailles*

Music wasn't simply entertainment, it was pivotal to state ceremony, marking the baptisms, betrothals, marriages, and funerals of the nobility. It was also an important part of the church mass and celebrations that attended religious festivals.



La Chapelle Royale, Versailles

There was a huge need for music in the life of this great nation and no shortage of people who could provide it. Wikipedia lists 225 French Baroque composers *ref. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:French\_Baroque\_composers]*.

#### **Music making was a family business**

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, skills in the trades resided in families and every member was to some extent, employed by the business. Music making was a trade like any other and looking at the composers of the day it is quite common to find fathers and sons of equal renown. Louis and François Couperin are a good example and a quick look at the list of composers will reveal many more.

#### **The Life of a Musician**

Musicians were either employed by a court or a city and were treated as servants – it was very unusual for them to earn extra money by playing or publishing their compositions elsewhere. If a composer wanted to find another job, they had to seek permission from their employer or be granted a leave of absence. Consequently, many absconded to take up a more prestigious post or simply to get paid, because employers would often default on their commitments.

#### **Music was a mark of social distinction**

The upper classes proclaimed their sophistication by participating in music making, either as instrumentalists, singers or through patronage. Courts around Europe

competed for the best composers and performers, so musicians were frequently well travelled, and there is also evidence that some acted as spies.

However, commonplace this propensity for self-promotion amongst the aristocracy, it was only the extremely rich and powerful who could afford to maintain an orchestra, even though the number of players employed was considerably less than we would expect to find in a modern orchestra.

#### **The Social Fabric of the Time**

Life in 17<sup>th</sup> century society was closeted and highly ordered, with each person having a clearly defined role. Unusually, music cut across social boundaries and influenced the lives of people from every walk of life.

#### **Artistic propaganda**

The Baroque style was a product of the counter reformation which started with the Council of Trent in 1545. This council attempted to reverse the fortunes of the Catholic Church, which had lost much of its authority during the Reformation. The Baroque style was highly ornate and elaborate, a deliberate contrast to protestant austerity which was a hallmark of the Reformation.

The paintings of the Baroque re-establish an ancient and hierarchical world view, in which there is *a place for everything, and everything has its place*.



Uniting the Crowns of England and Scotland  
James VI of Scotland becomes James I of England, 1603

In a properly organised society, divine order is imposed through ritual, and during the Baroque, aristocrats identified with the conceptual thinking represented by the myths of classical Greece and Rome, which had been rediscovered during the Renaissance.

### A Renaissance legacy

Classical myths describe a world in which the sacred and the profane intermingle, a world in which Gods meddle in the lives of mortals, without consideration for their feelings or interests.

When there is peace amongst the Gods (who represent conflicting human passions), all is well in the world and harmony prevails. The role of the king and the ruling classes was to instil harmony in the Nation and the outward manifestation of that harmony was music.

### An ancient idea

This hierarchical view of the world has its roots in the earliest civilisations – presenting a credible concept of the world, complete with its hardships, injustices, and scant regard for the lives of individuals.

Whatever your station in life you were acutely aware you could be struck down at any moment so there was an imperative to behave in the way that was imposed upon you by society.

This was your insurance policy – you could at least save your soul in the event of your early demise. This belief was accepted as having been pre-ordained by both the educated and uneducated in society.



Hierarchical Universe – Dante' Divine Comedy

### Static scenes - Vignettes

This view of an everlasting, unchanging world informed every aspect of life and Baroque music can be understood as representing a series of idealised, static scenes, like paintings of pastoral idylls or scenes from classical myth. Art was concerned with rendering immutable truths about the world as it is, in both its religious and secular aspects. The concerns of individuals had no meaning in the sense it does for us today.

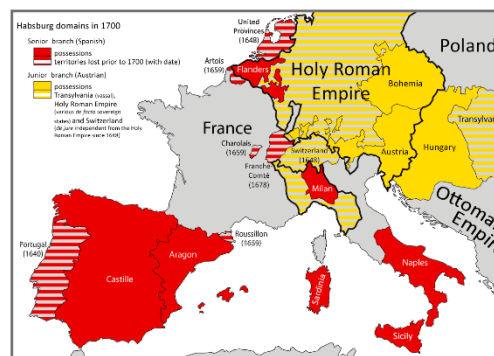
### Order in the kingdom

Louis XIV' Court acted out its role in this theatre as an embodiment of heavenly order, and the conduct of the monarch was legitimised by the notion that the king was ordained by God. Throughout his reign, Louis sought to become an absolute monarch through the centralisation of power, a form of governance (the *Ancien Régime*) which persisted in France until the revolution in 1789.

### Louis was driven by paranoia

Louis' reign was defined by three threats to his personal safety:

- competition from his relatives – the nobility
- the Habsburg Empire – which surrounded France



The Kingdom of France, 1700

- and the *Paris Mob*.

Paris at the time had a population of 500,000 and was one of the largest cities in Europe.

Louis' response was to build a palace at Versailles which provided sanctuary from the *Mob* and housed the nobility thereby neutralising two of these threats. Throughout his reign he waged constant war against his Habsburg neighbour.

### An auspicious start

Louis was fortunate to inherit a kingdom that had emerged, relatively unscathed, from the wars of religion that had ravaged Europe and almost halved its population. France had extensive territories in North America and the Caribbean, which brought considerable wealth, and a population almost 5 times larger than its close neighbour – Britain. In a pre-industrial country, a larger population equated to greater wealth because the country could produce more.

### The envy of Europe

The artistic life at court was a jewel in the crown of Louis' new palace at Versailles, and the envy of every European state. It was a projection of French prestige, influence, and power in a *Golden Era* we now refer to as *Le Grand Siècle*. It was within this context that French Baroque music acquired its own distinctive voice.

### Musical innovation

Music was transformed with the development of opera, cantatas, and sonatas, all of which were used as court entertainments as well as church ceremony.

### Jean-Baptiste Lully



Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632 – 1687)

The leading musician at court and a master of the French Baroque style was Jean-Baptiste Lully. He was born in Florence and christened Giovanni Battista Lulli.

The preference for French music over Italian during Louis' reign seems rather strange, considering the leading figure was himself Italian. This predilection for French music is often viewed as prejudice or bigotry, but in reality, there was a healthy exchange, with musicians moving between the two countries. The antipathy expressed towards Italian music in the French Court is better understood as competition and an ambition to become the dominant culture.

### Lully's career

He was born into a family of millers, so his education came courtesy of the clergy. He was noticed, aged 14, by a French aristocrat who saw him playing the part of Harlequin during

Mardi Gras. He was taken to France, ostensibly to converse in Italian with Anne Marie Louise d'Orléans, who was the cousin of Louis XIV. Initially Lully was employed in her court as a *Garçon de Chambre*.

However, he was a talented instrumentalist and dancer, so must have benefitted enormously from the company of musicians in Anne Marie' court. He came to the young Louis' attention, when they danced together in the *Ballet Royale de la Nuit*.

When Cardinal Mazarin died in 1661, and Louis began governing the country in his own right, he made Lully Superintendent of the Royal Music, a pre-eminent position he guarded jealously until his death in 1687.

Lully's career is a reminder that our ideas and judgements have changed with time. When we are tempted to perceive his upbringing as harsh, we are applying 20<sup>th</sup> century values.

### Marc-Antoine Charpentier



Marc-Antoine Charpentier

The most prolific musician at the time, Marc-Antoine Charpentier never held any position at court, but worked instead for Anne Marie Louise' aunt – Marie de Lorraine.

His father was a scribe employed by the *Parlement de Paris*, a legal court that actively tried to limit the king's power at the start of his reign. Another likely explanation for his exclusion was the sullied reputation of his employer, for the part she played in another challenge to the king's authority known as the *Seconde Fronde* (1649 – 1652).

Although we can never say with certainty what the reasons were, the situation probably suited him. Charpentier was treated by Marie, as a courtier rather than a servant. He was based in Paris and therefore removed from the intrigues of Louis' court which must have been a blessing for such a deeply religious man.

Whatever his reasons, he remained in the employ of Marie until her death in 1688. The remaining 17 years of his life were spent writing sacred cantatas for the Jesuits.

### Élisabeth Jacquet



Élisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre

Élisabeth Jacquet was born in 1665, into a family of musicians and master instrument makers, she was a child prodigy who was initially tutored by her father.

At the age of 5 she was invited to play at court for Louis who took a great interest in her development, something that continued throughout her life.

She was taken into the court as a teenager where her education was supervised by the king's mistress – Madame de Montespan. She remained at court until it moved to Versailles in 1682.

In 1684, she married Marin de la Guerre the organist of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris. As a married woman she continued to teach, compose, and give concerts in her home.

### Le Parnasse François



Évrard Titon du Tillet

*Le Parnasse François* was the vanity project of an adventurer Évrard Titon du Tillet, who was the son of the king's secretary and general manager of the armoury.

Originally, he planned to build a monument depicting artists in order of their status in Louis' court. The whole edifice was to be surmounted by a statue of Louis in the guise of Apollo playing the Lyre.

Élisabeth was accorded a place in this pantheon of poets and musicians alongside Lalande and Marais but beneath Lully.

Unfortunately, when the estimated cost reached 2 million livres, the entire project was scrapped, but her inclusion signifies that during her lifetime she was recognised as being a musician of the highest calibre.

### Her Legacy

Élisabeth Jacquet composed and published pieces for her own instrument the Clavecin, the ballet, and she was the first woman in France to publish an opera.

She was very much at the forefront of musical innovation, experimenting with the Italian forms of Sonata (Instrumental) and Cantata (Vocal). In 1695 she composed a set of trio sonatas (sonatas featuring 3 instruments), which were among the first examples of their type in France.

For a woman to reach such a prominent position was a great achievement made even

more remarkable when you consider the talent she was surrounded by.

### **A Limited Survey**

This survey of music has only covered music in the formal settings of the king's court, the palaces of the nobility, and the church, but within this limited scope there is enormous variety.

Music accompanied every aspect of life from the private to the public, from small to large scale productions, from solo instruments to orchestras and the new musical forms from Italy.

French Baroque Music demanded instrumentalists who were highly skilled and singers who could devote every moment of their time to perfecting their craft – such specialisation is only possible if you have an incredibly wealthy patron.

### **Out with the old and in with the new**

New instruments like the Hautbois (Oboe), were invented and existing instruments like the Harpsichord reached a level of perfection that allowed it to transition from its modest, continuo role and become a virtuoso instrument.



*Concert Harpsichord*

Curiosities like the Serpent disappeared entirely.



*Serpent*

### **In from the cold**

Brass instruments had been used almost exclusively for military purposes and hunting, but the incorporation of valves had turned them into chromatic versions which were more suitable for indoor, orchestral use.

Brass instrument players suddenly found their services were not just required in the field but were told to clean their boots and play indoors as well!

### **Louder voices**

Playing in larger ensembles required a bigger sound and many instruments like the Lute and Harp – which until this time had only been used to accompany a singer – were enlarged and acquired more strings so they could be heard in an orchestral setting.

### **The Baroque gives way to the Classical**

The explosion of creativity and innovation in music which occurred during the reign of Louis XIV, was replaced in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the classical.

Classical music shifts the attention to events affecting people, which is very much an Enlightenment idea. It is a style that charts the drama in the life of an individual as opposed to a static, unchanging, impersonal world view which characterised the Baroque.

### **The Early Music Movement**

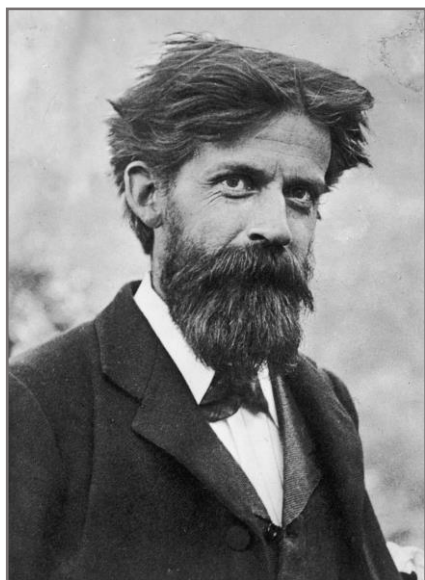
The Baroque with its strict adherence to an ancient perspective slipped into obscurity and another 250 years would pass before a few brave souls – dissatisfied with music making in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – would attempt to recreate the glorious music from previous centuries.

*Chris Lindsay, Perth*

## The Professor and the Poet

Patrick Geddes, World War One Poet Wilfred Owen, and *the pity of war*.

In many ways Franco-Scottish Society founder Patrick Geddes could have written poetically about the pity of war.



Source P. Geddes Centre

Geddes lost his son Alasdair in the war and his wife died in the same year. She still believed that her son was alive, Geddes reading the son's later letters to his dying wife.<sup>i</sup>

Geddes never met Wilfred Owen but, like so many of Geddes impacts, his effect was far reaching and long lasting. In many ways Geddes was responsible for creating the environment, conditions, networks and intellectual stimulus which allowed Owen to pen some of the most powerful poetry which captured the horrors of the Western Front and the futility of warfare.



Wilfred Owen Source Wikipedia

Wilfred Owen arrived in Edinburgh on 26 June 1917. A 2nd Lieutenant in the Manchester Regiment, he had been injured twice in quick succession on the Western Front and was now diagnosed as suffering from neurasthenia, or *shellshock* as it became known earlier in the First World War.

There were six hospitals across the UK Owen could have been sent to for recovery and treatment. In many ways it was fortunate he was sent to Edinburgh, now *the City of Literature* and even then, a literary city. The city also had a long and proud history of medical innovation. There in Scotland's capital, a team of innovative medics formed at *Craiglockhart War Hospital* from late 1916 when this disused Hydropathic Institute was commandeered as a military hospital. Owen had been a poet before the war although his *juvenilia phase poems* were not published. During Owen's time in Scotland he entered into a writing frenzy and penned the most powerful of his poems including *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, *Dulce et Decorum Est* and *Disabled* alongside more Edinburgh specific poems like *Who is the god of Cannongate ?* and *Six O'clock on Princes Street*. It was during Owen's time in Edinburgh that his first poems were published.<sup>ii</sup>

Owen was under the charge of Edinburgh physician and temporary *Royal Army Medical Corps Captain Dr Arthur John Brock*. Brock had been one of Geddes followers and regular correspondent with the polymath. In particular we see the impact of Geddes thinking on Brock when in 1910 Brock writes to his mentor figure with the word *ERGOTHERAPY* in large capital letters, overwritten many times at the top of the page.<sup>iii</sup> Brock, through sharing and forming ideas alongside Geddes, had found the cure for broken man.

Geddes' Regional Survey model and work inspired by *Le Play* (French engineer, sociologist and economist) noted the interface between place, work and people. Brock observed that industrial society had removed man from both people and the surrounding environs. At worst this saw man disengage and ultimately stop working and functioning. The

antidote to this withdrawal was work itself – getting men back on their feet, back connecting with others and outside connecting with their environs.<sup>iv</sup>

On arriving at Craiglockhart, Owen's first task set by Brock was to visit Outlook Tower, the museum to mankind Geddes had set up at the top of Castlehill. Owen was to write an essay from his experience.



OutlookTower Image Wikipedia

It is unknown if Owen even met Geddes, we have no evidence that they directly connected. If Owen had met the founder of the Franco-Scottish Society, he would have experienced being run up to the top floor to invigorate the body and then returning back down the tower visiting the themed exhibits on each floor: Edinburgh, Scotland, Language, Europe and finally the world.

The output from Owen's first task was more than an essay, it was a powerful poem which gives much insight to the thinking of Geddes, Brock and now Owen. Owen wrote his first Edinburgh poem – *The Wrestlers*.

The story of the fight between *Antaeus and Hercules* is a symbolic one showing of the impact of removing man from the soil on which his feet should stand. It had clearly been influenced by Geddes and Brock's thinking and reflections on the importance of mankind being connected to the land.

The poem started a writing frenzy which railed against the catastrophe of war where man was tearing each other apart and the land around

them – slowly rooting up the ecosystems that exist at ground level and between people and societies.



Courtesy of Edinburgh Napier University

Owen continued to benefit greatly from being reconnected with the land and wider society. Whilst in Edinburgh he was encouraged to walk in the Pentland Hills with the *war hospital field club* Dr Brock had set up, he lectured on plants to fellow patients and he threw himself into a university type broad general education of work and intellectual activities facilitated by the doctors and other patients.

Owen did not just benefit from activities in the hospital. Through Dr Brock, Owen was introduced to a *socio-economic network* of Edinburgh citizens who helped patients at the hospital recover and re-engage with normal day-to-day life. Many of these were ladies who served on Geddes Edinburgh improvement committees like the *Outlook Tower Committee* and *Slum Garden Groups*.

The group of self-improvement, arts and intellectual company all stimulated Owen's thinking and contributed to his enlightenment which, alongside his poetic mentor and fellow patient Siegfried Sassoon, helped his writing.

Owen left a list of who his poems were to be given to if they were ever published. The list is revealing for the number of Edinburgh people on it.

Of the 21 names noted, 7 of them were people Owen met in Edinburgh (fellow patient Siegfried Sassoon, officer and visitor to Edinburgh Robert Graves, Mrs Gray (one of Dr Brock's ladies), Mrs Fullerton (one of Dr Brock's ladies and teacher at Tynecastle School), Dr Sampson (Astronomer Royal and one of Dr



Brock's contacts), Dr Brock and Miss Wyer (member of Geddes Committees).

Owen only spent four months of his short twenty-five-year life in Edinburgh, but it had a significant impact on his life and the literature we are left with from that time.

Owen left Edinburgh in November 1917. A year later he was to be killed on the *Western Front* with a week of the war left. His parents got the telegram telling them the devastating news as the local church bells rang to celebrate the armistice.

We can find out much on Owen's life and influences from his letters and indeed his library. His letters show that his time in Edinburgh was a blend of meeting the good and the great (the Royal Astronomer Professor Samson and the High Court Judge, Lord Guthrie) to being at one with the other side of Edinburgh in the *old town*.

Owen was taken to the slums where to see *Edinburgh's submerged tenth*.<sup>v</sup> It all formed Owen's expanding socio-cultural education.

Owen's library of books also shows his wide range of interests. Amongst them all are various Scottish texts including Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and indeed a work published by Outlook Tower on St Columba.<sup>vi</sup> Owen had been inspired by folks, place and the work he engaged in during his time in Edinburgh.

Much is made of the impact Siegfried Sassoon had made on Owen. However, a deeper

analysis of Owen's time in Edinburgh shows that his socio-cultural network and associated intellectual and artistic development was already well underway before Sassoon arrived at Craiglockhart as a patient. Indeed, Dr Brock (and thus the thinking of Patrick Geddes) was of equal if not more importance to the poet in his recovery and writing. In a future edition I hope I might explore some other hitherto hidden aspects of Owen's Franco-Scottish influences and influencers. The spark for much of Owen's influences had been Franco-Scottish founder, Patrick Geddes.

The irony was Owen writing of the *pity of war* in 1917, the same year the pity of war hit Geddes. His son Alasdair had been transferred to the *Air Balloon Corps* where he had some narrow escapes. However, his war work was decorated with a *Military Cross* and a *Légion d'Honneur*.

Despite his distinguished service in the balloon corps, it was on the land that he was hit whilst walking back to his unit from an observation post. A shell fragment killed him instantly.

Owen also had been honoured with a *Military Cross* for his heroism. He was killed on 4 November 1918 whilst leading men across the Sambre Oise canal.

The deaths of two fine thinkers attests to Owen's warning which echoes through history – *The Old Lie: Dulce et decorum Est Pro patria mori*.

Dr Neil McLennan, Aberdeen

<sup>i</sup> Stephen, Walter ( ) *Think Global, Act Local: The Life and Legacy of Patrick Geddes* (Luath, Edinburgh), p.33.

<sup>ii</sup> McLennan, Neil (2017) Royal Society of Edinburgh Lecture: 'Wilfred Owen's Edinburgh Enlightenment' identified that there was in fact six poems published in Owen's lifetime as opposed to the initially thought five by the Wilfred Owen Association and British Library. The additional poem is be found in an editorial he wrote for the Craiglockhart War Hospital Magazine, *The Hydra*. The full list are all Edinburgh published poems:- 'Song of Songs' (The Hydra, Craiglockhart War Hospital Magazine, 1 September 1917); a fragment of a poem in Owen's editorial, which possibly later made up the poem 'The Dead-Beat' (part of editorial of The Hydra, 1 September 1917); 'The Next War' (The Hydra, 29 September 1917); 'Miners' (The Nation, 26 January 1918); 'Futility' (The Nation, 15 June 1918) and 'Hospital Barge' (The Nation, 15 June 1918).

<sup>iii</sup> McLennan, N 2019, 'Six o' Clock in Princes Street: An analysis of Wilfred Owen's Edinburgh 're-education' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 148, no. 2018, pp. 333-351 [ONLINE] DOI: [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.9750/PSAS.148.1256](https://doi.org/10.9750/PSAS.148.1256)

<sup>iv</sup> Brock, AJ, *Ergotherapy' in Neurasthenia*, *Edinburgh Med. J. (NS)*, 1911, 6, 430-434; Brock, A.J. (1918) 'The re-education of the adult' *The Sociological Review* Vol 10, Issue 1, July 1918.

<sup>v</sup> *Wilfred Owen to mother Susan Owen, 7 September 1917 in Bell, John (1985) Collected Letters of Wilfred Owen (OUP, Oxford)*, p. 274.

<sup>vi</sup> Branford, Victor (1913) *St Columba (Outlook Tower, Edinburgh) is in Owen's library. This can be found at the Bodleian (although currently housed in Weston) Library, Oxford University*

## Obituaries

### Patrick Barron (1943 – 2020)



Patrick Barron

Pat was a local man from Altamount in Blairgowrie who was domiciled in Perthshire throughout his life. He farmed locally and represented the local Branch of the *Farmer's Union* in Scotland.

Despite never leaving his native Perthshire, he was a very sophisticated, accomplished man who led an active life. He had a second career as a Commander in the *Royal Navy Volunteer Reserves* and at one-point captained Mine Sweepers – he also served a year, full time, with the Royal Navy.

The sea was obviously in his blood because he sailed his own boats on the west coast of Scotland for 25 years and upon retiring in 2006, bought a Dutch barge to explore the canals of Europe. His peripatetic existence explained why we saw little of him throughout the season, but he always managed to attend our Epiphany Lunches.

He was a charming and loyal member of our branch for many years, and we shall miss not seeing him and hearing news of his maritime adventures.

### Anne Sutherland Mackay Gwynn (1937 – 2020)



Anne Sutherland Mackay Gwynn

Anne was one of those people you felt you always knew, a steady, reliable person who was great fun to be with. As you can see from the photograph, she enjoyed a glass of wine with friends.

On her retirement, she and husband John returned to Scotland. They attended our meetings regularly and served on the Committee. John taught French at the start of his career in Education and both were Francophiles.

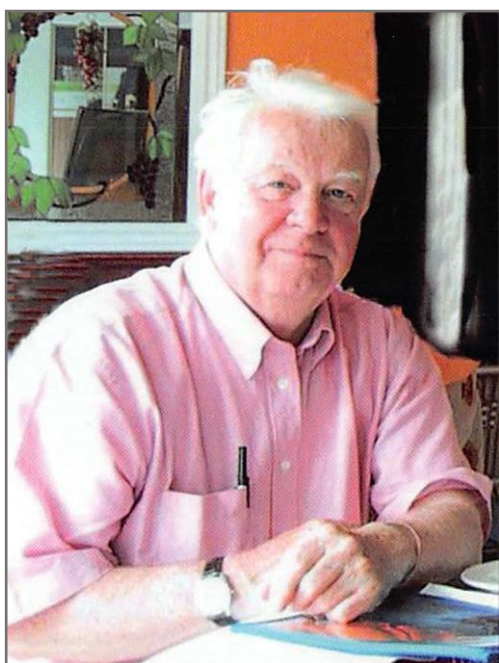
When they weren't in Scotland they could be found in their French property.

When John died, Anne continued to support the Branch until she finally moved to Haslemere in Surrey to be closer to her daughter Sarah.

She was a great personality and dearly loved by her friends, children, and grandchildren, her departing has left our group much the poorer.

*Chris Lindsay, Perth*

## Robert Galt MacWilliam (1927 – 2020)



Robert Galt MacWilliam

Robert and his wife Ginette have been the backbone of the Branch since they moved to Perth after retiring from the World Bank in Washington DC.

For many years, they both served on the National and Branch Committees of the Society and were enthusiastic attendees of the meetings until Robert's declining health prevented either of them from participating. This was a double loss for the Branch because Ginette refused to accept that he should be moved to a care home and steadfastly, looked after him during his remaining years.

He died peacefully in the small hours on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2020 surrounded by his family after a long and very successful life.

We shall all miss him greatly.

*Chris Lindsay, Perth*

## Donald McGregor (1939-2020)

The St. Andrews Branch of the Franco-Scottish Society are saddened at the passing of Donald Macgregor, a longtime member and supporter of the Society and all things French.

He was a well-known and respected figure in North-East Fife.

Born in Edinburgh, Donald attended *George Heriot's School* where he found his penchant for running.

He attended *St Andrews University* where he took a degree in French and German. He taught languages at *Madras College* where he was principal teacher from 1974 until he retired in 1999. He continued teaching French and German part-time until 2006 in the *Business School of Abertay University* in Dundee.

As a marathon runner he represented the United Kingdom at the Olympic Games in 1972. He participated in the Commonwealth Games in 1970 and 1974 and still holds Scottish record times.

He was Treasurer of the *St Andrews Athletics Club* and served on the *Scottish Cross Country Union* where in 1980-81 he was elected President. He spent many years developing and organizing sports training methods.

As a Liberal Democrat Councillor, he served from 1988 to 1996 on the *North East Fife District Council* and in 2007 he returned to politics as the local representative for the *East Neuk and Landward ward*.

For many years he was the chair of the *St Andrews Community Council* and served on the *St Andrews Links Trust*.

In 2004 he published a book of poetry *Stars and Spikes*, followed by an autobiography in 2010 entitled *Running my Life*. He co-authored a biography of Dr Otto Peltzer, a German athlete.

He was a highly appreciated member of the *Loches Alliance* that eventually led to the formal twinning of St. Andrews with the French town. An active and long-time member of St. Andrews branch of the FSSS, he gave many talks to the members about his French experiences.

*John Vaughan, St. Andrews*

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Gerry Toner | email: gerrytoner59@gmail.com

BULLETIN EDITOR:

Anne-Colette Lequet | email: ac.lequet@btinternet.com

WEBSITE HOST:

Stefan Cent | email: stefan@onthespot.org.uk



visit our website at:

[www.franco-scottish.org.uk](http://www.franco-scottish.org.uk)

### BRANCH CONTACTS

**Aberdeen:** Rhona Bean

22, Gain Crescent, Aberdeen AB10 6BE

email: rhonabean@hotmail.com | Tel: 01224-590 903

**Dumfries and Galloway:** Contact: Editor

email: ac.lequet@btinternet.com | Tel: 0131-661 5119

**Edinburgh:** Warden Black

122, Gilmore Place, Edinburgh EH3 9PL

email: w17b@aol.com | Tel: 0131-229 3158

**Glasgow:** Elizabeth Bryant

Flat 22 38, Addison Road, Glasgow G12 0TT

email: ebryant96@gmail.com | Tel: 07511-747 326

**Inverness:** Cécile Mettot

60, Craighton Avenue, Inverness IV3 8AZ

email : cmettot@gmail.com | Tel : 0753-409 7845

**Perth:** Chris Lindsay

7A, Woodlands Meadow, Blairgowrie PH10 6GZ

email: chris.lindsay.cl@btinternet.com | Tel: 01250-872 886

**St Andrews:** John Vaughan

Sunnybank, The Square, Letham, Coupar KY15 7RW

email: john@the-vaughans.org | Tel: 01337-810 359

Scottish Charity Number: SC 002507