

**Franco-British Council  
British Section**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2008**

**The front cover shows a poster for the Franco-British Exhibition which was held in White City in 1908. Its centenary was celebrated this year with a conference at the Institut Français, in partnership with the FBC.**

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## Review of the year

My appointment as Chair of the Franco-British Council has happily coincided with a renewed impetus to the relationship between our two countries as well as with a renewed and dynamic membership of the Council itself. This climate also presents unparalleled opportunities for partnerships and collaborations which can make a real difference – not only to the bilateral relationship and to our respective populations, but also to Europe at large and to a wider world which is presenting a whole new set of challenges and uncertainties.

As President Sarkozy put it in his thank you letter to the FBC following his State Visit to the UK in March: *'la France et le Royaume-Uni, si proches dans leur vision du monde et dans leurs idéaux, sont devenus complémentaires pour œuvrer ensemble à la paix, à la prospérité de nos peuples et à la défense de nos valeurs'*

So it is with renewed enthusiasm and sense of purpose that the FBC has set about confirming its role as a generator of ideas and enabler of partnerships between our two countries. On taking over the Chair in November 2007 I was struck by how much the FBC achieves with such limited resources. An example of our ability to put together a really value-added event at very short notice came in March, when the FBC was asked to pull together a diverse and interesting group of 'movers and shakers' with strong Franco-British connections to meet President Sarkozy during his very successful State Visit to the UK. The montage inside the front cover demonstrates the enthusiasm of British business, political and cultural figures to meet the new French President and to support his wish to move from *entente cordiale* to an *entente amicale* between the two countries. The confidence which our core sponsors, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and our private sector sponsors - including Argent and London City airport - have shown in the FBC's work is confirming us in our determination to move up a whole gear.

Thanks must go to our committed and energetic members. Together with our brilliant secretariat led by Ann Kenrick (13 years at the helm, and ably assisted for the last two years by Henry Paker), they have produced a programme of seminars which have, without exception, been topical and forward looking. Themes have included **intergenerational challenges**, **research and innovation**; **energy/environment issues**, and the role of culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is interesting that a number of the themes we have addressed figured prominently in the March Franco-British summit.

I believe that since November we have built on the solid foundations put in place by my predecessor Giles Radice to whom I would like to pay a particularly warm tribute. Our priority has been to sharpen the focus of our activities, to recalibrate our working methods, and to improve our outreach both to policymaking audiences

and to the wider constituency for initiatives which reinforce the bilateral relationship. Specific innovations include a major strategy review with our French Section counterparts in March, which led to a joint decision to build up our base of expertise and strengthen current partnerships by concentrating on four themes:

- environment, energy and sustainable development
- economic reform in the context of European developments and globalisation
- social cohesion and immigration
- culture including the arts, heritage and new media

We also agreed to broaden the format of our events, notably by breaking away from the traditional seminar format and including more events with other relevant stakeholders; longer conferences, breakfast meetings, a regular annual public lecture, and smaller follow-up meetings, with an accent on outputs and implementation. There is a new section in the annual report which refers to some of these new partnership events.

Our determination to encourage greater participation from the regions is evident in the location of our two next seminars; the first looking at **Agriculture** in Rodez and the second on **Public Service Reform** in Edinburgh. Another innovation came with the launch of the **Short Story Prize** supported by Prospect magazine and distinguished novelists Julian Barnes and Ian Rankin which allowed us to involve a younger age group in our work. An impressive number of stories on a French theme were submitted and the prize will be repeated next year. Finally, a communications strategy review has resulted in a new logo and plans for a new even more accessible website which will be launched in the autumn.

Last but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to thank those Trustees and members who stood down this year and who contributed so much to promoting the bilateral relationship during their terms of office. We will continue to receive the wise counsel of Giles Radice, Anne Corbett and Willie Prosser and we hope they will continue to be involved in our activities. Other members whose term of office came to an end during the year were Helen Drake and Sophie Pedder and I am delighted that they, too, have continued to contribute to particular themes and seminars. I see our role, through present and past members, as one of reaching out into our two countries and building the important networks of close cooperation and joint working which can be of such benefit to us in the future.

**Baroness Quin, Chairman, July 2008**

## ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

### **New Generations: Tomorrow's Society Seminar – London, October 2007**

This seminar, our third featuring participants of mainly under forty, was chaired by Yvette Cooper MP, Nick Clegg MP and Yves Censi, Député de l'Aveyron.

The broad picture painted at the seminar showed that inter-generational conflicts of interest are more acute in France than the UK and form a more distinct theme in politics. In both countries, however, younger people face particular problems in access to housing and education. The French emphasised differences between age cohorts while UK participants put more weight on differences between social groups. Both confronted structural inequalities:

- Educational or career advancement is strongly linked to background or parental income. In both countries family connections remain important, especially in ensuring access to elite higher education.
- Both countries need to make more long-term investment in education. They also need to listen to the voices of children and younger people, to encourage exchanges.
- In France, in the late 1970s, there was a 17% gap between the earnings of employees in their early 30s compared with those in their 50s. That gap is now some 40%. Virtually no earnings gap exists in the UK between these age cohorts, however enormous inequalities still exist within age cohorts owing to class which, in the UK, trumps age as the major cause of inequality.

Debate ranged over welfare, pensions, the environment, vocational training, entrepreneurship and corporate environmental awareness. Suggestions included greater devolution of power to local communities, proportional voting according to size of family, and the need for long term thinking on pensions. In education, proposals ranged from engaging parents more closely in their children's schooling to better alignment between school and employment and increased pay and status for teachers.



*Lord Radice, former FBC Chairman, and Nick Clegg MP*

### Research and Innovation; challenges and opportunities Seminar – Velizy, January 2007

This seminar was held in Velizy Villacoublay in the premises of the Messier-Bugatti company from the SAFRAN group which symbolised the high-tech nature of the event. The meeting was chaired by Joyce Quin and Jean Guéguinou and addressed the following questions:

- How can we encourage interaction between the public sector, the universities – particularly research departments – firms (including SMEs) and society, so as to generate synergy in the face of international competition?
- How can we increase productivity by turning know-how into profit in every sector?
- How can we promote finance and incentives for novel initiatives?
- How can we improve the interface between research and industry so that they open up to each other?

The event was timed to coincide with the publication by the Attali commission in France of 316 proposals to liberalise sheltered sectors of the economy, cut the cost and improve the flexibility of the labour market, and streamline public administration.

Topics covered included the extension of innovation to the service sector, particularly the health services. It was agreed that the contribution of the social sciences and humanities meant that the potential for innovation was not limited to science and technology.

The pertinence of R&D and the role of public services were explored in view of the priorities and goals of the world of research.



*The atrium at Messier-Bugatti*

The difference between 'curious' and 'orientated' research and their evaluation methods were examined, as were questions surrounding patents and intellectual property. Another important issue was the question of funding and economic incentives. Should there be a clear choice between public and private or a fusion of the two? The role of Europe surfaced as a key theme, particularly the evolution of its Research and Development programme. Finally, the relationship between research and enterprise proved to be a subject of sharp exchanges and interesting suggestions. It was agreed that an effort should be made by both sides to increase their understanding of each other in order to enhance joint effectiveness.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Energy, the Environment and Competitiveness Seminar- London, April 2008

Held days after President Sarkozy and Prime Minister Brown agreed at their summit that a more concerted effort was needed to scale up investment and financing to meet the challenge of climate change and sustainable development before 2012, this seminar brought together around 30 experts to exchange good practice and develop greater mutual understanding.

It was the first of a series of Franco-British debates on this subject and was chaired by Dr Camilla Toulmin, Director of the International Institute for Environment and Development and Christian de Boissieu, Chair of the Conseil d'Analyse Economique.



Lord Jay and The French Ambassador, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne

The meeting opened with a brief recapitulation of the environmental context in the two countries: the main conclusions of the Stern report in the UK and of the Facteur 4 and of the recent Grenelle de l'Environnement in France. Participants then went on to discuss measures to move the two countries towards a low carbon economy and to examine how a new environmental policy could be financed.

Looking ahead to the imminent French Presidency, participants considered where France and Britain should focus their joint efforts in a European context to work towards an ambitious and fair international agreement at Copenhagen at the end of 2009. Suggestions included the following:

- undertake joint work to accelerate development and deployment of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) in the EU and collaborate more closely on nuclear development projects
- engage in a process of education to encourage public support for measures to reduce emissions
- develop a common policy to reduce aircraft emissions and to develop train mix
- encourage the two governments to adapt their procurement policies to incentivise suppliers to come up with lower carbon products
- recognise our common experience and responsibilities in Africa and work together to build capacity on adaptation to climate change.
- champion greater emphasis on climate change in EU budget negotiations
- organise joint meetings between the Climate Change Committee and the French Grenelle *comités operationnels*

## CULTURE AND EDUCATION

### Creative Ways Forward; culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Seminar – London, November 2007

This seminar was the follow-up to the report, *Committing to Culture*, drawn up in 2000 by Graham Devlin and **Sue Hoyle**, which found a growing convergence between the British and French systems of arts funding. The purpose of this meeting, seven years on, was to examine to what extent the overall picture of arts funding and arts provision had changed and to look at future developments.

Following the lead set by the two chairmen **Nicholas Kenyon** (Director of the Barbican Centre) and **Philippe Meyer** (Journalist), delegates showed an admirable willingness to address fundamental questions about the value of culture to society and the individual. There was acknowledgment of the perennial antagonism between the avant-garde and the popular, of the lamentable gulf between the cultural offer and the take-up, and of the successes and failures of cultural democratization.

The setting for this seminar, the fast-changing area around Kings Cross, was chosen both to celebrate the opening of Eurostar's St Pancras terminal and to demonstrate one of the seminar's themes, the way the arts can foster urban regeneration. The evening reception preceding the seminar was hosted by the Gagosian Gallery, pioneering flagship of London's vibrant contemporary art scene whose recently opened premises had transformed a former garage in Britannia Street. Thanks are also due to Argent plc for sponsoring this reception.

Then Arts Minister, **James Purnell** (pictured) clearly relished the striking backdrop of the gallery's historic Pop Art exhibition as he spoke of his own cultural education in France and of Labour's ongoing commitment to culture.

Addressing the whole gamut of arts provision and funding, *Creative Ways Forward* was an ambitious seminar which opened up wide-ranging debates. It became clear that both countries' governments now pay serious attention to the arts not just because of the part they can play in

international diplomacy but because of their manifest contribution to GDP, tourism and employment.

However questions remained. Is Britain's recent cultural confidence a permanent change or rather temporarily connected to the current quest for regeneration projects? On the other hand the French seemed aware that their top-down, heavily state-subsidized approach to the arts was looking increasingly outdated, and were anxious about future funding levels. In the new era of public/private sponsorship can they sustain their traditional national role as tone-setters in the arts? Is leasing out their precious *patrimoine* the answer?



*James Purnell, former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, addressing delegates at the Gagosian Gallery*

## CULTURE AND EDUCATION

### Prospect/Franco-British Council Short Story Prize Competition – London, May 2008

The FBC is very keen to encourage young people to study French and so in conjunction with Prospect we invited sixth formers and undergraduates to submit a short story of no more than 1,000 words, inspired by France, or the French.

We were delighted to receive over eighty entries.

The Jury, which was made up of Julian Barnes, Ian Rankin, Joyce Quin, Bonnie Greer and Will Skidelsky, was impressed with the quality of the winning entries. The best stories managed to get away from clichés of coffee and croissants and instead carved out quirky and individual takes on France and the French and others were psychological explorations which used France as a backdrop.

The competition will be repeated next year with the support of Eurostar.



Caitlin Hart – Sixth form winner



Sarah Collier – undergraduate winner

### Undergraduates

- First prize: “The Face” by Sarah Collier, University of Salford, Manchester.
- Second prize: “Jean Paul Sartre is in my Cornflakes” by Daniel Bird, Loughborough University.
- Third Prize joint: “La Mere, La femme” by Kitty Wheater, Somerville College, University of Oxford.
- Third Prize joint: “Poppy” by Rachael Allen, Goldsmiths College, University London.

### Sixth formers

- First prize: “Heat” by Caitlin Hart, St Paul’s Girls’ School.
- Second prize: “Chabrol’s Cowboy” by Jessica Edith Sinyard.
- Third Prize: “St Vincent and the Grenadines” by James Gibson, Desborough School.

The FBC would like to thank Lord and Lady Strabolgi for supporting this initiative and City Airport for providing return tickets to Paris as prizes.

## **PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES**

This year the FBC has built on existing partnerships and developed new links with relevant organisations to create innovative events addressing a variety of topical Franco-British issues. These have included:

### **France and Britain in Europe and the World: let's seize the opportunities Speech – November 2007 at the LSE with SE Ambassador Errera**

This speech and debate provided the opportunity for the outgoing French Ambassador to reflect on his time in London and provide his perspective on future opportunities for bilateral cooperation in the context of the French Presidency of the EU.

### **Sarkozy's France – a year on Seminar – May 2008 at the Institut français with the University of Birmingham and Demos**

This two day conference examined what the election of Nicolas Sarkozy could tell us about the evolution of French society and political culture? Did his election signal the demise of French populism and the abdication of the political left? On the occasion of the first anniversary of the 2007 French presidential elections, French experts as well British academics, policy makers and journalists presented and discussed evidence-based analyses of the Sarkozy administration to date.

### **Franco-British Defence Council – St Malo 10 Years On. Simulation game – May 2008 with Loughborough University**

Helen Drake ran a simulation game with 20 final year undergraduate students of Loughborough University (as part of her module 'France in the World'). Students had been given preparatory papers months in advance, and had bid for the various roles beforehand. The game ran very well, and the 'Council' minutes are available from the FBC. This was organised with Loughborough University's Centre for the Study of International Governance (CSIG) who gave financial support, and in particular Dr Ana Juncos who worked on the preparatory materials and on the day.

### **Centenary of the Franco-British exhibition Seminar – June 2008 at the Institut français with the Franco-British Network**

We have used the poster for this conference as the cover of our 2008 Annual Report showing Britannia and Marianne meeting across the channel with the splendid exhibition in the background. Set in the area that is known as White City

as the buildings were constructed from white plaster, this exhibition set a popular and cultural seal on the Entente. The FBC supported this three-day international conference held to mark the centenary of the Exhibition held at the White City exhibition grounds in 1908. The conference brought together over twenty speakers to discuss not only the Exhibition itself, but also to offer insights from both sides of the Channel into the French and British empires, Paris and London, sport, literature and the arts at the time of the Exhibition.

### **The EU Presidency – over to France Seminar – 24 June 2008 with the LSE**

This one day conference on challenges for the French Presidency brought together key political and academic players to discuss the EU as a global player, widening and neighbourhood policy, the future of the Lisbon strategy and common policies/budget for the EU.

### **The Franco-British Relationship on the Move? –interviews leading to report and potential seminar – with Sussex and Loughborough Universities**

Helen Drake and a research assistant have conducted 20 interviews of young French nationals working in London for Paul UK. The interviews have focused on perceived differences between the UK and French labour markets and societies. She intends to carry out further interviews in the course of the summer 2008 and to draft a first article on findings, also in July-August 2008.

Sue Collard and Helen Drake are also developing a proposal to hold two seminars on the subject of the *chassé croisé* of British and French nationals across the Channel, one in Paris and one in London. Sue Collard continues to compile her pioneering findings about UK (and other EU nationals) elected as local councillors in France.

## FUTURE ACTIVITIES

### **Agriculture and rural life**

#### **Seminar - L'Aveyron, 16/17 October 2008**

This seminar will bring together experts to discuss *European agriculture in the global context, Agriculture in the EU and A new rural life?*

Questions will include:

- What system would both allow the maintenance of an agricultural sector in Europe and lift the pressure off the Third World producers?
- How compatible with an enlarged EU is the continued existence of the CAP in anything like its present form?
- What type of agricultural production and agricultural producers would Britain and France like to maintain, and how?
- Agriculture's dominant role in the rural economy has been assumed throughout history. What type of sustainable rural community does government want to nurture, and how can public policy contribute to the provision of employment, affordable housing, and local services?

### **Public Service Reform**

#### **Seminar – Edinburgh, December 2008**

The new Scottish parliament will be the venue for this topical debate. Our seminar will ask:

- Must moves to liberalise the economy be accompanied by “public service reform” of a Blairite kind?
- Does France need “public service reform” of the British kind?
- has public service reform now run its course in Britain, just as it begins to get going in France?
  
- What is the evidence for the need for reform, in terms of public attitudes?
- Does reform “work” and deliver measurably superior services or satisfaction?
- Do the French and British still hold identifiably different ideas of the state?

## **Colonial History**

### **Seminar – Paris, 29 January 2008**

This seminar is being organised by the French Section of the Council in collaboration with the Fondation Singer Polignac in Paris. An invited audience will hear British and French speakers debate the 'concept' of colonialism in the two countries, the positive and negative consequences of colonisation and the legacy that has been left. The speakers' papers will be published in a book by Harmattan.

### **Other projects under development include:**

- **Heritage and Patrimoine**
  - **Journalism and the challenges of New Media**
  - **The role of France and the UK in preventing deforestation**
  - **Ways forward in the EU after Lisbon**
  - **Challenges of Healthcare in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**
  - **Publishing**
-

- **ACCOUNTS**

**Balance sheet**

**Accountants' report**

## Seminar Reports

Last year the most popular reports downloaded from our website were those dealing with Sport, Truancy and Policing.

Reports are in English and cost **£5 each** (unless shown otherwise):

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Energy and the Environment</b> Aurélie Mejean	<b>2008</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Policies for the Ageing Society</b> Christopher Johnson	<b>2005</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Research and Innovation: challenges and potential strategies</b> Gérard Roubichou	<b>2008</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Religion and the State</b> Maurice Fraser	<b>2005</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Creative ways forward: culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> century</b> Philip Hensher	<b>2007</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>The American Elections and Transatlantic Relations</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2005</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>New Generations: Tomorrow's Society</b> David Walker	<b>2007</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>New Generations – New connections between France and Britain</b> David Walker	<b>2005</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>The Pound, The Euro and the Dollar</b> Christopher Johnson	<b>2007</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Future of the UN</b> Quentin Peel	<b>2004</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Challenges of Diversity in France and Britain</b> David Walker	<b>2007</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cross Channel Currents; 100 years of the Entente Cordiale</b> Edited by Richard Mayne, Douglas Johnson and Robert Tombs <b>£20.99</b>	<b>2004</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Nuances</b> Richard Mayne	<b>2006</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Development Aid Policies</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2004</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Crises in the Middle East</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2006</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>The Future of the European Union; French and British Perspectives</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2003</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Defence Europe</b> Roger Morgan	<b>2006</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Immigration and Integration</b> Sophie Pedder	<b>2003</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Economic and Social Policies</b> Laurent Bonnaud / Christopher Johnson	<b>2006</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Non-Governmental Organisations in France and the UK</b> Mary Braid	<b>2003</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>France, Britain and the Future of the European Union</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2006</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>French/British views of the situation in the Middle East</b> Jean-Marie Le Breton	<b>2002</b>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Food systems and Biotechnology</b> Paul Levy	<b>2002</b>
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>The Commonwealth and La Francophonie</b> Martin Mulligan	<b>2002</b>

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Please send the quarterly FBC e-newsletter to my email address:.....

Please send the FBC Annual Report to my postal address:

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I suggest you also send a copy of the Annual report to:

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I would like to make the following suggestions for FBC seminars/events:

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Please return to:

**Henry Paker, Franco-British Council, 16-18 Strutton Ground, London SW1P 2HP, Fax: 020 7976 8131**

or email **henry@francobritishcouncil.org.uk**

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\*=retired 2007 += joined 2008

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