

# The 'London French' Project

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Debra Kelly, Department of Modern and Applied  
Languages, University of Westminster

Martyn Cornick, Department of French, University  
of Birmingham

# Three Areas for Update/Discussion

What we're currently working on:

- British Academy Funded Seminar Series
- Edited Volume Proposal and Contents

What we want to do in the future:

- Large AHRC Funding Bid

# Broad Aims of the Project

A social/cultural history of the French in London exploring the multiple ways in which their presence has contributed to the life of the city with a dual historical and contemporary focus:

- Historical traces of the French in London (e.g., the capital as refuge for various émigrés and exiles);
- Insights into the contemporary French population (particularly young French people seeking new opportunities in the late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries);

The marks the French have made historically and continue to make on the contemporary life of London (in the arts; business; industry; education; the leisure and creative industries, etc.)

- A Temporal and Spatial Mapping of the French Presence in the British Capital from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day

Address old perceptions and new realities of the French presence in London

# Broad Project Objectives

- Review/undertake new research into the historical legacies of the French in London from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to the late 20<sup>th</sup> centuries;
- Provide data in order to survey/analyse the impact of the French on contemporary London (from 1980s to present day);
- To produce for the first time a comprehensive, innovative and up-to-date socio-cultural history of the contributions made by the French to London

# Why Us and Why Now?

- 'Culture F-B' Network of British and French scholars working on Franco-British cultural relations in 19th/20th centuries ([www.culturefb.org](http://www.culturefb.org); conferences and publications on the centenaries of the Entente Cordiale and of the White City Franco-British Exhibition);
- The French Consulate estimates that around 300-400,000 French citizens reside in the UK (majority in London/South-East);
- Numbers large enough for Sarkozy to campaign in London in January 2007 urging 'France's Children' to return home;
- Little research on impact and experiences of a substantial migrant community from UK's closest European neighbour (e.g. does the community itself and/or its host consider it be 'migrant'? What is the economic, social, cultural, etc. impact of French residents in London?)



# A Timely Project

- Centenary of the Institut Français du Royaume Uni in 2010; other commemorative events (e.g. June 2010 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of de Gaulle's 'Appel du 18 juin' and the presence of the Free French in London in the Second World War);
- 2011-12 is an Election Year for the French: voting in Presidential Elections (April, May) and Legislative Elections (June) with, for the first time, a Deputy for Northern Europe voted for by French residents living abroad; French in London will be voting here;
- Publication of first output (edited volume) envisaged for late 2012 following the London 2012 Olympics (re-established in their modern form by the Baron de Coubertin with emphasis on French language enshrined in its Charter; the 'Pavillon de France' in Billingsgate, etc.);

# Interest in the Project

- French Consulate and French Embassy
- Widespread Media Interest: programme series for French Radio London; interviews for *Le Monde*, BBC Radio London, TV5, *Ici Londres*; *Le Petit Journal*; *Expatlive*; the French in London more generally reported on (*London Evening Standard*; BBC, *The Economist*, etc.)
- Wide potential audience – students, scholars and researchers in history, sociology, cultural studies, politics and international relations, diplomacy, modern languages, migration studies, urban studies; Francophile British and wide-range of French residents in London (past and present) for professional and personal interests;
- Contemporary section will provide information on the economic, social and cultural contributions of the French to London (of interest to businesses and local and national policy makers)

# Broad Methodologies for Current Work

- Workshop Series for Book Project to bring together contributors of various types together for discussion/also involving potential readers and users;
- Established scholars working on chapters dedicated to their specialist areas;
- Surveying/Interviewing contemporary residents across generations/across employment sectors/across social sectors;
- Advisory Group to include, for example, representatives of the French Embassy/Consulate; French Associations in London; French Press in London; Educational Institutions; Museum of London; French Chamber of Commerce; Alliance Française; BBC; Cultural Organisations; Community Representatives; French Religious Communities; other French Studies specialists



# Starting Point: Initial Research Questions

- Recognition that migration brings about a fundamental transformation in spaces and places that are linked to the social and cultural meanings of 'home' and 'belonging'
- Have 'France's Children' been, and/or they now 'at home' in London?
- What has been/is the real and symbolic impact of their presence on the life of the capital in social, cultural, political and economic terms?
- Analysis of a migrant community not normally conceived as such may throw into relief those migrant communities which do receive considerable political, media and academic attention;
- Contribution also to the current political debate and research into French national identity (conducted by French government)

# Scholarly Multi-Authored History in Progress

Chronological mapping will be intersected by a number of themes, for example: exile/refuge; gastronomy; fashion; education; art; literature; music; leisure/pleasure; entrepreneurship; business; and above all **place/space**

From Hampstead in the north to Spitalfields in the east, from Soho in the centre to South Kensington and beyond in the south-west, the physical and symbolic traces of the French presence in London are many and varied, and are manifest in diverse ways and in diverse institutions

‘The spatial is precisely one of the sources of the temporal [...] the spatial is integral to the production of history [...] just as the temporal is to geography’ Doreen Massey

# Working Title: Liberty, Equality, Opportunity?

## The French Presence in the British Capital

### from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Day

- Introduction: 'Towards A History of the French in London': Martyn Cornick and Debra Kelly
- 'The Impact of the French Huguenots': Elizabeth Randall and Tessa Murdoch (Huguenot Society; V&A)
- 'The "novelty value" of French Emigrés in London in the 1790s': Kirsty Carpenter (Massey University, NZ)
- 'The French Princes in London: Conspiracy and Restoration': Philip Mansel (Society for Court Studies, London; IHR)
- 'French Republicans and Socialist Exiles 1815-1870': Fabrice Bensimon (Paris IV-Sorbonne)
- 'The Terrible Year and After: Refugees and Exiles after 1870': Robert Tombs (Cambridge)
- 'Exiles and Gender come out from the shadows: the French in London during the July Monarchy and the Second Empire': Máire Cross (Newcastle)
- 'French Cooks Serving Victorian Londoners' Valerie Mars (UCL)

# Contents Continued

- 'Continuity and Rupture in the French Presence in London Before and After the First World War' Michel Rapoport (Paris XII)
- 'Franco-British Cultural Diplomacy in the Early 20th Century': Philippe Lane (French Embassy)
- 'London during World War Two – One Frenchman, One Review - Raymond Aron and *La France Libre*': David Drake (Emeritus, Middlesex)
- 'The First Bastion of the Resistance?: Denis Saurat and the London Free French 1940-1941': Martyn Cornick
- 'Mapping Free French London': Debra Kelly
- 'From the 16ième to South Ken? A Study of the Contemporary French Population in London': Saskia Huc-Hepher and Helen Drake (Westminster; Loughborough)
- Conclusion: 'A Temporal and Spatial Mapping of the French in London': Debra Kelly and Martyn Cornick



# Previous Research

Examples:

T. Murdoch (ed.), *The Quiet Conquest: Huguenots 1685-1985* (1985)

T. Murdoch with R. Vigne, *The French Hospital in England. Its Huguenot History and Collections* (2009)

R. Gwynn *The Huguenots of London* (1998)

Henri Goiran, *Les Français à Londres* (1933)

K. Carpenter, *Refugees of the French Revolution. Emigrés in London 1789-1802* (1999)

F. Bensimon, 'The French Exiles and the British' in Freitag (ed.), *Exiles from European Revolutions. Refugees in Mid-Victorian England* (2003)

Numerous articles and book chapters on 18<sup>th</sup> /19<sup>th</sup>/ early 20<sup>th</sup> century French exiles and refugees/  
French writers and painters who visited London

Numerous studies on La France Libre and memoirs by the Free French in London in the Second  
World War

N. Atkin, *The Forgotten French: Exiles in the British Isles 1940-1944*

A. Favell, 'London as Eurocity: Free French Movers in the Economic Capital' in Smith and Favell  
(eds), *The Human Face of Global Mobility* (2006)

A. Favell, *Eurostars and Eurocities* (2008)

D. Block, 'French Foreign-Language Teachers: Culture-Shock and Shifting Pedagogic Cultures' in D.  
Block, *Multilingual Identities in a Global City: London Stories* (2003)



# Other Current Research

- 'French Capital: A Study of French Highly-Skilled Migrants in London's Financial and Business Sectors'

Funded by ESRC; University of Middlesex:

Dr Jon Mulholland

Dr Louise Ryan

Project Report; Academic and Public presentations; policy seminar; media releases; journal articles

Dissemination expected to commence November 2011

- Consulat Général à Londres 'Newsletter': feature and contact details for the London French Project; latest issue concerned with forthcoming elections

## Other recent/current areas of research

- statistics/London the fourth? fifth? largest French city ? The data is currently incomplete...
- previous research focus on younger generation service sector population, IT, media and finance sectors (Favell; 2006)
- *France Libre d'Entreprendre*  
<http://www.francelibre.org/>
- 'Français of the Year Awards'  
<http://grandes-ecoles-city-circle.com/>

# Français of the Year Award – More Media Interest

- Awards for business, gastronomy, sports and the arts
- 2008 winners: Arsène Wenger; Eva Green; Nicole Farhi; Pierre Gagnaire; Hélène Darroze; Jean-François Cecillon; Yoël Zaoui; Anne Brugière
- “Le roi des fusions-acquisitions en Europe couronné par la City”; “la styliste française la plus British”; “les trois mousquetaires de Goldman Sachs”; “Sont-ils perdus pour toujours?” (*La Tribune*)
- “La City est (un peu) française” (*Le Point*)
- “Des lauriers pour les exilés français de Londres”; “Election des meilleurs ‘Frenchies’ de l’année à Londres” (*Le Figaro*)
- “Ici Londres, les Français parlent aux Français” (*Les Echos*)
- “Paris-on-Thames”; “French Bubbles” (*Financial Times*)
- “Les Français sont arrivés”; “Successful French immigrants”; “Britain’s crème de la crème”; “The Accidental Englishman” (*The Independent*)
- “Expats vote on the crème de la crème of French in London”; “New awards to toast London’s French quarter”; “Zut alors! The French are taking over” (*Evening Standard*)
- “London’s French Foreign Legion Shuns Sarkozy Plea to Come Home” (Bloomberg.com)

# The Wider Context: London as 'global city' and 'Eurocity'

- long history of immigration and asylum; post-war, post-colonial multiculturalism
- 1990s open labour market for foreigners/prime destination of European free movement

“London has seen its own quiet European invasion, anchoring it firmly in the continent” (Favell: 2006)

“ [your] intelligence, imagination and passion for work and desire for success [...] have helped give [London] the vitality that Paris needs so much” (Sarkozy, January 2007 campaign speech)

- Contemporary community, social and economic trends
- Contemporary cultural practice and migration in a historical framework



# A Precise Example: Contribution to the British Library Web Archiving Project

The finished product offers options such as a virtual 'street' of thematically linked websites – in this case *Les Français de Londres* – whose homepages constitute the bordering façades which you can either choose to speed past or enter... Just like a real street, these sites will form part of the British Library's, and by extension cyberspace's, permanent landscape, they will be open to all those who wish to explore this significant community, there for posterity and as a marker of the socio-ethnic reality upon which they were founded.

In order to reflect all aspects of the vibrant, contemporary French population in London – from associations to academia, blogging to banking, cafés to communications, discos to doctors, education to estate agencies (and the list could, and should, go on) – we need your contributions. Any websites, web-pages, blog-spots, online directories, e-magazines, video-clips, educational zones or social networks, in French or English, that are linked to the French community in the UK are potentially of interest to us. Once we have permission from their creators, these internet resources will be saved in the digital archives of the British Library as a lasting testimony to the French presence in London. Whether entire sites or a single page/document accessible via a separate website: the aim is to paint as faithful a picture as possible of this very real presence through virtual means, whose ethereal quality will now for the first time in history be awarded an enduring existence



# Arts and Humanities Research Council Funding Bid

- Web based resources for public and professional access
- Public and Academic workshops and conferences; public engagement activities of all Project Partners
- Links between published edited book and website resources
- Co-authored popular book based on scholarly multi-authored history
- Journal articles
- Exhibition/Displays; exhibition catalogue
- Networking and Co-operation between Project Partners inside and outside academia
- Media and New Media Dissemination
- Consultancy Work (professional briefings and workshops for policy makers; diplomats, press; education; social trends, social policy, employment, community needs, etc)
- Links to other research work