



St Andrews – Loches Alliance

Summer Newsletter

Dear Members

There is a more positive vocabulary to describe our current situation these days: *le confinement* has become *le déconfinement* and gradually life is returning to normal albeit with some modifications. Sadly there has been little change in the situation of the Alliance; our busy 2020 programme has been with one exception, cancelled. We remain optimistic that the Café Cabaret on November 14th will take place and would urge you to save the date and tell your friends.

- *News from Loches*

Like St Andrews, during lockdown Loches returned to the quiet little town it was in the sixties and before; a ghost town. At its most severe, the market was suspended, people could only leave their homes for no more than one hour a day. To ensure that they adhered to this, they had to fill in a form every time they went out, stating the time they had left home and their purpose in doing so.

There was a very strictly limited range of accepted possibilities and gendarmes checked these papers with fines for infringements. From mid May however these restrictions were gradually lifted and now life has returned almost to normal, albeit with all the precautions that we too are experiencing. Happily, Loches was not badly affected by the Corona Virus



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Some photographs taken during lockdown showing familiar corners of the town, deserted. i) la Porte des Cordeliers ii) la Mairie iii) la Tour St Antoine et la place du marché aux fleurs. Truly *une ville phantôme*.

- *Le clocher dans le ciel*

As part of their recent exchange, the Caméra Photo Club du Lochois has shared with members of the St Andrews Photographic Society an exquisite little film they have made. It features the recent reconstruction of the bell tower in the village of Beaulieu-lès-Loches which many members will know. The film, ‘Le Clocher dans le Ciel’, can be viewed on YouTube. It highlights the skill and meticulous craftsmanship of the stonemasons, not to mention their bravery (and that of those who took the film) and is a reminder too of the work currently being undertaken to restore Le Collégiale St Ours in Loches and indeed Notre Dame de Paris. Thank you to John Peacock for bringing this to my attention.

- *Donald Macgregor*

Many tributes have been paid to Donald and I include here, with his permission, one from our dear friend Pascal Dubrisay, who knew Donald from the earliest days of the Alliance:

‘... mon ami Donald, lui qui dès le départ fut l’un des plus fervents supporters de la Nouvelle Alliance, et l’un des membres les plus actifs de nos échanges. Combien de fois les Lochois ont-ils pu le croiser dans nos villes historiques ? En plus, il écrivait et maîtrisait plutôt bien le français. Je conserve de lui des pages de poèmes écrits dans notre langue. Généreux, efficace, toujours heureux que nous nous rencontrions ici chez nous ou chez vous, je ne conserve que de magnifiques souvenirs de cette belle figure écossaise

Dans l’histoire de la Nouvelle Alliance que je devrais publier après l’été, je ne manque pas de lui rendre hommage.... Voilà un grand nom qui après ceux de Mary Freeborn, les Smith, Robin Adam s’inscrit dans l’histoire de nos deux villes. Son nom restera à jamais gravé dans mon cœur.’

On the eve of le quatorze juillet, la Fête Nationale, we remember the many Loches Alliance events which have taken place here and in Loches. Sadly, not this year but let's hope in the years to come.

Joyeux 14 juillet ! Bonne Fête Nationale et à bientôt !

Joyce