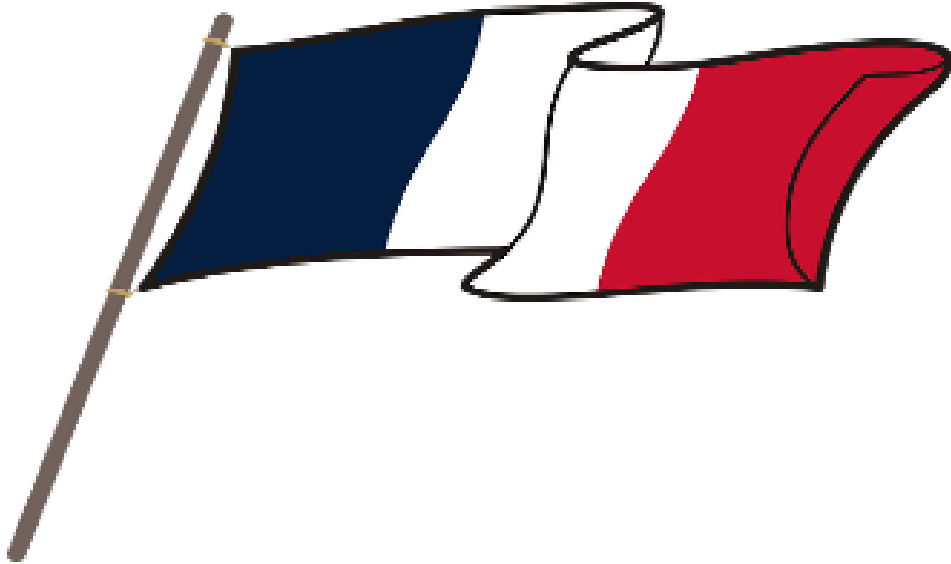


# **3Ls FRENCH CLUB**



## **RESUMÉ OF TALKS AND ACTIVITIES SESSION 2023-2024**

M. Crearie

## **OCTOBER - CÉCILE DOCHERTY, FRENCH TEACHER AND HONORARY MEMBER OF 3Ls FRENCH CLUB**

### **LAFAYETTE - AUVERGNAT, SOLDAT, ARISTOCRATE**



Lafayette (1757-1834) was born Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette, issue of a very noble military family dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Lafayette was tall, handsome, red-headed, popular with women and he liked uniforms (he designed the uniform for the National Guard) He had a rural provincial childhood and Cécile, being from Auvergne herself, was keen to emphasise the influence this had on him. He was brought up by his mother and grandmother who gave him lots of freedom. He was liberal, educated and loved liberty.

Aged 11 his mother took him to Paris where he was sent to military school. His mother died when he was 13 and he was looked after by his grandfather. He married at 16. Lafayette was bored at court and travelled but this bored him too. A meeting with the Duke of Gloucester, who sympathised with the “upstart” Americans, inspired him to fight with the insurgents at 18.

He bought a boat and sailed to America (against the wishes of the King). His first impressions were of shock on seeing black slaves. While not initially welcomed, he felt an immediate sympathy with George Washington and they became friends - they had a father/son relationship and Lafayette named his son Georges Washington. He impressed Washington with his prowess in battle. He spent a lot of money on the cause and even fought alongside the Native Americans. Lafayette was also a good diplomat. He returned to France on the death of his first daughter and was greeted as a hero. He convinced the King to send 2 fleets. Lafayette returned to America and fought with the American army. He had a significant role in the Battle of Yorktown.

After his return to France the Revolution soon started. Lafayette was not a Republican but a monarchist parliamentarian. He was made head of the army and wanted to save the King. Named a traitor, he went to Prussia where he was arrested and spent 5 years in prison.

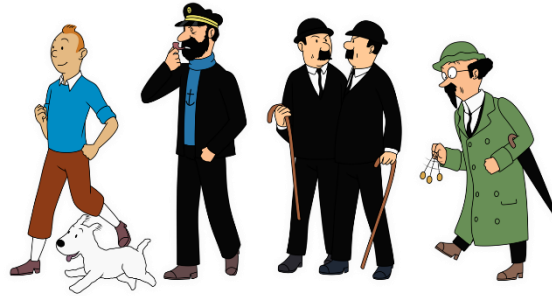
Lafayette returned to France after Napoleon secured his release in 1797, though he refused to participate in Napoleon's government. After the Bourbon Restoration of 1814, he became a liberal member of the Chamber of Deputies, a position which he held for most of the remainder of his life. During France's July Revolution of 1830, he declined an offer to become the French dictator. Instead, he supported Louis Philippe as king but turned against him when the monarch became autocratic.

In 1824, he had returned to the United States where he visited all 24 states and was greeted with great enthusiasm. Dozens of cities were named in his honour. On Lafayette's death, US President Jackson ordered that Lafayette receive the same honours bestowed on Washington on his death.

Throughout his career as statesman, Lafayette befriended Native Americans, defended the rights of French Protestants and Jews, before and during the French Revolution, backed national revolutions in Europe and South America, spoke out against capital punishment and solitary confinement and supported women and their ideas and causes. Lafayette died in Paris in 1834 aged 76.

I cannot do justice here to the detail and depth of knowledge that Cécile displayed in her presentation and all without reference to notes. Un tour de force!

## NOVEMBER - POT POURRI: FRENCH LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES



Our members always love activities which allow them to practise their language skills. We had 4 groups of different language activities. Member Joe O'Shea prepared some language activities identifying correct forms of words. Committee members chaired some games which had been kindly offered to us by Thomas Archambaud of the University.

One game centred on Parisian Metro Stations, a second on identifying films from slangy derogatory French reviews. Another game involved a picture story from Tintin, to which members had to provide the script.

There was a great buzz in the room as members moved around the different groups and everyone clearly enjoyed these fun activities which allowed them to work in teams together and use their French. A very popular activity.

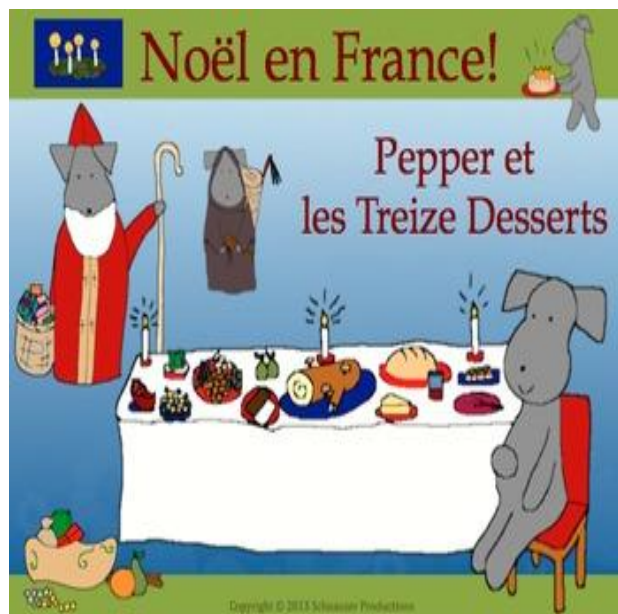


## DECEMBER - FÊTE DE NOEL



Our annual Fête de Noel was certainly joyeux. We started by watching a short film on how the French celebrate Christmas followed by a quiz on Christmas, prepared by the Club President.

We then had a few Christmas themed games and activities while enjoying a delicious buffet and some Christmas cheer.



## JANUARY - CATASTROPHE!!!!



Our scheduled speaker had to cancel due to personal circumstances, but a Plan B speaker was in place.



However, we had reckoned without the weather - black ice and the speaker lived at the top of a hill and cars could only get part of the way up! She was stranded!



Arrived at club with no plan C!!! Despite the weather there was a good turnout of members.

Oh là, là là là là! Que faire?

Fortunately, John Parkhill, former Club President, stepped into the breach and gave a brief account, in French, of a Burns Supper he had attended the previous day. Our hero!



We followed this with a short video on how the French celebrate New Year. This was very informative and introduced us to some new language terms. We found out that un Sam is the designated driver at a social event, and that appartement is shortened to apart. There were however audible gasps (of horror) when we were asked to "Likez" the video. Ça alors! Where is the Académie when you need it?

**FEBRUARY - MURIELLE JOUSSEAU, TEACHING FELLOW**

**FRENCH DEPT, UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**

**UN RESTAURANT PAS COMME LES AUTRES**



Murielle kept us guessing to the last minute with her mysterious theme. On the day, she finally revealed her title – Un Restaurant Pas Comme Les Autres, in fact Les Restaurants du Coeur, known as Les Restos du Coeur, a French Charity whose main activity is to distribute hot meals and packages to those in need.

The initiative was launched in 1985 by the comedian and actor Coluche (1944-1986) known for his irreverent attitude towards politics and the establishment (he actually stood for President in 1980 but was asked to withdraw) The venture he launched was meant to be temporary but nearly 40 years later it still exists. Coluche started the project in Paris and then spread it to other big cities in France. He aimed to give away 2,000 to 3,000 meals per day, but 8.5 million meals were distributed in the first winter alone. The restos run due to the generosity of industry, the public and the government.



Coluche used his own image to promote his charity and he created Les Enfoirés around this idea. He presented a TV show gathering together all sorts of artists, sports stars, politicians and media presenters. This has become a very popular annual event with all profits going to charity.

The mission of les Restos du Coeur has diversified to encompass a wide range of activities. As well as food it offers many different activities – help to get back into work, writing of CVs, language classes for immigrants, work experience, legal help, sport and leisure activities, holidays.

In 1988 the Loi Coluche was passed which permits small donors to benefit from the same tax breaks as big donors. The initiative has also spread beyond France to Belgium, Italy and Germany.

Unfortunately, Coluche died in 1986 in a motorbike accident (conspiracy theories followed).

Murielle was a delightful speaker, and we look forward to her returning to the French Club in the near future.

## MARCH - DAVID GUÉRIN FRENCH ASSISTANT, UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE

### L'ESPÉRANTO



David had the difficult task of trying to convince a sceptical audience of the importance and benefits of Esperanto. He focused on 3 areas in his presentation.

- 1) What is Esperanto?
- 2) The History of the Movement
- 3) Today's Esperanto Community

1) Esperanto is a language made up mainly from romance languages but with elements of Germanic, Greek and Slavic languages, praised for its regularity, simplicity and creativity. You can learn it 8 times more quickly than English and it's a useful starting point to learn other languages. David presented us with some examples of the grammar system (no irregular verbs!) and then gave us with a small passage in Esperanto for us to translate into English (with mixed results!).



2) Esperanto was created in 1887 by LL Zamenhof, an ophthalmologist from Bialystok, with the aim of reducing the time spent learning other languages and to promote harmony between different nations. A first World Congress was organised in 1905, and congresses have been held in different countries every year since (apart from during the two World Wars). Optimism for the language subsided after WW1. Later, Esperanto attracted the suspicion of many states, especially Nazi Germany (Zamenhof was a Jew), Franco's Spain and the Soviet Union under Stalin.

3) The impact of the internet has created a renaissance for Esperanto, making it increasingly accessible. It has up to 2 million speakers although no country has adopted it officially. However, in 1954 the UN granted official support to Esperanto as an international auxiliary language. The profile of Esperanto speakers is as follows:

students, retirees, teachers, translators, IT specialists, revolutionaries and geeks!

The community has its own "culture espérantiste" with all kinds of music, literature (original and translated) and theatre.

David made a final attempt to convert us by emphasising Esperanto as language for everyone, as an open community and as an intercultural experience. There is even a club in Glasgow

<https://skotland.org/>

While not converting us all, David's well-prepared and well-structured presentation was delivered with great authority, enthusiasm and charm, all of which was much appreciated by members

## DANKON POR VIA ATENTO

## APRIL - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DÉGUSTATION DE VIN



Mary Crearie, Club President, presented a review of the year. Thanks were due to Club members and guest speakers for their continuing support at regular meetings and social activities. The Club Committee were also thanked for their input over the year.

Mary provided feedback on a survey which members had completed the previous session and she outlined how their suggestions had been taken on board to enhance members' experience.

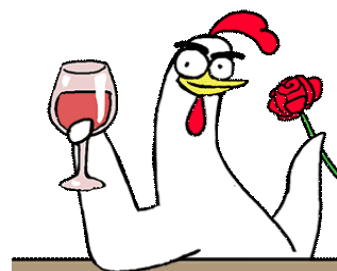
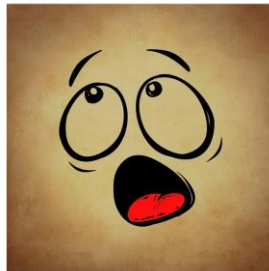
The AGM was followed by a very (very) merry wine testing organised by members Diane Campbell and Jean McClure. Members sampled a variety of wines and, in a blind tasting, had to match each wine to a description and identify grape varieties, using a helpsheet provided.

It was a very successful end to the year and glad to say all members arrived home "sains et saufs".

### NOVINOPHOBIA

(noun)

the fear of running  
out of wine





## CLUB SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Monthly cheese and wine after every talk



### FILM OUTINGS - all at GFT

ORIGIN OF EVIL - Sébastien Marnier

LES PARAPLUIES DE CHERBOURG - Jacques Demy

THE TASTE OF EVERYTHING - Tran Anh Hing, o preceded by lunch at The Willow Tea Rooms

THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO - Alexandre de la Patellière et Matthieu Delaperte



### CULTURAL AND SOCIAL OUTINGS

DEBATE in French at Alliance Française between undergrad students from Strathclyde and Glasgow Universities.

GENERAL TOUR OF KELVINGROVE ART GALLERIES (organised by Alliance) with Léa Masciocchi, followed by lunch in restaurant.

DEGAS EXHIBITION AT THE BURRELL, followed by lunch in restaurant.

TOUR OF FRENCH ROOM at Kelvingrove Art Gallery with Léa Masciocchi, with lunch in the restaurant.

