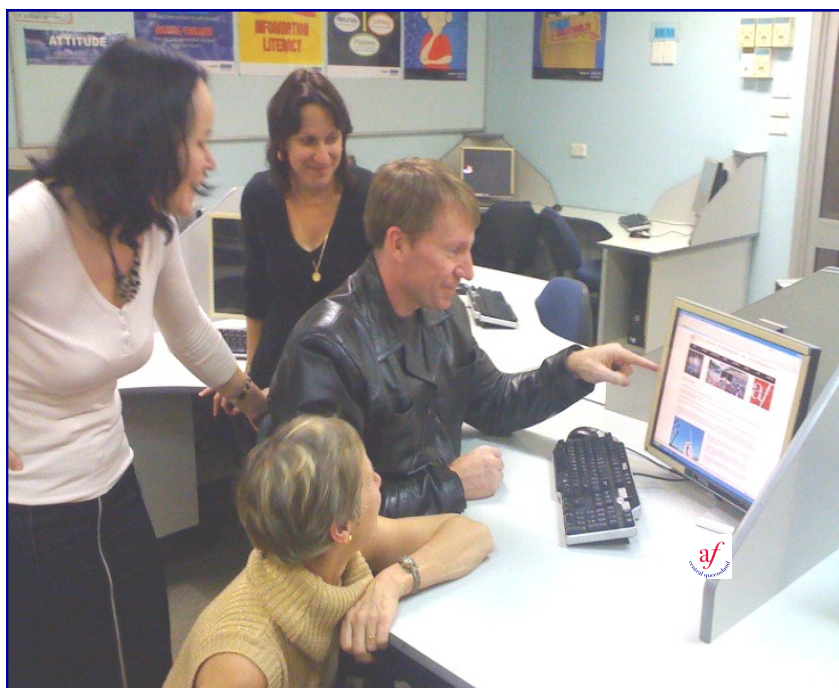


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[www.afrockhampton.com](http://www.afrockhampton.com)



**Steve McCutcheon demonstrating the website to teachers**  
**From the back: Fil Olsen, Pascale Levacher and Susan Yates**

Steve McCutcheon's generosity is proving to be a great bonus for the Alliance Française de Central Queensland. Although we had a website that was developed a number of years ago, no one knew how to access it in order to update it - *une situation lamentable*. Steve, a student who joined us in 2009, noticed our predicament and volunteered to create a new website, one for which he has provided a support pack so someone else can manage the site should he be no longer available. From the beginning of its operation in late February until mid May, there were nearly 2000 visitors to our new website, with the average time spent being four minutes. Many viewers have shown an interest in learning the French language and we have been rewarded with a number of new students who have discovered us on the web. The website was also a great bonus to the film festival with peak access being from 19 - 24 April. Congratulations Steve on a job well done!



## From the editor

What a busy six months since our last issue! The Touring French Film Festival has been *un grand succès* (see more on page 3) due to the interest and hard work of the Film Festival sub-committee, the wonderful support from the community, the Rockhampton Regional Council, Sue Smith and Judy Couttie, the ABC, the RSL and of course Richard Hindley of the Federation of the Alliances Françaises of Australia. Richard organises the films and their distribution to all the participating alliances.

My thanks to the contributors to this issue. Therese Keane generously shares the cruise of her family and the Moggs beside the Loire, demonstrating yet another enjoyable way of touring 'La Belle France'. My aim to print articles concerning different ways of touring France seems to bring an endless supply of interesting stories - each experience unique! If you are interested in other travel stories, the previous Newsletters are available on our website.

Of course much more information about the Alliance de Central Queensland and its activities can be viewed on the website. To contact the Alliance, you can telephone me on 4934 1363 or Susan Yates on 0410 878 536, or you can email us at [alliancefrancaise.rton@gmail.com](mailto:alliancefrancaise.rton@gmail.com)

Issue 5 of *le bulletin* will be published in early December, so if you would like to contribute, please contact me. Your articles will need to be submitted by the end of October.

**Pat Kandle**



# Seven Sparkling Days on the Loire

Therese Keane

September 2009 saw Michele and Peter Mogg and the Keane family of Micheal, myself, Lucie and Patrick cruising for a week on the **Canal latéral à Loire**. The Canal runs alongside the Loire River, crossing it from time to time, and we cruised the section between Briare and Decize, a distance of 133 km. The canals, now mainly a tourist attraction, were built during the industrial revolution.

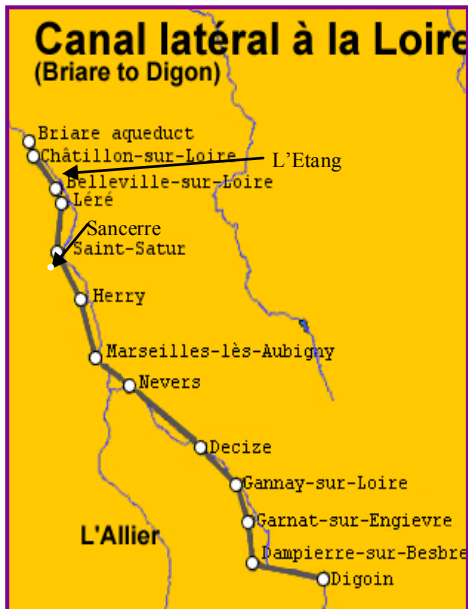


Our journey began at Châtillon-sur-Loire but the train from Paris (a distance of 240 km) came only as far as Briare and we had to arrange a taxi from there to the boat, which was our first attempt to speak French to a non-English speaker, but it happened without too much trouble.

Arriving in Châtillon-sur-Loire reminded Lucie of walking into the village from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. We managed to arrive on market day and in many ways this was the best experience of our travels. We purchased home-made apricot and strawberry jam that tasted like the freshest fruit. The butcher's shop just left us drooling, with terrines by the dozen and freshly cooked chicken, and the bakery, with a variety of pastries and breads, again was most enticing. Here was our first experience of a 'horse butcher' - located well away from the regular butcher. Needless to say we bought nothing there.

As it was quite late by the time we were organised with our self-drive canal boat, we back-tracked to Briare and crossed the beautiful Briare Aqueduct. Built with the help of the engineer Eiffel of Eiffel Tower fame, this is the longest canal bridge in Europe, allowing both barges and pleasure boats to cross the Loire river. As we crossed, we looked down and could see the untamed Loire River below us – it was an odd sensation driving a boat over a river.

The next morning, we explored Briare, a village overflowing with baskets of flowers, and bought Lucie a gâteau topped with 'fraises' and custard for her birthday. Patrick also celebrated his birthday on the boat but, unfortunately for Patrick, he woke



very ill that day and had one of the worst birthdays anyone could imagine.

Briare has a number of bakeries and an IGA equivalent. We had planned to leave around midday but - as the captain Pierre said – the crew were straggling. We finally set off around 1 p.m., stopping for the night a short distance away at Belleville, a little town perched on the top of a hill. We moored near the caravan park and went off searching for the winery we'd seen advertised on the way, but ended up walking miles – past vineyards and suburbia – until we came to the quaint village of l'Etang where everything was shut.



Lucie's gâteau

Our days were filled with interesting adventures. We were able to stop and start as we wished and spend the days and evenings however we liked. At Belleville we dined in a small family run restaurant. The chef was worried Patrick might eat the poisonous plants decorating the window sill when he stroked their leaves. This restaurant, so homely and quaint, could have come straight from the story book *Madeline*. The chef and his wife made us feel very special; they were so happy to serve us, and everywhere we found the locals to be the same.

Along the way we visited the villages by the river and roadside markets. One soft misty morning, Peter and Michele set off to find the roadside market and they returned loaded with freshly picked carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, capsicum, eggplant and lettuce and they had also gathered strawberries, the sweetest ever. We bought wine from a lockmaster near Belleville and bread at the 'mairie' of Sancerre. Each village is steeped in history. Léré has an eleventh century church with a piece of St Martin's jawbone (a bit gruesome really); Sancerre, with 300 year old plane trees and centre of the famous Sancerre wine region, is a medieval village situated on top of a hill with commanding views of the valley; Châtillon-sur-Loire can be traced back to the sixth century.



Michelle steering and Therese relaxing

Our journey ended on Saturday with another expression of the good-will of the French people. Michael and Peter set off to Nevers to collect the hire cars for the next leg of our journey. On the way back they became separated. Michael has absolutely no French but was given excellent directions by a local farmer who had no English at all, and they were soon reunited.

We certainly would do it again - it was a lovely way to travel - slow and relaxed. We just loved it.



# AGM Sydney

Nerida O'Kare

The 2010 General Assembly of the Federation of Alliances Françaises in Australia was held in Sydney on the 17th and 18th of April. More than 60 delegates representing 31 Australian AF's met to elect committee and executive members for the next three years, to listen to reports and presentations and to participate in discussions on issues of common interest.

Pascale and Nerida were our delegates. They were very impressed by the beautiful **venue** for the Conference, **The Alliance Centre de Sydney** which was opened in November 2009 and is the last commercial building designed by **Harry Seidler**. The building is of modern design, thirteen storeys high and features a spectacular circular granite stairway which links three floors, thereby creating a natural flow between the Café, classrooms and media centre. A Parisian style café, operated by the renowned restaurateur Becasse, provided delectable refreshments for lunches.



Stairway - AF Sydney

The **agenda** for the conference was very comprehensive and exhausting. Saturday morning began with the discussion of **items from the FAF General Assembly**, including a new scheme to calculate branch contributions to FAF, francophonie and francophilie in Australia and national projects (new quality control processes in teaching, common learning outcomes and pedagogical resources).

Pierre Labbe, the French Cultural Attaché, spoke about **francophonie and francophilie in Australia**, noting that while student numbers at the alliances are increasing in Australia, apparently unaffected by the global financial crisis, numbers in secondary schools are low. He also spoke of the desire for a quality control process so students of the

various Alliances will be able to demonstrate their levels of achievement.

There was quite an air of expectancy surrounding the **election of committee** and executive members. Word was out that 'change' was afoot. The election produced a new president, Canberraian Alan Edwards, who promises a new era of communication between the regional Alliances Françaises and the FAF Committee. Alan has also indicated that he will work closely with Phillippe Milloux, the Director General.

Professor Robert Aldrich's presentation gave an interesting perspective on **colonialism** and its changing face over the years. He was followed by Madame Simone Trehin from Noumea, who spoke of student exchange, the **promotion of francophonie**, and placements for assistants from New Caledonia or in New Caledonia.

Saturday afternoon consisted of several **workshops** grouped by states. Common issues such as French Film Festivals, membership, teacher availability and salaries, textbooks and student attainment levels were discussed. Teacher availability is a concern for many alliances.

A rather noisy **dinner** environment at a nearby brasserie on Saturday evening was not exactly conducive to further networking opportunities. However, afterwards, a walk with a new friend to a little teahouse in the next street capped off a pleasant evening.

Sunday provided a heavy mental agenda with the first topic being **'Mutation and mutualisation: challenges'**, which dealt further with classes, teaching and standards. South Australia then reported on its **collaboration** with the Department of Education and Training to monitor French teaching and learning and to look at current trends.

A very busy weekend was prefaced by a few hours of freedom in Sydney on Friday night for Pascale and Nerida, but that story can be told another time!

On reflection, we found our experience was both stimulating and enlightening.

The 2011 AGM will be in Canberra, 14th - 15th May.

# Un Grand Succès

Pascale Levacher

**Un grand succès: le festival itinérant des films français à Rockhampton pour la première fois!**

Pendant le weekend du 'jour de l'Anzac', l'Alliance française de Rockhampton a été très fière d'accueillir pour la première fois dans notre région le festival itinérant des films français. Pendant trois jours, les membres de notre groupe se sont efforcés, avec grand succès il faut le dire, de rendre cette expérience cinématographique aussi conviviale que possible. Cela ne se serait pas fait sans les efforts acharnés de Pat Handley, qui s'est occupée des détails administratifs, et de Nola Pontifex, qui a supervisé et organisé une équipe de chefs en herbe. Il faut aussi dire un grand merci à Greg Moore qui a pris en charge l'achat et la distribution des boissons, en particulier quelques très bons vins français. **La Fille de Monaco**, une comédie romantique avec un twist un peu tragique, a ouvert le festival, suivi le lendemain matin de **Les Enfants de Timpelbach**, beaucoup apprécié d'une audience un peu plus jeune. Les deux films suivants, **Les Bureaux de Dieu** et **Comme les autres**, ont suscité beaucoup d'intérêt auprès d'un public heureux de passer une agréable fin de soirée au Walter Reid Centre, à déguster des vins français accompagnés de petits-fours et canapés.

Le dernier film, projeté le jour de l'Anzac, était **Les Femmes de l'Ombre**. Il aurait été difficile de trouver un film mieux assorti à l'occasion. Au bilan, l'Alliance peut se féliciter d'avoir réussi à organiser cet événement culturel à Rockhampton - 375 billets de vendus, mieux qu'à Toowoomba, une ville de plus grande taille! - un bel effort! Il faut aussi dire qu'une fois de plus la bonne volonté, la générosité et le talent des membres de notre groupe nous ont permis de mener ce projet à bien, alors un grand merci à tous et à toutes et à l'année prochaine pour une nouvelle édition du festival itinérant des films français.

# Social and Cultural Activities

Between December and April, the energies of our committee and members focused on the **Film Festival** which, as stated by Pascale, was a great success. However we have managed to fit in a few other activities.

The **Conversation Group** continues to meet and although the regulars form only a small group, there have been some highlights. We enjoyed the company of **Philippe and Marie-Claire** from the south of Lyon. Their son Tristan is on a working holiday and he had met us earlier in the year. This was a great experience for the group. Marie-Claire and Philippe speak no English and so we had to make ourselves understood in French. They also had the opportunity to broaden their Australian experience as guests to an impromptu evening barbeque, with freshly caught crab, kangaroo, and a pavlova, and a delectable luncheon by the sea two weeks later. An **evening meeting** in May attracted more members and evening conversations are planned for **August** and **October**.

On the 12th of March we held a **film evening** at Glenmore High School to welcome new members. Black comedy at its best, **Le Couperet** (*The Axe*) is about the implications of putting profits and growth before people. The protagonist, Bruno (José Garcia), after being unemployed for three years, is ready to do anything to get a job, including wiping out his rivals with, of course, some unexpected results.

The annual **Multicultural Fair** was forward tracked to 31 May this year. Our information stall looked better than ever with beautiful **posters** from the **Saturday classes** and our new pennant, purchased just before the film festival.



**Multicultural stall**

The most recent activity was the **BYO June barbeque**, held at the residence of Pat and Bob Handley. Despite the miserable weather, a warm fire, hot soup, a range of hot dishes and exquisite desserts, all accompanied by good wines and good company, made for a happy and vibrant evening.



**Susan Yates and Linda Denty  
enjoying the June BBQ**



## Saturday morning classes

Each Saturday morning *les petits* and *les grands* arrive at a **Rockhampton Girls Grammar School** music room for their French classes. *Les petits* (under 11) have their class from 9.30 - 10.30 and *les grands* (12 - 17) attend from 10.30 - 11.30. All are very enthusiastic.

The class for *les petits* combines movement, songs and speaking and the hour goes all too quickly. Since the beginning of May there have been a number of enrolments of children from two to five. These younger ones, along with their parents, have been attending the same class as *les petits*.

Most of the attention for *les grands* is on listening to and speaking French, but with some emphasis on reading and writing. The teacher for this year has been Susan Yates, assisted by Pat Handley.



## Accessing French Language

### Adult Classes

- Beginners, intermediate and advanced
- Wednesdays 6.30 - 8.30 p.m.
- Library, Glenmore High School
- Qualified fluent French speaking teachers

### Children's Classes

- under 11 yrs 9.30 - 10.30
  - 12 - 17 yrs 10.30 - 11.30
- Saturday mornings, RGGS music room, via Little Athelstane Street.

### Private Classes

- By arrangement
- Susan Yates (0410 878 536)
- Bernadette Bernleitner (4933 0301, 0438 642 778)

### Translation and Interpretation

- Bernadette Bernleitner  
NAATI qualified

### Calendar- July - Dec 2010

**Conversation group** will continue on Fridays, 1 p.m. at the Heritage Hotel.

**Evening Conversations**, replacing the lunchtime meetings:

Friday 20 August and  
Friday 15 October

### Classes

Term III 14 July - 15 Sept  
Term IV 6 Oct - 8 December

### Bastille Day Celebration

17 July

### Le Noël et le Beaujolais Nouveau

20 November

### AGM

8 December

### Websites

Alliance Française de Central Q'land  
[www.afrockhampton.com](http://www.afrockhampton.com)  
Federation of AF's of Australia -  
[www.alliancefrancaise.com.au](http://www.alliancefrancaise.com.au)  
Sparkling cruises -  
[www.leboat.com.au/destination/france/loire\\_valley/the\\_sparkling\\_cruise](http://www.leboat.com.au/destination/france/loire_valley/the_sparkling_cruise)

