10. The London French from the Belle Epoque to the end of the inter-war period (1880–1939)

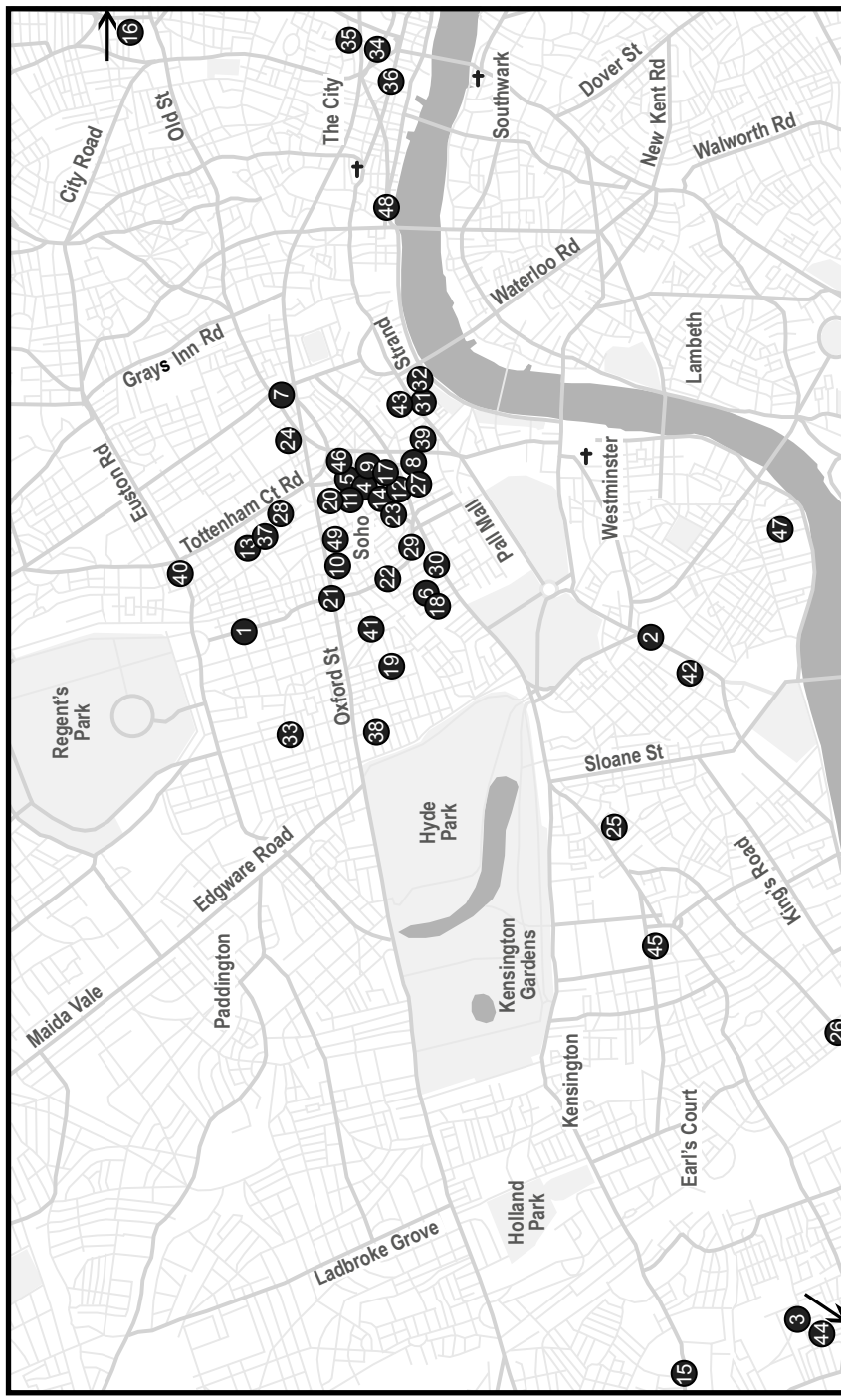
Michel Rapoport

The years from 1880 to 1939, by the end of which time the Third French Republic had been in the hands of the republicans for sixty years, witnessed a series of events that affected the presence of French people in London. There was the amnesty of 14 July 1880, which enabled most of the Communards who had fled to London after 1871 to return home; the anarchist crisis of the 1890s, which drove several hundred anarchists in the opposite direction, to exile in London; the French Exhibition at Earl's Court in 1890; the signing of the Entente Cordiale in 1904, followed by the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition at Shepherd's Bush, attracting a flood of French tourists; the First World War and its aftermath, when politicians, government officials and army officers came to London for the many Anglo-French and international conferences, while some of its 'French colony' were called up and had to return to France; and finally, the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The French who were in London during those sixty years can be grouped into two broad categories, which would then, of course, need to be sub-divided more specifically. There were the French men and women who lived there permanently or for a long time, whether or not they worked, or were married to British subjects. These form what French and British authorities term London's 'French colony'. The second group would consist of 'temporary visitors', and can in turn be divided into two sub-groups: 'occasional' visitors staying, perhaps repeatedly, for not more than a month at a time; and 'tourists', coming to London for short stays of only a few days, usually for enjoyment.

London's 'French colony' – uncertain demographics

The task of reckoning the numbers of French in London during those years is an ambitious and necessarily somewhat arbitrary one. A census was taken every ten years from 1871 to 1921; the results of the 1931 census were lost in a fire in 1942, but Home Office statistics are available. However, despite the apparent precision of the census data, they provide only an approximate idea of the number of French living in Britain and London.



Map 10.1. Places mentioned in the text (Base map: London *c.*1910)

Key to Map 10.1

1. Portland Place
2. Grosvenor Hotel
3. Penn House, Weybridge (off map *c.*15.5 miles)
4. Greek Street
5. Old Compton Street
6. Alfred Duclos, Royal Arcade
7. De Bry's, New Oxford St/Southampton Row
8. F. Guibert, 10 Charing Cross Road
9. Launay-Benoist *réunis*, 55 Charing Cross Road
10. Ramillies Place
11. Frith Street
12. Lisle Street
13. Charlotte Street
14. Gerrard Street
15. F. N. Huber, King Street, Hammersmith
16. Abraham Adler, Tredegar Square, Bow (off map *c.*2.5 miles)
17. Louis Mahieu, Little Newport Street
18. Dover Street
19. Worth, Grosvenor Street
20. Charles Alias, Soho Square
21. Grands Magasins du Louvre de Paris, Oxford Circus
22. Galeries Lafayette, Regent Street
23. Shaftesbury Avenue
24. Museum Street
25. Beauchamp Place, Brompton Road
26. Fulham Road
27. Leicester Square
28. Hôtel Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel
29. Café Royal, Regent Street
30. Prince's Restaurant, Piccadilly
31. Hotel Cecil, Strand
32. Savoy Hotel, Strand
33. Baker Street
34. Crédit Lyonnais, Lombard Street
35. Comptoir National d'Escompte, Threadneedle Street
36. Crédit Immobilier, Cannon Street
37. Librairie Française, Goodge Street
38. J. Barrière and Co., Green Street
39. Hachette Bookshop, King William Street
40. Besson's, Euston Road
41. Goupil Gallery, New Bond Street
42. Elizabeth Street, Belgravia
43. Restaurant Boulestin, Southampton Street
44. Charterhouse School, Godalming (off map *c.*31 miles)
45. Cromwell Gardens
46. French Hospital, Shaftesbury Avenue
47. Société de Bienfaisance, St George's Square
48. French Chamber of Commerce, Queen Victoria Street
49. Ecole de l'Eglise Protestante Française, Noel Street

Table 10.1. French people living in Britain and London, 1871–1931

	1871	1881	1891	1901	1911	1921	1931
French people living in Britain	17,906	14,596	20,797	20,467	28,827	23,659	
French people living in London	10,719	8,251	12,834	?	17,856	?	9,684

The drop in numbers between 1871 and 1881 is partly explained by the effects of the amnesty of 1880. The rise between 1881 and 1891 is partly linked to the United Kingdom's position in the world economy at that time and its financial strength. The leap between 1901 and 1911 is mainly due to the change in Franco-British relations signalled by the Entente Cordiale, as well as to London's economic growth, which attracted businessmen, skilled workmen, and employees and managers of French companies and banks with offices in London. With the outbreak of war the French presence in London altered in composition and was reduced overall, since the members of French delegations and refugees who arrived were fewer in number than the Frenchmen called up to the army (around 3,000), who returned to France. The end of the war did not bring about a return to the previous situation; on the one hand, a significant number of members of the 'French colony' had been killed in the fighting (550 have been identified),[1] and on the other, some of the French who had been living in London decided to remain in France after the war. According to the French Consulate, not many more than 1,000 people presented the declaration claiming the payment offered to ex-combatants. Finally, the 1930s were marked by a net drop in numbers. The Great Depression had two effects here: first, a serious reduction in employment, meaning that many job opportunities for French people disappeared; and second, a more rigorous application of immigration laws.

Out of the total French population living in Britain, the percentage living in London varies between 48 and 55 per cent. In 1911 it was estimated at 47.9 per cent and in 1921 it was just over 50 per cent, that is, between 10,000 and 12,000 people. But these figures are in fact very imprecise, since a large number of French people in London were not included in the official statistics. In 1901 and again in 1902, *La Chronique de Londres* referred to a 'floating' population of around 30,000 in London, which would be 50 per cent more than the figure shown by the census.[2] Henri

[1] H. Goiran, *Les Français à Londres: étude historique, 1544–1933* (Pornic, 1935), p. 219.
[2] *La Chronique de Londres*, 21 Dec. 1901.

Goiran, in *Les Français à Londres*, suggests that the census figures should be increased by 35–40 per cent.[3] It is true that there is a question about the exact boundaries of London, so that figures would vary depending on whether one is speaking of Greater London, Outer and Inner London, or Inner London alone. Additionally, there is a certain number of people who do not figure in the census, either voluntarily – prostitutes and dropouts, for example, among others – or because they were simply overlooked. It should also be borne in mind that there were large inflows of French people in connection with notable events (the French Exhibition at Earl's Court in 1890 and the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908, which was linked to the Olympic Games; the 1901 Glasgow Exhibition; perhaps the Coronations and the Jubilee) whose numbers cannot be calculated, since statistics at ports of entry do not give the destination of immigrants and visitors. Moreover, the census figures may include those for Belgians and Swiss. Until 1914 the French colony in London was the third largest, after the German and Russian. After the First World War it was the largest, since many Germans considered undesirables had been forced to leave the United Kingdom, and the independence of Poland meant that the census no longer included Poles among the total for Russians.

The French colony included more women than men: in 1891 there were 10,994 women and 9,803 men; forty years later, in 1931, out of 9,684 French residents, there were 6,196 women and 3,488 men.[4] This imbalance may be partly attributed to the employment of Frenchwomen as governesses and tutors by aristocratic and upper-class London families. The general age of the French colony was young, though it did include elderly people, as witnessed by the assistance offered by charities to a certain number of impoverished widows over seventy and others.[5]

Who were the French in London? A socio-professional approach

During the nineteenth century London represented a safe haven for a certain number of French people. It is not surprising, then, despite the effects of successive legal amnesties, that the French colony included refugees and descendants of refugees. These formed a minority, however; their failure to return to France was due either to their succeeding in setting up in business

[3] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 216.

[4] Data from the 1891 census. This item is not included as such in the 1891 and 1901 censuses. For 1931, see Goiran, *Français à Londres*.

[5] In some years *La Chronique de Londres* gave the names, ages and sometimes the former profession of beneficiaries. Thus the issue dated 28 Feb. 1903 gives as new recipients of Société de Bienfaisance pensions two dressmakers of 62 and 72 respectively, a teacher of 70, a painter of 82 and a laundress of 65.

in London, their fear of being unable to find a place in French society after long years of absence, or their advanced age. Sylvie Aprile recalls that in the 1890s only thirteen of the Paris Commune refugees remained.[6] They included Paul-Antoine Brunel, French teacher at the Naval College at Dartmouth; Albert Barrère, French teacher at Woolwich, author of a well-known dictionary of French slang and himself the son of an exile who had come to London in 1851, and brother of another Communard who had also been exiled to London, the future French ambassador to Rome, Camille Barrère; Victor Richard, whose grocery became a meeting place for French anarchists in the 1890s; the painter Constant de L'Aubinière; and the cartoonist Georges Pilotell who, having once been fashionable, ended his days in poverty. Some of the descendants of exiles of 1851 were extremely successful: Marius Duché, for instance, born in 1841, was brought to London by his father, a victim of the 2 December *coup d'état*. Marius took over and developed his father's business, took part in the founding of the French Chamber of Commerce in London in 1883, and was its president for many years.[7] There was also Albert Barrère, mentioned above. As for the anarchists, their generally brief stays in London precluded their setting up in business or the professions. Someone who did stay for longer was Louise Michel, who lived in London from 1890 to 1895, running, together with Charlotte Vauvelle, a school founded by the 'Liberal French Language Group' (Groupe Libertaire de Langue Française).[8]

Well-known figures who sought refuge in London briefly during the Third Republic were General Boulanger, who lived in an apartment at 51 Portland Place;[9] Henri de Rochefort; and Emile Zola. Zola came to London on 18 July 1898 to avoid going to prison, after receiving a one-year prison sentence in the French courts, confirmed by the Court of Appeal, following the publication of his article 'J'Accuse'. He lived in the Grosvenor Hotel for a while and then moved to a hotel in Weybridge, south-west of London, and afterwards a furnished apartment, Penn House, nearby.

[6] S. Aprile, *Le Siècle des exiles, bannis et proscrits de 1789 à la Commune* (Paris, 2010), pp. 271–2.

[7] These details come from the profile of Duché published in *La Chronique de Londres*, 21 Apr. 1900. Such profiles were published regularly and are an important source of information on people belonging to London's French colony about whom little or nothing would otherwise be known.

[8] For more on Louise Michel, see the chapter by Lane and Faucher.

[9] M. Quinton, *Le Journal de la Belle Meunière, le Général Boulanger et son amie, souvenirs vécus* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1895); Gaston Lapierre, in his article 'Boulangeries', published in *Le Moderniste*, 31 Aug. 1889, speaks of the 'contumax de Portland Place'; see also *The New York Times*, 23 Sept. 1889.

Because of the risk of arrest, Zola lived under several pseudonyms – Pascal, Beauchamp, Rogers and Richard. This did not prevent him from making brief trips to London, or from receiving numerous visitors, including his friend Georges Charpentier and his publisher Fasquelle in October 1898; Clemenceau at the beginning of January 1899; Octave Mirbeau in February; and especially several visits from his mistress Jeanne and her children, and from his wife Alexandrine; not forgetting his translator, Ernest Vizetelly. All in all, he was surrounded by a real support network from 18 July 1898 to 3 June 1899, the day when Fasquelle, Vizetelly and Zola shared a last London dinner together at the Queen's Hotel before his return to France.[10] During this period of enforced exile, Zola wrote *Fécondité*.

Apart from all these 'Londoners despite themselves', the French who lived in London during the period under study generally came because they were attracted by a very open labour market, with, in some cases, the prospect of professional and social success that would not have been possible for them in France. Others were sent by their families for training in commerce and finance or to improve their English, and then chose to remain in London. Still others worked in London as representatives or agents for their companies; and others again became Londoners by marriage. Nor should the staff of the French Embassy and Consulate be forgotten, and later, of the various French cultural institutions. The composition of this population changed and developed between 1880 and 1930.

[10] This was Zola's second stay in London. He had been there from 20 to 30 Sept. 1893, invited by the Institute of British Journalists to take part in their congress and that of the Authors' Club, whose president was Sir Frederick Pollock (he was also president of the Société des Gens de Lettres). That trip was organized by Léon Wolf, Ernest Vizetelly and Georges Petilleau, representing the Société des Gens de Lettres in England. During his stay Zola delivered a resounding speech at the Institute of British Journalists at Crystal Palace, underlining a fundamental difference between the English press and the French press: articles in the former were anonymous, those in the latter were signed. He also made his own Petilleau's suggestion of creating a parliamentary press 'International'. The speech was translated and quoted in the British press. On 28 Sept. he spoke at the Authors' Club dinner at the Metropole Hotel presided over by Oswald Crawford, attended by Oscar Wilde, Conan Doyle, Vizetelly and Petilleau. 'In England, where previously he had met with the greatest resistance, he has just been received like the *Imperator Litterarum*', declared Crawford. During this same visit he went to the British Museum, to the National Gallery to see the Turners (Zola was also an art critic) and to Westminster. He was guided round London by George Moore and discovered the poorer quarters, being able to 'cast a glance over the abject poverty and drunkenness in London', as Vizetelly wrote. For more on this visit, see *Mon cher maître, lettres d'Ernest Vizetelly á Emile Zola 1891–1902*, ed. D. E. Speirs and Y. Portebois (Montreal, 2002), pp. 107–13.

Table 10.2. Socio-professional categories of the French in England, 1881–1931

	1881	*1891*	*1901*	*1931*
Teachers	1,647	1,760	1,209	613
Students		717		1,049
Roman Catholic priests/sisters	388	407		796
Servants	1,592	2,190	2,997	595
Governesses, hired companions				616
Employees/Managers (companies/banks)				109
Commercial clerks/Commercial travellers	455	628	596	1,827
Merchants/Brokers	292	245		548
Cooks, out/domestic	566	819	867	879
Waiters			518	
Hairdressers/Wig-makers	126	153		182
Milliners/Dressmakers/Shirt-makers	648	831	1,014	
Tailors	144	214		
Artists/Musicians/Painters		342		319
Jewellers	160	119		
Seamen/Sailors	1,280	1,067	1,230	

Sources: Census figures for 1881, 1891 and 1901; and Home Office statistics

It is not possible to determine the exact numbers in London according to their profession, but we can guess that most of these French people lived and worked in London or its suburbs.

The Graphic, in an article of 16 December 1922 entitled 'French colony in London', noted that 'the principal activities of the French colony in London may be divided in four groups, i.e. commercial, educational, social and charitable'. During the debate on the Aliens Bill on 3 July 1905 Charles Hutchinson, Liberal MP for Rye, made a humorous reference to the French presence in London:

> Take the case of a man who came up to London for a night's pleasure … He went to a West End hotel where he was received by a cashier who was a Frenchman … He ordered his dinner from a French maître d'hôtel … and the food was cooked by a French chef. Afterwards he went outside, got into a motor car driven by a French chauffeur … he was accosted in one street by a French courtesan.[11]

[11] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 4th ser., cxlviii (3 July 1905).

These two references complement one another in a way; they are accurate, if somewhat summary, as is shown by the socio-professional statistics furnished by the censuses.

Commerce, labour and industry

These three spheres of action offered numerous opportunities for work, whether the commerce was wholesale or retail, or the labour skilled or unskilled. Certain sectors saw a particular concentration of French workers: food, dress, shoe-shops and shoe-repairs, and furniture.

While many French retail businesses were opened after the years 1850–70, the increase in numbers of the French colony and the buying-power of some of its members, together with the demands of a particular English clientele with a taste for French products, produced a sharp increase in businesses connected with food: French groceries, dairies and *charcuteries*, fine wine and champagne merchants, patisseries, and confectioners, all offered products imported from France or prepared according to French traditions. Among long-standing firms was the patisserie belonging to Bertaux, an exile from the Paris Commune, which stood at 28 Greek Street, Soho, from 1871. This shop rapidly became well known, and it was not the only one: close by, at 10 Old Compton Street, was the Maison Lombardy, while at 9 Church Street, off Shaftesbury Avenue, was Lemaire's 'Patisserie Parisienne'.[12] Confectioners and chocolate-makers were not lacking: in 1867 Alfred Duclos founded his shop at 2 Royal Arcade, off Old Bond Street, and from 1900 to 1910 this 'French Confectioner', supplier to the English aristocracy, had a regular advertisement in *La Chronique de Londres*, as did De Bry's, whose shop was close to Holborn, at 64 New Oxford Street and 45 Southampton Row. Delicatessens, specialist *charcuteries* and wine shops abounded in 'Petite France'. In Charing Cross Road, F. Guibert, fine wines and champagnes, was at no. 10, and at no. 55 was Launay-Benoist *réunis*, specialist *charcuterie* with a workshop in Ramillies Place. In Frith Street, Pierre de Loriol sold French wines next door to the Compagnie Française specializing in coffees. In Lisle Street, Fernand Robert had his 'Epicerie de Leicester Square' at no. 21, while at no. 3 Haizé sold French chickens. In Charlotte Street, F. Gasnier and E. Baudouin *successeur* had their 'Maison Française, charcuterie française, foies gras, vins fins'. Lovers of French veal and Pauillac lamb could obtain them from Cointat, French butcher at 15 Old Compton Street; those who preferred snails or frogs' legs could find

[12] *La Chronique de Londres*, with its advertisements, is one of the main sources of information on French commercial activity in London at this period. Church Street no longer exists under that name, but ran parallel with Shaftesbury Avenue from Greek Street down to Cambridge Circus.

them at L'Escargot, Greek Street, from 1894 onwards. Charles Bourdeau, who sold fruit and vegetables at 21 Gerrard Street, claimed the distinction of having a market-garden and orchards at Orléans that supplied his London business. Others set up shop further from the centre, such as F. N. Huber, merchant in wines and spirits, in King Street, Hammersmith.

Some of these traders played an important role within the French colony: M. L. Moussary was president of the Société des Confiseurs Français de Londres, La Bonbonnière. Only occasionally is it possible to trace the itinerary of these traders; Henri Ludovic Noël arrived in London in 1858, began by working in a French café-restaurant, and in 1860 opened a dairy selling butter and cheeses imported from France, and eggs. He then widened his range to include preserves and fine wines and started a jam factory with fruit imported from France; but his real claim to fame is that it was he who introduced camembert to England. In the area of flowers and fruit, Nestor Fauquemberge, who took over the firm started by his uncle A. Bisson in 1876, Albert Hernu and M. C. Franco supplied Covent Garden with produce imported daily from France.

The multitude of these retailers entailed the development of wholesale importers such as Abraham Adler, established in Tredegar Square, Bow, in the 1870s, and Louis Mahieu, a former chef, who had a wholesale business in Little Newport Street. There were also London branches of French wholesalers, such as Duchesne for champagne, and a network of their agents.

The French presence was also important in the sphere of clothing. Here there were two types of demand. France's reputation in the world of fashion was vast; high-society London ladies, plus the Frenchwomen in the elite of the French colony, were a major market. Ladies who went to balls and receptions during the London season either ordered dresses and hats from Paris, or obtained them at French shops in London, or else from the French fashion designers, dressmakers and milliners who worked there. One of the greatest firms of French haute couture in London was Paquin. The proprietor, Jeanne Paquin, in association with English partners, moved her headquarters from the shop in Rue de la Paix, Paris, to 39 Dover Street, London, in 1896. At the beginning of the twentieth century her London business employed 200 or 300 girls, almost all from Paris. In competition with Paquin's was Worth. This firm was founded in Rue de la Paix, Paris, by the Englishman Charles Frederic Worth, inventor of haute couture and supplier to empresses Eugénie and Elizabeth and European courts. In 1898, on the initiative of Gaston, one of the founder's sons, it opened a London branch at 50 Grosvenor Street. Until 1936, when it was sold by Jacques Worth, the founder's grandson, Worth was the symbol of French luxury in

London.[13] Charles Alias was another firm that built up a large clientele in the same sphere. Alias, a doctor's son, had come to London in the 1870s to sell leeches, but turned to theatre costumes; his shop in Soho Square also sold costumes to ladies for the fancy-dress balls held by the princess of Wales, the duchess of Devonshire and other aristocratic hostesses.[14] As for 'Paris goods', ladies could procure them in the London branch of the Grands Magasins du Louvre de Paris at Oxford Circus, or at Galeries Lafayette, which in 1920, before becoming well established in Regent Street, had been a commercial agent, centralizing orders and redistributing purchases to customers. Those in search of French underwear could buy it at the shop opened by Mme. Léoty at 26 Dover Street (a branch of the one at Place de la Madeleine, Paris), or at L. Bonvalet's 'maison parisienne' in Shaftesbury Avenue. French launderers, such as Mme. Delozanne's Blanchisserie Française at 40 Museum Street, and French dry-cleaners also had a good reputation and worked for a large customer base.

Less wealthy Englishwomen and Frenchwomen who were anxious to follow Paris fashions were another type of customer that kept French-owned clothing workshops and shops going. These were often on the borderline between businesses and crafts. Men's and women's clothing was supplied by G. Victor in Shaftesbury Avenue. The Deligny sisters in Beauchamp Place, off Brompton Road, produced blouses and skirts, and placed small advertisements in *La Chronique de Londres* for French fitters, bodice-makers and skirt-makers for their workshop. Bootmakers and shoemakers complete the picture: Nicolas Thierry had a shop in Regent Street for many years before going into shoemaking on an industrial scale. And finally, shoe-repairing seemed to be a French speciality in London. French skills and competence also explain the presence of numerous workmen and craftsmen such as cabinet-makers, carpet-makers, builders and electricians. It is impossible to give any estimate of their numbers.

As a centre of industry, London attracted engineers working for branches of French firms such as Saint-Gobain or Michelin, which opened in Sussex Place in 1905 and in 1911 moved to Michelin House at 11 Fulham Road, a prime example of French *art moderne*. Such people often went on to find employment for themselves in London, and some, in time, set up in business on their own account. Albert Sauvé, a graduate of the Ecole Centrale de Paris, arrived in London in 1868 and ten years later opened a machine workshop; Louis Percheron, a mechanical engineer, came to

[13] Another provider of French luxury goods in London was the firm Vuitton, specializing in bags and suitcases, which opened a branch in Oxford Street in the 1870s.

[14] *La Chronique de Londres*, 11 Nov. 1899.

London working for the Compagnie Française, and then set up as a maker of chocolate and sweet machines, equipping many businesses, notably the firm of Lipton's. Eugène Cocquerel, employed in a trading-house in London from 1859, started his own business in Croydon producing pendulums and decorative glass flowers, and became the only manufacturer of china wreaths for undertakers. Demand was so great that he opened a factory in Paris.[15]

Business and production, then, seemed to attract many French people. But variations and developments in this pattern need to be borne in mind. What was true of the 1880s no longer applied twenty years later. To take the example of French food businesses, still mainly based in Soho during the 1880s, a large number of them were French only in name, as Englishmen, Germans or Italians had taken over from the original French, keeping on the name of the firm as a way of attracting customers.

Services

The service sector was probably the largest provider of employment for French people over a wide range of jobs, with notable variations according to the period. In the years from 1890 to 1914, the largest group was that of domestic servants, most of whom were women; in 1911 this sector employed over 2,600 Frenchwomen. It is impossible to give figures for London alone, among other reasons because some employers only came to London for the season. Up until the First World War, families belonging to the aristocracy and gentry employed French governesses, paid companions, nurses, cooks and chauffeurs. Having the services of a 'Mademoiselle' was a mark of distinction. But between 1911 and 1931 this sector shrank by 60 per cent, as the upper classes ran into difficulties after the war, finding themselves obliged to sell London properties and reduce their lifestyle and number of servants.

Two other groups were of significant size: restaurateurs and hoteliers, and hairdressers. Restaurants and hotels employed over 1,250 people, two-thirds of them men. There was a strong demand for cooks, partly because of the reputation of French cooking, and partly because of the size of the French colony; and also for staff of all kinds in both hotels and restaurants. Additionally, these jobs in London offered good opportunities for success and promotion. French hotels and restaurants – whether or not they were run by French people – multiplied in Soho (Old Compton Street had the Hôtel Dieppe at no. 76, and the Restaurant des Nations at no. 40, run by M. Mulot, a former waiter), around Leicester Square (the Grand Hôtel de

[15] *La Chronique de Londres*, 19 May 1900 (Eugène Cocquerel) and 10 Feb. 1900 (Louis Percheron).

l'Europe whose restaurant was managed by Paul Courvoyer, and the Hôtel de la Paix run by Joseph Belot), and around Tottenham Court Road (Hôtel Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel). However, in 1933 Paul Morand noted that 'there are only two purely French restaurants left in Soho: L'Escargot and the Jardin des Gourmets run by General Gouraud's former chef'.[16]

The opening of large luxurious establishments made possible by the transformation of the Strand in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, was a godsend for the French. Among the most famous hotels and restaurants, four in particular illustrate the French reputation in this field: the Café Royal, the Prince's Restaurant, the Hotel Cecil and the Savoy. The first two, because they were French establishments, the third because of the personality of its manager, Auguste Judah, and the last because of its chef, Auguste Escoffier.

The Café Royal, opened in Regent Street in 1865 by Daniel Nicolas Thévenon, was, between 1890 and 1920, the best wine-cellar in London, a 'club' for the French, the haunt of famous artists and writers including Aubrey Beardsley, James Whistler and Oscar Wilde, and the setting for some notorious scandals. The Prince's Restaurant, on Piccadilly, was founded by Gustave Fourault, who, after having been chef at the Bristol had been in charge of the Brelant Restaurant; on his death in 1906 the position was taken by Victor Benoist, who was at the same time supplier to Buckingham Palace and various ministries and embassies, providing catering for receptions, parties, balls and picnics. Auguste Judah served his apprenticeship in Paris kitchens and worked as a chef in London before becoming manager of the Hotel Cecil, 'the prized centre of all high society', where he took 'the genius of hospitality' to a fine art, personally presenting each of his noble guests with a bouquet of flowers as they left. As for the renowned Escoffier, 'the chef of kings and the king of chefs', after a career on the continent he arrived in London with César Ritz in 1890, working until 1897 at the head of the kitchens in the Savoy, and then, from 1899 until his retirement in 1921, at the Carlton. This inventive chef revolutionized kitchen management, organizing his underlings' work according to F. W. Taylor's principles of scientific management, and being personally present everywhere, from kitchen to dining-room. At the Savoy he invented the fixed-price menu, and offered a menu based on produce imported from France. In June 1911, still in London, he launched a magazine in French and English, *Le Carnet d'épicure*, where he published certain of his recipes. Of his pupils, Charles Habensreithinger from Alsace also worked in London. Other French chefs were employed by great families, such as Octave Lamare, who, starting in

[16] P. Morand, *Londres* (Paris, 1933), p. 193.

the kitchens of the duc d'Aumale, in 1867 entered the service of Countess Frances Waldegrave, and in 1900 became president of the Club Culinaire.

'Justine announces "The hairdresser is here" with all the portentous solemnity that the butler would say "Madam is served," and my lady closes up the paper at once to greet the Frenchman … The hairdressing is soon over, the skilful fingers of the *coiffeur* have laid the locks of my lady in shining waves'.[17] Mrs. Aria's words recall the position held in London by French hairdressers and wig-makers, whose numbers increased throughout the period under study. They too came in response to the double demand, on the part of French people in London and of English high society. And they too included all kinds of hairdressers, from the simple *merlan*[18] to the great artist. What could there be in common between Auguste Derouette, in Charlotte Street, who was book-seller, stationer, newspaper-vendor and hairdresser, and Charles Klein of Baker Street? Klein had first worked for the hairdresser Jalabert in Paris, and arrived in London in 1873, where he opened a hairdressing salon. He invented electric hairdressing appliances, and developed his own hair treatment method. He was an active member of the French colony, organizing a fashion exhibition in 1897, holding many hairdressers' conferences, and becoming president of the Société du Progrès de la Coiffure, the Société d'Epargne de l'Espérance and the Anglo-French Piscatorial Society, as well as honorary member of other French societies in London.[19]

Another service, an illegal one, was prostitution.[20] The sex trade in the capital did not diminish and French prostitutes were well represented: their 'exoticism' enabled them to earn more than the others. Most of them plied their trade and lived in Soho and to the north of that area, either walking the streets or working in brothels. A minority, in the higher price-range, frequented more elegant parts such as Regent Street and Oxford Circus. In the 1930s they attracted more attention when their activities were controlled by gangs. Among the procurers were Marcel Vernon, who had

[17] Mrs. Aria, 'My lady's evening in London', in *Living London*, ed. G. R. Sims (3 vols., 1901), ii. 183.

[18] *Merlan*, literally 'whiting', French slang for the local barber.

[19] *La Chronique de Londres*, 30 March 1901.

[20] J. Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London 1885–1960* (2011), pp. 149–59; F. Linnane, *London the Wicked City: 1,000 Years of Vice in the Capital* (2003), p. 330; J. White, *London in the 19th Century* (2007), p. 312. With regard to French women, Morand notes that 'it is no longer French women who walk the streets in London; since the war, like everywhere else, it is young Polish-Jewish women. The Frenchmen trafficking their women, whose terribly spruce jackets used to adorn the cafés of Shaftesbury Avenue and Leicester Square, have found it hard to get anywhere in England for the past three years' (Morand, *Londres*, p. 195); an observation belied by the three works cited.

establishments in Soho, and Casimir Micheletti, a Frenchman of Italian parentage and a West End figure; he brought girls over from France either by promising them jobs in London, or by organizing false marriages for them with Englishmen to enable them to get into the country. Such was the case of Marthe Watts, who arrived in London in 1939 and was quickly taken in hand by the Italian Massini gang. Numbers of French prostitutes in London varied between 500 and 1,000; in the years 1884–6, of the 4,286 prostitutes arrested in the West End, 769 were French; fifty years later there were perhaps 500 of them. At the beginning of the twentieth century they also supplied the market for pornographic photographs.

The world of business

From 1870 onwards, because of its financial might and its role in the exchange markets, at least until the First World War, the City attracted the great French trading and savings banks. Crédit Lyonnais (in Lombard Street), Comptoir National d'Escompte (in Threadneedle Street), Crédit Immobilier (in Cannon Street), Société Générale, and Crédit Industriel et Commercial all had branches in London, employing mainly French staff. The same held true of the great trading houses (the more so because London was the great port of redistribution for tropical produce), shipping companies such as the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, and some insurance companies such as Le Phénix de Paris. The managers and staff of these companies all took part in the activities of the French colony, some of them playing a major role. Jules Moyse, for instance, a bank employee, was assistant manager of the London branch of Crédit Lyonnais in 1875, and in 1882 became manager of the Banque Anglo-Etrangère in Lombard Street. He was president of two of the most important societies of the French colony, the Société Nationale Française and the Société Française de Bienfaisance.

Account should also be taken of all the young French people sent to London to be initiated into British business and financial practices, employed in English firms for one or two years. One such was young Jean Monnet, who had been placed with the Chaplins, a family of traders, from 1902 to 1904. In London again in 1911, this time to oversee the activity of his family cognac business, he took an agent and planned to open an office in London.[21] There were sufficient numbers of young French people for Leon Clerc, secretary to the French Chamber of Commerce in London, to found the Union Commerciale des Enfants de France in England in 1898, whose mission was to 'ensure solidarity among young

[21] E. Roussel, *Jean Monnet* (Paris, 1996), pp. 33–4, 38–9.

French people in employment in England'. It accomplished this to good effect, if we are to believe the letter written by G. Lamorel, a teacher at the Ecole de Commerce de Boulogne to *La Chronique de Londres* in November 1900: 'The need to place one of my sons in England, to gain his business training there … brought me into contact with two institutions whose eminently useful and patriotic roles I had not hitherto suspected: I mean the Chambre de Commerce Française de Londres and the Union des Enfants de France'.

Booksellers, performers, and teachers

Booksellers, performers and teachers each contributed in their own way to the spread of French language and culture in London. French book- and newspaper-selling was a lively business. Hachette Bookshop, 'an intellectual link between the two countries' according to *La Chronique de Londres* of 24 September 1904, had been in King William Street since the mid 1860s. It was the leading seller of French books under the management of Henri Kleinan, and from 1911 onwards, under the management of Emile Rotival, of French newspapers. Other bookshops also had a significant customer base: Mme. Pirnay's Librairie Parisienne in Charlotte Street sold French and foreign newspapers, as did Charles Bachelet's Librairie Française in Goodge Street. J. Barrière and Co.'s bookshop, a 'corner of France' in Green Street, offered all the well-known French newspapers. La Librairie Cosmopolite, in Charlotte Street, had a reading-room with 5,000 French works, while the Librairie Universelle in Bloomsbury, and A La Civette in Old Compton Street both had lending-libraries.

Like the bookshops, French performers attracted by London had an important role to play. In the field of music, some French conductors were in the front rank. The best known was the composer André Messager, artistic and administrative director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, from May 1901 to July 1906. Messager became an ambassador for French music in London, introducing to the public the contemporary composers Claude Debussy, Jules Massenet and Edmond Missa, whose one-act lyric drama *Maguelone* was performed on 21 July 1903; and inviting French conductors. Less well known but likewise active at this time were Léopold Wenzel, composer and conductor, recruited by the Empire Theatre, and Jules Rivière, doyen of London conductors, who, invited to London by Dion Boucicault, conducted the orchestras at the Adelphi and the Alhambra, and then Covent Garden promenade concerts. French singers included the soprano Hélène Michaëlis. A pupil of Jacques Offenbach's daughter, she arrived in England in 1886 and learned singing at the Guildhall School of Music;

Figure 10.1. Façade of Barrière's bookshop at 17 Green Street. Author's postcard collection.

Figure 10.2. Interior of Barrière's bookshop. Author's postcard collection.

she was active in many aspects of the French colony such as dinners at the French Hospital and the Society of French Teachers.[22] Louise and Jeanne Douste, who had the privilege of singing at Buckingham Palace, gave piano and singing lessons. Léon Schlesinger founded the London French Musical Association to promote French works in England, organized concerts, gave lectures and held musical reviews.[23] French instrument-makers also set up in London and gained an international reputation: Besson's, founded in 1837, was in the Euston Road and by the end of the nineteenth century was employing 131 workers and producing around 100 brass instruments a week. In 1925 it was able to take over Quilter's, and it was still in business in 1939.

Painters and sculptors also swelled the ranks of the French colony. One of the painters was C.-A. de l'Aubinière, a pupil of Gérôme and Corot, who was exiled after the Paris Commune and worked in London from 1870 to 1880. In 1880 he and his wife Georgiana, who was a painter herself and the daughter of the painter John Steeple, held an exhibition of about forty paintings; Queen Victoria bought three of them. After a protracted stay in the United States and Canada, they returned to London around 1887 and organized an exhibition of French paintings, on behalf of the Société des Français Amis de l'Angleterre.[24] Faustin Betbeder, a well-known water-colour painter and cartoonist, arrived in London after 1870 and first worked for the *London Figaro*, then designed ballet and opera costumes for the Alhambra, the Lyceum and the Comic Opera. He was then recruited by the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum) to teach chromolithography techniques; he had a studio in Brixton where, with a large team, he executed a considerable number of commissions. Paris galleries opened branches in London hoping to profit from a possible market arising from their exhibitions: Paul Durand-Ruel, for instance, arriving in 1871, organized an Impressionist exhibition in 1882 and a retrospective Monet exhibition in 1905. In 1873 the art dealer Adolphe Goupil, father-in-law of the painter Gérôme and owner of the Galerie d'Art Parisienne, opened the Goupil Gallery, which from 1884 onwards stood in New Bond

[22] *La Chronique de Londres*, 13 May 1899. This newspaper frequently referred to Hélène Michaëlis between 1899 and 1901; it mentioned her marriage to Walter H. Freeman in May 1900, and published a eulogy after her premature death in Oct. 1901.

[23] *La Chronique de Londres*, 19 Aug. 1899. Schlesinger's articles in the *Chronique* seem to denote a certain reserve with regard to the new forms of musical composition. On 3 Dec. 1904, in a review of a concert conducted by Henry Wood who had included in the programme the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, he noted: 'Interesting composition and fine, skilful orchestration. I doubt if the public will take to it'.

[24] After her husband's death, Georgiana, who enjoyed the favour of Queen Victoria, was given a post as artist at Kew Gardens.

Street, where visitors could view works by Vincent J. B. Chevillard and, in 1889, Claude Monet.[25]

Writers, poets and other literary figures did not come to London in such numbers, at least for long periods. However, the correspondents of major French newspapers should not be overlooked, as they gravitated around the French Embassy, British government circles and the literary scene. Paul Morand, the writer-diplomat, was by and large an exception in London. When he was appointed attaché at the French Embassy in 1913, he was not a stranger to the city. He had come there as a boy in 1903 and 1904, and as a student in 1908. In *Londres*, published in 1933, he provided a testimony on fashionable London life before the First World War: 'Every evening, I went to four or five balls, which lasted until the dawn, and I often walked down Piccadilly as the sun was rising over the Ritz'; then, during the war, 'in the theatres, Parisian-style revues featuring French actors draw packed audiences. In the absence of our chefs, who had gone to the front, *dinettes* and *luncheonettes* in Soho at little square tables in ridiculous little pseudo-French restaurants called "La Madelon" … served by Italians'.[26]

The other exception was Marcel Boulestin, 'music critic, novelist, journalist, cookery-book publisher, and prince of gastronomes', with an immense reputation. Arriving in London in 1906, he opened an interior design shop at 15 Elizabeth Street, Belgravia, and then, in 1927, the Restaurant Boulestin in Southampton Street, Covent Garden, decorated by Albert Groult, with drawings by Jean-Emile Laboureur and Marie Laurencin and fabrics by Raoul Dufy on the walls. Morand was a frequent visitor to the restaurant during his 1932 stay in London. Among the correspondents of Paris newspapers some figures stand out: Robert Loyalty Cru, director of the Maison de l'Institut de France, university lecturer and correspondent of *Le Temps* in the 1930s;[27] and Jean Massip, teacher at the French Lycée, correspondent of *Le Petit Parisien* newspaper and president of the Foreign Press Association in London, who in July 1920 tried to launch a French gazette, *L'Entente*, which was quickly taken over by *La Chronique*

[25] The London branch was also a sales point and distribution centre throughout the United Kingdom for prints, photographs and photogravures of works he had bought; these reproductions were produced in France, in his studios at Asnières-sur-Seine.

[26] Morand, *Londres*, p. 52.

[27] Robert Loyalty Cru, born in 1884, graduated from the Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) in 1905 with a degree in English, and defended his doctoral thesis in 1913 on the topic of 'Diderot as a disciple of English thought'. He was attached to the British Expeditionary Force as an interpreter from 1914 to 1916, and from 1916 to 1919 worked at the London office of the Maison de la Presse. Afterwards he was appointed director and secretary of the Maison de l'Institut de France until his death in 1944 in the bombing which destroyed the Maison de l'Institut.

de Londres. As for Henry Davray, specialist in Anglo-French literary connections, with multiple networks in British circles, and founder, with his friend Edmund Gosse, of Entente Cordiale associations that formed the basis for the Anglo-French Society, he was correspondent from 1915 to 1925 of *Le Petit Journal*, and then from 1928 to 1929 of *Le Temps*. Coudurier de Chassagne was correspondent of *Le Figaro* from 1903 to 1919, and of *L'Illustration*, *Le Voltaire*, *La Politique* and *Coloniale*. André Géraud, better known under his pseudonym Pertinax, was correspondent of *L'Echo de Paris* from 1908 to 1914, and then again in the 1920s. He was taken on as a journalist by the *Daily Telegraph*, and it was Paul Cambon who initiated him into international politics.

However, the most active defenders of French language and culture were teachers, who formed a major group in the colony, numbering 505 men and 2,133 women in 1911. Distinctions need to be made here: on the one hand, there were young women, representing a significant proportion of Frenchwomen in employment. They came to London in search of work as primary-level teachers. They were much in demand; it is impossible now to know how qualified they were, though some claim they were less qualified than primary-level women teachers working in France.[28] But the need for moral guarantees led to the setting up of systems for reception, accommodation, placement and protection for them, as well as registration and monitoring. Between 1844 and the beginning of the twentieth century no fewer than four associations were created: Le Bon Accueil, the National Home, La Société Française des Institutrices and L'Association des Institutrices Françaises.

As well as these, there were secondary- and tertiary-level French teachers, a more heterogeneous group, primarily because of their origins. These teachers were faced with competition in French teaching from British people and even Germans.[29] For an exile, teaching their native tongue was a way of obtaining some income, and many of those who joined the French colony as language teachers at the end of the nineteenth century came from backgrounds that had nothing to do with teaching. Georges Petilleau worked in the secretariat of Ferdinand de Lesseps at the Compagnie du Canal de Suez, and went on to work as a journalist in Paris for *Le Nain Jaune*, *Le Figaro* and *Le Charivari*. After difficulties with the government,

[28] A. Thomas, 'A la conquête d'un statut professionnel: les enseignants de français en Angleterre et leurs associations (1880–1914)', *Documents pour l'histoire du français langue étrangère ou seconde*, xxxiii–xxxiv (2005), 214–26.

[29] In 1885 Charles Cassal complained about the large proportion of Swiss, Belgian, English, Italian, Polish, Russian and German nationals among the 2,500 teachers of French in London.

whom he had attacked in *La Fronde*, a newspaper he created in 1874, he settled in London. He obtained a BA and, in 1881, was recruited as head of the department of French language and literature at Charterhouse School. He translated and adapted a number of French authors for the benefit of his pupils, wrote *John Bull à l'école*, translated Elgar's *Sea Pictures* cycle, and, with Clémence Saunois, published *L'Entente Cordiale à la campagne* in 1918. He was a member of the Société des Gens de Lettres.[30] But beyond all this he was the founder, in 1881, of the Société Nationale des Professeurs de Français (SNPF), a powerful instrument for the spread of French, and organized its first congress.

Alfred P. Huguenet from Alsace graduated from the Ecole Spéciale Militaire de Saint-Cyr before becoming a teacher and also editor-in-chief of *La Chronique de Londres*. The defence of the French teaching profession, one of the reasons for the existence of the SNPF, led progressively both to a 'nationalization' and to a genuine professionalization, and to the recruiting of qualified secondary-level and university-level French teachers, by schools in London. One example was Bernard Minssen: he had a degree in arts and qualified as a university lecturer; he began by teaching in the *lycée* in Le Havre before coming to London and being recruited by Harrow, where he taught French. The status of these teachers in London society, whether British or that of the French colony, varied according to the kind of school in which they taught. Separate consideration should be given to French university professors who taught in London either at a university – Henri Lallemand was professor of French literature at University College; Denis Saurat[31] was director of the Institut Français du Royaume-Uni (IFRU) and professor of French at King's College – or, like the historian Paul Vaucher, at the London School of Economics.[32] Many of these, like Petilleau or Saurat, published scholarly works, translated, gave public lectures and joined in the London literary and social scene.

Finally, from 1910 onwards, the IFRU occupied an important place, both culturally and socially. Marie d'Orliac, a young Frenchwoman, wishing to make French writers, artists and intellectuals better known in England

[30] This explains his insistence on being present during Zola's 1893 visit (see above, n. 7).

[31] For more on Saurat, see the chapter by Martyn Cornick.

[32] Paul Vaucher (a former pupil of Elie Halévy and nephew of the founder of the Ecole des Sciences Politiques, the Anglophile Emile Boutmy), although a historian, was twice president of the SNPF, in 1925–6 and 1929–30. A specialist in Walpole, he taught modern French history at the University of London from 1922 onwards. At the London School of Economics he taught a course on French institutions. A notable number of Frenchmen worked at the LSE, either as professors (Paul Mantoux, followed by Paul Vaucher) or lecturers (Elie Halévy or Marc Bloch, for instance).

and to strengthen Anglo-French relations, suggested the idea of creating a University of French Humanities in London. Supported by influential figures such as Lord Askwith and the industrialist Emile Mond, her initiative brought about the inauguration, in Marble Arch House, of a new French institution, the IFRU, in 1911. In 1913 its status was fixed: it was a society run by an administrative council of twenty-one members, mostly British, with Lord Askwith as president. Between 1913 and 1919 it was financed by subscriptions and donations. As its activities expanded, the British government generously lent the IFRU a building in Cromwell Gardens. At the same time the universities of Paris and Lille became its sponsors, and in 1922 an accord was signed that altered its status. A Paris-Lille inter-university commission was created to work with the IFRU's administrative council in the areas of general administration and to promote the educational programmes of the University Section (Faculty of Arts and Lycée), distinct from the Social Section (public lectures). But as the administrative council remained the only body authorized to take financial decisions, British predominance was maintained. The inter-university commission proposed nominations for the Institute's director and staff, but the council's permission was necessary for their appointment. In 1922, beside Marie d'Orliac-Bohn, Emile Audra was appointed director; in 1924 he was replaced by Denis Saurat, who, because of his many years in the post, played a major role in the Institute's development.[33] It was Saurat who, from 1932 onwards, set in motion the construction of the new IFRU building in Queensberry Place, which was inaugurated in 1939, financed by the French government and the Université de Lille. The IFRU Faculty of Arts offered a course leading to an arts degree awarded by the universities of Lille and Paris; a course leading to the Certificate in French awarded by London University, where Saurat, who had a professorship and a doctorate, taught; and courses of university-level lectures.[34] In 1931 the Faculty of Arts had 423 students, 400 of whom were British. The Social Section had 369 people enrolled for its public courses; its talks and lectures, given by celebrities from the worlds of literature, arts and sciences, attracted quite as many people as the tea-parties it held once a week.[35] The list of the IFRU's patrons attests to the high regard in which

[33] Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (hereafter MAE), relations culturelles, S.S. 1945–59, 0-106-3, rapport de Vaucher conseiller culturel au ministre de l'education nationale en date du 24/11/1944.

[34] One of the professors at the French Institute was René Maheu. He graduated from the ENS in 1925 with a degree in philosophy, and was a friend of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. He was a cultural attaché in London from 1936 to 1939. It was Denis Saurat who asked him to teach courses at the French Institute. He later became UNESCO's director general.

[35] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 238.

it was held: Princess Mary, Lord Harewood and the president of France; the French ambassador was its honorary president, and its vice-presidents were the rectors of the universities of Paris and Lille and the French consul general. The French presidents did not fail to honour the IFRU with their presence on their official visits to London: Raymond Poincaré went there in May 1913 and again in January 1921, just before the inauguration of the Cromwell Road premises; Gaston Doumergue visited it in April 1927; and Albert Lebrun in February 1939 to inaugurate the Queensberry Place site.

As well as this new epicentre of French cultural influence, the eight London committees of the Alliance Française which had been created between 1903 and 1908, on the initiative of the SNPF, continued to bring conference speakers from France, starting with René Bazin. Professor Amédée Salmon and his daughter were the main driving forces behind this venture.

Structures and forms within London's French colony

Social contacts within London's French colony were based around all sorts of societies and associations. There were professional associations, sports clubs (such as the Jeunesse Cycliste, organizing bicycle races; and the Contre de Quarte for fencing) or spiritual organizations (three Masonic lodges, one of which, Hiram, affiliated to the Grand Orient de France, was not recognized by the English Grand Lodge, although the Loge de France and the Loge l'Entente Cordiale were). Some were long-standing but still active, such as the Société de Bienfaisance, founded in 1842, which was seen as 'the soul of the colony',[36] and whose directors figured among its elite; or the Club Culinaire Français, founded in 1845. Others were more recent, such as the London section of France Mutualiste, one of the societies of ex-servicemen which started in 1929 and also had VIPs as its directors. The 1880s were a key moment in the starting of French associations in London. The years 1880–3 saw the founding of three of the most important associations: in 1880, the Société Nationale Française, started by Emmanuel Cadiot in order to group together the various London French associations; in 1881, the Société Nationale des Professeurs de Français en Angleterre, the 'embassy for French thought'; and in 1883, the London French Chamber of Commerce. All these societies had the same aims: defending their profession and seeing that new arrivals found places; propagating French culture, each in their own field; and providing help to those in need. They were also an instrument of social control, defending the morality and cohesion of the group.

[36] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 227.

Like English clubs, these societies were very selective in their recruitment of members. Normally, candidates for membership had to be sponsored by two existing members; strict criteria were applied. The SNPF required candidates for membership to be French. Criteria for morality were essential. The National Home for Women Primary School Teachers was an association founded in 1900 by the SNPF on the initiative of Alfred Huguenet, with Marie Lauraint as its first director, whose aim was to provide its residents with family life and ensure their protection. A primary-level woman teacher who applied to it for membership had to provide two character references and a third about her family. 'Competence, honesty, good manners' were the entrance criteria for the Société des Progrès de la Coiffure. The Chamber of Commerce had a special information office on the honesty and commercial situation of dealers and industrialists; when the question was raised, in 1904, of creating a 'Cercle Commercial Français', the proposers underlined that members would have to be 'of proven honesty'. As a result, membership of some societies was quite low. The London section of the SNPF had only about twenty members in 1901. Moreover, societies were basically masculine. One of the rare ones that accepted women, first as mere associates and later, from 1884, as members, was again the SNPF.[37] The only societies for women were the Société Française d'Institutrices, founded in 1894 by a female teacher who was an associate of the SNPF, and the Association des Institutrices Françaises, founded in 1903 by Marie Lauraint.

The defence of France's image and culture was of primordial importance for these associations. The SNPF claimed to represent 'French thought and culture in England', defend the recruitment of French nationals as French teachers, and maintain the pre-eminent position of French in foreign-language teaching in Britain. Under Petilleau it organized a major annual competition, with prizes, gold and silver medals from the French Ministère de l'Instruction Publique and the Alliance Française, and the Prix Hachette de Littérature,[38] awarded at a ceremony at the Guildhall in the presence of the lord mayor – proof of the audience reached by the SNPF, and the interest taken by the British in French teaching. The Société Culinaire

[37] See Thomas, 'A la conquête'.

[38] In 1900 the Hachette Bookshop in London, which published works by members of the SNPF, inaugurated a 'Prix Hachette de Littérature' as a prize in the Grand Concours de Langue et Littérature Françaises. This competition had been established in 1884, and its prizes were two gold medals (offered by the French Ministry of Public Instruction and Fine Arts); three silver medals (one from the ambassador, the other two from the Alliance Française); prints offered by the Galerie Lefevre; and works of art offered by Charterhouse School, Harrow School, Godalming School, M. Petilleau (president of the Comité des Professeurs), M. Testard (of the Alliance Français), M. Vasselier, the SNPF, and, from 1900, the Hachette Bookshop.

Française, besides the defence of its members' interests, and their jobs in London, established itself as the 'faithful and vigilant guardian of French culinary traditions'.

In certain areas there were rival societies; this was the case for primary-level women teachers, and also in the culinary sphere, where as well as the Club Culinaire Français there existed the Société Culinaire, the Club de l'Avenir Français founded in 1893 to help in finding jobs for young French people newly arrived in London, and the Société des Cuisiniers et Confiseurs. In 1932 the first two of these united into one, whose purpose remained that of 'maintaining the superiority of French culinary art' and defending the interests of the profession. Membership of these societies bestowed considerable importance on people, and some, like G. Petilleau or Marius Duché, became VIPs, invited as guests by the French ambassador and the lord mayor, given places at receptions held for official visits by the French president, etc.[39]

The life of these societies was organized around general assemblies, artistic and musical soirées, and especially dinners, banquets and annual balls – high points in their activities and the opportunity for honoured members of the French colony to meet one another, since it was the habit of each society to invite Embassy dignitaries, eminent members of other societies and British high-society figures. The banquets were punctuated by toasts proposed to the queen or king, the French president and distinguished guests, and by speeches, including one by the French ambassador if he was present. As for the balls, they were opportunities to dress up. Some societies were known for their soirées and balls: participants at the soirées of the Société des Progrès de la Coiffure were invited to come in 'historical, modern and fantasy hair-styles' and its balls were in fancy-dress. These festive occasions (the most important of which were the dinners of the Hôpital Français and the Chamber of Commerce in the presence of the French ambassador and the lord mayor) were certainly social events, but they were also fund-raising occasions for the charitable works of the French colony. The Société de Bienfaisance provided monetary help to French people in difficulties, contributed to the cost of returning to France, and paid annual pensions to five or six destitute elderly people. The Ligue de la Bonté was founded in 1901 by the SNPF. The Hôpital Français, founded in 1867 by Dr. Rimmel

[39] *Le Livre d'or de l'entente cordiale* (Bordeaux, 1908), contains the reports of the visits to London made by President Loubet (pp. 89–110), the members of the French Parliament (pp. 113–18), naval officers of the Escadre Française du Nord (pp. 171–80), the Paris town councillors (pp. 211–16), a delegation of members of French universities (pp. 192–4) and others. As well as an account of the receptions, the *Livre d'or* gives the welcoming speeches, speeches of thanks, names of some of the delegates, and photographs.

and Dr. Vintras, offered treatment free to French people in reduced circumstances or to foreigners who had no-one to look after them. From 1890, the hospital stood in Shaftesbury Avenue and underwent successive enlargements; doctors, surgeons and sisters treated over 16,000 in-patients between 1867 and 1904, and more than 23,000 between 1904 and 1930; nearly 364,000 out-patients between 1867 and 1904, and over 500,000 between 1904 and 1930.[40] In 1904 the British inspection of hospitals stated that 'the hospital is a model of what an institution of this kind should be, and leaves nothing to be desired'. Dr. Vintras had added to the hospital a convalescence and rest home at Brighton.

These societies faced two related problems: the absence of premises, and the absence of a federating organism. Apart from the Société de Bienfaisance, the National Home, which had a spacious residence in St. George's Square, and the French Chamber of Commerce, which occupied premises at 153 Queen Victoria Street, the rest were 'of no fixed address'. Repeated attempts were made from 1880 to the inter-war period to put in place a structure to act as a link between the various French societies in London, and as a rallying-point for French people in London. Cadiot founded the Société Nationale Française in 1880, with three sections: industrial and commercial; artistic; and scientific and literary (with Petilleau as its president). This, however, had no real effect, and neither did an attempted re-launch in July 1900. De Bry, Fauquemberge and others had set up La Vraie France the month before, but it too was a failure. In December 1901 Cambon, the only French ambassador to take an interest in the question, organized a meeting in view of the financial problems resulting from this lack of cohesion, which had assailed the Société de Bienfaisance, the convalescence home at Brighton and the National Home. He called for absolute harmony among the members of the colony, insisted that a central committee should be set up with the French consul general as president, supported by four sub-committees (commercial, financial, cultural and press), and told them to set to work.[41] The question came up again in 1908 and finally, in December 1913, a permanent committee for the colony was set in place, with Duché as its president, charged with ensuring proper discipline between the societies, representing them officially and defending French national traditions.

[40] *La Chronique de Londres*, 12 Nov. 1904, and Goiran, *Français à Londres*, pp. 231–2. In 1932 the hospital had 70 beds, an operating theatre, three consulting-rooms, an x-ray department and a laboratory. The nursing care was provided by Sacred Heart nuns trained at Versailles. During the First World War it was a department of the First London General Hospital and 30 beds were reserved for wounded British soldiers. The French Hospital, bought back in 1967, became the Shaftesbury Hospital. It was closed in 1992.

[41] *La Chronique de Londres*, 21 Dec. 1901.

A further question facing the colony was that of their children's schooling. Until 1915 the few schools available were only at primary level. The Ecole de l'Eglise Protestante Française in Wardour Street had three classes; it taught children of members of the Eglise Protestante Française, children of members of Protestant churches which held their services in French, and children who had at least one French parent and whose mother-tongue was French. As for the French schools in Leicester Square, which appear to be the only ones recognized and supported by the French Embassy, they were linked to the Catholic church Notre Dame de France, which was the colony's parish church. The girls' school was run first by Sacred Heart nuns and then, after 1892, by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, and had 120 pupils in 1902. The boys' school was established in 1892, and run by Marist Brothers; in 1902 it had 100 pupils. There was a kindergarten for eighty children between the ages of three and seven. These schools were located in the district where many of the poorer members of the French colony still lived. They were insufficient to meet demand, and did not solve the problem of secondary education. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the colony's leaders were concerned that this lack of provision was leading the children to abandon their French nationality to be able to attend English schools. They aspired to create a school where 'generations of English and French children' could 'grow and be educated together, get to know each other and learn to appreciate each other'.[42] The First World War and the influx of French and Belgian refugees led to the opening, on 18 January 1915, of two French secondary schools, one for boys, with a Belgian university lecturer as headmaster, and one for girls, with Marie d'Orliac as headmistress. They were set up by the IFRU, thanks to gifts from Emile Mond. Seen as a patriotic effort, they offered free places to about 100 boys and about thirty girls, refugees from France and Belgium or children of French, Belgian or English soldiers who had gone to war. Until February 1919 they were located in two houses in Buckingham Palace Gardens lent by an individual, and afterwards in a collection of buildings lent by the British government in Cromwell Road. The teachers were all French, and were generally qualified university lecturers or secondary school teachers.

Between patriotism and Entente Cordiale

The French colony in London always stood aside from the political struggles and great crises that divided French life. Individual political opinions

[42] Y. Guyot, G. R. Sandoz, P. Bourgeois and J. Clarétie, *Exposition Franco-Britannique de Londres 1908, rapport général au Comité Français des Expositions à l'Etranger* (3 vols., Paris, 1913), ii. 420.

belonged in the private sphere, and were never expressed in public, either in the London French press or within the various societies. The only shared views that were strongly upheld in this colony were patriotism, forcefully expressed in the celebration of 14 July, and the defence of French language and culture and French interests, but never to the detriment of the Entente Cordiale. Hence the great deference towards the crown,[43] which was shown when the occasion arose, and especially at times when Franco-British relationships were strained – during the Fashoda crisis, the Transvaal affair, and above all, during the Boer wars, before 1914 and immediately after the First World War. The offensive caricatures of Queen Victoria by Léandre, among others, led the representatives of the French colony in London and the editors of *La Chronique de Londres* to assure the queen of their profound respect and to denounce the bad manners of certain French people in France. There were constant reminders of and references to the Franco-British Entente and the need to defend it, especially during the tensions of 1920–1.

The expression of these sentiments was particularly emphatic during the First World War. Within the French colony, the *union sacrée* was unquestioned. The mobilization of French people living in London and their departure for the continent was accomplished without difficulty. The French Red Cross, the London section of the Union des Femmes de France, whose president was Mme. Brasier de Thuy, and the church of Notre Dame de France all lent their support and provided material assistance to the families of the men called up, to refugees arriving from the northern parts of France, and to Belgian refugees as well.[44] The war did not lead to any slackening in the work of spreading French language and culture: the French Lycée and the Théâtre des Alliés, which put on French repertory, saw to that. The alliance between England and France brought to London members of the French army and French members and representatives of the many Franco-British commissions. Jean Monnet, back in London in July 1914, was, from 1915 onwards, the personal representative of Etienne Clémentel and a member of the Commission for the Distribution of Tonnage. Staying at the Ritz, he spent his evenings at the theatre.[45] Georges

[43] 'The French had the greatest reverence for Queen Victoria, and they entertain the same feeling towards the present King who, when Prince of Wales, gave to the French colony so many proofs of interest and a kindly patronage' wrote Paul Villars in 'French London', his contribution to Sims, *Living London* (ii. 138).

[44] *La Chronique de Londres*, 22 Aug. and 5 Sept. 1914. A committee for aid to families of French soldiers was set up with Duché as president. Mme. Brasier de Thuy was the wife of the London agent of a shipping company.

[45] See Roussel, *Jean Monnet*, pp. 45–82, on this period of the war.

Boris, who joined his brother Rolland, an adjutant to the French naval attaché, in London, was appointed to the French section of the Franco-British Commission for Supplies.[46]

The London French press also echoed the feelings of patriotism and support for the Entente Cordiale. The French colony in London had its own newspapers. There were not many of them and some were short-lived, but they were felt as a necessity. *La Chronique de Londres*, which considered itself the organ of the opinions of the French colony, lasted the longest. Founded in 1899 by Henri Didot, and having, for its editors-in-chief and then directors, A. P. Huguenet, professor of French and influential member of the SNPF, followed by A. Philibert, it appeared continuously until 1924, when it was swallowed up by *La Gazette de Grande Bretagne*, which ceased publication in 1932, hit by the Great Depression. These newspapers defended the Franco-British Entente Cordiale, constituted an organ of information and a link between the societies and people of the French colony in London, and defended French economic and cultural interests. Their target readership included French men and women who were in London more briefly. *La Chronique* appeared weekly, offering basically a chronicle of events in England, literary and arts reviews, portraits of members of the colony, news of French triumphs, a serial, information on the French societies in London, news of charitable and social events, a women's page from 1921 onwards, personal columns, and advertisements. It was not a vehicle for politics as such, but often for expressing gratitude towards Great Britain, as evidenced by this editorial of 29 December 1900: 'Next Tuesday *La Chronique* enters its third year … Setting aside all political questions, all of the French residing in London owe a debt to the country which accords us such generous hospitality, and the payment of that debt of gratitude is for us a sweet duty'.[47]

Geographical sketch of the French colony in London

The French colony in London was an endogamous one. Eight out of ten marriages, as demonstrated by a systematic analysis of the wedding and marriage announcements published in *La Chronique de Londres* in the years between 1899 and 1924, were between French people; mixed marriages

[46] J. L. Crémieux-Brilhac, *Georges Boris, trente ans d'influence Blum, de Gaulle, Mendès France* (Paris, 2010), p. 26; in London, Boris shadowed General de Gaulle and kept in contact with 'Jacques Duchesne', the theatre producer-manager Michel Saint-Denis (see below, under 'French intellectuals and artists').

[47] At the end of Aug. 1914 the publication of a newspaper called *Le Cri de Londres* was announced, which aimed to deal with all aspects of the combat and appear until the end of the war.

tended to occur in the upper social strata. In the years 1880–90, the colony was essentially concentrated in the area of Soho and around Leicester Square, where the Protestant church, the Catholic church, the primary schools and, to begin with, the French Hospital, were all located. However, from the end of the 1890s the sociology of the colony changed; the upper middle classes increased in proportion, with a surge in activities linked to commerce and finance, and the development of cultural structures and education. This in its turn brought about a gradual move towards the more prosperous parts of London. The addresses of SNPF members in London at the beginning of the twentieth century are evidence of this movement: more than half lived in South Kensington, Hampstead, St. John's Wood and Harrow.[48] According to the 1911 census and the data from 1931, the French population of the Borough of Westminster, which includes Soho, went from 2,486 to 1,388, that of St. Pancras from 1,580 to 938, that of St. Marylebone from 1,197 to 678, and that of Kensington from 1,156 to 1,089.[49] Thus, in the general reduction of the French colony in London, Kensington maintained its numbers.

French visitors in London

London seems to have been for the French what Paris was for the English, a lover. Politicians and businessmen came to London in increasing numbers. The Entente Cordiale and then the First World War favoured contacts and exchanges; additionally, from the 1920s on, air travel meant that for these classes of people London was on Paris's doorstep: 'You come to London for lunch to sort out some question, and in the afternoon you go back to Paris without even having to change your dinner-time'.[50] They were not the only ones to flock to London: university researchers and students, writers, artists and scholars came to work and hold seminars, invited by institutions or members of their networks.

Official receptions

Official visits by delegations – parliamentarians, town councillors, university professors, army officers – all followed, with varying degrees of ceremoniousness, the model of the presidential visits. A president of France came to London on an official visit six times between 1903 and 1939: Emile Loubet in 1903, Armand Fallières in 1908 to inaugurate the Franco-British Exhibition, Poincaré in 1913 and 1921, Doumergue in 1927 and Lebrun in

[48] *La Chronique de Londres*, 5 Oct. 1901.

[49] N. Atkin, *The Forgotten French: Exiles in the British Isles, 1940–4* (Manchester, 2003), p. 190.

[50] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 213.

Figure 10.3. President Loubet visits the Home des Institutrices Françaises, 1903. Author's postcard collection.

1939. The standard components remained the same: reception by the king at Buckingham Palace or Windsor, with gala dinners and ball; visit to the Guildhall and reception by the lord mayor, lunch or dinner; receptions at the French Embassy – on the day of the president's arrival, a delegation from the French colony in London was presented to him (in 1903, to Loubet, by Marius Duché); official dinner given by the president to the king; evening at Covent Garden. Other visits were made to the French institutions in London: the Hôpital Français, the National Home for Women Primary School Teachers and, after 1910, the French Institute, with the conferring of decorations. In 1908 Fallières conferred the insignia of Officier de la Légion d'Honneur on Marius Duché and Paul Villars, correspondent of the newspaper *Journal des débats* and author of a piece on the French in *Living London* edited by George R. Sims; while Marie Lauraint was appointed Officier de l'Instruction Publique. Finally, the president attended a military review.

Delegations of parliamentarians were received by the sovereign either at Buckingham Palace or at Windsor, invited to a banquet at the House of Commons, given receptions by the lord mayor and lunches or dinners by liveried companies; visits to the great financial institutions were also organized (in July 1903 to the Baltic Exchange and Lloyd's). The seventy-one members of French universities who visited London from 4 to 8 June 1906 were given receptions by the king at Windsor, by the Foreign Office, the University of London and the French Embassy; they visited Kensington Palace, Westminster Abbey and Camberwell School. In 1905 the town councillors of Paris were given receptions by Edward VII, the London County Council and the lord mayor at Mansion House; they visited the headquarters of the Fire Brigade and the Barking Sewage Works. All these ceremonies were punctuated by speeches: by the king, the French president, the ambassador and officials (on 5 June 1906, during the visit of members of French universities, no fewer than forty speeches were given!).[51] Presidential visits and visits by French naval or army personnel were also accompanied by processions through London streets lined with crowds, in which the British mingled with the people of London's French colony.

French intellectuals and artists

From Ernest Renan, who came to London in 1884 to deliver the Hibbert Lectures, and Paul Verlaine, whose stay in London in November 1893, organized by William Rothenstein, Thomas Powell and Arthur Symons, was a failure, to Paul Morand and Paul Valéry, who both stayed in London

[51] *Livre d'or*, pp. 192–4.

many times, literary figures, artists, dramatists, university lecturers and students all made the journey to the capital, perhaps finding it a source of inspiration and networking, and helping to bring French cultural life to England. Particular figures illustrated this special relationship with London.

Between 1902 and 1934 Valéry Larbaud made about twelve visits to London, 'a city of people with unpolished shoes', but also 'the place in the world where I have been happiest', and one that 'fills me with courage and ardour', he noted.[52] These stays were times for research and working in the British Museum for Larbaud, a specialist in Chesterton and Walter Savage Landor and translator of Samuel Butler. They were also an opportunity for meetings: in July 1911 he met André Gide; together, on the initiative of Agnès Tobin, they went to visit Arthur Symons and Joseph Conrad; in September–October 1919, while doing research on Butler at the British Museum, he met H. F. Jones, his biographer.[53] During his stay in May–July 1921, he gave a lecture at the IFRU on the French Poets.[54] They were also days of affection, from the time of his 1912 stay with Gladys, his London 'ally'.[55] Of the five stays that Gide made in London, the one in December 1912 was the most fruitful in literary terms: he met Edmund Gosse, whom he had first encountered the year before, Edith Sichel and George Moore; he also revisited Conrad, whose translator he became.

Paul Valéry was also assiduous in his London visits. His first stay dates back to 1878, before his seventh birthday, and, he wrote, 'no other trace of that first contact with England now remains to me save an impression of extreme terror experienced in Tussaud's Museum'.[56] Despite this, by 1934 a further six London visits had followed. In 1922 he unveiled a plaque in memory of Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud, gave a talk at Lady Colefax's, and spent a day with Conrad; the following year he gave a talk on Charles Baudelaire and Victor Hugo at the French Institute; in 1934, on 23 November he gave a lecture at King's College, on 24 November went to watch *Hamlet*, and on 26 November met Luigi Pirandello at the Italian Embassy.[57]

Another visitor, both a man of letters and a politician, was Georges Clemenceau, who came to London ten times between 1880 and June 1921. Clemenceau was shepherded into London's literary and political circles by Admiral Maxse, to whom he had been introduced by Louis Blanc in 1872,

[52] V. Larbaud, *Journal* (Paris, 2009), pp. 150, 599, 724.

[53] Larbaud, *Journal*, pp. 710–34.

[54] V. Larbaud, *Œuvres* (Paris, 1958,) p. li.

[55] Larbaud, *Journal*; Gladys is mentioned throughout the *Journal*.

[56] P. Valéry, *Œuvres* (2 vols., Paris, 1957), i. 13. Valéry and his parents went to stay with his aunt, Pauline de Rin.

[57] Valéry, *Œuvres*, i. 45, 46, 60.

and his daughters, to whom he was linked. His first visits were as much cultural as political in nature.[58] In 1884 Clemenceau, the radical, was invited into aristocratic English circles, met Lord Granville and other members of the nobility, and spoke at the Cobden Club. In January 1899 he paid a visit to Zola, the exile; in February 1900, on the initiative of Violet Maxse, he and Gustave Geoffroy met Claude Monet at the Savoy and went together to listen to the Minstrels at St. James's Hall, Piccadilly. In 1903 he met the socialist Henry Hyndman, later Clemenceau's biographer, and Rudyard Kipling.[59] From March 1918 to January 1920 Clemenceau came to London as president of the council and negotiator, either alone or in the company of Marshal Foch. During his last visit, on the way to Oxford to receive an honorary doctorate on 21 June, he stopped over in London, went to Claridge's, and met Churchill, the Steeds, the Kiplings, the Cecils, the Asquiths and, without any pleasure, Lloyd George.[60]

Of the artists, Claude Monet, a refugee after the Paris Commune, came back to London three more times, in September–October 1899, February–April 1900 and January–March 1901, to work on his series of views of London, some painted from his room at the Savoy, others from a room in St. Thomas's Hospital. Paintings of the Thames, Charing Cross Bridge, Westminster Bridge, views of the Houses of Parliament, Leicester Square by night, and Waterloo Bridge, in the light effects specific to London, were some of the fruits of these stays. In spring 1898 Henri Matisse came to study J. M. W. Turner's paintings and spent his honeymoon in London. He returned in 1922, having been commissioned by Sergei Diaghilev to design sets and costumes for Igor Stravinsky's ballet *Rossignol*.

Individual French actors such as Réjane,[61] Sacha Guitry and Yvonne Printemps achieved considerable successes on the London stage, but still more influential were the tours by theatre companies. These included: the Comédie Française, which came with Sarah Bernhardt[62] at the end of the nineteenth century, and after the First World War was asked by Aristide Briand to perform at Drury Lane on the *Journée du Combattant*, 31

[58] J. B. Duroselle, *Clemenceau* (Paris, 1988), p. 198.

[59] Duroselle, *Clemenceau*, pp. 404, 415.

[60] Duroselle, *Clemenceau*, p. 879.

[61] On 27 June 1894 she played the role of Catherine in V. Sardou and E. Moreau's *Madame Sans-Gêne* at the Gaiety Theatre; the theatre company was French and the piece had previously been performed on 27 Oct. 1893 at the Théâtre du Vaudeville, Paris (programme, private collection).

[62] Sarah Bernhardt was a familiar figure on the London stage. For example, on 11 Oct. 1913 she performed at a soirée to raise funds for the French Hospital; in 1896 she performed at Daly's Theatre (2 and 8 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square) during the season of French theatre.

March 1921, when the king and queen were invited;[63] the Théâtre Libre de Copeau in 1891; and Michel Saint-Denis's Compagnie des Quinze, which performed in London several times between 1931 and 1934. The last two named introduced elements of experimental theatre to London. Michel Saint-Denis settled in London where, from 1935 to 1939, he directed the London Theatre Studio, a place of innovation and cultural exchange.[64]

Debussy visited London seven times between 1902 and 1914. In July 1902 he came in response to an invitation by André Messager; in 1903 he was sent by the literary periodical *Le Gil Blas* to report on Wagner's Ring cycle, conducted by Hans Richter at Covent Garden; in February 1908 he conducted the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and *La Mer* to immense acclaim at Queen's Hall, Langham Place; a year later he returned to conduct *Nocturnes* and the *Prélude* again. In the 1908 season Edouard Colonne had the immense privilege of being the only foreigner to conduct at the Proms before the death of Henry Wood.[65]

Elie Halévy and Marc Bloch were two of the many university teachers who came to pursue their research at the University of London or the British Museum, to give lectures or attend conferences. Halévy was a philosopher specializing in Benthamite utilitarianism, and a historian, author of the *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*; his correspondence reveals his journeys and his network of London acquaintances. Starting with his first stay in 1892 he met Henry James, the Burne-Joneses, Jane Ellen Harrison, Miss Margot Tennant, the Sickerts, the publisher Unwin, and George Moore;[66] in 1898 he met the Sassoons; in 1902, Leslie Stephen; in 1919, Lord Haldane; in 1927, Eileen Power, whom he had previously met in Paris, and the Webbs; but one of the solid friendships he formed, this time in Cambridge, was with Bertrand Russell. His circle of contacts was wide and complex. Besides his research work, he met all these people at dinners,

[63] MAE, relations culturelles, série Z, carton 312, pièces 28 (dated 8 March 1921), 29, 31.

[64] M. Saint-Denis, *La Compagnie des Quinze: les cahiers* (Paris, 1931); J. B. Gourmel, 'Michel Saint-Denis, un homme de théâtre (1897–1971)' (unpublished Université Paris I-Panthéon Sorbonne MA dissertation, 2005). A nephew of Jacques Copeau, Michel Saint-Denis went by the name of Jacques Duchesne during the war and broadcast the programme 'Les Français parlent aux Français'. The London Theatre Studio trained many actors and directors including Peter Brook and Michael Redgrave.

[65] M. Rapoport, 'Debussy et les Proms', in *Actes du colloque Debussy*, ed. M. Chimenes (Paris, forthcoming 2013).

[66] E. Halévy, *Correspondance 1891–1937* (Paris, 1996), letter of Tuesday 1 Nov. to Ludovic Halévy, p. 87; for 1898, letter of Thursday 12 May to L. Halévy, p. 245; for 1902, note at p. 286; for 1919, letter of 16 March to Mme. Ludovic Halévy. Elie wrote very regularly to his father Ludovic, and after his father's death, to his mother. His interest in the socialist movement led to several meetings with the Webbs.

went out to the theatre at Covent Garden, frequented the Athenaeum and was invited to give lectures at the London School of Economics. His stays in London gave rise to observations on British politics as seen by a man who was close to the socialists, as well as on London life. On 8 May 1935 he wrote to Xavier Léon:

> I really did not want to go to this Jubilee procession. But *everyone* told me it was my duty to be there. I yielded, and do not regret it. It was very beautiful and at the same time very charming, very simple, very family-like … What is a king of England? It is England herself, adoring herself in an individual incarnation …[67]

His correspondence also records his migrations within London, from his first stay to his last, from the Family Hotel in Great Russell Street, where he stayed in 1892, to Gordon Street, where he stayed in the 1930s.

Marc Bloch's connection with London has become better known since the publication of F. O. Touati's book.[68] Bloch's researches on medieval history revolved around a comparison between France and England. Between the summer of 1921 and March 1939 he came to London four times, both for research and to give classes at the London School of Economics. Generally he stayed at the Maison de l'Institut de France, a foundation bequeathed to the Institute by Edmond de Rothschild in 1919 and intended to offer accommodation to researchers and members of universities in order to 'strengthen the intellectual links between France and England … to help create, between the two countries, a spiritual alliance in order to spread throughout the world the ideas of progress, justice and peace'.[69] But for Bloch, unlike Halévy, the most important encounters occurred less in London than in Cambridge or Oxford: Eileen Power, Michael Postan and F. M. Powicke.

Tourists

Finally, London, which Elie Halévy said 'is still the most extraordinary city in the world',[70] was a tourist destination: 'Saturday sees Victoria thronging with groups of Parisians, somewhat stunned to find themselves in a foreign country',[71] London being the epitome of exotic new surroundings. It would be impossible to calculate the numbers. H. Goiran estimates that the

[67] Halévy, *Correspondance*, p. 729. Xavier Léon was one of Halévy's oldest friends and the founder of the journal *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*.

[68] F. O. Touati, *Marc Bloch et l'Angleterre* (Paris, 2007).

[69] Touati, *Marc Bloch*, p. 72. Marc Bloch was one of the first guests of the Maison de l'Institut de France when he stayed there in the summer of 1921.

[70] Halévy, *Correspondance*, letter to Ludovic Halévy of 2 Feb. 1893, p. 116.

[71] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 214.

number of French tourists increased year by year.[72] London was a strong attraction, but apart from special occasions like the great exhibitions,[73] when railway and boat companies offered reduced rates, it was basically the upper middle classes who crossed the Channel and headed for London.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the Second World War the components of London's French colony had undergone a change over the previous sixty years and now consisted largely of two groups. On the one hand, were those connected with business, represented by people like Pierre de Malglaive, London director of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique, E. Bellanger, director of Cartier de Londres, Jacques Métadier, director of a pharmaceutical company, or T. J. Guéritte, former president of the French Chamber of Commerce. On the other hand, were people from the world of culture: Professor Paul Vaucher, Denis Saurat, Robert L. Cru and Michel Saint-Denis. The colony was structured around a number of institutions – cultural ones such as the Institut Français, the French schools and churches; economic ones like the French Chamber of Commerce; the many professional societies; and charitable institutions such as the French Hospital. Throughout this period the colony had maintained its cohesion despite the divisions that had shaken France. Those in charge of its various institutions had been energetic defenders of the Entente Cordiale, particularly at times of tension between England and France; they affirmed the colony's patriotism and its fidelity to France, but at the same time its respect and gratitude towards Great Britain and the king or queen.

The outbreak of war, and especially the collapse of France in May–June 1940, brought about a radical change in the features of the French colony in London. For the first time, its members had to make choices: whether to stand by the legal government of France in Vichy, or to rebel and join the partisans backing General de Gaulle or another resistance group, or to support England. Some returned to France, and others left London, while large numbers of French newcomers appeared there – officers, ordinary soldiers, civilians from every sphere of French society, and politicians,

[72] Goiran, *Français à Londres*, p. 214.

[73] The preparation of these great exhibitions, the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908 for instance, involved visits by French delegations of experts, government representatives, members of parliamentary commissions and chambers of commerce. Once the exhibition was under way, these same people would come back for the many events scheduled: the opening, banquets, receptions, etc. Account should also be taken of the hundreds of exhibitors, their employees and agents, who flocked to London for several weeks and who had to be accommodated.

often from opposing sides. Some of the French institutions in London, and particularly the Institut Français, became rallying-points for a section of London's French colony and the more recent arrivals. New French locations appeared in London and, between 1940 and 1944, new French institutions connected with the war were set up. French London in the 1940s was no longer the same as before the war either in its make-up or its geography. It was a new colony that was being born, with its own history.

Translated by Helena Scott