

# Oxford-Grenoble Association



## Newsletter

No 11: Winter 2013/14

www.oxford.gov.uk



## Oxford & Grenoble: friends since 1989

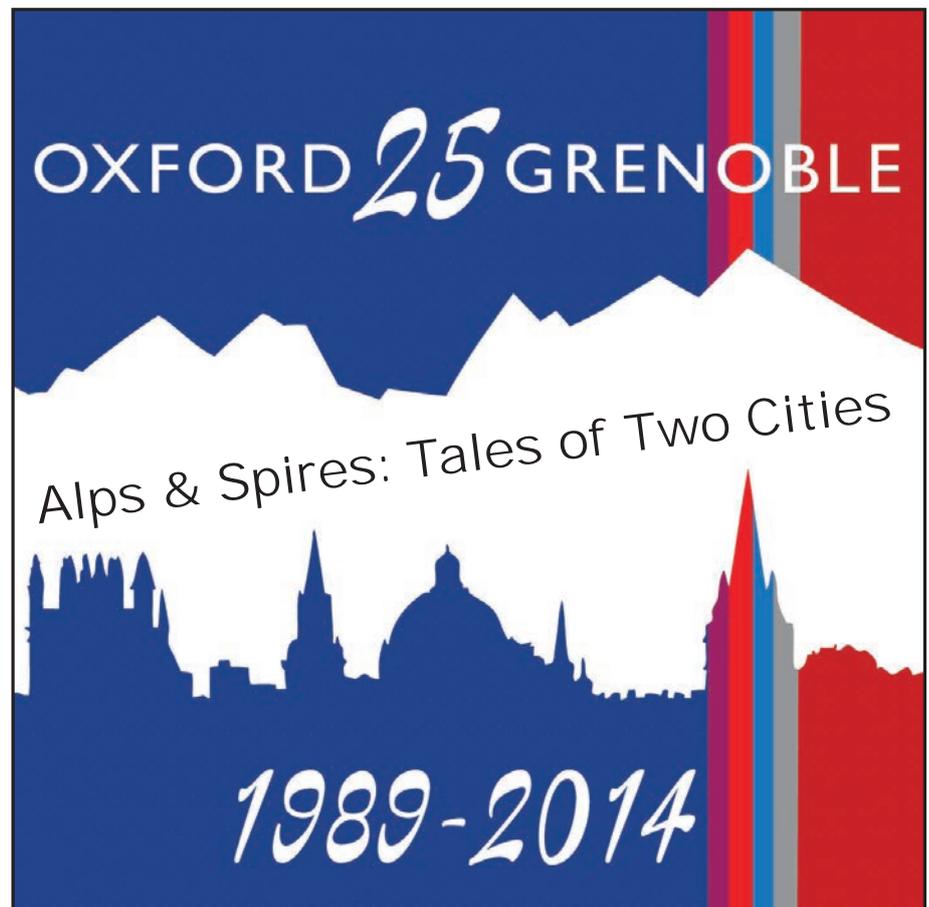
This spring our two cities celebrate the signing of the twinning agreement in April 1989, followed by 25 years of friendship as well as many contacts and exchanges - personal and individual, cultural, sporting, educational, scientific - going back over an even longer period.

The 20th anniversary of the official civic twinning was hosted by Grenoble. Now it's Oxford's turn to welcome both French friends and fellow citizens to a week (26 April - 3 May) of celebratory events under the title *Alps & Spires: Tales of Two Cities*, among them:

- Exhibitions of work by Grenoble and Oxford artists and photographers at several venues
- May morning music and dancing with our old friends Rigodons et Traditions and Torivaki, and new ones, Yebarov, un Fanfare Balkanique
- The Big Book and story-telling at the Story Museum
- Jazz, folk and classical performances

A fuller programme will be available shortly; for more information go to: [www.oxford.gov.uk/alpsandspires](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/alpsandspires), or contact 01865 249062 or [internationallinks@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:internationallinks@oxford.gov.uk)

Given the scale of the festivities there will be a substantial number of French visitors arriving in Oxford (most for only part of the



week) and we hope that members and friends will welcome them into their homes.

Helpers will also be needed for a few hours at some of the events. Please complete and return the form at the back of this newsletter if you'd be willing to offer accommodation or other help.



# Oxford-Grenoble exchanges 2013

## Diana Bell

Oxford was represented at Grenoble's spring book fair (Printemps du livre) by artist Diana Bell and her interactive *Big Book*, which has already been seen in some of Oxford's other European twin cities. On this occasion Diana also organized a small exhibition in the Maison de l'International entitled *The Magic of Books* which featured the work of three Oxford artists: Kate Hammersley, Madi Acharya-Baskerville and Diana herself.

She was accompanied on the drive to France by photographer and musician Paul Medley. They both took advantage of the visit to make contact with fellow-practitioners there who might present their work in Oxford during the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Oxford-Grenoble link.

## Graham Avery

*A graduate of Oxford University, Graham has recently settled here, having previously worked for many years, as did his wife, at the European Commission in Brussels. He writes about his first encounter with Grenoble and the Oxford-Grenoble twinning:*

In February 2013 I gave a lecture at Grenoble University's Institut d'Etudes Politiques: for me it was my first experience of the 'Capital of the Alps', while for my wife, who studied French in Grenoble, it was nostalgic. We met members of the Alliance Grenoble-Oxford (Marie-Christine Simiand, Susan Blattès, and David Bailey) who gave us a warm welcome at a dinner at the Café de la Table Ronde.

During our stay we enjoyed the remarkable collection of art and antiquities in the modern Musée de Grenoble, the materials on alpine social history in the Musée dauphinois housed in the former convent of Sainte-Marie-d'en-Haut, perched above the city, and the evocative displays about the region's wartime history in the Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation.



Alice's White Rabbit inaugurates the Big Book's visit to Grenoble.



A stained glass window by Joost Swarte at the Fondation Glénat.

A special discovery was the headquarters of Éditions Glénat, the publisher of comic books and graphic novels, and books on the Alps, among other subjects. It is housed in the city centre in the former convent of Sainte-Cécile, recently renovated and open to the public. The building, now full of books, has an entertaining series of stained glass windows by the Dutch cartoonist Joost Swarte.

We also explored the city on foot, admiring the impressive Art Nouveau architecture, and of course we travelled on the public transport system of TAG (Transports de l'Agglomération Grenobloise) with its splendid modern trams.

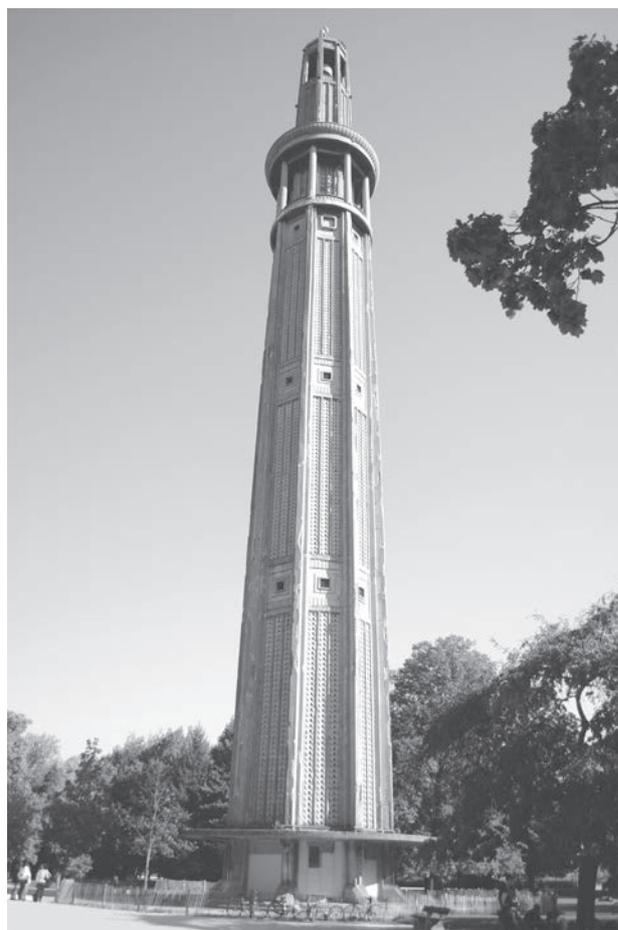
## Christiane Thibault

*In November Christiane Thibault, a teacher of English and legal professions at Grenoble's Université Pierre Mendès-France, came to Oxford with her husband, a keen student of geology. She gave a presentation in English to international students at Oxford Brookes Headington campus and in French at the Harcourt Hill campus to students training to be teachers of French. She has given us this account of her visit:*

Dans le cadre du programme Erasmus et à l'invitation de Dana Wentworth et Béatrice

Davies, professeurs à l'université Oxford Brookes, j'ai présenté trois sites remarquables de la région grenobloise avec une initiation à l'observation des éléments du relief. L'objectif était de sensibiliser les étudiants à la lecture des paysages, à devenir des randonneurs avertis et éventuellement de préparer un séjour à Grenoble.

Grenoble est connue pour ses sports d'hiver, mais, avant eux, elle doit son essor économique au ciment (issu de ses carrières de calcaire exploitées depuis le XIXème siècle), avec des réalisations (Tour Perret) qui ont suscité la curiosité des New-Yorkais. Dans les massifs qui entourent la ville, les Européens du nord se sont émerveillés devant les sculptures naturelles et c'est grâce à eux que le mot 'tourisme' s'est popularisé.



Grenoble's 95m high Tour Perret, built in 1924-25 in the parc Paul Mistral.



Bonnet de Calvin, l'autre nom donné au Châtel à cause de sa forme caractéristique, qui offre un panorama à 360° facilement accessible.

Dans ces mêmes massifs, la profession de guide de montagnes a commencé quand les connaissances de terrain des locaux se sont révélées indispensables aux sportifs d'Outre-Atlantique et d'Outre-Manche désirant atteindre les sommets des Ecrins. Au même moment les refuges ont été aménagés par le Club Alpin Français. C'est aussi non loin de Grenoble, sur le plateau du Trièves que les communautés religieuses, persécutées pendant les guerres de religion, ont trouvé un havre de paix et ont développé l'économie solidaire qui a éveillé l'intérêt de la Reine Victoria. La première école de formation des maîtres, chère à Félix Neff, y a été fondée. C'est également sur le plateau du Trièves que le Mont Aiguille (le mont inaccessible) a marqué le début de l'alpinisme avec l'exploit des seigneurs de Charles VIII avec force cordes et échelles au moment où d'autres souverains conquéraient des continents en 1492.

Nous avons voulu aussi profiter de ce public pour leur faire découvrir la toponymie qui nous éclaire sur l'origine, l'histoire d'un lieu; ainsi les protestants ont donné le nom de Bonnet de Calvin à une montagne surplombant le Trièves étant donné sa morphologie et l'histoire du site, tandis que les catholiques ont donné le nom de Bonnet de l'Evêque à une montagne toute proche.

Nous avons terminé la séance par un *Hammer Award*, le marteau étant l'outil du géologue.

Les étudiants ont évalué dans un questionnaire la richesse et la beauté des sites présentés lors de notre intervention.

Il était temps alors, pour les professeurs et étudiants, de déguster un verre de vin chaud dans les rues d'Oxford qui célébrait sa fête des lumières. Nous avons apprécié la qualité de l'accueil et espérons avoir contribué à une nouvelle approche de la région grenobloise, qui recèle des trésors de paysages, et consolidé les liens entre les deux villes. 'There is more to Grenoble than meets the eye.'

*Christiane thanks her colleague Bronagh Morse for helping to arrange this visit.*

## Ben Mowat

*Ben Mowat is a 29-year-old Oxford composer who leads an ensemble called The String Project, a cross between a band and a string quartet, including cello, viola, 2 violins, vocals, drums and piano. They play mostly instrumental cinematic music he writes himself, drawing inspiration from the worlds of both classical and popular music 'with a folk edge'. Currently they are collaborating with visual artists, having also worked with contemporary dancers. Ben has written the following account of their visit to our French twin city last May:*



A couple of our band members were invited by East Oxford Community Choir to play in the orchestra for their two concerts with the Grenoble-based choir Interlude.

With the much appreciated help of Mel Houldershaw, Marie-Christine Simiand and other members of the twinning team, we managed to organise a concert for my band during the visit in the prestigious Café des Arts in Grenoble's old town. We promoted it through the choirs and also independently around Grenoble via the Internet.

We were very grateful for the opportunity to play at Café des Arts, with its wonderful acoustic, friendly reception and delicious food, which we happily ate before our concert. We had a good audience and enjoyed their full attention as we played a programme made up mostly of my own compositions but also including a tango by Albéniz and a version of Fauré's Pavane.

Not only was this an excellent motivating goal for my band to work towards, but it was also great experience in organizing a concert abroad and getting my compositions heard in France for the first time. This will help the band as we begin to make funding applications, look for gigs and concerts and seek recognition and professionalism as a group as well as for me personally as a composer.

Thank you to all who helped us make this concert possible. To hear some live recordings from the concert visit my YouTube channel:

[www.youtube.com/benmowatmusic](http://www.youtube.com/benmowatmusic)

## Sally Sale

*The main purpose of the May visit to Grenoble was for members of East Oxford Community Choir to join their French twin choir Ensemble*



Members of The String Project.

*Vocal Interlude in two performances of Haydn's 'The Seasons'. OGA member Sally Sale takes up the story:*

Despite being one of the founder members of OGA, I was a little anxious as to how I, a lapsed member and non-singer to boot, might be received. I was instantly reassured by the friendliness and the enthusiasm of my fellow travellers and likewise by the warm welcome from our French hosts at Grenoble station. We were swept into their embrace as old friends were greeted with delight and new friends introduced. Francophiles and anglophiles eagerly exchanged news.

The programme was action-packed given the short time span between the first joint rehearsal on the Friday and the Saturday and Sunday evening performances to a rewardingly receptive public. Our hosts welcomed us royally at a reception at the Town Hall on Friday as well as preparing delicious meals, driving us about town and singing their hearts out. On Saturday



The Grottes de Choranche in Vercors national park.

some of us enjoyed a visit to the spectacular Grottes de Choranche and Pont-en-Royans in the Vercors national park. On Sunday morning there was time to shop, visit the city or, as in our case, to be impressed by the exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Alberto Giacometti at the magnificent Musée de Grenoble.

I dutifully attended every rehearsal and helped a friend of the orchestra while she practised her tricky 'triangle' part. I amused myself observing the locals who potted in and out of their church (Centre Œcuménique de Saint-Marc) including one elderly lady who, after a moment's hesitation, boldly pushed her bicycle up to a pew where she then sat enraptured during one rehearsal. The Dutch brass section came and went, mainly seeking beer during their long interludes and bringing a smile to our faces.

Under the expert direction of Jean Ménissier and with the talented soloists Baptistine Mortier, Julien Drevet-Santique and François Zeconi the combined choirs treated the Saturday

and Sunday evening audiences to an excellent rendition of this lengthy work. After the final performance we all relaxed at a Ceilidh held in our honour.

The returning train on Monday was abuzz with chatter, such was the adrenalin flow! Gradually exhaustion overcame all but the hardiest and our dreams were sweet as we mused on yet a further recognition of the 'Entente Cordiale', especially on the personal level. Long may such harmony continue!

## Grenoble, Compagnon de la Libération

The final issue for 2013 of *Nouvelles de Grenoble*, produced by the Hôtel de Ville, commemorates an episode in the city's history from 70 years ago that caused it to be included among the five communes honoured in May 1944 with the title Compagnon de la Libération and presented in November of that year with the Order of the Liberation cross by General de Gaulle.

In September 1943, as the Nazi occupation of France moved south into what had previously been the Free Zone, German forces took over control of Grenoble and the surrounding region from the Italians, stepping up reprisals against any signs of rebellion. November brought demonstrations and attacks on munitions stores followed by many arrests, deportations and deaths. Less than a year later, in August 1944, resisters and French soldiers liberated Grenoble.

Last November two exhibitions recalling aspects of these events were held in the Hôtel de Ville, while the Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation de l'Isère opened a further exhibition *Automne 1943, résistance et répressions* which runs till May 2014.

## AGM 2014

Our AGM is normally held around March-April but will be postponed this year to May-June after the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events.



## La noix de Grenoble

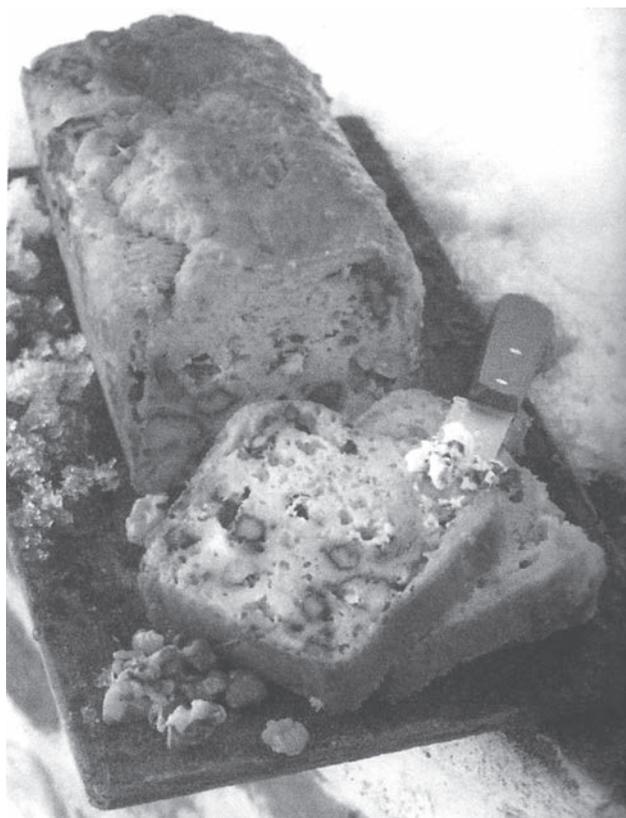
Can we ever have enough of these delicious walnuts? The last AGM was followed by a tasting in both edible and drinkable forms and an earlier newsletter featured recipes to appeal to the sweet tooth. Here is another for you to try, this time a savoury one:

### *Roquefort and walnut loaf*

- 50g shelled walnuts
- 3 eggs
- 10cl cream
- 150g roquefort cheese
- 200g SR flour
- 10cl sunflower oil
- Salt & pepper

Preheat oven to Mark 6 or 160C. Dice roquefort and break up walnuts. Pour flour into a mixing bowl, making a well in the centre into which you break the eggs. Beat well adding the oil gradually, then the cream. Add cheese and walnuts and mix in, then add salt and pepper.

Line a loaf tin with greaseproof paper and pour in mixture. Bake 45 mins then allow to cool



Delicious roquefort and walnut loaf.

before turning out on to a plate. Serve warm or cold.



If you would like to be involved in OGA's 25th anniversary celebrations, please fill in the form overleaf. You can also use this form to join the Association, or to renew your membership.



# Alps and Spines

Oxford-Grenoble 25th Anniversary Celebrations  
25ème anniversaire du jumelage Grenoble-Oxford

1989-2014

FULL PROGRAMME OF EVENTS 26 APRIL-3 MAY 2014

To join or renew your membership, and to offer help or accommodation during this week, please complete the form below.

OXFORD 25 GRENOBLE



## OGA membership subscription and offers of help



Please complete the form and return to: Jean Burrell, 59 Bedford St, Oxford OX4 1SU.

★ I wish to join/rejoin the Oxford-Grenoble Association for the calendar year 2014  
(Some members have already done this - if this is your case please ignore the reminder)

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Surname(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email or postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tel (home): \_\_\_\_\_

(Please enclose a cheque payable to Oxford-Grenoble Association: £10 individual or £15 household)

★ I can offer the following help during the week 26 April - 3 May:

Help at events: .....  
(e.g. helping on market stall 26/27 April; stewarding at concerts; meals for visitors)

Accommodation: No. of beds: ..... No. of bedrooms: .....  
(4 nights from Wednesday 30 April to Sunday 4 May)

Signed: .....