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-P.8

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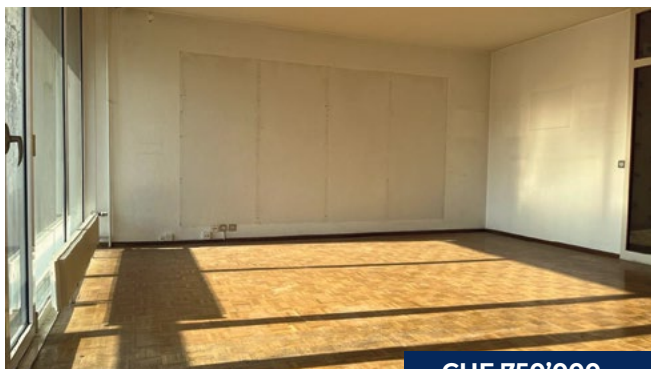
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RIVIERA FRANÇAISE

Menton la romantique

-P.44



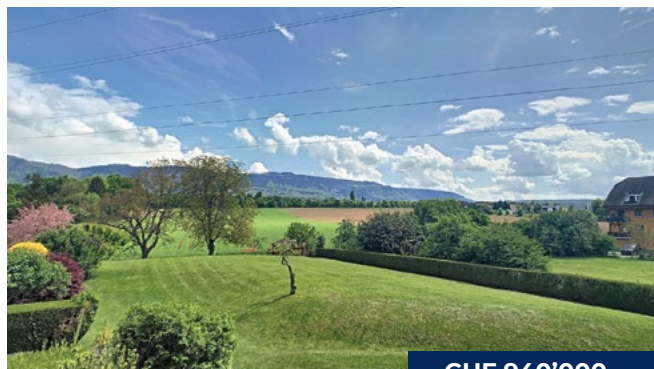
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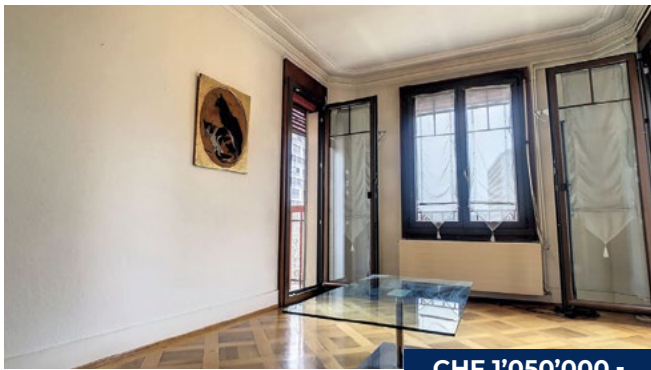
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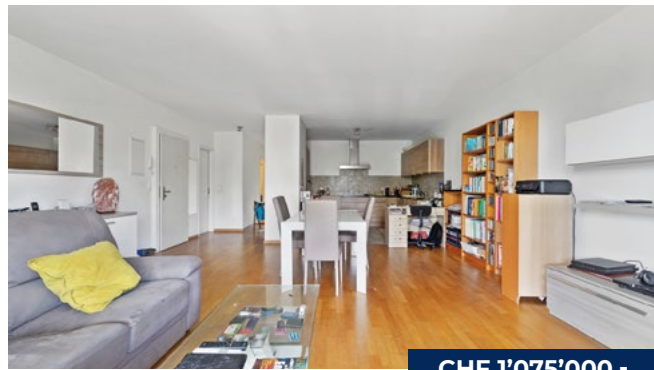
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Relax, Read, Repeat

It is a tradition that the summer issue of this magazine focuses on vacation, time off and fun.

But those working in international agencies or organizations in Geneva will tell you that with various global developments and needs, it is not always possible to take time off during the summer. Many of us feel guilty when we take even a brief respite from our jobs, as so much needs to be done!

I hope this issue will help you reflect on the need for relaxation or doing activities that are not directly parts of our jobs. Having read on this subject, and my inner scientist coming out here, I can say that there is good evidence that this approach may not be getting us closer to getting things done. We need to recognize that we're not machines, and not taking time off or at least balancing things out may actually be counterproductive.

So go ahead and book some vacation. Grab a copy of the magazine and other reading.

Enjoy the summer! ■

Détendez-vous, lisez, répétez

C'est une tradition: le numéro de l'été de ce magazine se focalise sur les vacances, le temps libre et le plaisir. Mais ceux qui travaillent dans des agences ou organisations internationales à Genève vous diront qu'avec les différents développements et besoins mondiaux, il n'est pas toujours possible de prendre des congés pendant l'été. Beaucoup d'entre nous se sentent coupables lorsqu'ils prennent ne serait ce qu'un bref répit de leur travail, car il y a tant à faire!

J'espère que ce numéro vous aidera à réfléchir sur le besoin de se détendre ou de pratiquer des activités qui ne sont pas directement liées à nos emplois.

Après réflexion, mon côté scientifique me souffle que ne pas lâcher prise risque fortement de ne pas faire avancer les choses. Nous devons accepter le fait que nous ne sommes pas des machines, et ne pas prendre des congés ou au moins, ne pas équilibrer les priorités, peut, en fait, être contre-productif.

Alors, réservez donc vos vacances! Emportez dans vos bagages une copie du magazine et d'autres lectures.

Profitez de l'été! ■

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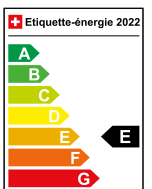
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Why Read?

For those of us who have ever got 'lost in a book', the question, 'why read?' may seem rather daft. The immersive experience of exploring another reality – perhaps an imaginary world or another person's life – has kept some of us fully occupied, long before the invention of virtual reality glasses...

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

The latest functional literacy rate for the world population (for adults aged 15 and above) was 87% (UNESCO UIS, 2020). And yet, as recently as 1976, only two-thirds of the global population or 67% could read. Historically, in Victorian times, reading was almost exclusively confined to the upper and educated classes of Victorian England. And yet, in the absence of television or films, with plays the precursor of cinema, mainly for lucky populations of large towns, books were almost the films of their day, taking audiences to ancient times or new places. Authors were the effective celebrities of the day, in their own right. One can imagine the trial of Oscar Wilde providing nearly as much gossip in its day as a lawsuit involving famous actors.

Early on in the pandemic, as we all adjusted to working online,

I noticed that some journalists and news presenters were engaging in what I called 'The Battle of the Bookshelves'... Rather than generic Zoom backgrounds, some TV presenters and university professors were competing to present in front of serious sets of bookshelves crammed with Dostoevsky and weighty tomes covering different aspects of international relations, as if to provide credentials for their intellectual capital (who knows whether they had actually read these books? It is relatively easy to start a book, but much harder and more time-consuming to finish it).

And yet, as technologies evolve and reading takes on different forms, the reasons why we should continue to read might need spelling out for some.

The academic benefits of reading are well-known. Reading trains



your mind, expands your vocabulary, develops your grammar, enhances your concentration, teaches you another language, and can educate and entertain you, in equal measure. We do not need global statistics to tell us this – we can see it for ourselves, either via personal experience or second-hand, via our children's education.

And yet, these theoretical benefits bypass some of the very real reasons why we read (I do know people who still read to grow their vocabulary, but the younger students are reading books for exam curricula and the older people do so either from habit or to learn a language). When I read, I get to lead other lives vicariously or by proxy. While reading, I have fallen in love, I have learned the lessons of other people's lives, I have taken on different identities, I have lived in different times and different societies. 'The Kiterunner' gave me a small inkling of what a childhood in Afghanistan might feel like, 'Maurice' gave me an idea of what it might have been like to grow up homosexual in Edwardian England. 'Le Blé en Herbe' taught me about

adolescence in seaside France. Ursula K. Le Guin and Anne McCaffrey showed me how to ride a dragon (more recently, Cressida Cowell taught us how to train them). Johanna Lindsey, Judith McNaught and Kresley Cole gave me misleading ideas about romantic love (as well as impossible expectations of men). Virginia Woolf and Ursula K. Le Guin explored issues of gender roles and gender identity, long before the issue entered mainstream public debate. J.R.R. Tolkien and Tamora Pierce taught me the meaning of the word 'quest'. When we read, we can experience the thrill – and risk – of a situation vicariously, without experiencing any of the actual, real-life dangers.

Reading also gives us many of our cultural anchors. Who would fully understand the true meaning of the word 'narcissist' without having read the myth about Narcissus? The Greek myths may be ancient, but they are full of warnings about surprisingly fallible gods and heroes, the actions of jealous wives and the dangers of loving money too much. In their myths and legends explaining

their world, the ancient Greeks provided plenty of warnings about all too familiar modern dangers.

Reading also educates us and gives us something to share with friends or others. Strangers who also enjoy books immediately have conversation in common, in books they have enjoyed or found fault with, or suggestions of new authors to explore. As the TV presenters and professors realized, perusing bookshelves can give you an insight into people's characters, in terms of what they enjoy, and what interests them. Today, with the Internet, questions of what and how to read are also becoming important. The mere fact that we 'browse' online sources rather than 'read' online tells us much. As Robert Pirsig put it in his excellent book, 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance', the river of human consciousness runs more broadly these days, but not as deeply. Clearly, we can learn a lot of news and information from the Internet, and often experience issues or situations in a more visual and impressive way (who can ever forget the tragic online

footage of the Boxing Day tsunami?). However, that does not mean to say this information is always accurate or correct. And retrievability is fast becoming an issue – 'the web never forgets' can also be experienced by some users as 'now where did I come across that?'

My dyslexic daughter is always telling me that comic books and mangas are a form of reading, which is of course entirely correct. But the Internet and mangas should not be our only sources or forms of reading. And here perhaps the training all journalists and historians get should be extended to the general public – in reading as widely as possible, we can learn about different points of view, different presentations and different interpretations of the same situation from different perspectives. And this can only be of greater benefit to us all – in our professional, as well as personal, lives.

And above all, reading can be fun and enjoyable. It can give us a structure, a purpose to our day, something we can dip into, and dip out of, whilst doing other things (riding the bus or sunbathing on a beach). (Although sometimes, I have been so engrossed in my book, I have forgotten the beach and got sunburnt!). In our ordinary lives, reading can give us a break from our worries and preoccupations and introduce a little spice into our lives. So go on, pick up a book, choose a new author or a new topic, and find out something you didn't know about a culture or country you are not familiar with... Enjoy the summer with a good book as your companion, and give yourself something to share with others in your life! ■



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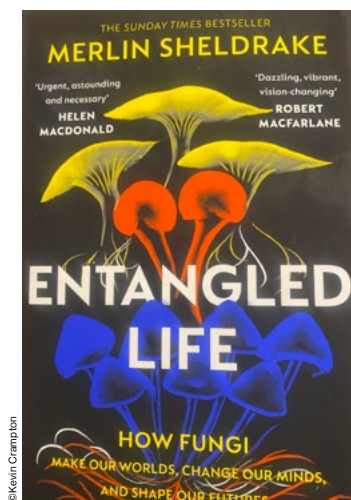
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Entangled Life

by Merlin Sheldrake

Selected as a book of the year by The Times, Daily Telegraph, and Time magazine among others, Merlin Sheldrake's first book entitled "Entangled Life", made quite a splash when it was published in 2020, and has since become an international bestseller, nominated for a host of awards.



"Entangled Life" by Merlin Sheldrake

REVIEWED BY KEVIN CRAMPTON

Sheldrake is a Cambridge-educated biologist specialising in that most intriguing form of life of earth – the fungi. His passion for the subject is evident on every page in which he describes in wonderful detail what makes these organisms so distinct, perplexing, and downright weird. It's a popular science book that is also a compelling page-turning read as Sheldrake draws on his own experience including everything from research in the forests of Panama, to home brewing, truffle hunting and clinical trials of mind-altering mushrooms.

The life of fungi really does capture the interest and imagination in unexpected ways. The book covers the little that we know and the deep unanswered questions about an entity that is absolutely essential to all other life on Earth.

Most people are familiar with mushrooms, the fruiting bodies of the network of mycelium that thread their way beneath the ground and form symbiotic relationships with the plant roots to which they connect. The behaviour of the mycelium is more animal than plant and blurs the distinction between those terms. They can forage as an animal does, sending out exploratory shoots in search of nutrients and then reforming their network once they have found resources to exploit. This behaviour can be

used to get them to solve mazes and also, satisfyingly, to model the ideal road layout for cities since mycelium will grow in optimum spatial configurations.

The property of a network of mycelium to exchange matter with the plants with which they connect and also to facilitate swapping material between these plants almost brings the science of economics to their study. Biologists are beginning to understand how the mycelium act as brokers between larger organisms such as trees for the "trade" of the nutrients that the plants need.

Sheldrake touches on the downright creepy too, describing zombie ants whose minds, it seems, are taken over by an infectious fungus which then controls the creature like a puppet. The fungus forces the ant, uncharacteristically, to climb up and bite onto a grass stem and die to provide the perfect place for the fungus to continue feeding and growing on its body. Some coloured photos illustrate the grisly process.

Throughout the book Sheldrake emphasizes how fungi touch every area of life and offer ideas about how we might deal with the challenges of a changing world. Since they are essential for the decomposition of matter as nature's garbage collectors and recyclers, there are interesting experiments to see if they can

break down and neutralise man-made substances that otherwise take long periods to degrade. The example of raising *Pleurotus* oyster mushrooms purely on a food source of discarded cigarette ends is described with particular glee.

Sheldrake is a keen home brewer and covers his personal experimentation with different fungi species to create a wide range of food and drink that literally give him a taste of his subject. He jokes at the end that to celebrate the publishing of the book he will grow mushrooms on it for his dinner and will also break down the pages with a weak acid to turn the cellulose in the paper to sugar and ferment that into a home-brewed beer.

Whilst never losing sight of the fascinating hard science and the unanswered questions about our fungal neighbours, Sheldrake's

book is an easy and enjoyable read and draws you in no matter your initial interest in the subject. So attractive is his presentation that it was picked up by the recent *Star Trek Discovery* series that based a whole fictional technology of a mycelium drive for crossing the universe.

Throughout the book Sheldrake, maintains the tone of hope and optimism that a better understanding of this fascinating life-form will be a key player in the recycling challenges that face humanity. Who better to help us clear up the mess that we make than the natural garbage collectors of the planet who've been refining their skills for 600 million years? ■

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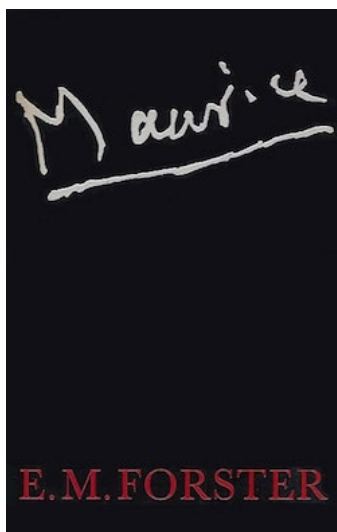


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Maurice by E.M. Forster

I have read several books by E. M. Forster recently and found them full of astute observations about English society in the early twentieth century, so I started his book 'Maurice' with great interest.



REVIEWED BY PHILLIPPA BIGGS

The novel 'Maurice' is exceptional among E. M. Forster's books for several reasons. Firstly, and very unusually for the time, it involves a homosexual protagonist of the same name, describing the story of his early life, friendships and relationships. Secondly, unlike some of his other novels, which took several years to write, by his own admission, Forster wrote the first draft in 1913-14 comparatively quickly in a matter of months, as the 'general plan and the characters... all rushed into my pen'. Thirdly, although it was written early on in his life, Forster kept the manuscript private throughout his life, showing it only to a few friends. Forster revised it several times, most notably, in 1960 and Maurice was finally published posthumously in 1971, one year after Forster's death.

E.M. Forster was not afraid to deal with subjects which would have been 'taboo' in the England of the early 1900s, such as a single mother (*Howards End*) and the Italian love affair of a charming young widow (*Where Angels Fear to Tread*). But E.M. Forster doubted the reception of same-sex love, and did not seek the fame (or infamy) such as that inspired by D.H. Lawrence's 'Lady Chatterley's Lover' (Forster actually testified at the Old Bailey as a witness for the defence at the 1960 trial of the publication of 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'¹).

Whilst relatively open with his friends about his sexuality, E.M. Forster was never publicly

very vocal about his homosexual nature (the author of a well-known [study into E.M. Forster and his books](#), Lionel Trilling, had no idea about his homosexuality).

'Maurice' comes across as the novel E. M. Forster was really engaged with and wanted to write (although all novels need huge determination to start, let alone finish). The interest and enthusiasm of the author for his characters and story shine through on every page. Many of E.M. Forster's novels contain autobiographical elements (e.g. 'A Room with a View' and 'A Passage to India' draw on his trips to Italy and India, respectively).

Maurice contains strong biographical elements, as well as some revealing and honest personal revelations covering same-sex attraction, friendships and relationships. Public school and an undergraduate degree from Cambridge University are common to both the author Forster and the protagonist, Maurice. There are also key moments that Forster must have experienced – such as when Maurice realizes that women hold little attraction for him and he is more interested in young men for friendships and relationships (both emotionally and sexually, although the sex scenes are essentially omitted). This novel reads as an exploration of not one, but two love affairs, and the questions, doubts and heartbreak that can follow the end of an affair. In these respects, it really does not matter that the love affairs described happen to be

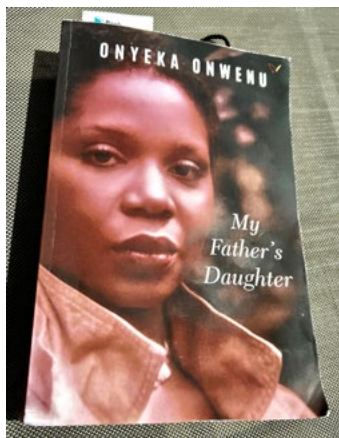
same-sex relationships. The passion and excitement of falling in love, the risks in opening oneself up to another, the pain of heartbreak, the futility of everyday life in the absence of the loved one are all described with powerful and compelling accuracy. These are elements that every reader can relate to and enjoy – irrespective of their sexuality.

From this novel, I gained an insight into what it must have felt like to grow up different from what was accepted and praised by society around you at the time (in this case, to grow up homosexual in Edwardian England), and the burden of hiding yourself, and your true nature, from most people around you. And for that, and much more besides, Maurice is well worth reading. ■

¹ <https://www.penguin.co.uk/articles/2020/october/d-h-lawrence-lady-chatterleys-lover-trial.html>

My Father's Daughter by Onyeka Onwenu

This is an autobiography of Onyeka Onwenu, famous Nigerian singer/actress, songwriter, human and social rights activist, journalist, feminist, former international UN civil servant, politician and mother of three.



REVIEWED BY DEBORAH RANDOLPH
TALON

Written simply, and humbly, it describes Onyeka's life, from the loss of her father to her school years, through the Nigerian-Biafran war, to the many positions she has held until today. She also touches briefly on her tumult in marriage and separation.

Each chapter provides you with admiration of her strength of purpose in the face of challenges: each line is filled with humility and a quiet humour. The book itself is populated with words of wisdom that she has gathered over the years, either from her father (whose deep love forever marked her), strict mother or through her own Christian beliefs.

I was drawn to this book as a lover of African music. I could see how artists such as the grand Fela Kuti or Sunny Ade's music still influences African music of today, such as in the case of Afro Beat tunes and rhythms. However I was curious to learn more about the female influence of African artists from the 1980s.

In all honesty, I knew little of Onyeka Onwenu apart from one or two hits of the 90s and her famous role in *Half of a Yellow Sun* (a film adaptation of Chimamanda Adichie's novel of the same title). Not being a fan of autobiographies, I was a bit sceptic when I reached for

this book, but was pleasantly surprised: it is a personal and deep story of a woman of many qualities, true values, and a down-to-earth attitude which one cannot help but admire. It is related in a story-like fashion, hence captivating the reader.

No background of Nigerian history or African music is required. In some areas of the

book, references are made to a few African celebrities or politicians, but ignorance in this area does not reduce the understanding of the story.

This is the kind of "feel good" books that boosts your belief that anything is possible if you believe in yourself and stick to your values. ■

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The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition, by Tina Quick



© Lisanne Hopkin

Growing up as a TCK.

REVIEWED BY LISANNE HOPKIN

If you read my previous article in the June issue of the magazine, then you'll know that I spoke about Third Culture Kids, or TCKs. A quick reminder: the simplest definition of a TCK is a child who grew up in a different country than their parents' passport country. You don't need to have lived in several different countries in order to be a TCK. And, more importantly, being a TCK does not define who you are. Sure, it might be fun to tell your friends, especially if you've just learnt about the term 'Third Culture Kid'. However, being a TCK is not your sole defining feature. You are young, and you are still learning and figuring out who you are. Being a TCK is like being that one girl who is really good at spelling. Or that one boy who really enjoys art classes. Your whole personality and character does not depend on you being a TCK. It is just one of the many sides that makes you a star. Throughout the months of April and May, I spent some of my time

reading Tina Quick's book 'The Global Nomad's Guide to University Transition', which she wrote specifically for Third Culture Kids who are preparing to go to university. You don't have to be a teen preparing to go to university to read it, though. I found that a lot of it has been helpful in explaining who I am and why I have experienced the things that I have and why I've felt different. If you are an adult who has children who are TCKs, I would suggest reading this book, even if they are not ready for university. If you are a teen who wants to find out more about being a Third Culture Kid, I would also recommend reading this book.

Here are a few of the lessons that I've picked out from the book, that I think apply to TCKs of all ages. Even Adult TCKs.

Lesson number one: as I mentioned at the beginning of this article, 'being a TCK is not to be equated with an identity. It does not define who you are. And you are not a victim because you are a TCK. Having led a TCK lifestyle is a beautiful gift as long as you have the knowledge and self-awareness to work positively with it'. As kids, it can be really hard to be grateful for something we didn't wish for in our lives. It is only in recent years that I have become grateful for growing up in an international environment, being able to speak a second language fluently, and have been able to visit many parts of the world. Some people aren't as lucky. One of my housemates from university had only been on a plane three times when I

had met her. I couldn't believe how little she had travelled, but now I realise that I have been so incredibly lucky to have had that opportunity. And while we grew up differently, we were both able to relate to each other, because deep down, we have shared experiences. We are both humans with feelings. Our needs are similar, but our experiences and dreams are different. And that is normal.

This brings me nicely to my second point. Lesson number two: 'our identity is not in our passport; rather it is found in belonging'. Tina often refers to a book written by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, which is called 'Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds'. In the fifth chapter of Tina's book, she states that 'Pollock and Van Reken put emphasis on two related human needs that, if met, help us form our personal identity: 1) the need for strong relationships, and 2) the need for a sense of belonging'. Tina explains identity as being shaped by the people we meet and share experiences with. It is not necessarily about the place that you live in, but the people who you spend your time with. Often, if you meet other TCKs in the place you are living, you grow close to them, as they understand what you are going through, and it is they who shape your sense of identity and belonging. As kids, we spend a lot of our time building relationships. We make friends with lots of people over the years and they are what matter to us most about a place. It isn't usually about the beauty of the place, or the culture, or food. Our hearts are usually taken up

by people. And they are the ones we miss the most if we move away.

Lesson number three: you are going to feel a lot of emotions and it can be tough. As a third culture kid, you may find that there a lot of moments where you can question your whole life just because someone asks you where you're from. How do you tell someone that your parents are from two different countries and you've already lived in four countries which aren't where your parents are from? And then on top of that, you don't feel like you really belong to any of those countries. It can be quite tough. I have said this before, but I will say it again: it is completely normal. You may feel like you don't fit in because other people know exactly where they're from, and then you may begin to isolate yourself, but please don't. Tina wrote her book because she was constantly being told by TCKs that they felt isolated, different, alone, sometimes suicidal. But this is proof that you're not alone. Tina says: 'I could tell you story after story of global nomads, including tales of near-suicides out of the hopelessness that comes with feeling different, weird, inferior or worthless.

My hope and prayer for you is that by reading this book, you will understand that you *will* feel different from your peers but it is a *good* kind of different'. You have grown up with different experiences that shape you and there are lots of other people out there who have had similar experiences. You just need to find them.

If you are preparing for a move to a different country, the whole thing can be quite stressful. This is our fourth lesson. You're transitioning to a new culture, even if you are returning 'home', you have not spent a lot of time there, so you're not sure what to expect. It is essential that you prepare yourself well and that you look after yourself throughout the whole process. Know that you will probably not know everything about the place you are going to, some of the habits or traditions they have, and that is okay. You can't know everything. Just be aware of this and allow yourself to learn. Make sure that you have your healthcare covered. Whether that is your dental records, your list of vaccinations that you've had over the years, any ongoing medication that you need sorted, all of it is vital to have ready before you leave to the new country. Give yourself time to adjust once you have moved, don't expect to settle in straight away. Do things that will make you happy, that may reduce your loneliness and stress. Tina asked some students how they coped with anxiety, chaos and/or stress and here are some of the answers: 'playing guitar, dancing, listening to music, journaling, chatting with friends online, laughing, not taking themselves too seriously, painting, going for a run, shopping, and taking a nap'. If you have a way that helps you de-stress, make sure you keep it up.

Lesson five: your identity is your own. Being a TCK means that your identity can be confusing, and you may never feel settled

on one single identity. But it is *your* identity, not anyone else's. No one else can define who you are, except you. This can be quite daunting. However, it can also be quite empowering. You are constantly figuring out who you are. You may have changed from who you used to be, and you may change some more in the future. People may also have their own opinions about who you may be. Those opinions don't matter. They may be incorrect. And if people don't take the time to find out who you are, then their opinions of you are unimportant. 'Acknowledging that you are not the person that the other describes and that this is just their opinion of you, not a true reflection of who you truly are, can get you back on your feet'. Nowadays, words have so many different connotations; 'introvert' can mean shy and socially awkward, whereas Carl Jung initially defined introversion as 'the inner world of thoughts and ideas'. On the other opposite end of the spectrum, 'extrovert' can now mean loud and sociable, whereas it used to refer to 'the outer world of material things and people'. Things will change over the years. Fashions come and go, as do words and expressions. You do, too. But only you have a say over how you change. No one else does.

And finally, my last lesson is for parents of TCKs. Lesson six: be there for your child. Now that you know about third culture kids and what they may be going through, talk to them, support them, listen to them. It can frustrating not knowing where you're from. And it can be quite lonely. At the

end of the day, 'what kids really want are listeners. They want someone who will let them voice their anxieties and acknowledge their concerns without diminishing them or fixing them. They need someone who loves them unconditionally, who will remind them of their past successes and achievements and encourage them to move forward in their independence'. As adults, we know that our teenage years can be incredibly full-on and full of questioning and discovery. If you feel like your child is struggling, lend them a shoulder to cry on, an ear that can listen to them, someone they can turn to when they are feeling overwhelmed. You're all in this adventure together, even if you're in two separate countries.

I hope that this has been helpful. I hope that some of you feel a lot more aware of the TCK lifestyle and what comes with it. And I hope that you can learn from Tina's book and my lessons. Look after yourself! ■

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International Geneva and its neighbour – A love story

“Une région transformée: 100+1 ans de vie internationale, Divonne-les-Bains”¹

MANUELA TORTORA, VICE-PRESIDENT OF GREYCELLS²

In November 1920, the League of Nations was established in Geneva. This event gave rise to what is now known as “International Geneva”, with important consequences for the entire Lake Geneva region, including the Pays de Gex in France. Our region has experienced exponential development since 1920 and especially since 1945. Such an evolution deserves recognition. The commune of Divonne-les-Bains therefore decided to organise an exhibition on the history of relations between the Pays de Gex and Geneva during these 100 years.

The exhibition “100 ans +1 de vie internationale – une région transformée” was presented from 29 September to 24 October 2021 at the Maison du Quartier de la Gare, Divonne-les-Bains, France, one year later than planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The 20 panels and three showcases in the centre of the exhibition recalled the events and personalities that have marked the recent history of the region. They

recounted amusing and more serious anecdotes, well-known and lesser-known facts.

John Burley,
Curator of the Exhibition.
Member of Greycells

What were the origins of this Exhibition: was the occasion of the 100 years of the League of Nations the only reason, or also the need to raise awareness regarding the impact of International Geneva beyond its geographical borders?

It was very much the latter point. By mid-2018, it was known that Geneva and the Office of the UN (UNOG) would both be marking in one way or another, the anniversary of the establishment of the League of Nations in 1920. UNOG was planning an exhibition on 100 years of multilateralism, and there would be celebrations hosted by *l'Etat et la Ville de Genève*. A private Foundation – Bodmer – was also planning a major exhibition on the theme of war and peace over the centuries. Each of the centennial celebrations was planning to look at the subject matter very much from a traditional point

of view, namely political or institutional. There was little planned on how Geneva, and the region, had been impacted by the arrival of inter-governmental organisations, namely the League and ILO.

In addition, in early 2019, I was designated Deputy Mayor of Divonne-les-Bains with a special responsibility for cross-border relations between the town and our Swiss neighbours. I had always been interested in the history of the area and how what is now known as *le Grand Genève* began to emerge. When I suggested that Divonne sponsor an exhibition on the history of relations between the two sides of the border over the last 100 years, the new mayor was enthusiastic.

From the point of view of international cooperation, the map of International Geneva encompasses the Pays de Gex, in France. Today, this porous border is part of the daily life of citizens living on both sides, but was this porosity always taken for granted or is it rather the result of a gradual, sustained transformation?

An important clarification: *le Grand Genève* and by implication international Genève encompasses not only the Pays de Gex, but also that part of neighbouring Haute-Savoie on the left bank that hugs Carouge and Geneva. There are over a million inhabitants of the region, which is now one of the most dynamic in Europe. And international Geneva, with the UN organisations, the diplomatic missions, the vast network of international NGOs, CERN and the multinationals, has made a huge contribution to where Geneva finds itself today.

It is, in fact, the continuation of a long history stretching back over several centuries. The frontiers between the different political entities in the area had always been both elastic and porous. The 1815 peace agreements of Vienna and Paris that brought the Napoleonic wars to an end formally established the present-day political borders between Geneva and neighbouring France. But the economic frontiers were different. Voltaire in the 1770s had petitioned the king of France to permit free trade between the Pays de Gex, Haute-Savoie and Geneva, to enable the French farmers to export milk dairy products to the Swiss. The free zone was maintained after 1815 and has directly contributed to the very natural interdependence between the two economies on both sides of the border. So what

is happening today is a deepening of a process that has been going on now for centuries.

What were the main difficulties in organising this Exhibition? Any anecdotes that you would like to share with us?

I had never organised an exhibition before, and frankly, I did not know what I was getting myself involved with! There was a lot that had to be done. For a start, the presentation of the history of relations between the two sides of the border had to pass the muster of the historians very knowledgeable about such matters.

But more than that: the content had to be made interesting for the public, as the exhibition was not intended for the specialist. It was clear the public would range from the French and Swiss on both sides of the border, who over the years had directly witnessed the radical changes in their lives, to those in the international community in Geneva, who may not have known much about the history of the region where they were now living. So, we had to choose those subjects that would keep the attention of the visitor, but would also tell a story of change and evolution in a simple but meaningful way.

The economic and social impact of the International Geneva is highly relevant for both sides of the border in terms of job opportunities, infrastructure,

exchanges, investments... What are the French or Swiss policies that have been (or are) more relevant for the life of this "transformed region"?

There has never been a joint French-Swiss master plan for the coordinated development of the region. Measures to promote collaboration were incremental, step-by-step. Since Geneva was the magnet, the Swiss side mattered more. There has never been any outright opposition on either side, but both the French and the Swiss were careful to ensure that their interests were protected.

Once the notion of cross-border workers (living in France and working in Geneva) became more common in the 1960s and 1970s, measures to facilitate such cooperation became more frequent. And the Swiss acceptance of the EU regulations regarding free movement under the Schengen rules had a big impact in the area. A very high proportion – 60% in the case of the Pays de Gex – of the working population on the French side of the border now have jobs in Switzerland. Transport links were critical – the motorways, Cointrin airport, the TGV were all designed to encourage mutual access and use. French access to Swiss medical services was another issue, still not yet fully accomplished, for understandable reasons linked to questions of financing. The Swiss can buy or rent residential accommodation in France, but

that does not mean to say there are no problems.

The trends are clearly in the right direction, and although there will be ups and downs (the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 was a case in point) the border or the frontier will continue to gradually fade away. In my view, the scheme introduced 50 years ago in 1973, whereby part of the income tax paid in Geneva by French workers is reimbursed to the departments of l'Ain and Haute-Savoie and to their communes of residence, is the single most important factor influencing these trends. This farsighted arrangement works in large part because the several tens of millions of Swiss francs are transferred directly to the two French departments and do not transit through the Ministry of Finance in Paris.

As shown in the book, many historic events and negotiations took place in the Pays de Gex, that since the 30s became a place where diplomats could meet discreetly (and enjoy good food!): in your view, which episodes have a great relevance for international relations? / French gastronomy and wines helped peace talks; it seems...

The first such significant lunch took place in September 1926, when the French and German foreign ministers reconciled their countries over a five-hour lunch in the reputed *Hôtel Léger*

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in Thoiry! League of Nations diplomats enjoyed long lunches and dinners in Divonne, both before and after a round of golf or a visit to the Casino.

But good food played no part in the largely unknown but fascinating negotiations on the independence of Algeria in February 1962. These took place in Les Rousses, literally 500 metres from the Swiss border in the Jura. The Algerian FLN negotiators travelled up from Geneva every day to meet with de Gaulle's emissaries. Lunches consisted of sandwiches from the local café. The discussions were conducted in extreme secrecy, as the OAS – the French terrorists who wanted to sabotage any notion of independence – were everywhere looking for the negotiators.

You say in the book that during the war the Pays de Gex was an area both of tension with the occupying forces and a transit zone to Switzerland: when researching materials for the exposition, what was more striking for you in this regard?

I knew very little about this aspect of the history. It was fascinating to learn of the clandestine passages of Jews and resistance fighters seeking safety across the border. The infamous Klaus Barbie spent several months in the Pays de Gex in a foregone effort to kidnap from Geneva a Russian secret agent. But I was particularly interested to learn of the French Jews freed from the Nazi concentration camps who came in September 1945 for treatment at the spa in Divonne. I searched everywhere for a photo of their arrival at the then railway station in Divonne, but even the museum in Paris could not find a copy. There was a story that Simone Veil, the holocaust survivor and well-known French politician and activist, had also come to Divonne for a visit at this time. She certainly visited Nyon, but I could find no documentary evidence of a visit to Divonne.

The life of some citizens of the Pays de Gex would have been very different without the influence of international activities. Divonne-les-Bains and Ferney-Voltaire played a key role in the life of Albert Cohen, the famous author of Belle du Seigneur, and Denis de Rougemont, advocate of European integration, philosopher, and writer. The whole ecosystem of Geneva and the Pays de Gex seems designed to promote culture and cooperation.

Internationalism seems to live in the air of Lac Léman. It is part of the ADN of the region. The International School of Geneva, which now has four campuses, the Graduate Institute, with its stunning buildings in the heart of international Geneva and the international school in Ferney-Voltaire epitomise what we are talking about. If education can be internationalised, then the chances for peace and understanding and cooperation are all the greater.

In 1820, Thomas Jefferson by then the former President of the United States wrote to his friend Marc Auguste Pictet, of the same family as today, saying that he viewed Geneva as “a point on the globe... where industry, honesty, simplicity of manners, hospitality and science seemed to have marked it as their own”. What was true 200 years ago is still the case today.

The CERN is the best incarnation of the borderless spirit uniting Geneva and the Pays de Gex. Could we envisage in the future other institutions or initiatives that physically link both sides of the border for cooperation purposes?

CERN began in Meyrin in the mid 1950s. It expanded into France, through a joint Swiss-French-CERN agreement in the mid-1960s when it needed the physical space available in the Pays de Gex. It is a remarkably successful example of cross-border cooperation, even if President de Gaulle insisted on the need for a separate French entrance to the

site, close to St-Genis-Pouilly! But it is difficult to see how the CERN example could be replicated. It is the physical presence that matters in the case of CERN, and international organisations are “invisible” in their work at headquarters. The Swiss will be very careful in keeping intact the international quartier.

You count how many cars' plates are from Geneva or Vaud in the parkings of the supermarkets on the French side and you know what the exchange rate Swiss Franc/Euro is today, as you say in the book. But the interdependence of both economies also relies on the daily flow of transfrontaliers: how did this flow evolve since 1920?

I referred earlier to the free zone: this still exists de jure, but with Schengen, it has ceased to have any practical effect at all. The first “transfrontaliers” date from the late 1960s; it is of course by now a thoroughly common phenomenon. Geneva's economy, especially the medical services, are dependent on French labour. The French side needs the jobs in Switzerland. Assuming consumers are rational and are able to purchase on both sides, the typical household shopping basket will have items from both French and Swiss shops. Housing is cheaper on the French side. This mutual dependency benefits all parties. And there is no reason why it will not continue to do so.

In the book, you look towards 2050: to what extent this Swiss-French beautiful example of cooperation will continue to grow, or will it be affected by the lack of a bilateral agreement between Switzerland and the EU? In your view, which factors will determine the evolving linkages across the border?

The final panel in the exhibition threw down a provocative challenge. 220 years ago, Geneva and the Pays de Gex were part of the same French department, following Napoleon's march through

Geneva en route to northern Italy in 1798. The *Gessiens* can either see their territory grow into a dormitory suburb of their larger and more dominant neighbour or the area could develop into a true and deep partnership based on interdependence and the mutuality of interest. Will the *Gessiens* be “*Lémaniens*” again? The opportunities are immense, but obviously, there are equally large national interests at stake as well as a whole variety of factors way beyond the control of the region. I would like to think *le Grand Genève*, with the help of their international friends, can devise new cross-border ways of living and the frontier is dispatched for good to the museum. ■

1 Webpage: <https://bit.ly/Divonne-les-Bains-le-Pays-de-Gex-et-Genève-Internationale> and PDF

2 Association of Former International Civil Servants for Development (Greycells), <https://www.greycells.ch/>



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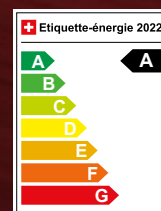
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What's the outlook for public libraries?

From book repositories to knowledge exchanges

Back in Ancient Greek times, the renowned Library of Alexandria invested in copying and translating scrolls, as well as expanding knowledge through human dissections and vivisections. Modern-day libraries likewise perform many functions, from collecting books and artifacts to ensuring their accessibility and recording history as it continues to happen.

PHILLIPPA BIGGS, ITU

Questions of how libraries should equip themselves for the digital age were at the centre of the panel discussions at the Library of Geneva on 14-15 October.

As countries grapple with accelerating digital transformation, they increasingly face choices about how to approach, invest in and preserve national heritage documents, libraries, and the vast array of associated print and digital collections.

The Swiss National Library, for instance, operates under a mandate from the Swiss Constitution to preserve information relating to Switzerland and the Swiss people. Like other libraries worldwide, it finds itself under pressure to digitize its wide-ranging collection of sources and materials. However, according to Jean-Frédéric Jauslin, President of the Swiss Library Service Platform, a paper document is often easier to preserve than a digital one. The costs associated with a book or document mainly relate to its acquisition costs, with low annual costs afterwards, whereas digital documents incur regular costs of storage and technological upgrades.

Driven by data

Despite assertions that we must

“digitize documents to preserve them for the future”, the risk of obsolescence necessitates continual, costly technical upgrades to preserve digital copies.

Frederic Sardet, Director of the Geneva Library, pointed to a growing environmental footprint associated with digital storage. Conversely, digital preservation has already started shaping new research and knowledge development. Some 85% of all US doctorates now only quote online sources, said Professor Beatrice Joyeux-Prunel, Professor of Digital Humanities at the University of Geneva.

Knowledge is increasingly delocalized and disassociated from physical spaces, she added.

Until recently, the vast amount of art that had been digitized was mainly North American, with a few examples from European collections. As a result, Joyeux-Prunel noted, most recent PhD doctoral theses into art history have tended to focus on North American art forms, potentially neglecting others.

New libraries for new times

Digital collections will not kill tangible, real-world book and document collections. Instead, both forms will co-habit libraries

for the foreseeable future, panelists concurred in the Geneva Library's “[Places of Knowledge in the Digital Age](#)” discussions.

However, to move forward and adapt to the digital era, libraries must:

Increase the accessibility of their collections. Expanding digital collections is one way, but so are soft measures to encourage people to come into libraries. Suggestions include ending rules of silence, developing reading rooms as interactive social spaces, effectively turning libraries into coffee-houses or co-working spaces, just as many bookstores are also doing. Librarians must become more digitally literate and help their audiences and clients with navigating digital collections.

Remain trusted mediators. Libraries help the public and researchers find information. Given the recent explosion in online misinformation, access to documents via libraries, with support from trained librarians, can help to verify authenticity and source quality.

Actively curate and advocate. This means helping raise awareness about heritage. It also requires libraries to keep preserving history, digital and otherwise, in

fast-changing, information-saturated societies.

Analyse reading and research trends. Libraries can draw on extensive metadata about their collections and cataloguing related websites and links. They are well-placed to help answer key questions, such as how people obtain, understand and follow news these days, assess the user-friendliness of different platforms, and forecast the future of publishing.

Continue to diversify. To stay relevant and visible, libraries need to host events and exhibitions, bring their content to life, and serve as permanent knowledge exchanges. Libraries and librarians must take the initiative to collaborate with new partners and adapt to provide new forms of content, including podcasts, audiobooks and ‘meet the author’ interviews on topical issues.

In short, as growing audiences spend more time reading and researching sources online, the future for libraries looks far from bleak, but it will certainly be new and different. ■

Conclusions emerging from an event, “[Les Lieux de Savoir à l'Ère Numérique](#)” or Places of Knowledge in the Digital Age, held at the Library of Geneva, Friday 14-15 October 2021.

World bicycle day Geneva Special Event



World bicycle day, Geneva special event

World Bicycle Day, designated by the UN General Assembly and celebrated annually on 3 June, draws attention to the benefits of using the bicycle — a simple, affordable, clean, and environmentally sustainable means of transportation. The bicycle contributes to cleaner air, lessens congestion, and makes education, health care, and other social services more accessible to the most vulnerable populations.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), safe infrastructure for walking and cycling is also a pathway for achieving greater health equity. For the poorest urban populations, who often cannot afford private vehicles, walking and cycling can provide a means of transportation while reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, diabetes, and even death. Therefore, walking and cycling are not only healthier; they are also more equitable and cost-effective.

A sustainable transport system that promotes economic growth

and reduces inequalities, while bolstering the fight against climate change, is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UN Postal Administration celebrated World Bicycle Day on 3 June 2022 with a special event sheet of ten stamps in the denominations of 1,50 fr.

Journée mondiale de la bicyclette, événement spécial de Genève

La Journée mondiale du vélo, désignée par l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies est célébrée chaque année le 3 juin, attire l'attention sur les avantages de l'utilisation de la bicyclette – un moyen de transport durable simple, abordable, propre et respectueux de l'environnement. L'usage de la bicyclette contribue à un air plus pur, à réduire la congestion des villes et à rendre l'éducation, la santé publique et d'autres services sociaux plus accessibles aux populations les plus vulnérables.

Selon l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), des infrastructures sûres pour la marche et la bicyclette sont également une

voie vers une plus grande équité en termes de santé. Pour les populations urbaines les plus pauvres, qui n'ont souvent pas les moyens de se payer des véhicules privés, la marche et la bicyclette peuvent constituer un moyen de transport tout en réduisant le risque de maladie cardiovasculaire, d'accident vasculaire cérébral, de certains cancers, de diabète et même de décès. De ce fait, la marche et la bicyclette ne sont pas seulement saines; elle sont également plus équitables et économiques.

Un moyen de transport durable qui favorise la croissance économique, réduit les inégalités tout en renforçant la lutte contre le changement climatique est essentiel pour atteindre les objectifs de développement durable.

L'Administration postale des Nations Unies a célébré la Journée mondiale de la bicyclette le 3 juin 2022 avec une feuille d'événement spécial de dix timbres d'une valeur de 1,50 fr. ■

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Breakthrough in the Swiss Transplantation Regulation

In the Swiss democratic system, citizens are invited to vote on all sorts of issues, including highly complex ones.

CHRISTIAN PAULETTO¹

The popular vote that took place on 15 May 2022 was an opportunity for Swiss voters to make up their minds on difficult questions. With a majority of 60.2%, the Swiss population accepted a modification of the Law on Transplantation of Organs, Tissues and Cells. The proposal touched on challenging ethical and emotional issues and was aimed at improving the balance between the demand and supply of the organs. This vote is interesting in three respects:

- First, it illustrates the idiosyncrasies and flexibilities of the Swiss direct democracy;
- Second, it is an example of a type of compromise needed to get a nationwide consensus on this sensitive issue;
- Third, the situation of non-residents, including “health tourists”, and of some categories of foreign persons, including categories of international civil servants and diplomats, deserves some clarification.

Before delving into those three aspects, the present situation needs to be described. The current law, dating back to 2004, is based on the principle of “explicit consent in a broad sense”. While a consent in the narrow sense is limited to the will of the deceased only, the consent in the broad sense allows to encompass the opinion of the relatives. In order to respect fundamental rights, the law prohibits soliciting or accepting an organ donation against remuneration or granting of advantages. The law also prohibits the trade in organs both

in Switzerland or to abroad from the Swiss territory. Thus, persons in Switzerland cannot take part in trade of organs, tissues or cells abroad even if the latter never enter the Swiss territory.

The amendment of the law accepted on 15 May aims to switch from the principle of explicit consent to the principle of presumed consent.

Direct democracy instruments involved

The case at hand illustrates the flexibility of the Swiss direct democracy. Most foreigners would know that in Switzerland two different procedures of direct democracy exist: the popular initiative and the referendum. Some foreigners may also know that the Parliament has the possibility to submit a “counter-project” to an initiative, in the form of a full-fledged draft legal act. What few people are aware of, however, is that those procedures are not exclusive, but may be cumulative. This is what happened here.

The whole story started with groupings from civil society which launched a popular initiative and collected enough signatures from citizens to submit their initiative to a national vote. As such, this step could be enough and the Swiss people could have voted. But in this case, the Federal Council (Swiss government) and the Parliament decided to table a counter-project. Whenever a counter-project is tabled, the authors of the initiative may either maintain it or withdraw it.

In the former case, it comes to a popular vote, in the latter case the story stops there and the counter-project adopted by the Parliament enters into force. The authors of the initiative on transplantation found the counter-project good enough and withdrew.

Thus, why did the popular vote take place? Precisely, because the other instrument of direct democracy remains valid, and even though the authors and the Parliament found a common ground the possibility to attack the counter-project through a referendum is unaffected. This is what happened in this case. Groupings from civil society objecting to the idea of presumed consent collected enough signatures to request a popular vote on the counter-project. Hence, the vote on 15 May.

What compromise was struck?

The reason why the Federal Council and the Parliament rejected the initiative was that no mention of the relatives was contained therein. Thus, it was assumed the initiative entailed a presumed consent “*stricto sensu*”. Such strict approach is not only doubtful in terms of ethics (it was firmly rejected by the National Ethics Commission) and fundamental rights, it would also have no chance of success in a popular vote. To strike a workable compromise, the authorities relied on the existing law. There, a staged procedure is established. If the hospital finds an explicit consent by the deceased (e.g. a formal declaration of consent), it

can proceed with the transplantation. In the absence of a declaration, the hospital still may start a search for relatives to enquire what would be, to their knowledge, the will of the deceased (“referee’s opinion of relatives”). And if relatives have no knowledge of the will of the deceased, they have the opportunity to provide their own explicit consent (“subsidiary right of relatives”). And, if at that stage relatives fail to express a consent, i.e. if they remain silent, no transplantation is allowed.

The counter-project is inspired by this staged approach but the other way around. In the presence of a declaration from the deceased, objecting to the transplantation, the story ends there. In the absence of declaration, the hospital cannot take the organs though. It has an obligation to search for the relatives. If the relatives cannot be contacted, no transplantation may be performed. If the relatives are found, the hospital has to enquire about their knowledge of the deceased’s opinion (as referees), which shall prevail. In the absence of known opinion, the hospital is obliged to ask the relatives’ will (subsidiary consent). The hospital can proceed only after the relatives have been adequately approached and informed. Now, what happens in the new law if the relatives stay silent? If you consider the successive stages of both models, looking only at the presence or absence of a declaration, no fundamental difference between

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Œuvre "Entre les mains d'un autre"
de Juan José Ruiz

them exist, so far. The major difference lies in this ultimate stage. In the new law, if the relatives ultimately remain silent, then the hospital may proceed with the transplantation.

Overall, the new model contains enough checks and balances to make it consensual in a popular vote. It also aligns it to fundamental rights, especially Article 8 of the European Human Rights Convention. Two decisions by the European Human Rights Court confirmed the requirement for clear and accessible procedures to be available to relatives.

What about foreigners?

Switzerland is a country with an intense flow of tourists, business persons or cross-border service suppliers. It is also a world-class destination for health treatment and a host of international organisations and meetings. Two things need to be clarified in this respect. First, as said, the obligation of searching for and contacting the relatives is maintained in the new model, including for those categories of persons.

Second, the implementation of the new system will entail the establishment of a national

registry of declarations (regarding consent, opposition, or specific conditions set by the donor). This registry will identify individuals through their AVS number (social security number). Thus, what about persons not having an AVS number, such as diplomats and quite a number of Geneva-based international civil servants? Not the law, but the future implementing ordinance is the right place to tackle such details. Expectedly, the above categories of persons will have opportunities to make a declaration, whether through the registry or otherwise.

The need for the Federal Council to issue sensitive pieces of implementation regulation, inter alia, the definition of "relatives" and the establishment of the national registry, also implies that the new law will not enter into force before 2024. ■

¹ Member of the Board and lecturer on Swiss political institutions at Université Populaire du Canton de Genève

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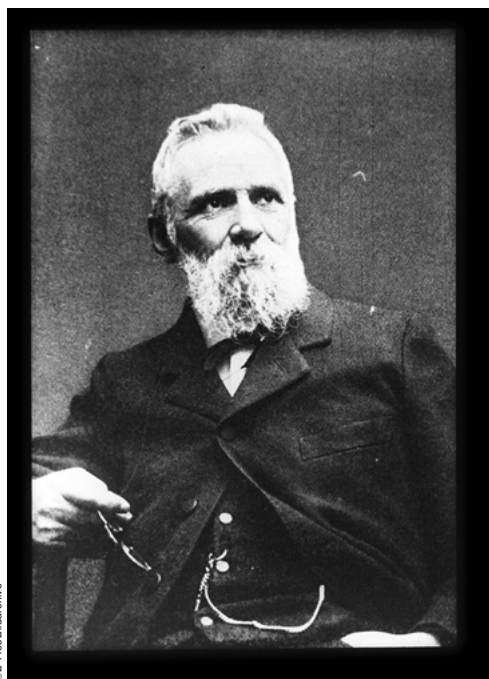
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Good Vibrations: Wavy Lake Geneva

Hit a drum or strum a guitar and the instrument vibrates and makes a sound. The physics that creates the waves also scales up to the size of a whole lake where wind, atmospheric pressure changes and even earthquakes can set up long period standing waves called seiches. The phenomenon was first described by an incredibly multi-talented 19th century Swiss “limnologist”, a local Vaudois studying our very own Lake Geneva/Lac Léman.



François-Alphonse Forel

Forel is largely forgotten today outside of specialist circles, and it was his cousin Auguste Forel who appeared on the 6th issue of the CHF 1,000 bank note. The Department F.-A. Forel for Environmental and Aquatic Sciences (DEFSE) at the University of Geneva is however named after the famous limnologist, as is the submarine F.-A. Forel (PX-28) which made 3,600 dives between 1978 and 2005, the majority of them in Lake Geneva for scientific research. A monument to Forel stands on the lakeside in Morges.

KEVIN CRAMPTON, WHO

Have you ever sat in the bath and wiggled your toes to generate some waves? That’s not just me, is it? If you wiggle at the right frequency, then the waves reflecting back towards you from the edge of the bathtub meet the ones heading outwards and join together to create one big wave. It’s pretty satisfying when you get it right, but you can soak the bathroom floor if you’re not careful! It’s also particularly annoying when trying to bathe a struggling baby...

This is a “standing wave”, and you can create the same thing with a rope stretched between two points or by blowing across the top of a bottle. Standing waves are the result of interference between two waves moving in different directions and they depend on the length of your string, the size of your bottle, and the width of your bathtub. It’s the reason that harp strings and organ pipes are different lengths, and a trombone has a slide.

In fact, wiggle your toes or shake your string at the right frequency and you can create all kinds of patterns of standing waves as you hit different “modes” that are stable vibrations.

The physics that describes the phenomenon has been well understood since antiquity

(initiated by the Pythagoreans in the 5th century BCE) but it wasn’t until 1890 that a Swiss physician named François-Alphonse Forel proved that even large features can exhibit long period standing waves.

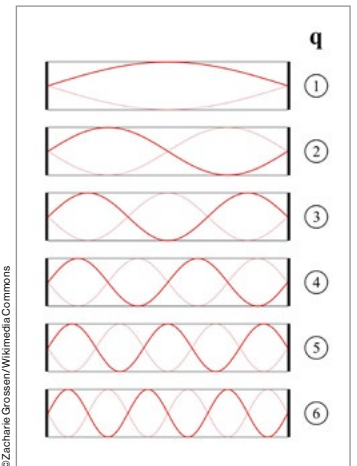
Forel was born in Morges in 1841 and studied in Geneva and in France before becoming a professor of anatomy and physiology at Lausanne. Lake Geneva was his passion and between 1892 and 1904 he published his magnum opus, the three volume *Le Léman*, covering the geography, geology, bathymetry, climate, and hydrology of the lake. He is now known as the father of “limnology” – the study of inland bodies of water and the Forel-Ule scale for evaluating the colour of a body of water is half-named for him.

Forel’s work on Lake Geneva, refined in more recent accurate studies, is that the lake under certain conditions of wind or atmospheric pressure can develop standing waves affecting the level and vibrating with periods between 73 minutes and 81 hours! Typically, wind pushes water up to one end of the lake and when it dies down, the water sloshes back and forth like the waves in the bathtub. The effect is too small to notice under normal conditions and requires measurement from multiple locations to understand



Submarine F.-A. Forel (PX-28)

First Six Modes of Standing Waves



the behaviour of the whole surface. You can try imagining some giant toes pushing the water around at just the right frequency!

Forel called such waves – *seiches* – either from the French *sèche* because a wave pulling water back from the shore can leave it dry, or from the German *Seiche* meaning sinking.

Seiche are not limited to Lake Geneva of course and are observed all over the world. In some areas they are a lot more noticeable – Lake Erie can experience extreme seiche that cause the water level to vary by as much as five metres and in July 1995, a seiche that caused a one metre water difference left boats hanging by their moorings in Lake Superior. As the lake oscillates as one big connected system, the

effects along the shoreline can be dramatic – a giant version of soaking the bathroom floor.

Wind and weather are not the only drivers though. The magnitude 9.0 earthquake that struck Japan in 2011 and resulted in a devastating tsunami, also caused water to rise in the fjords of Norway and send freak waves rolling onshore. The vibrations of the tremor, having travelled through the earth were at the right frequency to excite a seiche – but only in those fjords that were oriented towards the north east! Swimming pools and dams are particularly prone to seiche damage during earthquakes and protection from these standing waves is now factored in by the engineers that design them with computer models used to predict likely behaviour.

In addition to the biology, chemistry, topography, and physics of lakes, Forel also did interesting work on *fata morgana* – the rare mirages that are seen over water and can make it look as if ships, mountains or cities are floating in the air. In short, there was almost no aspect of Lac Léman that he did not study.

Forel died in the town of his birth, in Morges, in 1912, a few months after the sinking of the Titanic. With some 288 publications to his name, he was called the “Faraday of Lakes” for his enormous and eclectic output – establishing a new branch of science and encouraging us to look at such systems in an integrated manner. Today, when man’s impact on the environment has never been more obvious or destructive, Forel’s holistic approach to studying

the natural world and his legacy of outstanding and wide-ranging and all-encompassing science has never been more relevant. ■



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Une fenêtre vers un autre monde: bref tour d'horizon du mandarin

La plupart des langues asiatiques, et tout particulièrement le mandarin, exercent une fascination presque contradictoire, mêlant exotisme séduisant et difficulté extrême. Cependant, en y regardant de plus près, le mandarin apparaît beaucoup plus simple et plus facile d'accès que d'autres langues, dont le français, l'allemand ou le russe par exemple.

D^{re} GRÂCE POIZAT, UNIGE¹

La langue la plus parlée au monde

Le mandarin est la langue la plus parlée dans le monde: aux 1,4 milliard de locuteurs-trices de la Chine, il faut ajouter près de 38 millions en Asie, en Amérique, et en Europe. Selon certaines études,² il se situait en 2016 à la deuxième place des langues les plus influentes du monde, derrière l'anglais, mais devant le français, l'espagnol, l'arabe et le russe.

La situation linguistique, en Chine, est particulièrement complexe, principalement du fait du grand nombre de dialectes et de variations régionales. Le mandarin, appelé *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 (langue commune), en tant que langue véhiculaire, commune et standardisée, est la langue nationale et officielle du pays. Si vous parlez le mandarin, vous serez compris par à peu près tous les Chinois. La situation peut être comparée à l'usage de l'allemand en Suisse, où le *hochdeutsch*, compris par la majorité des Suisses alémaniques, est utilisé dans les communications officielles et les médias, mais rarement dans la sphère privée.

Petit tour des spécificités de cette langue passionnante à travers son histoire, sa grammaire et son écriture.

Quelques éléments d'histoire

Bien que la standardisation du mandarin soit récente, remontant au début du XX^e siècle, l'histoire des langues chinoises est beaucoup plus longue. Voici les étapes principales de leur développement:

- le chinois archaïque (du X^e siècle av. J.-C. au V^e siècle apr. J.-C.), celui de Confucius, du Classique des mutations ou du *Tao Te King*;
- le chinois médiéval (du VI^e au XII^e siècle), la langue des célèbres poésies Tang et Song;
- le chinois moderne (du XIII^e au XVII^e siècle) que l'on retrouve par exemple dans le roman *Le Rêve dans le pavillon rouge*;
- le chinois contemporain (du XVII^e siècle à nos jours), celui des écrivains Lu Xun ou Mo Yan.

Si la langue orale a considérablement évolué au cours des deux derniers millénaires, la langue écrite a fait preuve, *a contrario*, d'une grande stabilité. Par exemple, les traces d'écriture ossécaille (*jiǎgǔwén* 甲骨文), sortes de signes divinatoires gravés sur des carapaces de tortues ou des os de bœufs, formes archaïques des caractères utilisés aujourd'hui, remontent au XIII^e siècle avant notre ère. L'écriture chinoise constitue, de ce point de vue, le plus ancien système d'écriture en usage continu, et le deuxième système graphique

le plus utilisé dans le monde, juste après l'alphabet latin.

Quelques caractéristiques de la grammaire chinoise

Si on laisse l'écriture de côté, le mandarin n'est pas une langue difficile, même pour un-e apprenant-e francophone. Il n'y a ni genre (masculin, féminin ou neutre) ni nombre (singulier ou pluriel), les verbes ne se conjuguent pas, et les adjectifs ne s'accordent pas. Pas besoin donc d'apprendre d'interminables tableaux de conjugaison comme cela est le cas en français. Les informations concernant le temps, le genre, le nombre ou encore la voix sont indiquées par le contexte, et dans le cas contraire, elles seront précisées par l'ajout de mots supplémentaires.

La syntaxe est très similaire à celle du français: la structure de base est une séquence "sujet - verbe - objet", avec un ordre des mots plus strict, mais aussi plus régulier, qu'en français. Le contexte d'une phrase est souvent très important, la forme restant secondaire. Par exemple, le mot *qù* 去 "aller", peut signifier selon le contexte: je vais, tu vas, nous allons, je suis allé-e, j'irai, vas-y, allons-y, et ainsi de suite.

Le chinois est une langue tonale, comme une soixantaine d'autres langues en Asie, en Amérique, ou encore en Europe (par ex. le limbourgeois, le lituanien ou le suédois). Il existe un peu moins

de 400 syllabes différentes, un nombre peu élevé en comparaison d'autres langues, telles que le français par exemple. En y ajoutant son système de quatre tons, le chinois dispose d'un total d'environ 1250 sons différents (les syllabes ne pouvant pas toutes recevoir tous les tons). En voici quelques illustrations:

- *lí* 梨 "poire"
- *lǐzi* 李子 "prune"
- *lizi* 栗子 "châtaigne"
- *shìjiè* 世界 "monde"
- *shìjiē* 石阶 "escalier en pierre"
- *shíjiè* 十诫 "dix commandements"

Précisons au passage que tous les Chinois-es ne sont pas Pékinois: les habitant-es des différentes régions de Chine parlent avec toutes sortes d'accents, et les Chinois-es sont habitué-es à des prononciations parfois très éloignées du standard officiel. En général, grâce au contexte de leur échange, deux interlocuteurs-trices réussiront à se comprendre même si leurs tons ne sont pas tous exacts.

L'un des grands désavantages de ce système phonétique réside dans le nombre important d'homophones: avec 1250 syllabes pour une dizaine de milliers de mots usuels, le calcul est vite fait, il y aura beaucoup d'homonymes. Ainsi, *shī* peut signifier "poème 诗", "maître 师", "mouillé 湿", "cadavre 尸", "perdre 失", etc.



© Jeremy Bishop/Unsplash

Les caractères chinois

Les caractères chinois exercent une forte attraction sur celles et ceux qui ne les maîtrisent pas. Au-delà des différents styles calligraphiques qui peuvent en rendre la lecture parfois difficile, ceux-ci sont structurés de manière claire et logique. Par exemple, nombre d'entre eux sont originellement des dessins représentant des objets concrets (*huǒ* 火 "feu", *mù* 木 "arbre", *rì* 日 "soleil"): ce sont des pictogrammes. La plupart des caractères chinois sont composés en combinant ces éléments, souvent dans un couple formé d'un radical sémantique et d'une partie phonétique: *zhī* 枝 "branche" est composé du radical de l'arbre *mù* 木, qui donne une indication sémantique (tous les caractères qui possèdent ce radical sont en lien, d'une manière ou d'une autre, avec l'idée d'arbre), et de l'élément phonétique *zhī* 支, qui en précise la prononciation. Contrairement à ce qu'on raconte souvent, l'écriture chinoise est

en partie phonétique, et plus de 90% des caractères comportent un élément phonétique aidant à la lecture.

Il est impossible de dire combien de caractères chinois existent aujourd'hui. Certains comportent des variantes, d'autres ne sont plus en usage, ce qui rend l'estimation du nombre total difficile à réaliser. À titre indicatif, le célèbre Dictionnaire de caractères de Kangxi (*Kāngxī zìdiǎn* 康熙字典), publié en 1716, en répertorie environ 47 000, avec près de 2 000 variantes. Le Dictionnaire des caractères Xinhua (*Xīnhuà zìdiǎn* 新华字典), référence incontournable en Chine, comporte environ 13 000 entrées. Si ces chiffres sont considérables, il n'est cependant pas nécessaire d'en connaître autant pour se débrouiller dans la vie de tous les jours. On estime que la maîtrise de 2 500 caractères courants permet de lire près de 99,9% des documents grand public.

Signalons enfin que la Chine et Singapour font usage de caractères simplifiés (par exemple *yì* 译 "traduire"), alors que Taïwan, Macao et Hong Kong continuent d'utiliser les formes traditionnelles (*yì* 譯 "traduire"). Le Japon, quant à lui, emploie des caractères (kanjis) légèrement différents des formes d'origine, traditionnelles comme simplifiées (*yaku* 訳 "traduire").

Finalement, est-ce difficile d'apprendre le mandarin?

La réponse est à la fois oui et non. Oui, parce que le mandarin est très différent des langues européennes, ce qui implique que le bagage linguistique des apprenant-es européens-ennes n'est d'aucun secours. L'écriture n'étant pas alphabétique, il faut s'habituer à une autre forme d'écriture et apprendre les caractères un par un; enfin, lorsque l'élément phonétique n'indique pas la prononciation, le son et l'écriture doivent être mémorisés séparément. Certaines structures grammaticales reflètent un mode de pensée et une logique propre aux Chinois-es, ce qui peut à première vue sembler étranger, exotique, voire incompréhensible. Par exemple, le passé est représenté par le mot "devant", l'avenir "derrière"; les appellations entre personnes sont complexes, de même que les salutations. Derrière ces "bizarreries" se cache en réalité une logique autre, propre à la l'histoire de la civilisation chinoise.

Non, parce que tous les mots ont une seule forme, invariable, sans conjugaison ni déclinaison, sans genre ni nombre. De plus, la morphologie lexicale est assez simple, et la formation ou la dérivation de mots sont régulières. Par ailleurs, il y a peu de sons/syllabes, la grammaire de base se résume à des règles intelligibles qui ne comportent pratiquement pas d'exceptions; la forme importe peu tant que le contexte est clair. Le vocabulaire est très imagé, concret et poétique.

Ainsi, il n'y a pas de langue plus facile ou plus difficile qu'une autre à proprement parler. Le degré de difficulté d'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère dépend du bagage linguistique et culturel de chacun-e, mais aussi de la motivation et de l'investissement personnel.

Bienvenue dans le monde de la langue et de la culture chinoises!

L'Institut Confucius est un centre d'enseignement et de recherche de l'Université de Genève. En dehors de la conduite de projets de recherche et l'organisation de colloques scientifiques, il offre des cours de langue chinoise de tous niveaux, en rythme régulier ou intensif au travers de plusieurs programmes de formation continue.³

Durant le mois de juillet, l'Institut propose des cours intensifs. Ces petites classes, composées de moins de 15 personnes, sont assurées par des enseignant-es universitaires spécialisé-es dans le chinois langue étrangère, et permettent d'acquérir des bases solides et de progresser rapidement.

À partir de septembre, des cours réguliers sont offerts, ainsi qu'une série de conférences académiques où des chercheurs-euses européen-ennes universitaires présentent leurs travaux de recherche récents toujours en lien avec la Chine.⁴ ■

Poursuivez l'exploration en découvrant la variété des activités et formations proposées par l'Institut Confucius de l'Université de Genève sur <https://www.unige.ch/ic>.

- 1 Le D^{re} Grâce Poizat est chargée de cours au département d'études est-asiatiques et vice-directrice de l'Institut Confucius
- 2 http://www.kailchan.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Kai-Chan_Power-Language-Index-full-report_2016_v2.pdf
- 3 Plus d'informations sur <https://www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/langue-chinoise>
- 4 Plus d'informations sur <https://www.unige.ch/formcont/cours/conf-chine>



The Savoie on its journey across the lake

Summer adventures

LISANNE HOPKIN, EDITORIAL ASSISTANT, *NEWSPECIAL*

Summer's officially around the corner, and I could not be more thrilled. After spring, summer is my favourite season. Despite being a winter baby, I crave good weather and heat. I always feel like I'm a flower, as winter really seems to drain all the energy out of me. And then as soon as the sun shines, and the air is warm, I can literally feel myself become happier. I thrive on the sun and the good weather. I know that this is not the case for everyone. My best friend loves the winter months, and I cannot understand her for the life of me. Still, winter is not here yet. On the other hand, summer's coming, and I am ready to tell you about things you can do in the summer.

Now that most Covid-19 restrictions have eased, you can finally go away for a holiday! I recently went to Barcelona for a few days, and I cannot put into words how much I have missed being in a different country. Especially a sunny one. There is something about exploring somewhere new that just makes me so content.

If you are planning to go away, make sure you check if there are any Covid-19 restrictions that are still in place! When we went to Barcelona, you had to wear masks on any kind of public transport. Just double check. It's better to be safe than sorry!

If you're looking for something a little closer to home, for instance, something that is still in Switzerland, I would recommend exploring little cafés, restaurants, or beaches that are dotted around the lake. One of my favourite places to go to when the weather is nice is La Plage de Perroy, which is just past Rolle. It is open seasonally, but I don't think many people would want to sit by the beach in the winter months anyway. They do lots of yummy food, and the buvette is right on the lake, so you can sit and enjoy the view as you eat. We've also been fortunate enough to see little cygnets swim past with their parents, so it is quite a quiet area, which could be ideal if you're looking to relax. You can find out more about the buvette on their Facebook page 'Buvette de la plage Perroy'.

Another thing that I rather enjoy doing in the summer, and when the weather is nice, is taking what I call 'the big boat' across the lake. The big boats are the steam boats that are run by CGN, like the Savoie. They're quite a peaceful and relaxing way to get around the lake. You could go to Geneva, Nyon, Hermance, Yvoire, Vevey, Lausanne, Montreux... The list goes on and on. Or, if you're not bothered about going anywhere in particular, you can just sit on the boat and watch the world go by for a while. And, if you want, you can also have dinner aboard some of the boats, which can be a lovely way to spend your evening. When having dinner, you don't usually end up somewhere else. You can get off at a different port if you feel like you may not have finished your dinner in time, or would just like to spend more time on the boat. But you are unlikely to find yourself in Montreux if that is not where you had started. You can find out more about the boats and their crossings on the CGN website.

If, like me, you enjoy live theatre performances, then you can



The view at the top of La Ballade à Béatrix



Waiting for a performance of Hamlet.

join TNT Theatre Britain and the American Drama Group Europe as they perform their production of a Shakespeare play outside, with beautiful castles as their backdrop. In their most recent years, TNT Theatre Britain and the American Drama Group Europe have staged Hamlet and Othello. Set facing the Château de Prangins, the actors are the ones who get to admire the beautiful gardens, while we are transported away to whenever Shakespeare has set his plays. If you're lucky, the weather will be warm, the sun will shine as its own sort of spotlight, and you may get to see the sunset reflected on the windows. It will inevitably be cool when the sun disappears, so take a jacket. And, if the weather is looking a bit gloomy, take a raincoat, and a

jumper, just in case. I have heard that it can get quite cold in the rain. You can find out more about the shows and where they're being performed on the American Drama Group Europe website.

Another little place that I would recommend if you're looking for somewhere with a good view, is at the top of La Ballade à Béatrix. My family and I have been doing this short, and mostly easy, walk in the Saint-Cergue area for about two years now. It has some benches you can sit on, should you want to rest and catch your breath, and lots of leafy areas that are quite cool in the summer heat. There's a story that goes with the walk, with sixteen panels along the path, so you can learn about the final episode of the Château

de St-Cergue. Though I've never managed to read it myself, as we never really stop, unless it is for a drink of water. The walk itself takes about half an hour, and is around 1.3 km. However, recently we found a shortcut. La Ballade à Béatrix seems to go around on itself, whereas if you take the shortcut, you go up a bit of a steep climb, and are at the top in about 10-15 minutes. Either way, you end up with the most beautiful view of the Lac Léman. You can see all the way from Geneva to Montreux, perhaps further, on a clear day. It really is one of the best views. The way back is probably just as quick as the way up, definitely not more than 30 minutes, and probably as quick as the shortcut. You can go back the way you came, though there

are some narrow paths on the way up, so do be careful if you cross paths with any other hikers. You can find out more about La Ballade à Béatrix by visiting the La Côte tourism website. ■

Websites to visit:

La Plage de Perroy: <https://fr-fr.facebook.com/people/Buvette-de-la-plage-Perroy/100063606577543/>

CGN: <https://www.cgn.ch/fr/croisieres.html>

American Drama Group Europe: <http://www.adg-europe.com/>

La Côte Tourism: <https://www.lacote-tourisme.ch/en/V779/the-path-la-ballade-a-beatrix>



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No Mixed Feelings about Mixed-Gender Sports Polo Excels at Equality Game

“Impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic, and incorrect.”¹ That was a swift verdict on women participating in the Olympic Games by no other than Pierre de Frédy, the patriarch of the International Olympic Committee. Unimpressed by the rejection, women entered the age of modernity by competing against men just four years later, at the 1900 Summer Olympic Games.

YULIA LEMENEZ, UNDP

One of those “new age” athletes was Elvira Guerra, the Russian-born daughter of an Italian circus owner, who made a career as a horse ballerina.² She competed in a horse-riding event elegantly dressed and side-saddled, finishing ninth.

It is no doubt that in 2022, Ms. Guerra would feel more comfortable riding a horse astride in jodhpurs and high boots. But would she be impressed with her own legacy? 122 years after she proudly entered the *manège* in a tall hat and a corset dress, equestrian sports are still leading the very short list of mixed-sex (or coed) sports. One of the most physically and mentally demanding of these is polo, a horseback ballgame with a fair

claim to being the oldest mixed team game.

Fascinated by Ms. Guerra’s story (albeit much less so by the progress made since), I have invited Coast Sullenger, the founder of the Geneva Polo Club (GPC), and Clare Usher-Wilson, an outstanding polo player, to share their thoughts on the role of women in polo and competitive sports more generally.

Coast spent most of his career as an investment professional responsible for investing in emerging markets and natural resources. He founded the Geneva Polo Club in 2008, several years after catching the ‘polo bug.’ The first step was to rehabilitate the 30-hectare farm in Veigy on the French-Swiss

border and build what has now become a Geneva staple. Today, the Club has two beautiful playing fields with events areas, as well as high quality infrastructure (stables, training facilities, clubhouse) that accommodates over 80 horses during the season and nearly 40 polo players! Coast is fluent in English, French, Spanish and Russian, and often plays the role of MC at the main events during the season.

Clare blames her Zodiac sign, Gemini, for all the hats (“personas,” as she calls them) that she is sporting so elegantly. She is the Deputy CEO of an international trust company; a mother of triplets and a lucky 10-year-old; and a wife of a surgeon, who is also honorary consul, with clinics in three cantons, which on



occasions requires her to step into the shoes of a 'honorary consort.' Running a busy household does not prevent Clare (and the rest of her family) from devoting a remarkably large amount of time to polo between the months of May and October.

Coast, has polo always been a mixed-sex sport?

According to early accounts of the history of polo, women were playing the sport from the very beginning. Polo was first documented in Persia around the 5th century B.C., but later became a sport practiced by the Cavalry in England and in all the British colonies. This is the period when the sport spread across the globe and particularly to places like India and Argentina. Most of the players throughout history were men, but recently

there has been a surge in the women players. This is the fastest growing segment of the polo community presently.

Clare, how did you discover polo? What attracted you most about the game?

I grew up in a rural part of the UK. Horses played a big part of my childhood. Around the age of 18, I left home and then the UK to explore the world and all the fun adventures it has to offer. Yet, there was always something slightly missing. One summer evening in 2009, I was invited to an Argentine barbecue, *asado*, at the GPC. There, I found myself surrounded by horses again! Suddenly, I realised how much I had been missing them. It was that feeling (in addition to the excellent *asado*) that drew me to GPC in the first place. But it did not

take long for me and my husband, who shared the first lesson with me, to catch the "polo bug." This is how our new adventure together started... and may it continue!

How many women players does GPC have?

Coast: Women have been a key part of the GPC fabric and culture since its inception. There are now around eight to ten ladies playing regularly at the Club, which represents around 25-30% of the total. This seems to be a typical ratio, but again, this segment is growing fast!

Clare: When I joined in 2009, there were only two other women players. One is still an active member, and our daughters are the very best of friends as a result (hello next generation!). Nowadays, in addition to players, there are also five *patronas* who own their own horses. Times have changed!

Clare, did you have to 'prove' yourself as an excellent polo player to be on par with men? For example, did you have to train harder?

Clare: There is some truth to it, even though the usual 'physical difference' card does not score any points in polo. Nothing about the game, including big hits, is about brute strength. I do train harder, but this mostly comes from just wanting to improve. Besides competing with myself, I am keen to excel at the all-important 'hand, ball, eye' hitting coordination, which seems to come more easily to men.

In terms of 'proving myself,' I have occasionally had the satisfaction of a man assuming that a woman on the other side wouldn't cause him too much trouble, only for him to realise too quickly just how bad that trouble is. We are still hitting the stereotypes on the polo field, just like those Persian ladies in the 5th century B.C.

Coast: I have learned the hard way not to underestimate the ladies or give them any breaks on the field

- they can be just as competitive as men, or even more so!

It does sound like polo is not a sport for everyone. What makes an 'ideal' woman player? Any particular qualities or passions?

Clare: Riding ability! You need to hang off a horse at high speed, while keeping sufficient control of it and not crashing into other horses going just as fast. Rather astonishingly for me, this is where women and men differ. If women strive to ride confidently before they start to play, this seems to be an optional extra for quite a lot of men. Not that it stops them, but yes, they do fall off much more. Beyond riding skills, having a 'just give it a go' attitude to life is a good quality. Being someone who holds horses in high respect and gratitude will probably allow you to get more out of the game, too.

Does the dynamic of the game change when women players join the team? Do they bring a unique perspective or element to the game?

Coast: Although we shouldn't generalise, women tend to have more consistency and rigour, as well as a cleaner game (fewer fouls) than men. They play very much as a team, especially amongst themselves, tend to be very good riders, and are often more focused on strategy.

Women also tend to be gentler with the horses, which is very important.

Clare: Without generalising, an amateur male polo player is more likely to be a 'ball chaser' entirely focused on the heroic moment of scoring a goal. As Coast says, women tend to be better team players, which makes the game more enjoyable for everyone. Personally, I prefer setting up a goal for another to finish off, rather than have that 'do or die' pressure at the last moment of goal scoring - or, conversely, the agony of a miss-hit when it (so often) goes wrong.



In addition, if men have a better ‘hand, ball, eye’ hitting coordination, I think that women have better horsemanship. Part of that is putting the time in with your horses to get the best out of them. Polo teaches us to appreciate diversity, put our comparative advantages to good use, and help advance the skills that may come easier to the other gender.

Clare, what does polo give you as a professional, a mother, and woman?

Head space! I challenge anyone to think of a to-do list while playing polo! For me, the fact that all my children are just so happy at the polo club while their parents play is a huge plus, too.

Are there any skills that polo helps develop?

Clare: Not to take oneself too seriously; learning to be in the right place at the right time; respect for rules, which when broken put yourself and other people at risk; and anything that equates to thinking fast enough, as if playing three-dimensional chess at the fastest speeds that your nerves allow.

What about leadership skills?

Clare: I credit horses with their generosity in giving so much

effort to players, but equally, in an instant, they can make total fools out of them. One side step as you stretch for a ball can render you an inelegant heap eating dirt off the floor. There must be a parallel to be drawn with treating more junior, but smarter (as they often are), colleagues with respect and humility.

What changes are you seeing in the sport now?

Coast: Ladies’ polo is growing fast, and there are more and more all-women tournaments and competitions. It is very exciting and entertaining to see them play together, and sometimes you can even get the impression that ladies are rougher than the men when they play together.

Clare: Playing in an all-women team is still on my list. I hope that GPC will have enough players to form such a team soon.

Among women out there, is polo particularly advantageous for any particular background or context?

Clare: Since polo is one of the few truly mixed-gender sports, I would encourage the spouses and partners of male players to give polo a go. Technically, it is quite

easy to be in and out of GPC in an hour, but it is such a sociable environment that before you know it, post-match beers arrive, followed by that famous *asado*. By the time the grill goes cold, hours will have passed in the company of interesting people, who for a change ignore the convention of a much-needed shower. I realise that I am not selling the glamour of polo, but the reality is that most of it is not about the glitzy tournaments.

Speaking of glamour and much-needed showers, is polo a family sport? Your four children were born after you caught the ‘polo bug.’

Clare: Being part of the polo community as a couple is fantastic. Once a whole family is involved, it becomes a lifestyle. There is a community spirit within any sport, but polo has that special sub-culture that involves an international tribe of semi-feral children enjoying fresh air and freedom alongside their equally happy (and non-helicoptering) parents, horses, dogs and other creatures.

As I mentioned, I grew up in a rural environment, and I am so incredibly grateful that my kids get away from an urban setting

and can immerse themselves in this parallel barefoot life. We are very happy – all six of us! – and that must count for something.

What would be your advice to girls and women who are only learning about the sport now?

Clare: Polo is a break from being the responsible woman that life constantly demands us to be. It is wildly irresponsible: physically, financially, parenting-ly. But hey, why shouldn’t we girls be irresponsible in pursuit of nothing more than pure fun?! It’s not like we don’t work for it!

Coast: The beauty is that women are fully recognised in polo, and based on their skills, they can play with men in all competitions. Women are instantly accepted not only into the game, but also into the polo family. Everyone is most warmly welcome at GPC. The 2022 season started in mid-April. Please join us for a game, and certainly for the *asado*. ■

¹“Women in Sports,” National Library of Australia, <https://www.nla.gov.au/digital-classroom/year-7/sport-and-australian-culture/women-sport>

²“First female competitors at the Olympics by country,” Olympedia.



Isabelle Alexandrine Bourgeois...

... nomad journalist on the road to joy

- *Washington, D.C.-United States, 1966*
- *Journalism – Joy for the Planet*
- *“Gustave Revillod, who not only brought the world to Geneva through founding the Ariana Museum, but also gave the land on which the League of Nations set up its headquarters in 1937.”*

newSpecial is delighted to include profiles presented by Zahi Haddad, in his recently-published book “126 Heartbeats for International Geneva”.

We thank the author and his publisher, Slatkine, for this exclusivity.

“Your joy is my destination!” Isabelle Alexandrine Bourgeois’s maxim is crystal clear. Just like her voice, bright, perky. This maxim gives us a glimpse of the vivacity of a person who has been around, who has engaged in sincere encounters with her fellow human beings and has chosen to devote herself to the beauty of the world. Of her contemporaries.

Isabelle’s story begins in Washington, D.C., where her father is the First Secretary of the Embassy of Switzerland. It takes on another dimension when he is taken hostage while stationed in Colombia. “I was twelve years old and the work the ICRC did to help him left a deep impression on me.” A few years later, Isabelle pursues artistic studies at the Collège de Saussure, in Geneva, a “great fulfillment” for this outstanding designer who would later sketch comics with shimmering characters chiseled by her inner benevolence. Her academic pursuits include not only political science, but also journalistic training. This which leads her to a number of French-speaking newsrooms. Pen, microphone and camera in

hand, she tries out all forms of communication. She is enriched by all the encounters that shape her media journey.

At thirty, she finds love during a trip to the Sinai desert. She leaves everything, gets married and settles in Cairo where she continues work for a French-speaking Swiss radio station. Three years later, her free spirit brings her back to Geneva. By road and by sea! Isabelle finds she needs “L’Autre”, something different, in order to blossom. The ICRC gives her this chance and sends her to Kosovo, Ethiopia, Iran and then to Iraq. She observes the great upheavals there at the dawn of the new millennium. In Mesopotamia it clicks for her. What will condition her life? “Amidst the destruction, I witnessed exceptional acts of aid from doctors, humanitarian workers, soldiers and manual workers. I was touched by this great human beauty, too rarely presented by mainstream media.”

This is the thinking behind Isabelle’s launch of the volunteer platform “Positive Planet”, a compilation of good news from

five continents. The site is a success. Considered a pioneer, Isabelle wants to devote her “life as a journalist to what brings people together, to openness, to creativity.” Still employed by the ICRC, she spends another four years at the Geneva headquarters as the chief editor of the organization’s newspaper. Until she receives an email inviting her to the first World March for Peace and Nonviolence in 2009. For three months, she travels a total of 150,000 kilometers through nearly eighty countries. Including Colombia. Where, fantastically enough, she meets by chance the former guerrilla, repented, who had sequestered her father. There were “moments of tears, forgiveness and unconditional love which so well embodied my process of peace.” Such intense altruism then leads Isabelle to join the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit as a communications expert and French-speaking editor for the institution’s newsletter.

After a few years offering tailor-made ethical and solidarity trips, Isabelle takes to the road again in January 2018 in a

motorhome that she revamps to suit her needs. Without a specific plan, she sets herself the goal of meeting “joyful people, those people who live conscientiously and positively, despite life’s setbacks.” In the end, Isabelle travels 40,000 kilometers through 23 countries, producing 500 articles and 100 videos. She especially chooses “fifty-six nominees of joy” which she compiles in a book, *The road to joy: a journalist meets extraordinary ordinary people*. Her book is an editorial success and awarded the Robert Scheimbet Prize that “salute the efforts of people who, modestly and discreetly, dedicate themselves to better living and well-being on our planet.” For Isabelle, this is a consecration in a unique moment of happiness! ■



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I am grounded and stable

Positive Affirmations and Your Inner Critic

How many of you out there use positive affirmations? And when do you listen to them? In the morning to prepare you for the day, or before going to bed for a calm release?

DEBORAH RANDOLPH TALON, WHO

Maybe you are in the category of those who are asking what are positive affirmations?

The English Oxford Dictionary defines affirmations as a “definite or public statement that something is true or that you support something strongly” and provides “a confirmation” as the synonym to an “affirmation”.

If we refer to this definition, it provides us with a very large spectrum from which we can deduce that anytime we say something that confirms an action, a description, or an episode... it falls into the affirmation category. In broad terms, an affirmation can be considered as positive or negative. For example: “Gosh, I am amazing: I aced that interview” or “I am such an idiot, I forgot to do X, Y, yet again!”

Most of the affirmations we make during the day are on the subconscious level, and it is believed that the subconscious picks up these affirmations, whether positive or negative, and gives them the same importance. In other words, if you keep telling yourself you have no sense of orientation, and you always get lost; you will always get lost; if you keep telling yourself you are an amazing public speaker, you end up being one. People use positive affirmations to “re-program” their minds and habits. By repeating these affirmations regularly, it can be used to push away negative beliefs which may have manifested on the subconscious level and may have resulted in negative behaviors. Crudely described, using positive affirmations in your day-to-day life is a bit like using the famous “fake it till you make it” attitude. Lastly, the use of positive

affirmations stems from the belief that what you put your attention on grows.

There are quite a few recordings online with positive affirmations covering different aspects of your daily life; from health to work, to building self-confidence and general well-being. All of them have the underlying feature of starting with a positive affirmation in the “I” form, which you repeat either aloud or in your head; some complete this statement with the same affirmation in the “you” form to reinforce the belief. People are also advised to create their own affirmations, as this would not only be more relevant, but hearing this repeated in one’s own voice makes it far more convincing.

On a personal note, I have been an avid user of affirmations in



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I am surrounded by people who love and support me

the past, but in some areas, I have made little or no progress. For example, I hate interviews and speaking in public (note the negative affirmation) and one of the affirmations I have repeated consistently is “I love speaking and connecting to people. I am a confident and clear speaker”.

I have taken leadership and presentation courses, read books on how to speak in public, watched Ted Talks on public speaking... If you add this to my above positive affirmation; it is serious ammunition indeed.

In the area of affirmations, I always wondered what could help me improve this skill. It thus came to my surprise during my life-coach training that in some areas affirmations may not work to their full potential, they may even be counterproductive!

Why? Meet your Inner Critic.

So, next question. How many of you hear this voice from time to time that just puts you down? Hits you where it hurts? You know the one that when you decide to apply to the new position, it kindly tells you that they will never select you because you don't have what it takes? Or that if you shoot that ball, you will miss anyway because you are meant to fail? Sounds nasty, right? But your

inner critic is definitely no angel. One main characteristic of the inner critic is that it speaks with authority: an unquestionable authority. In addition, it picks up on all the negative jabs that you received, mostly as a child, and accentuates them.

Negative comments or critiques from your caregivers, teachers, parents, your first crush, are amplified and thrown back at you with no mercy.

Your inner critic is there because you gave him/her the power to be there. It is thus most virile in areas where you have low self-esteem.

This is the case for me with regard to public speaking. Hence, when I repeat the affirmation, “I love speaking and connecting to people. I am a confident and clear speaker”, it replies: “Sure you are... pull the other one”.

Until you address the inner critic, your positive affirmations have little effect.

One way to quieten the inner critic and give yourself space to continue working and growing with your affirmation is not to engage in an argument with him/her/it, but to acknowledge the counter statement, and ask the

“and question” or the “so question”. These last two questions are repeated until there are no more replies from your inner critic.

Let us take a simple example (tried and tested). Back to my fear of public speaking. Before an interview, these were the steps I took regarding my positive affirmation:

1. **Me:** *I love speaking and connecting to people. I am a confident and clear speaker.*
2. **Inner Critic** (sarcastically): *No kidding...*
3. **Me:** *No kidding... And?*
4. **Inner Critic:** *You smile too much, and get seriously nervous...*
5. **Me:** *I smile too much and get seriously nervous so...?*
6. **Inner Critic:** *You are wasting your time, they won't take you anyway...*
7. **Me:** *They won't take me and...?*
8. **Inner Critic:** Silence.

Note how the inner critic leaves the first argument and picks up another under point six above. Also note how at the end of the conversation, it is reduced to silence. The period of silence is the most appropriate time for you to pick up your original affirmation and work with it. Note that this is not a magic formula and may have to be repeated a

few times as your inner critic may keep coming back (for ingrained beliefs, other tools in addition to the above will have to be used).

Your inner critic may also stay longer than mine did, or walk away after the first interaction. It is important to note that at some point the inner critic will have nothing more to say. It is almost like it runs out of gas.

Now, how did the interview go?

I did not get the higher position, but I did realize that I felt more at ease, and I was even able to forget myself and interact with the panel on a passionate discussion on financing.

In summary, for those who are strong users of positive affirmations or those who are considering using affirmations, I can only recommend it. However, keep in mind that you may have to deal with your inner critic first in order to give your positive affirmation space to grow. ■



The First Ukrainian School in Geneva

“Mom, what about the next classes at the Ukrainian School in Geneva? We will definitely come, right?”

LESYA NIKOLAYEVA, UNEP¹

– With these words, Nazar Mazurenko approaches his mother as soon as the lessons are over. To visit the Ukrainian classes, an 11-year-old boy travels to Geneva for almost three hours one way. His family was kindly hosted in the town of Schwarzenburg, near Bern (Switzerland), where Nazar joined a local school. He was the first student from Ukraine in Schwarzenburg and he was greeted with great love and care by all classmates. Nazar appreciates such a warm welcome wordlessly, as he cannot speak German with his new classmates. Meanwhile in the Ukrainian School in Geneva, the boy met the same Ukrainian children, who talk, laugh, play, joke in the Ukrainian language. All teachers are also from Ukraine and speak their native language, including his mom Larysa Mazurenko, who volunteered to

be a Teacher of Culture at school. It is an incredible atmosphere of trust and friendship between children and adults, especially in such difficult times. Unsurprisingly, it turned out that among the new acquaintances are Ukrainians who grew up and live in Switzerland, Italy and France, but can speak Ukrainian. Very quickly the guys became real friends: Nazar counts the days before meeting Aeneas and Mark in Geneva.

The Mazurenko's family is the small example of an ordinary Ukrainian family that was forced to leave the country or internally displaced due to the full invasion of the Russian Federation to Ukraine on February 24, 2022. This day changed the lives of millions of Ukrainians, as well as other nations who host Ukrainians in their homes, cities and countries. According to the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 6.5 million refugees are estimated to have fled to neighbouring countries since 24 February and the number is rising. The [swissinfo.ch](https://www.swissinfo.ch) reports that Switzerland expects up to 60,000 Ukrainians who seek a refuge, granting them a protection status S in a fast-track procedure.

Along with hospice services, well organized by hosting Swiss authority and population, social, educational and cultural adaptation of Ukrainians is very important. To the same extent to maintain a bridge with the Ukrainian cultural identity, as a major part of Ukrainians await being back home. With an aim to support Ukrainian children and families in Geneva, especially to create a platform for in-person studying and exchange, the non-profit organization “Ukrainian Women in Switzerland” jointly



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with an Association Free Ukrainian organized the First Ukrainian School in Geneva. The first lessons in Ukrainian language, literature, history and culture were conducted by volunteer teachers on April 10, 2022 and the lessons are held every Sunday. Special lectures on history and social issues for teenagers and parents are given by the Ukrainians who work for the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations and international organizations,

the United Nations in Geneva etc. As of the end of May, 43 volunteer teachers and 125 students have registered at the school. The students are also invited to the excursions to the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, workshops in the University of Geneva and training of the Plast National Scout Organization of Ukraine. School received strong support from the Ukrainian Greek

Catholic Church, which assisted with the temporary premises for school in Geneva.

The school is part of the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Geneva created to unite Ukrainians living in Geneva and Ukrainians who have found temporary refuge here. Moreover, the school engages professional Ukrainian teachers who have temporarily arrived in Switzerland and who are happy to support education among Ukrainian children abroad on a volunteer basis using their professional background. While learning the Ukrainian language and subjects, school creates a friendly environment for the Ukrainian children to make new friends, spend time with their compatriots, and feel a corner of Ukraine in Switzerland.

The students of the First Ukrainian School in Geneva believe that when the war in Ukraine is over, they will visit each other. They will never forget these happy Sunday lessons in Geneva and their Ukrainian classmates. And they will jointly celebrate the victory of Ukraine! ■

¹ Lesya Nikolayeva, works at UNEP and is Chair of the Organization "Ukrainian Women in Switzerland"

For more information about the Ukrainian School in Geneva, please see the Facebook pages of the Organization "Ukrainian Women in Switzerland" (<https://www.facebook.com/UAWomeninCH/>), the Ukrainian Cultural Centre (<https://www.facebook.com/CentreCultureUkrainienGeneve>).

Contact: ukrainianculturalcentregeneva@gmail.com

Humanitarian aid to Ukraine:

Ministry of Health of Ukraine: <https://moz.gov.ua/dopomozhit-ukrainskim-medikam-ta-armii>

Savelife Fund / Фонд "Повернись живим" / Défendre l'Ukraine Ensemble: <https://www.comebackalive.in.ua/fr/donate?fbclid=IwAR0mchShTiGanoXhF3odD2OC08eamB3pfmqg0YRhQDrpCa-wUPagf9Eobl>

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Episode 14:

**TEST TO PROTECT:
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La Suisse inconnue, à la découverte des 26 cantons

Canton de Bâle-Ville: Bettingen

Une série de 26 impressions de lieux
plutôt inconnus – loin du tourisme.

CARLA EDELENBOS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS

Le canton de Bâle-Ville est composé seulement de trois communes: Bâle-Ville et les deux communes rurales de Riehen et Bettingen. Riehen attire déjà beaucoup de visiteurs grâce à une institution de portée internationale: la Fondation Beyeler.

Donc il ne nous reste que Bettingen, un petit village calme de 1200 habitants. Le village appartient à Bâle depuis 1513, quand les propriétaires de l'époque le vendirent à Bâle-Ville pour la jolie somme de 800 florins! Pour y arriver, on s'arrête d'abord à Bâle-Ville pour prendre un train vers Riehen, où on prend un bus pour notre destination. Ce périple nous permet d'accéder à toutes les communes du canton en un seul trajet!

Notre bus nous dépose sur la

place du village, un groupement des maisons entouré par des champs et la forêt. L'église protestante attire tout de suite notre attention à cause de sa modernité. Elle a en effet été construite en 2021! Contrairement aux autres églises protestantes, elle reste ouverte pendant la journée pour la prière et la méditation. Inhabituel aussi est le fait que la "lampe éternelle" y est allumée, une pratique qu'on ne trouve d'habitude que dans les églises catholiques ou orthodoxes et dans les synagogues. La lumière symbolise la présence de Dieu et ici est aussi une expression de solidarité œcuménique.

À côté se trouve une ferme bio avec un petit magasin où se vendent les produits de la ferme: viande et saucisses, œufs, pain, jus de fruits, pendant la saison: pommes, poires, pruneaux, abricots, noix et bien sûr, il y a

des confitures maison! Derrière le magasin nous admirons les vaches et un peu plus loin les poules courent dans toutes les directions. C'est sympa de se retrouver à la campagne après avoir traversé la ville de Bâle!

En face, le bel établissement "Basler Hof", prolonge l'impression d'être loin de la ville. Comme c'est midi et qu'il fait beau, on s'assied sur la jolie terrasse pour déguster le menu du jour: soupe de carottes bien épicée, émincé de veau et une délicieuse panacotta pour terminer. Voilà que ça donne envie de rester à l'ombre avec un bouquin pour profiter de la douce vie, mais la curiosité nous pousse à payer la note et commencer notre découverte.

Nous admirons la belle fontaine au centre du village, le Wendelinsbrunnen, construite en 1913 pour commémorer les

400 ans d'appartenance à Bâle. Que la fontaine porte le nom de Wendelin, un saint catholique considéré comme le patron des bergers, nous surprend, mais l'endroit est accueillant. Quelques belles maisons et des arbres fleuris entourent la place et une rue étroite monte vers des pâturages. Nous suivons le sentier par la forêt pour arriver à St. Chrischona, à 522 mètres d'altitude, qui est le plus haut point du canton. Depuis le sommet on peut voir les Alpes par beau temps – il fait beau mais pas très clair donc malheureusement nous ne voyons pas très loin.

L'église évangélique de St. Chrischona est entourée d'un ensemble de bâtiments, la plupart utilisés par la haute école de théologie évangélique qui y tient son campus. Au moyen âge, l'église sur la colline était un but de pèlerinage, et cela jusqu'à la Réforme. L'église actuelle date de la fin du



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15^e siècle et fut pillée pendant la guerre de 30 ans qui opposait les puissances catholiques en Europe aux pays protestants. La Suisse, elle-même divisée dans des questions confessionnelles, restait hors de ce conflit et se forgeait une neutralité armée pour défendre son territoire, précurseur de sa neutralité actuelle. Avec le Traité de Westphalie, qui clôt la guerre en 1648, l'indépendance de la Suisse fut reconnue par les puissances européennes.

L'église de St. Chrischona fut restaurée seulement au 19^e siècle, et un séminaire y fut établi pour former des missionnaires chrétiens. Actuellement l'école a comme but la formation théologique générale et est liée à l'université de Middlesex à Londres. Même si l'école s'est agrandie et contient des constructions modernes, les bâtiments du 19^e siècle sont toujours utilisés.

En 1925, un couvent évangélique fut ajouté, qui comptait plus de 300 nonnes. Aujourd'hui, même si quelques sœurs y habitent encore, l'endroit accueille surtout une maison de retraite et des appartements individuels pour couples et familles, dans le but de faire vivre ensemble des générations multiples. Juste à l'extérieur de l'enceinte du campus et du couvent, se trouve une jolie place de jeu, de laquelle on voit bien l'émetteur de Swisscom, une tour de 250 mètres de haut qui est la plus haute construction indépendante de Suisse! La tour n'est accessible que sur réservation en groupe avec une visite guidée.

Pour retourner au village, nous prenons le chemin de contemplation, qui part dans la forêt, en suivant des panneaux avec des textes incitant à la réflexion. Plusieurs textes font référence à Frère Nicolas, le saint national de

Suisse. C'est une promenade très agréable, qui se termine à l'église St. Chrischona. Mais nous continuons plus loin dans la forêt et croisons un parcours VTT, où des jeunes cyclistes s'exercent en faisant des sauts sur des rampes de terre. Heureusement qu'ils portent tous un casque, parce que cela a l'air quand même un peu risqué. Après avoir laissé la piste derrière nous, nous admirons un panorama magnifique sur la ville de Bâle. Peu après nous entrons de nouveau au village, en passant devant l'école primaire surmontée de son joli campanile.

La piscine communale n'est pas encore ouverte pour la saison, pour l'instant il n'y a que des canards qui s'ébattent avec bonheur. Nous achetons une bouteille d'eau dans le petit magasin du village, voilà que le bus arrive et nous ramène à la gare, ravis de cette excursion. ■

Depuis Genève, prenez le train en direction de Bienne. A Bienne changez pour le train en direction de Bâle. Il est aussi possible de passer par Bern au lieu de Bienne. A Bâle, prenez le train ou le tram pour Riehen, et là le bus 32 pour Bettingen. Durée du trajet: 3 heures et 45 minutes.

Pour visiter la tour émettrice, voir <https://www.swisscom.ch/fr/business/broadcast/portrait/sites-emetteurs.html>.



Vergilius flanked by the Muse of history (left) and tragedy (right)



Friedrich von Schiller



Seneca the younger

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS at 75

ALFRED DE ZAYAS, UN SOCIETY OF WRITERS, ON TURNING 75

Unfinished. Not to be completed.
Hoary hopes appear defeated,
myriad questions wait for answers.
Is it sensible to weigh the chances?
Pretend to cut more Gordian knots?
Should I recalibrate my thoughts?

A long apprenticeship to live
appears now over. Here my narrative
of sailing out in search of port,
reaching out and falling short.
What lies beyond my Parthenon?
Must I still cross a Rubicon?

Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit!

Planning for the future was a youthful
habit,
asking questions, watching others:
Now I reminisce.
Not everything succeeded:
Life is hit and miss.
With equanimity I ruminate on fateful
moments, smiling seasons — reasons to be
grateful.

Sure, when I was twenty-five —
and single — all was overdrive —
each sunrise was a given.
Then at fifty, still untamed and unforgiven,
battling jealousies and office strife,
I found my sustenance in married life.
I must confess that I still harbour appetite,
bewitching beauty can my spirits light.
Adventures lived — and some imagined
— taught
me to distinguish fantasy from fact.
As Argonaut
my early loves were lost, but not in vain.

In bonhomie
they heralded my choice for sane
monogamy.

Nothing can surpass in passion and in joy
subdued
the years of living for each other, not in
solitude,
in constant sharing, listening,
commiserating,
working at it every day, alliterating,
conjugating
mutually: “*Wer ein holdes Weib errungen*”
must proclaim his luck!... *Der grosse Wurf*
*ist ihm gelungen.*²

Each sunrise jointly lived — a gift,
each sunset an inspiring lift.
Now, three times twenty-five seems late...
Perhaps an opportunity to abdicate.
No longer can I start anew...
Yet on the roses I see dew.

I teach beneath my virtual pergola
and learn from students as did Seneca:
*Docendo discimus*³ - what blessing
every day to keep on learning!
Students bring me fresh perspectives,
echoes of my youth in lively retrospectives.

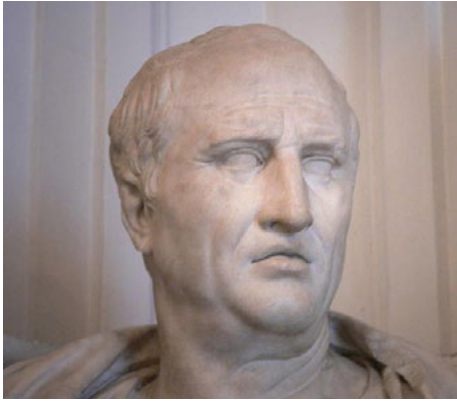
Life is not a solitary tree - is continuity,
no solipsism but community.
We see the rabbits spring, hear sparrows
sing,
while in the distance church bells ring.
We tend our garden as we gently breathe,
while weaving fragile flowers in a wreath.

Repeating rites of day and night,
four seasons that continuously unite.
Eternal tides in clockwork rise and fall,
enhance the rhythm of the ocean's roll.
We hear the shells that crackle on the
shore,
perceive recurring breezes, showers that
restore.

When navigating to and well beyond my
equinox,
I questioned orthodoxies, reasoned in and
out the box,
resolved to challenge mainstream
narratives,
proactively pursued alternatives.
I knew that progress came from rebels
- Galileo,
Gandhi, Martin Luther King - *volente Deo*⁴.

We *homo sapiens* are but nature's
representatives.
In awe we stand before the dignity of all
that lives,
all creatures of this earth, above in air,
beneath the sea,
each blossom, flower, wheatfield, chestnut
tree.
We seniors recognize that nature holds
eternal youth,
that every leaf and butterfly show avenues
to truth.

Although I'm not prepared to leave,
I sense that I approach the eve.
I know that leave I must,
as every shadow... human dust.
If *pulvis umbra sumus*⁵, what remains?



Cicero

Alone what love and memory sustains.

The kiss of life I take, accept my fate...
But am I losing faith? Again, too late?
The hearts of many friends and family
have ceased to beat. How can that be?
They live in life-like memory,
they live in me as were they out to sea.

Life means creation: Procreation —
Giving life to every generation.
Stefan saw the light but did not carry on.
We know not why we lost our son.
He would have written many pages
of our lives, expand us through the ages.

Lucky they who love and marry young,
in mutual trust to grow together decades
long,
renewing genesis. But we, how can we fill
our void?
A godchild, niece or nephew rushes past —
fast as an asteroid.
Thank God for merry friends who
cheer us up,
who even keep their promises and
follow-up.

My many books are no *Ersatz* for children
— or for boisterous grandchildren...
Books can never cry - or laugh,
belong inscribed on my lean epitaph.
But was the journey worth the trials,
the early pains and self-denials?

Yes, each daybreak had its worth,
each hour was a miracle on earth —
from mother's soft caress
to that first love, first yes.
Each day has been a gift, each kiss
well worth the pain and artifice.

I cherished each infatuation,
joyful spiritual inebriation.
Loving, being loved is all that matters.
Now we feast, as melancholy scatters.



Lucretius

Sharing joy and sorrow is our win-win
recipe,
forgiving when we err, a tested strategy.

Happiness is more than pleasure, but a
state of zen:
communion with our fellow men
— and women too! Means being one
with nature, watching on a lake — a swan.
All pleasure is ephemeral, we know.
Contentment lasts, says Cicero.

At times I muse on going back to start
anew,
pretending to pick up where I left off, renew
old friendships, hoping to undo what
I did wrong,
apologize for hurtful words, attune my
farewell song.
A second go at life, to reach what I once
dreamed...
Bereft, regrets remain, my conscience
unredeemed.

My metronome is slowing down: For me
less scherzos⁶ — more adagios in a minor
key!
Beethoven's Ninth⁷, the universal melody,
*Urlicht*⁸, Mahler's Resurrection Symphony⁹,
*Um Mitternacht*¹⁰ and Strauss' string
therapy:
his *Metamorphosen*¹¹ that buoys
our reverie.

I'm ready to accept the end,
but first I shall attempt to mend
what can be fixed, my garden tend¹²,
make peace with others, ditch the trend,
the Zeitgeist, groupthink, "flavour of the
week".

*No panem et circensis*¹³: Just sincerity
I seek.

I have no bucket list as yet,
try now to give more than I get,



Ovidius

pray consciously with gratitude
for all those years of plenitude
together — lived in our harmonious house.
I light a lively candle to my spouse.

As bottom line Ovidius advocates
discretion:

*Bene vixit qui bene latuit*¹⁴ – a wise
suggestion
to escape attention, envy, sterile
competition.

Wonder why I heeded not this proposition,
but instead I let my vanity prevail,
for *vanitas vanitatis*¹⁵ is also Alfred's tale.

One day we're here, next moment maybe
not.

Should this be cause to be distraught?
We like to practice *carpe diem*¹⁶ each and
every hour,
conscious of the words on our clock tower:
*latet ultima hora*¹⁷.

Thus, let's toast to life, to us, to our aurora. ■

¹ "Perhaps someday I will remember this fondly". Vergilius, *Aeneid* 1.203.

² Friedrich von Schiller, *An die Freude*, "Who has won the great attempt to call a friend a friend, who has won a lovely wife, must celebrate his luck."

³ Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* (Book 1, letter 7, section 8).

⁴ God willing.

⁵ "We are dust and shadow". Horatius, *Odes*, book IV, Ode VII, line 16.

⁶ One of my favourite scherzos remains the second movement of Richard Strauss' *Symphonia Domestica*, Opus 53.

⁷ Opus 125 in D-minor, third movement, *adagio molto et cantabile*.

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rR6_F6Fxf1k

⁹ Symphony Nr. 2 in C minor, <https://mahlerfoundation.org/mahler/compositions/symphony-no-2/symphony-no-2-manuscript/>
¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWYJdYTA36M>

¹¹ Study for 23 solo strings, composed April 1945 as a kind of *In Memoriam* to culture, in the light of the destruction of Europe during World War II. *Metamorphosen* draws inspiration from Ovid's *Transformations*, Beethoven's *Eroica* and Goethe's *Zahme Xenien*. <https://www.myclassicalnotes.com/2021/09/metamorphosen-by-richard-strauss/>

¹² Voltaire, *Candide*, Chapter XXX "il faut cultiver notre jardin".

¹³ Lucretius, *Satires*, 10.77–81.

¹⁴ Ovidius, *Tristia*. III, 4, 25.

¹⁵ *Ecclesiastes*, 1:2.

¹⁶ "Pluck the day", Horatius, *Odes* (I,11)

¹⁷ "The final hour is hidden" slogan on many churches and sundials.



La Kia EV6 affiche un look résolument sportif et distinctif jusque dans le moindre détail

© Claude Maillard

“The Car of the Year” 2022

Malgré le report de l'édition 2022 du Geneva International Motor Show pour cause de pandémie, la cérémonie de remise du Prix de 'The Car of the Year' qui inaugure traditionnellement les journées de presse du GIMS s'est néanmoins déroulée à Genève et, pour la toute première fois, Kia remporte le trophée européen avec la Kia EV6.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Après deux annulations consécutives, l'une en mars 2020 au tout début de la pandémie de coronavirus et la seconde l'année suivante, le Geneva International Motor Show a une fois de plus été repoussé. La décision d'annuler le GIMS 2022 a été prise dans l'intérêt des constructeurs et des passionnés du monde de l'automobile. Les difficultés découlant directement et indirectement de la pandémie actuelle de COVID-19 n'ont pas laissé d'autre choix aux organisateurs. Ils affirment par ailleurs que la venue sur le salon des constructeurs et visiteurs aurait été de plus rendue difficile par les restrictions de circulation encore en vigueur dans de nombreux pays. Mais l'épidémie de coronavirus n'est pas la seule raison qui a poussé

les organisateurs du salon de Genève à annuler leur manifestation. Selon eux, la pénurie de semi-conducteurs n'y est pas pour rien non plus. Celle-ci a en effet forcé les constructeurs à revoir leurs priorités et à résoudre ces problèmes avant tout. Ces difficultés ont entraîné plusieurs annulations récentes qui ont mené à la confirmation définitive du report du salon.

Un titre prestigieux du monde automobile

Le Geneva International Motor Show est un carrefour incontournable de l'avenir de la mobilité depuis 1905. Largement reconnu comme étant le salon automobile le plus important d'Europe et l'un des plus prestigieux au monde, ce dernier attire à chaque édition pas moins de

10 000 journalistes venus de toute la planète ainsi que plus de 600 000 visiteurs. Directeur général du GIMS, Sandro Mesquita est confiant: «*Nous travaillons d'arrache-pied pour que la prochaine édition du Geneva International Motor Show puisse avoir lieu en 2023. La cérémonie 'The Car of the Year' retrouvera son rôle d'événement inaugural des journées de presse de la manifestation, ce d'autant qu'elle fêtera l'an prochain son 60^e lauréat.*

Décerné depuis 1964, le trophée 'The Car of the Year' est la récompense la plus prestigieuse et la plus convoitée du monde automobile. 'The Car of the Year' est soutenu par neuf grandes publications en Europe: «Auto» en Italie, «Autocar» en Grande-Bretagne,



© Claude Mallard

Spacieux et inspirant, l'habitacle de la Kia EV6 offre sérénité et sécurité à ses occupants

«Revue Automobile» en Suisse, «Autopista» en Espagne, «Auto Trends» en Belgique, «Autovisie» aux Pays-Bas, «Firmenauto» en Allemagne, «L'Automobile Magazine» en France et «Vi Bilägare» en Suède. Le jury 2022, composé de 61 journalistes automobiles de 23 pays, a testé et évalué individuellement les sept modèles présentés en finale qui ont été auparavant sélectionnés parmi 39 nouveautés lors d'un premier tour de vote. Et c'est finalement la Kia EV6 qui s'est vu attribuer le trophée, largement devant les autres finalistes. La Renault Mégane E-Tech Electric et la Hyundai Ioniq 5, toutes deux également 100% électriques, complètent quant à elles le podium. Suivent la Peugeot 308, la Skoda Enyaq iV, la Ford Mustang Mach-E et la Cupra Born.

Frank Janssen, président du Prix 'The Car of the Year', s'est réjoui après l'annonce des résultats: «C'est une belle surprise d'attribuer ce Prix à la Kia EV6. Il était temps que la marque et le groupe sud-coréens soient récompensés, tant ils ont travaillé dur sur cette voiture. Le rythme de progression de Kia est vraiment impressionnant!».

Quant à Jason Jeong, président de Kia Europe, il ne peut qu'être pleinement satisfait de ce résultat: «C'est un grand honneur que de se voir décerner le Prix 'The Car of the Year' 2022 avec l'EV6, la toute première Kia à remporter cette prestigieuse récompense. L'EV6 a bénéficié d'un développement inédit et a été conçue dès le départ pour rendre la mobilité électrique amusante, pratique et accessible en combinant une autonomie très impressionnante en conditions réelles, des capacités de recharge ultra-rapides, un intérieur spacieux et high-tech et une expérience de conduite vraiment enrichissante. L'EV6 représente une première interprétation de ce qui est encore à venir dans notre gamme électrifiée en pleine évolution».

La Kia EV6 100% électrique, l'éveil des sens.

Il s'agit d'une première dans l'histoire de l'élection de 'The Car of the Year': six voitures sur sept finalistes sont 100% électriques, la Peugeot 308 étant le seul modèle à être aussi proposé en version diesel, essence et hybride rechargeable. La Kia EV6 est un crossover 100% électrique qui ouvre une nouvelle ère et s'impose comme la référence pour

les années à venir. Au design moderne, sportif et déjà iconique, l'EV6 affiche un look résolument distinctif jusque dans le moindre détail. Puissante, elle abat le 0 à 100 km/h en 5,2 secondes (dans sa version quatre roues motrices) et revendique une vitesse maximum de 188 km/h. Equipée d'un moteur disposé à l'arrière et alimentée par une batterie Lithium-ion de 77,4 kWh, elle affiche une puissance de 229 ch pour la version deux roues motrices et 325 ch en version quatre roues motrices. D'une autonomie permettant de parcourir jusqu'à 528 km, la batterie de l'EV6 voit sa charge passer de 10 à 80% en seulement 18 minutes grâce à un vaste réseau de stations de recharge haute performance proposé par Kia. Et en cas de nécessité, une recharge ultra-rapide de 100 km peut s'effectuer en seulement 4 min 30.

Spacieux et inspirant, l'habitacle est conçu en pensant aux passagers et à leurs trajets: un plancher plat, des sièges relaxants et un espace suffisant pour répondre à tous les besoins de transport. L'EV6 regorge de systèmes de sécurité visant à garantir une protection optimale sur la route.

Ainsi, le système de freinage d'urgence autonome permet tout à la fois de garder un œil sur le trafic en amont et de s'adapter à toutes sortes de situations. La Kia EV6 inaugure le mode de conduite i-Pedal. Cette fonction permet au conducteur de contrôler sa vitesse, d'accélérer, de décélérer et de s'arrêter par le biais de la pédale d'accélérateur. De surcroît, l'EV6 bénéficie d'un système à récupération d'énergie à multiples niveaux qui exploite l'énergie du freinage et permet ainsi d'améliorer nettement l'autonomie et le rendement énergétique du véhicule.

Enfin, la Kia EV6, qui fait la part belle aux matériaux écoresponsables, est éligible au Bonus Ecologique qui permet de bénéficier jusqu'à 5000 euros de remise, encore un atout non négligeable de plus à ajouter au bénéfice de la voiture élue au titre de 'The Car of the Year' 2022. ■

Un grand merci à «Elan Automobile» Garage Jordan-Meille à Sauvigny (04 50 41 18 14) distributeur officiel Kia, qui a mis à notre disposition une Kia EV6 pour cet essai.



© Olga Fontanella

Hike to the Aiguilles Rouges hut

Stepping out of the rocky and barren moonlike landscape, I stare at the crystal clear turquoise blue mountain lake with jagged, snow-capped mountain peaks reflecting in its water. I take a deep breath, wipe the sweat from my brow, and I can't resist whipping out my camera. We are deep in the Val d'Hérens, a picturesque valley in the Swiss countryside.

OLGA FONTANELLAZ

The trail begins in the small high-altitude village of Arolla, which takes its name from arolla, a tree growing in local forests. Despite its big name in the alpinist world, Arolla is a tiny hamlet tucked away in the valley.

We start a gentle ascent via a rural asphalt road followed by the fragrant forest of arolla pines and larches. After an encounter with hikers and marmots, we reach the Remointse de Pra Gra with panoramic views and a typical Swiss landscape – verdant alpine pastures with old wooden houses, black cows and white glaciers.

Known as “mayens”, these rustic huts were used by farmers, who went up in summer to the mountain pastures with their cows. The

black cows wearing bells with the embroidered strap around their necks are Hérens cows, a typical race for this valley. The quick-tempered Hérens cows are known to fight with each other to establish a hierarchy in the herd. Loved and pampered, they are the pride of the local breeders, who organise every year a series of cow fights. Local and national television broadcasts the event like a football game.

Leaving the pea-green pastures, we enter a rocky, lunar-like landscape. If the glacier was a king just a few decades ago, now it's no more than a rocky formation. The remnants of the glacier are only found on the higher grounds.

The path becomes narrower. The vegetation disappears as we

climb, giving way to small pebbles. We cross a torrent before starting our climb through the large rocks. The signs painted in red in this labyrinth of rocks indicate the trail. While we don't hesitate to use our hands in places, a group of enthusiastic hikers rush past us like ibexes.

The hut is now visible. After a small passage, exposed and secured by chains and some scree, a final climb brings us to the stone-made Aiguilles Rouges hut. Sitting on the rocky slopes at 2810 m of altitude at the foot of a spectacular chain of peaks known as the Aiguilles Rouges d'Arolla, it has fantastic views across the valley.

The next morning, we decide to make a loop circuit. The descent



© Olga Fontanelaz



© Olga Fontanelaz



© Olga Fontanelaz

to the Lac Bleu is more demanding. We follow the path marked in red through a stone valley, cross a torrent, which now looks more like a stream, and begin a very steep descent via the pastures with spectacular views of the snow-capped peaks. The path descends in large bends towards the bottom of the valley. We spot a few chamois. These wonderful creatures are less than thirty meters from us.

Further down, the trail leads to a small lake of an astonishingly blue colour, the Lac Bleu. With its emerald, crystal-clear waters, it looks surreal! The Lac Bleu isn't famed for its loneliness. Easily accessible from La Gouille, it's very popular with families. We find an idyllic spot for a picnic in front of the piercing blue waters.

Now we have a choice. We can go down to La Gouille and from there take a bus to Arolla or go directly to Arolla. We opt for the latter. The last steep part is often referred to as difficult because of its passages equipped with chains. In reality, it's not that difficult. We hear the whistle calls of marmots and suddenly see a deer appearing behind the trees. He momentarily turns his antlered head our way, then vanishes.

As we approach Arolla, I recall the story of Thomas Cook, a British pioneer of organised travel, who brought the first tourists to Valais. Over 150 years later, I realise that nothing has really changed. The magnificent Alps and pure air are still there. The only change is that the asphalt road has replaced the mule track, and I wear super light

hi-tech boots and thermal fleece instead of heavy crinoline dress and lace-up shoes. Same emotions. Same sense of wonder. ■

Practical information

Access: The Aiguilles Rouges hut is located in the canton of Valais in Switzerland in Val d'Hérens and is accessible from the village of Arolla (2h30, 12 km). Despite its classification as T3, it's a rather easy hike.

Accommodation: Aiguilles Rouges hut www.aiguillesrouges.ch is guarded only in summer.

Olga together with her husband Errol created a project www.anywayinaway.com to showcase the world's cultural diversity. When she is not travelling to some remote corners of the world, she spends time hiking in Switzerland.



Entre mer et montagne, la commune de Menton surplombée par le Roc de l'Orméa s'élève de 0 à 774 m d'altitude

Riviera française 2/2

Menton la romantique

Très loin du bling-bling et de l'agitation de certaines stations balnéaires méditerranéennes, la romantique ville de Menton se distingue par son calme, sa sérénité, son charme qui en font un endroit où il fait bon vivre: la dolce vita en quelque sorte.

CLAUDE MAILLARD

Une jolie légende est attachée à l'origine de la ville de Menton et de son symbole, le citron: Eve, chassée du paradis terrestre avec Adam, en emporta un fruit d'or. Adam, redoutant la colère divine, lui demanda de jeter ce fruit. Après avoir franchi des montagnes, des vallées et des plaines, ils aperçurent la baie de Garavan. Le golfe, la douceur du climat, la végétation luxuriante... tout rappelait à Eve la douceur de l'Eden. Elle y enterra le citron. En ce lieu naquit un petit paradis, Menton...

Des panoramas à couper le souffle, des villages authentiques, une nature généreuse et préservée. A Menton et le long de son littoral, partout, la montagne semble se jeter dans la mer. Entre la «perle de la Riviera française»

et ses villages perchés, l'histoire se conjugue à tous les temps. Douceur de vivre, beauté sauvage des paysages, patrimoine historique, un parfum d'Italie ajouté à cela... Tous les atouts d'une destination sur un même territoire. Vous êtes vraiment au paradis!

Comme un air d'Italie

«Menton, l'Italie commence, on le sent dans l'air» écrivait Flaubert. Il y a à Menton quelque chose dans l'atmosphère, une ambiance italienne, comme un souffle de dolce vita. Une énergie douce qui pousse au farniente, à la flânerie, à la contemplation. On s'y perd volontiers au gré des ruelles étroites et noueuses, des escaliers et des placettes ombragées, bordées de façades aux variations d'ocres lumineux. Dans l'ancienne enceinte fortifiée, les traverses médiévales et



Depuis le cimetière du Vieux château, la vue offre un panorama exceptionnel sur toute la baie jusqu'à la frontière italienne

l'ensemble baroque du parvis Saint-Michel révèlent le poids de l'histoire. Et partout, absolument partout, la Méditerranée rappelle sa présence de son bleu azur éblouissant. Un véritable décor de carte postale, une merveille pour les yeux et pour le cœur. Est-ce dû également à la beauté et au romantisme des jardins qui, grâce à un climat d'une extrême douceur, ont fait de Menton le paradis des botanistes du XIX^e siècle? Je ne saurais répondre. Une chose est sûre: il faut venir ici pour comprendre, pour prendre le pouls de la ville et se laisser pénétrer de cette douceur de vivre. Flâner, goûter, s'émerveiller, rencontrer l'histoire... Il y a tellement de choses à vivre à Menton.

Ville d'art et d'histoire

On connaît mal les origines du nom de Menton et les premiers habitants qui peuplèrent le site. Mais la découverte d'outils et de statuettes en pierre taillée, de sépultures humaines et de gravures pariétales dans les grottes Balzi Rossi situées dans

les environs attestent une présence humaine dès le paléolithique supérieur. Ce qui est sûr, c'est qu'à la fin du XI^e siècle, une petite cité fortifiée nommée Podium Pinum, propriété des comtes de Vintimille, s'élevait au sommet d'une colline, celle où se trouve aujourd'hui le Monastère de l'Annonciade. Une nouvelle bourgade s'implante ensuite plus près de la mer, en bordure de l'ancienne voie romaine venant d'Italie, la via Julia Augusta. Elle se bâtit autour du château et de la Basilique Saint-Michel Archange: le vieux Menton d'aujourd'hui est le noyau originel de la cité.

La seigneurie de Menton apparaît au XII^e siècle. Elle appartient alors à la famille génoise des Vento. En 1346, la ville devient propriété de Charles Grimaldi, seigneur de Monaco. Dès lors, son histoire se confond avec celle de la Principauté. Au XVIII^e siècle, la ville compte 4000 habitants, qui vivent surtout de la pêche et de l'agriculture. En 1848, Menton fait sécession et se proclame ville libre sous protection sarde.



Au pied de la vieille ville dominée par la Basilique Saint-Michel Archange, le vieux port de Menton dispose de près de 600 places d'amarrage

Elle choisit son rattachement à la France en 1860 et Charles III de Monaco abandonne ses droits sur la ville à l'empereur Napoléon III. Menton est alors rattachée au département des Alpes-Maritimes.

Dès 1880, Menton profite du développement touristique de la Riviera française et devient une station climatique appréciée des touristes anglais et de l'aristocratie russe. Palaces et villas de luxe fleurissent, des hôtes illustres y viennent en villégiature et

Menton est proclamée la «Perle de la France». Destination historique par excellence, elle offre un patrimoine exceptionnel qui lui vaut en 1991, le label «Ville d'Art et d'Histoire».

Un village au cœur de la ville

Impossible de venir à Menton sans visiter son cœur historique: la vieille ville. De la frontière italienne jusqu'au Cap Martin, le regard est attiré par ses façades colorées. On parcourt le labyrinthe de ses ruelles entre ombre et lumière, chaleur et fraîcheur.



© Claude Mallard

En ombre et lumière, chaleur et fraîcheur, on se perd volontiers au gré des ruelles étroites de la vieille ville de Menton



© Claude Mallard

Menton et ses façades aux ocres lumineux, un décor de carte postale, une merveille pour les yeux et pour le cœur

On remonte l'histoire du médiéval au baroque. Une fois gravies les majestueuses rampes qui grimpent à la basilique Saint-Michel Archange, une pause sur le parvis s'impose. Ce joyau de l'art baroque, construit en 1639, domine la vieille ville avec son clocher de 53 mètres de haut. A ses côtés est construite la chapelle des Pénitents Blancs édifiée entre 1680 et 1687. La magie du lieu est saisissante! On prend le temps, on contemple la vue plongeante sur la plage des Sablettes et le vieux port. De là, en continuant par d'étroits escaliers, on arrive au cimetière du Vieux château qui surplombe le site et offre un panorama imprenable sur toute la baie. Les artistes, dont Jean Cocteau, ont passionnément aimé Menton et lui ont laissé en héritage un patrimoine architectural et botanique remarquable.

Poumon vert de la Riviera, l'histoire de Menton est indissociable de celle de ses jardins. Les essences tropicales et subtropicales ramenées de voyages s'y acclimatent volontiers. Dans les jardins urbains, bananiers, avocatiers, manguiers et ficus

s'épanouissent à l'envi. Jardins remarquables ou jardins d'agrumes, végétalisation des parcs et des espaces publics contribuent à ce patrimoine naturel d'exception

Le citron de Menton, un amour d'agrumes

Fruit de légende aux saveurs extraordinaires, le citron, symbole de Menton, en est le roi. Depuis 1934, en février, la ville lui consacre deux semaines de festivités hautes en couleur: la Fête du Citron. De renommée internationale, l'événement rassemble tous les ans 250 000 personnes autour d'un thème constamment renouvelé. Les corsos mentonnais, ou défilés de chars d'agrumes, rivalisent avec les plus beaux carnivals du monde. Fruit d'or au goût doux et acidulé, le citron de Menton que l'on retrouve à la table des grands chefs ou dans les assiettes des gourmets, exprime pleinement son terroir: beaucoup de soleil, un zeste de douceur et une bonne dose de générosité! A consommer sans modération...

Ici, à Menton, la nature offre ce qu'elle a de plus beau et de plus

précieux. De la frontière italienne à Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, sur tout le littoral, les plages procurent des «émotions» méditerranéennes exceptionnelles. Eaux claires azurées, plages de sable ou de galets, sauvages et authentiques ou plus confortables, sources d'eau douce sous-marines, chacun trouvera forcément la plage qui lui ressemble! ■

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