

## Glass artists tap into French culture market

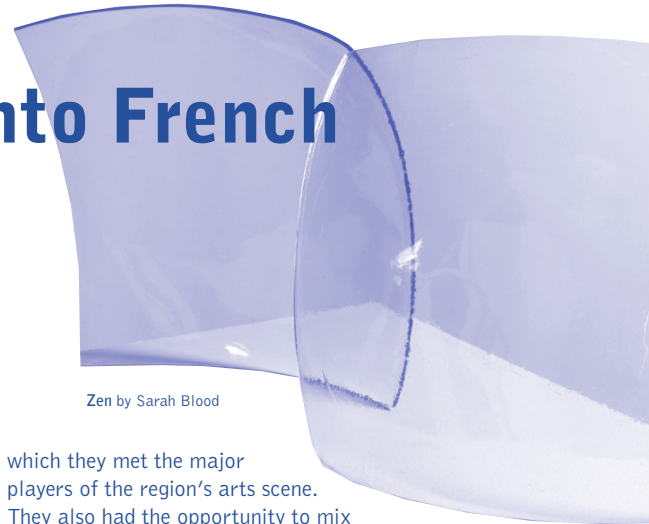
From 8 to 14 October 2001, a group of North East glass artists visited the Limousin region of France. The trip was organised by the French Business Council in association with design consultancy Outline, with additional financial support from Northern Arts and Newcastle City Council.

It was a reconnaissance mission to meet relevant contacts, evaluate spaces available and discuss opportunities for an exhibition or a series of exhibitions of North East glass artists in the Limousin, as well as opportunities for exchanges and collaborations.

The group of nine artists was represented by a delegation of four. They attended pre-arranged meetings at



Mission delegation:  
from left to right  
Emmanuelle Deplanche,  
Jessamy Kelly, Christina  
Kirk, Effie Burns, Sarah  
Blood, Juliette Boisseau.



Zen by Sarah Blood

which they met the major players of the region's arts scene. They also had the opportunity to mix with other people involved in culture projects by visiting galleries and museums, attending a private view and an opera performance.

The response from French contacts was consistently positive. At least one exhibition is confirmed for 2002. There were offers of residencies. Sources of funding were identified. Some contacts are already planning a visit to the North East for 2002.

The artists involved have given excellent feedback, the mission having exceeded their expectations. Effie Burns said "The opportunity for exchanges and for making lasting links was there." The group is now busy writing proposals and following up leads, with continued help from the French Business Council and Outline.

## Trade Partners UK build stronger links with FBC via Business Link Tyne & Wear 'Focus on France' Event

Trade Partners UK is a Government backed network for international trade services delivered at your local Business Link by the International Trade Team whose role is to foster business competitiveness by helping UK companies secure overseas sales and investments. These teams comprise several International Trade Advisers whose responsibility is to visit local SMEs and help them become successful exporters.

Within the North East region, there are 15 International Trade Advisers operating from the 4 local Business Links of Northumberland, Durham, Tees Valley and Tyne & Wear. All promote international trade to their local SMEs and assist them to adopt a strategic and cost effective approach to their chosen market. In addition to this, the international trade advisers organise specific events and visit-based packages. For example Business Link Tees Valley are taking a group of regional SMEs to meet potential customers in Paris in February 2002 as part of an Export Explorer package and Business Link Tyne & Wear are organising an event, 'Focus on France', on 11 December in association with the French Business Council and RTC North Ltd. Andrew Robinson, Chairman of the FBC, will be guest speaker at this event.

Business Link Tyne & Wear have recently appointed one of their international trade advisers to the role of Regional ICT International Trade Adviser. Jayne Pickersgill will be working closely with ICT companies across the North East region and will be actively involved with events and trade missions for this sector.

Jayne is assisting the North East companies who are attending the prestigious MILIA 2002 Show in the South of France to prepare for and follow up from their visit. For the last few years, the FBC has taken the lead in organising a North East stand at this international exhibition. This year, the Digital Media Network will take on that role. Exhibitors will benefit from the Trade Partners UK financial support to assist with the cost of their presence at the Show.

MILIA takes place from 5 to 8 February 2002 and brings together developers, producers and publishers of interactive entertainment, on-line games and digital media content with senior decision makers from broadband and wireless networks, telecoms, broadcast, Interactive TV operators and major Internet portals.

Trade Partners UK will continue to work closely with the French Business Council for the benefit of SMEs located in the North East.

Nov - Dec 2001

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There are 450 different varieties of cheese produced in France.

The Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée was first awarded to wines and spirits in 1935 and to cheeses 20 years later.

39 French cheeses have the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée, the most recent being Morbier and Pélardon.

Club Sophia UK is a French Business Council initiative. For more information contact:

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or visit the website: [www.club sophiauk.com](http://www.club sophiauk.com) which contains full details of events and projects.

### Want to watch French TV?

Acusat North-East is offering a £199 all inclusive package which enables you to watch six French channels (TF1, France 2, France 3, M6, La Cinq, Arte) through a dish and analogue box.

Call the FBC office on 0191 284 2213 for more information.

## Bonjour Biotech

Club Sophia UK, in collaboration with Bio Sci North organised a trade mission for the life sciences sector in Sophia Antipolis in September 2001. Finn Willingham, Marketing Manager at Bio Sci North reports.

Bio Sci North is a regional initiative set up to promote the development of the bioscience sector in the North East of England. The company's objectives include job creation, helping new companies to get established and increase turnover in the bioscience sector in the region. It acts as a gateway for SMEs to facilitate their dealings with business support organisations, and provides a full range of services from writing a business plan to offering advice on an existing one.

A major part of Bio Sci North's work is to improve communications and networking within the bioscience community and this is achieved, in part, by the organisation of and attendance at trade missions to encourage inward investment and international partnerships.

The company was therefore well placed to collaborate with Club Sophia UK's Life Science mission to Sophia Antipolis, Europe's largest Science and Technology Park.



Left to right: Dr Dale Athey (Newcastle University), Dr Finn Willingham (Bio Sci North), Tony Dell (Bio Sci North), Estelle Chatard (Club Sophia UK), Dr Alan Lowdon (NuWater) and Prof Colin Self (Newcastle University).

Working closely with Club Sophia UK, Bio Sci North invited North East biotech businesses and representatives from the five regional universities to participate whilst Estelle Chatard, Project Manager at Club Sophia UK, played a vital role in organising the mission and arranging partnering meetings for mission delegates with organisations in Sophia Antipolis.

The overwhelming feeling of the delegates was that the mission was very successful. This is reflected by Tony Dell, Vice Executive Chairman of Bio Sci North who says "I was very encouraged by the enthusiastic reception accorded to the North East mission by the Sophia Antipolis Science Park. We met with a number of companies and university faculties whose interests and activities seemed complementary with those in the North East, and where there is a distinct possibility of future co-operation and collaboration. All our mission members returned with high hopes of developing links that had been established during the visit. As it's the biggest Science and Technology Park in Europe, Sophia Antipolis offers great potential as a future market for North East bioscience companies and universities. Bio Sci North will be looking at ways to capitalise on a most rewarding mission."

Bio Sci North are looking forward to future collaborations with Club Sophia UK in order to build on the relationships already formed with Sophia Antipolis, and plan to return to France next year with more representatives of the North East's bio-community.



Estelle Chatard (Club Sophia UK) with Philippe Laluyaux (Clip Card) at Evolution

## Evolution and Global Forum 2001: knowledge and networks in the North East

In October, the city of Newcastle upon Tyne hosted the Global Forum 2001 which was preceded by Evolution, the regional Forum.

Evolution was a conference and an exhibition aimed at bringing together the region's new media and e-business community. The exhibition showcased the regional talent, expertise and skills, giving North East SMEs a key opportunity to network and promote their business.

The Global Forum - organised by Newcastle City Council, ITEMS International and Foundation Sophia Antipolis - is an annual international event dedicated to business and policy issues affecting the successful evolution of the information society. The main themes this year explored the issues of the dynamics of the e-marketplace, industry regulations, virtual services and the applications for citizens in the e-society.

As a gold sponsor, Club Sophia UK was featured in the International zone. It recruited more than twenty participants and invited five companies to exhibit on the stand: Urban River International Ltd, Virtuoso, the e-Business centre, The Design Group and Clip Card.

Clip Card is a French company based in Sophia Antipolis. They have developed a Smart Card system for processing parking tickets. They have a partnership with IBM, and the cities of Cannes and Turin have agreed to become pilot cities for the project. Mr Philippe Laluyaux, director (pictured above with Estelle Chatard), is currently looking for partners in the UK. His visit in the North East was a success. As he explained, "the Global Forum was a very good opportunity for Clip Card to meet potential partners. We are impressed by the forward thinking attitude of the North East of England and we support initiatives such as Club Sophia UK. We hope that more French companies will be part of the network."

Club Sophia UK is currently working with One North East and ReCET to explore this opportunity further. E.C.

1,870,000 tons of cheese are produced in France every year.

In France the consumption of cheese per person per year is 23.7kg – leading the world ahead of Germany and Greece.

In 2000 France exported 512,000 tons of cheese worth 1,933 million Euros.

# Big hit for FBC and Tyneside Cinema collaboration première

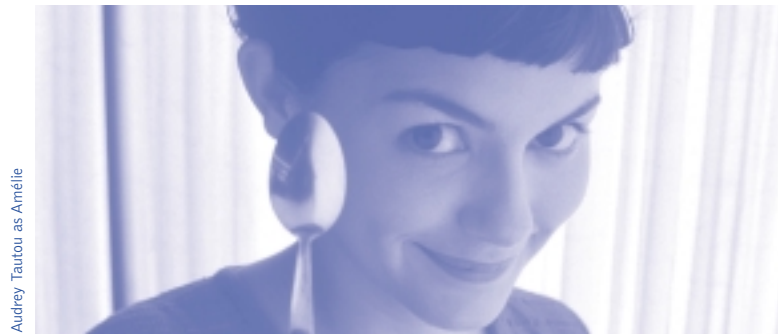
Friday 5th October saw the North East opening of one of the most successful French films ever to grace British screens. At Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle, a special sell-out opening night screening of *Amélie* was shown to over 100 guests, specially invited as part of an event organised with the French Business Council. Those lucky people who were able to make the event were treated to a drink and a free screening of the movie.

*Amélie* is the story of a young waitress in a Montmartre café who finds one day that her true vocation in life is to help others find happiness. A magical journey through a picture-postcard Paris follows, packed with colourful, larger than life characters and some great cinematic moments.

*Amélie* has proved to be one of this year's deserved Box Office hits and is guaranteed to have introduced a few people to the delights of foreign language cinema.

The screening itself was a massive success, and everyone who attended agreed that *Amélie* was a truly uplifting experience. Because the event was such a success, Tyneside Cinema and the French Business Council intend to work together again in the future, so watch the screens!

Tyneside Cinema is the home of foreign language film in the North East.



Audrey Tautou as Amélie

The Cinema is based right in Newcastle's City Centre on Pilgrim Street, and attracts around 100,000 visitors each year. First opened as a News Theatre in the late 1930s, the Cinema boasts one of the most striking auditoriums ever to be seen. The Cinema's programme ranges from cinema classics to foreign language movies from all around the world, to the latest and greatest effects movie.

As well as showing movies, the Cinema holds regular teaching courses on film, ranging from how to write a screenplay to A' Level Film Studies and

specialist courses like 'The World Of Horror' and 'Shakespeare In The Movies'. Screenings are often accompanied by prestigious guest speakers.

Over Christmas and the New Year, the Cinema has a host of French-language movies including *The Piano Teacher*, starring Isabelle Huppert, the fantastically inventive period romance-cum-horror movie *The Brotherhood Of The Wolf*, and the return of *Amélie*.

To find out more about Tyneside Cinema visit [www.tynecine.org](http://www.tynecine.org)

## Visit the FBC website at

[www.frenchbusinesscouncil.co.uk](http://www.frenchbusinesscouncil.co.uk)

Visit the site for the latest information on events and projects, useful documents about France, links to partner organisations, and more.

## French market at Whitley Bay

The French Market is returning to Whitley Bay for St Nicholas' Festival on 30th Nov, 1st and 2nd Dec. This year the 20 traders from South West France will be joined by 25 English farmers. Not to be missed!



## Stagiaire

Aurore Fernandez has been appointed French Business Council Stagiaire and will work on a placement with the FBC until the end of the year.

She is a 2nd year student at Bordeaux Business School. Aurore has a passion for rowing. She was European Champion in 1999. Whilst in Newcastle she is training with Newcastle University Boat Club.

# Paris and Hexham theatres coproduce exciting new play

L'Enfant Peul is a coproduction between Hexham based Théâtre Sans Frontières and Paris based Atelier International de Recherche et de Créations Théâtrales. The two companies share a common training in Paris with movement teacher Monika Pagneux.

They are committed to international work that goes beyond the boundaries of one another's countries. The ensemble of actors working on the show come from Tunisia, Martinique, India, Japan as well as mainland France and Britain.

The production is directed by Tunisian Habib Nsagmouchin and produced by TSF's Sarah Kemp. Work began in 1999 with initial discussion between the Artistic Directors of both companies. In January 2000 TSF were awarded a Regional Arts Lottery Programme Award and in the summer of that year the initial development on the project began. This included two weeks with a group of actors in Paris and then three weeks of work with children and young people aged 9-18 from the North East of England. Both groups looked at scenes and themes from the novel *Amkouplel*, L'Enfant Peul by Mali born writer Amadou Hampate Ba.

Over the following 12 months Habib Nsagmouchin worked with the stage adapter and the designer in Paris whilst TSF were setting up the tour in Britain. Final rehearsals took place in September 2001 in Paris and at the end of that month the whole team transferred to Hexham for the production week and première of the show. It is currently touring nationwide throughout England and hopefully to France in the not too distant future.



Théâtre Sans Frontières L'Enfant Peul

## case study

# Cosmetics and Concorde – the quiet success of Capalex

When you next pass the cosmetics counters of Galeries Lafayette or other similar department stores in France, give a thought to the local manufacturing company who has helped to create the chic image associated with the top French cosmetic and perfume houses in these stores. Indeed if you're fortunate enough to travel in the newly refurbished Concorde which recently recommenced transatlantic flights, think about the same northern company that also supplied components for this symbol of Anglo-French co-operation.

Capalex has been a quiet success story. Since the mid 1980s it has striven to expand its trading links with France and has enjoyed some notable achievements along the way.

Founded in 1979 as an extruder of aluminium sections, the company trades from its rural base in Cumbria. Over the last 20 years Capalex has grown and expanded its facilities and product range to become a high quality manufacturer of aluminium components supplying a wide range of different sectors including shop, display and office fittings and furniture, aviation and aerospace components, together with supplying the automotive sector and a host of other applications including a prototyping and design service for product development.

But it hasn't been plain sailing all the time. There have been many lessons learned along the way which have helped to refine the approach that Capalex has adopted in supplying this very special market. Unlike its other customers in Europe, whether from Germany, Holland, Scandinavia or Spain, who are happy to conduct their affairs in the 'international business language' otherwise known as English, Capalex discovered that the French expect that any company wishing to do business in France should be able to do this in French – of course, in the same position the English would adopt the same stance. In response to this Capalex has adopted a multi-language approach in its French business, with both company literature and the company website being in both French and English, and the ability to handle phone enquiries in French as well.

The attention to detail and exacting standard required from French customers is also something that has had to be taken account of. As a high quality precision manufacturer with a number of significant approvals to its name, including from the Civil Aviation Authority, Capalex has been well placed to accommodate the stringent quality standards demanded by its French

customers, but for the unwary this can often come as a surprise.

The reluctance of French customers to trade in currencies other than the French Franc is also something that Capalex has been responsive to. In its drive to do business within the Hexagon, anything that could provide an incentive for customers to buy from Capalex was adopted. So the company has for many years always quoted for products supplied to France in Francs and has offered its customers the ability to pay by cheques written in Francs if they prefer this to electronic bank transfers – something that has proved very popular with the company's smaller customers.

The aim of Capalex has been to make the option of trading with a British company as easy as doing business with companies within France. What customers appreciate is that even though Cumbria might be a thousand miles away from their business in France, Capalex can show flexibility and responsiveness that is often better than what is offered by other companies nearer to home. The fact that Capalex has also traded for more than fifteen years in France also provides reassurance to customers who may be reluctant to place business with a foreign supplier.

Although Capalex is proud of its success to date, there remain aspects for doing business with France that still remain a challenge. Customer loyalty is a significant factor for French businesses, and is something that Capalex enjoys with its existing client base; however, this also means it is harder to win new business and expand into new areas. This is particularly true for Capalex in the automotive sector, where in Britain the company has supplied components for up-market models such as Jaguar and Morgan Sports Cars, as well as the new Rover Mini. However in France, Capalex has yet to make a significant impact in this industry and it is an important objective for the future.

Having only recently learned about the existence of the French Business Council, the company regrets that they did not hear about the organisation several years ago. Having gone through many of the difficulties of trading with France on their own, and learning through their own experience, they would have welcomed the advice and expertise of 'insiders' to help them. Having found out about the opportunities that such collaboration can bring, Capalex are now looking forward to all the benefits that this can provide.

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