

## 40th anniversary speech

Written & delivered by Marie-Jacqueline Ballagh, with apologies to Dylan Thomas...

It is our fortieth year to heaven...

I awoke to memories of meetings in the Bar de l'Univers

Making merriment with Ted Davies, Peggy, Ruth, Bob Norwood, Patrick Jory, Bertrand Cahen

And many others...

Enjoying outings, picnics, parties, discovering the Vaucluse

Myself to set foot that year

In my new home town, Carpentras.

Things got serious in the nineteen nineties

The association recognized as « d'utilité publique » - useful to the public...

A room attributed in the Charité

Casual conversation becoming Linguistic Exchanges

Along came Daphne Mathon

Our very own 'Queen Mum'!

For fifteen years she reigned

Benignly attending to her subjects

Coaxing the conversation exchanges,

Her dynamic troupe of committee members

brimming with ideas, never tiring to suggest new outings and events

Producing a magazine - Les Dentelles de Montmirail...

Next came Yvette Lilot with her modern ways,

The video projector was acquired,

Language sessions enhanced with films

The newsletter digitalised, sent out by email,

The kingdom was expanded to Isle sur la Sorgue...

She was followed by Geneviève Woolf.

Later, there was a moment of chassis,

The once dynamic committee tiring,

The language sessions flagging.

'Save the Franco-Brits' pleaded Daphne, at a July Lunch.

Warriors Nigel and Alison Skinner heard the call,

Recruited no less than 25 new members on Association Day

- the Franco-Brits were saved.

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During Lockdown, Raina sent out reassuring emails  
Ulrich posted useful tips on the website  
There were Zoom apéros, play readings, karaoke, even Christmas Carols,  
A photo competition was organized,  
A calendar compiled with the winning pictures.

The dark years over  
New activities and traditions emerged,  
Hikes, cookery workshops, Qi Gong, Scottish dancing ...  
The 'Fête de la musique', 'Let's lunch', Pancake Parties.  
Beata, Pete & Zsu arrived, brimming with ideas and energy...  
Boules, unusual cultural outings - and much more.  
And so the Association has thrived  
And here we are today -  
Our fortieth year to heaven!