

Cozette Griffin-Kremer

griffin.kremer@wanadoo.fr

*Associate Researcher, Centre de recherche bretonne et celtique (CRBC),
Université de Bretagne Occidentale, France*

Regulating Lily-of-the-Valley (Muguet) Festivals in France on the National and Local Levels

Abstract. France has been home to diverse Maying customs that varied from one village or hamlet to the next, and practices enacted in more urban contexts also reflect this variability. The regulation of May Day customs such as politically oriented marches is an object of national law and this extends to rules on the gathering and sale of lily-of-the-valley, the customary flower gift for that date. On a more local level, much action is now undertaken under the heading of 'territorialisation', which often involves promoting tourist and commercial attractiveness, specifically including holiday events, such as the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival in the town of Rambouillet. The township carried out an in-depth study of the issues involved in supporting and regulating festive events generally and this 'fête' in particular. Regulation is part of the interplay between the town administration and the actors 'in the street' whose work maintains the life of the festival, an often delicate balancing act, with manifold threads that may (or may not) underwrite the continuation of such events.

Keywords: Festival, lily-of-the-valley, *Convallaria majalis*, Rambouillet, territorialisation, float-construction

From a methodological standpoint, Maying customs in France involving the use of lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*) offer very fruitful perspectives, because there is both a nationally celebrated holiday on May Day and various events on other dates in the month that involve the flower, most particularly the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival in the town of Rambouillet (population about 27,000), located mid-way between Paris and Chartres. This contrast between national and local provides a basis for comparison that raises many issues about festival events, with only the one of regulation to be dealt with here, as our conference theme.

May Day might well be considered a holiday, whatever highly varied form it takes in different countries, that requires little preliminary introduction. In view of its early history, it is easy to see that there

would be considerable effort expended today to keep it cheerily bland and prevent it from becoming in any discernible way once again a ‘pro-testival’.¹ Both the apparently national holiday and the local festival in Rambouillet are examples of holiday or festival invention from the late nineteenth century on, the various threads of which have now converged into a bundle often fitting neatly into the contemporary term ‘festivalisation’ in the context of cultural and economic development.

Two buzzwords already scored, so we might as well add a third, which occupies an important place in French political discourse — ‘territorialisation’. This applies to a nuanced spectrum of visible and invisible public policy utilising this cover term, which was brought in over the last twenty years, often to replace the rather negatively perceived word ‘decentralisation’. The latter spoke more of letting the City of Light shed powers (and obligations) rather than granting anything new to the (logically) benighted provinces surrounding it. There is a vast bibliography on territorialisation and what it means to various stakeholders and the reactions to it, which have often been critical of the term’s opacity to many of the actors involved.²

One source on territorial finances puts the stakes involved in perspective. ‘Territorialisation as a lever of performance in public action’: in a context of increasing needs for social services at a time of decreasing

¹ Graham St John, ‘Protestival: Global Days of Action and Carnivalized Politics in the Present’, *Social Movement Studies*, 7 (2008), 167–90.

² There are ample online documents on the subject covering specific fields as varied as agriculture, local services and project financing, education, etc. Cf. the following as examples for introductions with bibliographies: La territorialisation: menace ou levier de l’action publique?, <http://www.inet-ets.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/rencontre-professionnelle-e.pdf> [accessed 2 June 2020]; a detailed project for the Aquitaine region, Territorialisation des politiques publiques en Europe, http://www.msha.fr/msha/programme_regionaux/territorialisation/brisson-landi_partie_2_detail_web.pdf [accessed 6 January 2016, no longer accessible but available from the author upon request]; a brief critical study, Territorialisation des politiques publiques et cohésion nationale: un mariage complexe, http://www.google.fr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0ahUKewj5hozTqbjJAh-VEPxoKHSsSAf8QFggdMAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Feso.cnrs.fr%2F_attachments%2Femergence-d-un-espace-public-en-milieu-rural-article-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2Fdo.pdf%3Fdownload%3Dtrue&usq=AFQjCNE3FDb684bWAXzIXa-6nwym-PAlQ&bvm=bv.108194040,d.ZWU [accessed 2 June 2020]; a review of a complete book of in-depth appraisals, Alain Faure and Emmanuel Négrier (dir.), *Les politiques publiques à l’épreuve de l’action locale: critiques de la territorialisation* (Paris: l’Harmattan, 2007), <https://questionsdecommunication.revues.org/1636> [accessed 2 June 2020].

human and financial resources, rationalisation and optimisation have become key strategies, which involve more citizen- and actor-centred approaches based on recognising the specificities of a territory — and its component sub-territories — as the fundamental unit of action, in the stated objective of avoiding fragmentation of public policies, opacity and resultant multiplication of hidden costs. This means setting aside an older focus on activity sectors and on particular categories of the public in order to conceive more forward-looking development strategies encompassing all possible interests — that is, a more holistic and ‘sustainable’ approach.³

Among the many threads in such strategies is the promotion of festive or leisure activities, preferably permanent calendar events, that foster a local sense of identity and belonging, as well as offering clear incentives to developing tourism. This sort of ‘development’ is further seconded by pan-European action to promote cultural events as being emblematic of European identities — ‘unity in diversity’.⁴ Since giving lily-of-the-valley in France for (or close to) May Day is a custom already underwritten by a highly commercialised support and supply system, as well as being the only obligatory day off in the entire French working-year calendar, it hardly needs more recognition and is not generally regarded as a focus of territorial concern.⁵ The contrary is

³ La territorialisation comme levier de la performance de l’action publique, <http://finances-territoriales.over-blog.com/article-22964378.html> [accessed 2 June 2020], translated by the author.

⁴ Cf. Europa Nostra, ‘Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe’, executive summary, http://www.encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CHCfE_REPORT_ExecutiveSummary_v2.pdf [accessed 2 June 2020]; full report, http://www.encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CHCfE_FULL-REPORT_v2.pdf [accessed 2 June 2020].

⁵ The history of May Day in France is complex. First ratified by the French Senate as a day off (*jour chômé*) in 1919, then reconfirmed and redefined in 1941 as a *paid* day off under the Vichy government, only to disappear after the Liberation in 1945, reappear in 1947 as a day off without being declared a holiday and only called La Fête du Travail from 1948 onwards. See the French Ministère du Travail article ‘L’Histoire du 1er Mai en 5 infos-clés’, <https://travail-emploi.gouv.fr/actualites/l-actualite-du-ministere/article/l-histoire-du-1er-mai-en-5-infos-cles> [accessed 2 June 2020]. See also the Wikipedia article ‘Fête du travail’, https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%AAte_du_Travail#cite_ref-19 [accessed 29 June 2020] which is quite good. The present-day definition is in the Code du Travail (Work Legislation) Article L222-6, <http://legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCodeArticle.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006072050&idArticle=LEGIARTI000006647414&dateTexte=20151130> [accessed 2 June 2020].

the case for the highly local Rambouillet festival and we shall examine later the interplay of official or semi-official regulation affecting it and the freedoms for which that regulation allows.

Lily-of-the-Valley for May Day

For most people familiar with France, there is but one icon of May Day — the lily-of-the-valley, which is given as a gift to bring happiness and good luck (as a *porte-bonheur*). A few people enjoy ignoring the custom or outright detest it, but the vast majority of folk scurry about on their way to meetings with family or friends looking for the *muguet* that suits the occasion. This may be an elaborate and expensive arrangement of rooted plants that elicits the comment, ‘we never skimp on that, it’s for Maman’ or the ultimate in simplicity of a totally undecorated sprig of *muguet* bought hastily from a Red Cross seller at the last minute before arriving for lunch. The point is to have it with you, to express your good wishes.



Fig. 1. Lovers with their *muguet* (to remain anonymous), 2009.
Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer

The elaborate gift will be made up by a florist or found ready-to-carry-out in the local hypermarket, a garden shop or at the grower's own outlet. These people are in business and need no authorisation to sell their wares. However, what strikes the observer is the enormous amount of street selling, where people set up stands or just sell out of pre-prepared boxes. They may combine this with presentation of other homemade products, such as gathered wild asparagus or Camembert cheese, but according to official regulation, street sellers are supposed to offer only wild lily-of-the-valley. Needless to say, this is a convenient untruth. The suburban Rungis market supplying the Paris region with food and flowers is besieged by street sellers who buy the flowers for resale and boxes marked 'Muguet Nantais' — the area around the city of Nantes produces 85% of the supply — are visible everywhere on the sidewalks. The entire regulatory system is dictated by prefectural or ministerial decree, which allows for some latitude in local application on the part of the town halls responsible for implementation.⁶



*Fig. 2. Near Montparnasse train station, May Day Eve, 2015.
Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer*

⁶ Regulation of gathering wild plants is within the ambit of the Direction du Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Industrie et du Numérique (Ministry of Economy, Industry and Digital Affairs), <http://archive.wikiwix.com/cache/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.economie.gouv.fr%2Fdgcrrf%2FPublications%2FFiches-pratiques%2FMuguet> [accessed 4 January 2016].

This means that on either side of a street marking the border between two townships, the Red Cross or Communist Party volunteers may be selling sprigs or even potted *muguet* with a red rose added in an attractive plastic wrapping, or — on the other side — standing there forlorn with sprigs alone, the ‘naked’ sprig, so to speak, with no wrapping and not even a strand of straw to tie it up. On the one hand, strict enforcement of the rules is usually an expression of the will of local florists, who believe their business is dented by street selling. On the other, many florists take the attitude ‘the more, the merrier’ and are quite tolerant of street sellers, although the latter can be given a fine by police, if they are within forty metres of a professional florist’s shop. As a rule, the atmosphere is happy, as the day itself is generally perceived to be. However, so many people sell that there is occasionally discernible harassment among sellers over a ‘best’ spot, but this is not the object of any outside intervention.



Fig. 3. Red Cross selling in Vanves on May Day, 2015.
Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer

The activity that partially bridges the around-May Day custom and the festival in Rambouillet is the gathering of wild lily-of-the-valley. The flower has come to be rare in many parts of the Ile-de-France around Paris and in other regions, so it may be protected by prefectoral order



*Fig. 4 & 5. Gathering wild lily-of-the-valley in the Faisanderie, the restricted area of the Rambouillet castle domain, 26 April 2015.
Photos by Cozette Griffin-Kremer*



forbidding it be disturbed.⁷ Nor, in theory, may anyone grow the plant at home in a garden in order to sell it.⁸ The opposite is the case in the town of Rambouillet, where gathering the *muguet* for construction of the festival floats is the object of special permission to use the (formerly) presidential grounds in a closed part of the castle parklands, the Faisanderie or pheasant-raising station, open for an afternoon to the teams involved in supplying the festival float builders with flower fuel. This in itself is a rather remarkable instance of decisive encouragement as a facet of regulation.

Origins of the Two Fêtes

A step back for a moment here — to the historical precedents for the national holiday and the local festival. There is abundant documentation of the rise of May Day as a popular holiday enjoyed as an occasion to express protest, within the bounds of the Workers' International activities and the law, but far more as a day associated with giving the sign of summer's opening as a gift, either the flower itself or as a motif typical of the proliferation of postcards, then greeting cards and today e-cards, the last often accompanied by the ubiquitous Francis Lemarque song 'Il est revenu, le temps du muguet' ('Lily-of-the-valley time has come again').⁹ The origin of the national holiday is frequently cited as stemming from a custom invented by royalty. King Charles IX is said to have given *muguet* to the ladies in his court for the first time around 1560, a gesture instantly taken up by all his courtiers in hopes of ingratiating themselves with the young king.¹⁰ As regards the workers' May Day, the flower originally used in France was the dogrose (*églantine*, *Rosa canina* or *Rosa rubiginosa*), replaced by the lily-of-the-valley in the 1940s.

⁷ Either limiting the quantity of wild lily-of-the-valley that can be gathered or outright forbidding this in many regions or administrative jurisdictions in France. Cf. for one example, Réglementation des Hautes-Alpes, <http://www.florealpes.com/arr22nov1993.php?PHPSESSID=e14581ba658ee19f18a5499c80f476c8#art2> [accessed 2 June 2020].

⁸ Manuel Alaver, 'Vente de muguet le 1er mai: ce qu'il on a droit de faire, ce qui est interdit', *Capital* (online edition), 29 April 2019, <https://www.capital.fr/votre-argent/vente-de-muguet-le-1er-mai-ce-que-lon-a-droit-de-faire-ce-qui-est-interdit-1336623> [accessed 2 June 2020].

⁹ Francis Lemarque, 'Le temps du muguet', <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ybnpn4dTHxw> [accessed 12 May 2020].

¹⁰ There are many references to this both online and in print, but it remains unverified.



Fig. 6. *Fête du Muguet Rambouillet, 1920.*

Photo from Wikipedia Creative Commons

The origins of the Rambouillet festival are quite well documented and the impulsion of the event around 1900 was from a troika of actors: the local duchess, the town mayor and the town shopkeepers. The lady was the Duchesse d'Uzès, first French woman to get a driver's licence, first to get a traffic ticket, aristocrat, obviously, and close friend of the anarchist and suffragette leader, Louise Michel. She was great friends with the Rambouillet mayor, long-serving Marie Roux,¹¹ who was great friends with the then President of the Republic. This explains why the festival got off to a stylish start, officially in 1906, and over the years was able to offer raffle prizes that could include a large Sèvres porcelain vase donated by the President, along with other valuable prizes, all in all quite a feat for a town with a population of some 6,000 souls

¹¹ A gentleman, who held office 1904–1919 and 1920–1935. Cf. Les maires de Rambouillet, <http://www.francegenweb.org/mairesgenweb/resultcommune.php?id=337> [accessed 2 June 2020]; Jocelyne Bernard 'La fête du muguet, de l'innovation à la tradition', in *Fêtons le muguet, Journée de rencontres à La Lanterne* (Mairie de Rambouillet, samedi 24 mars 2018), pp. 28–35.

in this period.¹² The third ‘player’ is in the plural – the town shopkeepers, who envisioned the event as a promotional venture for their trades, and it worked. The national railway corporation (SNCF) even scheduled special trains to bring holiday-makers to Rambouillet for the Fête du Muguet and, in its more recent heyday from the 1960s into the 1980s, it attracted nationally known entertainment stars such as Claude François, Enrico Macias or Sacha Distel. Today, it mainly attracts crowds from Rambouillet itself and surrounding communities.¹³



*Fig. 7. Marc Robert Mayor with the Reine du Muguet and Dauphines.
Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer*

The Rambouillet Lily-of-the-Valley Festival

The Fête du Muguet – still retaining that name, but also recently termed Muguet en Fête – has had its ups and downs. Its major features

¹² According to the statistics contained in the adjunct information on the Cassini maps, the 1906 population of Rambouillet is cited as 6,165: Rambouillet notice communale, http://cassini.ehess.fr/cassini/fr/html/fiche.php?select_resultat=28583 [accessed 13 May 2020].

¹³ For the festival's founding, the role played by the major and duchess, and its continuation today, see the Rambouillet website, <http://www.rambouillet.fr/Fete-traditionnelle-de-Rambouillet.html> [accessed 4 January 2016; no longer accessible, see above].

involve activities, some of which truly require some oversight simply to function, while others need encouragement to the most active contributors to continue. This is how it unfolds temporally. It is announced in all pertinent media from the local newspapers to the town's quarterly magazine and through shop-window painting done well beforehand, abetted by the triangular green and white street banners gracing the float parade route of the year. There is royalty — a Queen and two Dauphines — who are chosen at the January ball called *La Nuit du Muguet* (Lily-of-the-Valley Night) from among the candidates proposed by local associations such as the Shopkeepers and Artisans Association, the Fencing Club, Tennis Club, or the Blood Donors, among some eight to ten groups.

The festival itself is always in mid-May, scheduled as best possible not to compete with the myriad of holidays that dot (or plague, for employers) the month. This means the fun fairs are up and running by the Friday afternoon and the through streets are closed off to automobile traffic, all of which requires some light-handed policing. By Saturday, the various music groups — from rock to rap — are running full steam at several strategic points in the downtown. There is a Saturday evening band concert in the part of the château park called the *Rondeau* — an artificial lake with a view onto Rambouillet castle — immediately flowing into the arrival of the Queen and Dauphines by boat, motorcycle, horse and carriage, or antique car. (No one has tried a helicopter yet, but it has been suggested...). The Queen is formally crowned and receives the gift intended for her and for the people of Rambouillet — a music and fireworks display reflected in the *Rondeau* water. There used to be a dance following this, but everyone involved was so exhausted that it was set aside, because the Sunday is equally demanding for the young ladies and the band. Morning meeting at the square near one of the castle grounds entries, then a procession led by the same band up to the Mass in church, followed by descent to the inside-of-town small park for a cocktail party given by the town hall, with speeches, of course. Then, everyone flits away for a quick lunch to reassemble by two in the afternoon for the final event, the float parade, which wends its way through the town, joining many of its neighbourhoods in its itinerary, and on to final presentation of the floats at the castle, where they move off to the park, awaiting judgement and their prizes.

To say that all this is traffic-stopping is an understatement, but the requirements for managing the street activities are also fairly self-evi-

dent and standard procedure for the local police. What is less obvious is regulating the float-making done for the final parade — *nota bene* that the Queen and Dauphines are nearly always carried by the last of the floats. There may be 30,000 to 40,000 leaves used on a single float and there is a whole panoply of skills applied to getting them and the flowers (that is last-minute work, generally done the night before and on the early Sunday morning) firmly stuck on the float structures. In recent years, there has been a town-hall-declared theme, such as the Far West, carnivals or the 2015 cartoon characters, announced in late November, so that by early December the float-builders can begin their work on the platforms lent them by the town hall. Having a declared theme was meant to guide and encourage the builders, all the more so as one group twice mounted a clearly religion-related subject. This choice did not respect the strict *laïcité* (secularism) which is supposed to characterise any event enjoying official sponsorship or permission in the République and generated considerable public disapproval. All the float-making groups must now fill out



Fig. 8. Detail during float construction, Scooby Doo for the Association 'Amis des Fêtes'; the 2015 theme was cartoon characters.
Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer

a detailed description of what they intend to portray within the announced theme and submit it to the municipal associations committee for approval months ahead of the fête itself.

How to Regulate a Local Festival Event

All this indicates that the Rambouillet Fête du Muguet is anything but a spontaneous event, in contrast to something that has become a popular (with some) custom like burning cars for New Year's Eve in Strasbourg, an activity that has been dubbed a counter-festival or might well be termed a protestival, or a bloody nuisance, or rampant juvenile criminality, depending on your standpoint. This is far from Rambouillet, to say the least, in all senses. Still, the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival, most especially the float-building, walks a tightrope between association creativity and highly planned encouragement guidelines.

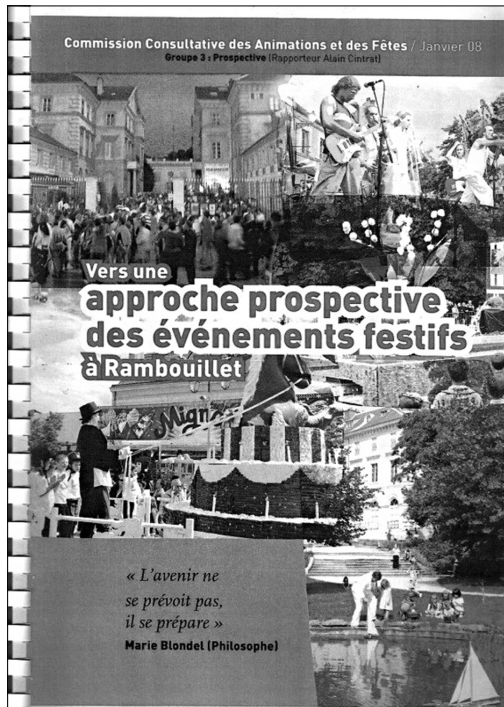


Fig. 9. A Prospective Approach to Festive Events in Rambouillet.

It fulfills all the requirements of territorial development and European Union cultural boosting, but it is as fragile and as strong as the commitment of its most creative participants. However, by the early 2000s, it appeared to many that the Fête du Muguet was running out of steam, to the consternation of the town hall and to many of the association folk, who deemed the event a major opportunity to express their participation in the town's yearly life cycle.

This concern gave rise to a reaction. Rambouillet township decided in December of 2006 to set up a Consulting Commission on Activities and Fêtes, presided over by the mayor and composed of three action groups of elected officials, association representatives and individuals who 'participate in the life of the *Cité*'. This commission had no decisional power, but was intended to (1) watch over events, (2) evaluate them in order to improve or develop them to the satisfaction of the citizens, and (3) reflect upon maintaining them or creating new projects in anticipation that some festive events might disappear.¹⁴ Most importantly for us, the Commission brought out a report entitled *A Prospective Approach to Festive Events in Rambouillet*,¹⁵ a remarkable 86-page document based on the 'prospective' precepts of the philosopher Gaston Berger which analyzes and appraises the entire panoply of town events in the year. It explicitly deals with many preoccupations, such as defining a fête, the involvement of various age groups, 'channeling' youthful energies, promoting profits for businesses in the downtown, integrating newcomers, encouraging neighborhood solidarity, as well as enumerating nearly all the classic anthropological criteria for a festive event.

The report also takes up the prickly question of how to ensure the lasting existence of a festival like the Fête du Muguet, which does not fit into a nationally foreseen slot, as does May Day, the 14th of July national holiday, or the Fête de la Musique, a recently invented and highly popular yearly event. The Lily-of-the-Valley Festival possesses a rather

¹⁴ This definition of the 'Commission consultative des Animations et des Fêtes' is on page 3 of the document of the same title, cited above, termed hereafter CCAF Report.

¹⁵ Commission consultative des Animations et des Fêtes, *Vers une approche prospective des événements festifs à Rambouillet*, Commission consultative des Animations et des Fêtes, Janvier 08, Groupe 3: Prospective (rapporteur Alain Cintrat). I owe a special note of thanks to M. Cintrat, not only for giving me this report, which was not widely circulated, but also for devoting considerable time to discussing very frankly the situation that gave rise to it and the hopes for lasting positive results based upon it.

unique status: it is perceived by all involved as ‘traditional’ — the universal term used to describe it — quite non-commercial and wholly dependent on the good will and enthusiasm of the associations that provide the royalty and the floats, as well as the shopkeepers who put up with no car parking or passage, although they profit from the crowds attracted on the Saturday, when the weather cooperates.

The Commission report carefully notes the absence of precisely this important group of actors who were at the origin of the Fête du Muguet, the shopkeepers, as well as of academics or researchers working in human and social sciences to assist in writing it up. According to the ‘prospective’ terminology of Gaston Berger, the working group is to establish a diagnosis of existing events, imagine various future scenarios and propose solutions to the decision-makers.¹⁶ The methodology is summed up succinctly, with an image evoking how to look ahead: ‘drive with your high beams, not the low beams, and above all, don’t drive looking in the rearview mirror’, so there is a considerable amount of insider pep talk involved. Perhaps we might term it regulators regulating themselves, at least giving a well-defined shape to the attitudes they expect to reign.¹⁷ There are two major preoccupations, clearly stated: how to integrate an increasing incoming population without ‘natural’ identity links to the town and how to avoid one of two catastrophe scenarios: either the abrupt disappearance of an event or the emergence of one that is uncontrollable, the example cited being rave parties.¹⁸

In line with the objectives of ‘territorialisation’ enhancement, the ‘multi-directional’ effects aimed at are oriented towards three entities: the public, the town (*Cité*¹⁹) and the economic/tourism ‘pole’. Especially as regards the ‘town’, these effects are to play out by ‘responding to political objectives in terms of territorial marketing’.²⁰ The Lily-of-the-Valley Festival is among seven events analyzed, takes up seventeen out of the eighty-six pages of the report, and is compared with four events in other cities deemed to be similar.²¹ The report was carried out by

¹⁶ CCAF Report 4.

¹⁷ CCAF Report 6.

¹⁸ CCAF Report 8.

¹⁹ *Cité*, as in ‘the life of the Cité’, is often used in French as the term *polis* may be in English.

²⁰ CCAF Report 14.

²¹ CCAF Report ‘The Lily-of-the-Valley Fête’, 15–32, ‘file card’ analysis 65–66.

a team of fifteen university students in commercialisation techniques on the basis of an inquiry involving 325 respondents and gives an idea of the investment made in the fête's two major components, the January election ball and the weekend festivities, at €71,000 in 2007.²² At the time the report was written, the float parade was perceived as having become the weak link in the fête, signaled by the decreasing number of floats, the material difficulties (host sites for their construction, traction vehicles), financial issues (slight siphoning off of funding to other activities) and, above all, the human factor — how to recruit new people willing to spend hundreds of work-hours on building something this 'ephemeral'.²³ *Nota bene*, that in the interval since this report came out, the positive attachment of some association players and music groups noted there has been reinforced and the 'prospective' is widely perceived as once again positive.



Fig. 10. King Kong float (Association Amis des Fêtes) moving towards the rendezvous point for departure of the float parade.

Photo by Cozette Griffin-Kremer

²² CCAF Report 15.

²³ CCAF Report 18–19.

Among the many social effects hoped for, few were being satisfactorily met in 2007, the only possible exception being the intergenerational 'shoulder-rubbing' during the fireworks display on Saturday night. Otherwise, the Fête did not seem to be in any way the desired, if highly controlled, melting pot of old and young, commercial and social aspirations, above all, not satisfactory in terms of 'territorial marketing'. There is considerable self-criticism as regards the role of the Fêtes Committee and its over-attachment to routine and conservatism. This group had not succeeded in opening up to new blood and facing the challenge of reconciling 'Tradition and Modernity'.²⁴

So, what is to be done? Comparison with the four other towns suggests the importance of defining a 'red thread' theme for the entire fête, and especially for the float parade.²⁵ The report's concluding remarks concern the three major town events (the Fête du Muguet, the bi-annual autumn Saint Lubin Fête, and the Music Fête), the promotion of which necessitate a change of name and outright replacing the Fête Committee with a Fête Piloting Committee. The latter must bring in new, dynamic members, 'mutualise' and 'fluidify' relations between the various actors, pinpoint human resource needs, find the right leaders, even if this means resorting to outside expertise, and 'accompany' the fêtes from conception through implementation. These actions are to include the specific strategy of 'bringing culture into the fête': responding to the evolution of the fête's meaning, regenerating traditional events, and making 'culture' accessible to the greatest number. Last but not least, developing 'territorial marketing' requires highlighting the image of the town and its dynamism, aiming effectively at the surrounding townships, improving communication, underwriting the quality of events so that the various fêtes highlight local heritage (historic, cultural and gastronomic) and, finally, getting shopkeepers and local businesses back into the game.²⁶

All this regulation and autoregulation might make one think of Nietzsche's remark that it is easy to set up a festival, but harder to find anyone to come and enjoy it.²⁷ Yet, this at times rather daunting regu-

²⁴ CCAF Report 25.

²⁵ CCAF Report 23–25.

²⁶ CCAF Report 81–84.

²⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Aufzeichnung aus den Jahren 1875/79', in *Gesammelte Werke*, IX (München: Musarion, 1922–29), p. 480.

lation has most certainly not smothered the Lily-of-the-Valley Festival, supported as it is by a panoply of attractions that are paid for by the township, such as the outside music groups and the fireworks display. The town band, a venerable institution, plays its considerable role for free, and so does the Catholic Church. The fun fair (carnival) folk pay for their parking spots and take their profit chances with the weather. To cap the fête, as its last event, the float-makers add something the regulators cannot do — supply the creativity, frequently expressed as outright funniness, the fruit of internal cohesion, often of inter-group cooperation. And they show everyone their work — hundreds of hours of work crystallised in a single ‘artefact’ among others, which they give to the public, their neighbours and friends, for about four hours. Nowhere in the Consulting Commission Report is the word ‘gift’ used, perhaps because the desire to give it can be underwritten, but not created by decree. The report, it seems, all the while stressing their importance, stops where the human resources take up, in this dynamic tension between creating and regulating. And the float-makers are the ultimate actors in self-imposed regulation. They all now toe the line on presenting subjects that pass muster officially. But further, the most demanding groups among them strive after the ‘traditional’ manner of attaching the leaves and the contingent high quality in design passed on by the ‘old hands’, the elder generation of now retired float folk. Gradually over the years, through a spirit of emulation and the joy in sharing pleasure with fellow-builders and the public, they have won over more and more of the other float-makers to greater investment of time and ingenuity. It shows in an atmosphere of confidence and the sort of gaiety which no decree ever produces.

Cozette Griffin-Kremer, Associate Researcher, Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, Brest, France, took her doctorate in Celtic Studies on the subject of May Day practices in the British Isles and an Advanced Research Degree (DEA) in the history of technology at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, and so attempts to marry the two fields, especially concentrating on the calendar system, human-bovine relations, the relationships between ritual and work, museum work for intangible heritage, food history and plant uses.

griffin.kremer@wanadoo.fr

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