



# Ambassador's Activities

2014

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- Press and Communications Services -  
58 Knightsbridge, SW1X 7JT London  
E-Mail: [press@ambafrance-uk.org](mailto:press@ambafrance-uk.org)  
Web: [www.ambafrance-uk.org](http://www.ambafrance-uk.org)

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Speech by HE Bernard Emié,  
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom

at the Entente Cordiale cocktail to celebrate alumni and sponsors

27 March 2014

*Cher* Lord Janvrin, *Cher* Professor Crawford,

Members of the board of trustees, members of the jury,

Entente Cordiale Scholarship alumni,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It's a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to the French Residence to celebrate, on the eve of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Entente Cordiale Scholarship scheme, a programme which has enabled nearly 500 students from both sides of the Channel and all disciplines – 500 students, each outstanding in his or her own way – to get to know such a familiar yet different neighbour.

Thank you for coming here this evening to share a glass of Entente Cordiale, whether you are former scholars, members of the board of trustees, or new or long-standing donors; I'm very happy to be able to welcome you and talk to you, the movers and shakers of Franco-British friendship.

I'm delighted at the scheme's success over the past three years. In 2015 we'll be able to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the agreement signed by Prime Minister John Major and President Jacques Chirac at the Franco-British summit of 1995. May I take this opportunity to thank Sir Christopher Mallaby, who sadly can't be with us this evening but who launched the scheme when he was the United Kingdom's Ambassador to France. Sir Christopher wanted to build a cultural bridge between our two countries, because the fact is that it's taken time and a few historic battles to define our relationship: rivals, friends or – to use the phrase coined by my friends Robert and Isabelle Tombs – “sweet enemies”.

The Entente Cordiale Scholarship Scheme is one of the symbols of Franco-British friendship, because it enables brilliant students from both sides of the Channel to deepen their studies in the other country. In the long term it enables us to nurture talented professionals steeped in both our cultures, each in his or her field of excellence.

I'd also like to thank Lord Janvrin for putting such passion and skill into his work as Chair of Trustees of the Entente Cordiale scheme. *Cher* Robin, as Chair you are courteous, effective, determined and utterly steadfast – qualities which were appreciated so much by Her Majesty during your years of service with her, and qualities from which we're benefiting today.

I'd also like to thank and pay tribute to the board members – Lady Jay, Laurence Colchester, David Campbell, Professor Michael Crawford, James Peach and Edouard Moreau – for the care they take to ensure that the Entente Cordiale scheme always addresses the needs of students, whatever their discipline, in an ever-changing world.

And likewise – there are a few of them here this evening – to the members of the jury, led by Professor Crawford, who ensure the calibre of the student cohorts, the diversity of their backgrounds and the richness of their research projects.

I'd like to thank those of you, private partners or Entente Cordiale alumni, companies, foundations and individuals who have been generous enough to provide the scheme with funds for the scholarships. Thanks to you, new generations of Anglophiles and Francophiles will create a network of excellence and nourish all the intertwining branches that make up our multicultural and increasingly international society. If I may extend the metaphor, the help

you provide is the sap which nourishes the network and allows the Entente Cordiale to grow. Thank you, *cher* Nabil Ariss, not only for your donation, but for giving the British scholars a chance to find accommodation in such a crowded city as Paris. Thank you, *chère* Mme Benrahal, for providing your own contribution as a thank you to the programme you yourself benefited from. I hope others follow your example and understand how vital it is to support the Entente Cordiale. *Chère* Lorraine Thomas, we share your hope that the commitment of HSBC Holdings will enable a new generation of scholars, in turn, to prove their excellence. And finally, I'd like to thank my dear neighbour, Len Blavatnik – whom you, Mr Harding, are representing – for the extremely generous donation, which will ensure the Scheme is able to cover the cost of several cohorts and give it the time needed to plan its important future initiatives. I thank Sir Michael Pakenham for his role in this contribution.

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to scholars past and present, and tell them what a strategic role they play. You must be expert mentors – something Europe needs and the world needs. I can tell you that our embassy is proud of what you are doing. We are counting on your energy and on each of you, at your own level, serving as ambassadors of this *entente*, of this friendship which links us all today. We need to hear from you how these scholarships contribute to your careers, and of course we need your help over the long term.

I now hand over to Lord Janvrin, the Chair of Trustees./.