

L'Île de France Locations Expo: le 28-29 Avril 2011

Just as the business of "tournage" in Blighty hots up for 2011, what do the French do but *zut alors* launch their first Locations Expo in Paris? Not all the French are to blame for this, *mais bien sûr*, the Île de France Film Office is culpable. You may already know this, but l'Île de France comprises the region of greater Paris and thus the eight surrounding départements of Yvelines, Val-d'Oise, Val-de-Marne, Seine-et-Marne, Seine-St-Denis, Hauts-de-Seine, Essonne and Paris *elle-même*.

Your home county or unitary authority is not a part of the state in the way that France is centralised and subdivided. The département's préfecture is the local office of the central government. Why mention this? For us, it helps to understand how the wheels of *tournage* are oiled, what the chain of command is and we were delighted – and a little envious – to discover that the state encourages filming right down to exploiting its own estate for *lieux de tournage* – locations!

This Locations Expo showed primarily how the region with its départements, its préfectures, central government offices of justice and defence, the Palais de Versailles, le Louvre, SNCF (French Railways), RATP (Paris bus, tram and métro) etc, etc are all busting to help you film. So if you want a prison or a court, France may well provide....when the buildings are *fermés* to the public.



Olivier is the tall suited gentleman.....



...Jenny Cooper parle avec notre ami nouveau, Xavier

Jane and I were guests of the Île de France Film Commission, familiar as our hosts from the fam trip last November when Stéphane Martinet who, an art historian by trade, led us around Versailles, the Louvre and into the Monet exhibition when they were all closed. Unlike the UK, most galleries and museums are closed one a day a week, so you can film in the Palais de Versailles (*Lundi seulement*), le Louvre (*Mardi seulement*) or film *par le nuit* in these magnificent buildings. The Da Vinci Code filmed in the Louvre for 12 nights. On the fam trip Stéphane also mentioned that there is a reserve air terminal available for filming. Charles de Gaulle and Orly belong to the same authority and are keen to facilitate filming both in the working airports as well as in the reserve terminal: they had a stand at the expo. Next time we need to go and scout it, to bring back *la preuve!*

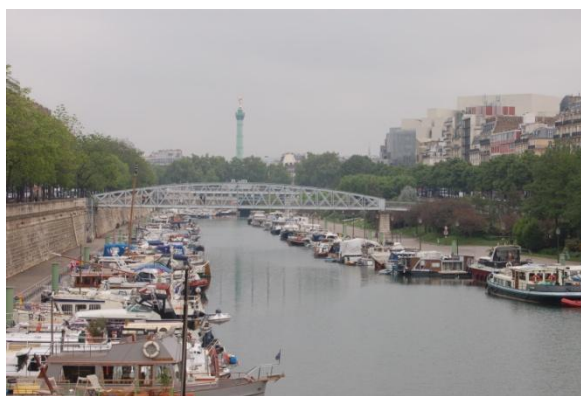
One special treat (especially for a certain woman of a certain age) was to be accompanied by Xavier Guérard, who we thought would meet us at St Pancras at 07.30 merely to discharge our *billets de voyage* but turned into our guide and occasional interpreter. Xavier is with the French Embassy and is the audio-visual attaché headquartered at the Institut Français in South Kensington. Being a government building, it is also for hire as a *lieu de tournage* but is also known for its cinema and regular screenings. Do you think any British embassy supports the UK filming effort in such a way? Anyway, we are invited not just for French

lessons but also as a future venue for a GM. Suits me, being handy for Paddington and my 22.15 back to Gloucestershire...

Back in Paris, we learned that in France there is very little provincial production industry and that our role of Location Manager is divided in two – the scouting element being done by the Repéreur whilst contracts, budgets etc are handled by the Régisseur. They are paid about the same, tend to work with regular teams supporting the eight-plus productions which are on the streets of Paris every day, but they also have a useful fall-back in quiet times. By paying into a scheme when they are working, they are paid back ‘dole money’ if they have worked more than 240 days during the previous year. This applies to all grades in film, TV and theatre, as we learned from Stéphane Guillemet of the Association Francaise des Régisseurs. In France, like other countries, copyright payments can be made to architects but only when buildings are strongly featured, so consult with your local Repéreur and Régisseur and leave room in your budget!



Has the Eiffel eyes?



Le port de plaisance

Who wasn't exhibiting in the Salon? Location libraries (and we were assured of their existence) and any authority specifically responsible for the Seine, which occurred to me after I got home, especially as I had stumbled upon a *Port de Plaisance* whilst walking between Bastille and Quai de la Rapée Métro stations.

It was interesting to see how many people arrived at the exhibition at the end of the working day. By 7.00pm the *Salon* was packed. Olivier-René Veillon, the Executive Director of the Île de France Film Commission, welcomed everyone and introduced Jean-Paul Huchon who is President of the Île de France region and clearly the moving force behind the huge Government support felt at this Expo. Wouldn't it be great if the Dept for Culture, Media and Sport encouraged the BFI and Creative England and what survives of the Regional Screen Agencies to provide such positive support to the UK industry!

We left the capital of the French Republic as Sky News were showing wedding highlights, envious of the support of the relevant powers towards the Film Industry and very mindful that Paris was only two and a quarter hours away from London. Stéphane Martinet is already planning a second, larger Locations Expo next February, when hopefully fewer GLM members will have succumbed to work and more than two of us can juggle our commitments enough to go. Jenny Cooper (Film London and Screen South) also attended, to see if a joint London and Paris Expo could be held within the next couple of years: this partnership being mindful that USA producers can perceive Europe as one *lieu de tournage*.

Meanwhile we all need to brush up our *Français* – and Xavier Guérard is keen to provide crash courses for all levels of *capacité*.

Rob Champion