

# Rencontres franco-britanniques et de l'innovation de la recherche

## *Nos alumni innoveront*



**Date** : 16 juin 2025



**Lieu** : Institut Français du Royaume-Uni, 17  
Queensberry Place, South Kensington, SW7 2DT  
Londres



**Thème** : Des talents pour changer le monde :  
nos alumni innoveront

## Contexte

L'événement Alumni Day célèbre la contribution des alumni formés en France et ayant un impact à travers leurs innovations, recherches et entreprises. Cette édition mettra en lumière leur rôle dans les transformations sociales et technologiques, tout en valorisant les collaborations franco-britanniques dans la recherche et l'innovation.

## Objectifs

- ✓ Mettre en lumière les alumni comme acteurs de changement dans leurs domaines.
- ✓ Favoriser de nouvelles coopérations.

## 9H00 **Accueil des participants**

## 9H30 **Allocutions d'ouverture : Des trajectoires inspirantes**

**Sébastien BIDAUD**, Ministre Conseiller, Ambassade de France au Royaume-Uni : Les anciens élèves, piliers de l'innovation franco-britannique.

**Olivier Marichalar**, Responsable du service Études, Presse & Communication, Campus France : La mobilité internationale comme catalyseur de carrière.

**Erika BOAK**, Directrice de l'éducation pour l'UE, British Council

**Jamie ARROWSMITH**, Directeur, Universities UK International

## 10H15 **Session 1 – Les alumni au coeur des coopérations scientifiques : Récit des bénéficiaires**

*Modératrice : **Katherine NATHAN**, Directrice exécutive de la création et PDG, RATCHET*

**Daniel FINCH-RACE**, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Maître de conférences en géographie à l'Université de Bologne et boursier Marie Curie.

**Pulkit GHODERAO**, Imperial College, doctorant bénéficiaire de la bourse SSHN séjour de recherche à ENS-PSL.

**Daniel GORDON**, Maître de conférences en histoire européenne, Edge Hill University : boursier Entente cordiale, postdoc à Université de Nice (2001-2002).

**Crina GROSAN**, King's College London : coopération avec l'Université de Montpellier/CNRS/INSERM financée par le Programme Sophie Germain de l'Ambassade de France au Royaume-Uni.

**Ke LI**, Maître de conférences à la faculté d'ingénierie de l'University of Nottingham : bénéficiaire de Fonds international pour les partenariats scientifiques (ISPF)

**Jason ROBINSON, Guillermo NAVA ANTONIO**, University of Cambridge : coopération avec l'Université de Lorraine financée par le Programme Sophie Germain de l'Ambassade de France au Royaume-Uni.

## 11H00 Pause-Café

## 11H15 **Session 2 – Le rôle clé des alumni dans les écosystèmes d’innovation français et britanniques**

*Modératrice : **Katherine NATHAN**, Directrice exécutive de la création et PDG, RATCHET*

**Stephen COWAN**, Leader du London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham : présentation de la stratégie industrielle de Upstream London.

**Kourosh FRANCISCO** (UCL & HEC), fondateur de Bluco.ai, start-up en IA appliquée au recrutement. Soutien de l'écosystème d'innovation français.

**Ghida IBRAHIM** (PhD Cifre Telecom, Young Leader), VP chargée des produits et des données à Sector Alarm.

**Gregor LENZ** (PhD, Institut de la vision – Sorbonne Université), Co-fondateur et directeur de la technologie à Neurobus.

**James PEACH**, alumni Entente cordiale – Sciences Po, Directeur des opérations, start-up biotech OutSee.

**Sandeep SANDHU**, Responsable des relations avec les partenaires, Innovate UK.

## 11H55 **Les alliances des universités européennes et l’innovation**

**Antoine MARTIN**, IMT, Chargé de mission Affaires européennes, Bruxelles.

## 12H00 Conclusion de la matinée

Synthèse des échanges et perspectives

## 12H15 Déjeuner offert

## 14H00 17H00 **Rendez-vous bilatéraux**

Rencontres préprogrammées de 30 minutes entre les participants

# Soirée Alumni Day Royaume-Uni

## *Nos alumni innuvent*



**Date** : 16 juin 2025



**Lieu** : Résidence de France, 11 Kensington  
Palace Gardens, Londres W8 4QP



**Modératrice**: Katherine NATHAN

### 18H30 Discours officiels

**Sébastien BIDAUD**, Ministre Conseiller, Ambassade de  
France au Royaume-Uni

**Maddalaine ANSELL**, Directrice de l'Education  
internationale, British Council

### 18H50 Des talents qui changent le monde / Nos alumni innuvent

**Sarah DE LAGARDE**, ESCP alumna, Directrice de la stratégie  
et des affaires institutionnelles chez Janus Henderson  
Investors.

*"L'IA dans la santé : accélérer l'innovation et l'accessibilité - Sarah de Lagarde,  
80% humaine, 20% bionique"*

**Aziz KAOUECH**, EDHEC alumni, Co-fondateur de Dooda.

*"Let's eat insects for breakfast! - Delivering sustainable food to a hungry planet"*

**Grace VANSTONE-HALLAM**, INSP alumna, 1ère conseillère,  
Trésor britannique.

*"Tout le monde peut innover"*

**Pierre-Clément HERBERE-DESMIER**, Alumni Sorbonne  
Université, Responsable des ventes, Google.

*"L'IA au service de l'équité sociale : démonstration de NotebookLM pour se  
préparer aux entretiens d'embauche"*

**Charles HERVET**, Violoncelliste, Franco-British Young Leader

### 20H00 Cocktail

# ALUMNI DAY

## Franco-British innovation and research meetings

*Our alumni innovate*



**Date:** June 16, 2025



**Location:** Institut Français du Royaume-Uni, 17  
Queensberry Place, South Kensington, SW7 2DT  
London



**Theme:** Talents to change the world: Our  
Alumni innovate

### Context

The Alumni Day event celebrates the contribution made by alumni who have studied in France and have a positive impact through their innovations, research and businesses. This year's edition will highlight their role in social and technological change, as well as showcasing Franco-British collaboration in research and innovation.

### Objectives

- ✓ Highlighting alumni as agents of change in their fields.
- ✓ Encourage new forms of cooperation

# ALUMNI DAY

**9:00AM Welcoming of participants**

**9:30AM Opening remarks: Inspiring trajectories**

**Sébastien BIDAUD**, Deputy Head of mission, French Embassy in the UK: Former students as pillars of Franco-British innovation.

**Olivier Marichalar**, Head of Research, Press & Communications, Campus France: International mobility as a career catalyst.

**Erika BOAK**, Director of Education for the EU, British Council

**Jamie ARROWSMITH**, Director, Universities UK International

**10:15AM Session 1 - Alumni at the heart of scientific cooperation: Beneficiaries' stories**

*Moderator: **Katherine NATHAN**, Executive Creative Director and CEO, RATCHET*

**Daniel FINCH-RACE**, Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, Lecturer in Geography at the University of Bologna and Marie Curie Fellow.

**Pulkit GHODERAO**, Imperial College, doctoral student receiving the SSHN grant for a research mobility at ENS-PSL.

**Daniel GORDON**, Senior lecturer in European history, Edge Hill University: Entente Cordiale scholarship, postdoc at the University of Nice (2001-2002).

**Crina GROSAN**, King's College London: cooperation with the University of Montpellier/CNRS/INSERM funded by the Sophie Germain Programme of the French Embassy in the UK.

**Ke LI**, Lecturer in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Nottingham: beneficiary of the International Science Partnership Fund (ISPF)

**Jason ROBINSON, Guillermo NAVA ANTONIO**, University of Cambridge : cooperation with the University of Lorraine funded by the Sophie Germain Programme of the French Embassy in the UK.

# ALUMNI DAY

**11:00AM Coffee break**

**11:15AM Session 2 – The key role of alumni in French and British innovation ecosystems**

*Moderator: **Katherine NATHAN**, Executive Creative Director and CEO, RATCHET*

**Stephen COWAN**, Leader of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham: presentation of White City's industrial strategy, Upstream London.

**Kourosh Francisco SHIRAZI** (UCL & HEC), founder of Bluco.ai, an AI start-up applied to recruitment. Support from the French innovation ecosystem.

**Ghida IBRAHIM** (PhD Cifre Telecom, Young Leader), VP of Product and Data at Sector Alarm (KKR Portco).

**Gregor LENZ** (PhD, Institut de la vision – Sorbonne Université), Co-founder and Director of Technology at Neurobus.

**James PEACH**, Entente cordiale alumni – Sciences Po, Operations Director, biotech start-up OutSee.

**Sandeep SANDHU**, Head of Partner Relations, Innovate UK.

**11:55AM European university alliances and innovation**

**Antoine MARTIN**, ITM, European Affairs Officer, Brussels.

**12:00PM Conclusion of morning session**

Summary of discussions and outlook

**12:15PM Complimentary lunch**

**2:00PM Bilateral appointments**  
**5:00PM**

Pre-programmed 30-minute meetings between participants.



## Opening



**Olivier Marichalar** is Head of the Communication, Press, and Studies Department at the Communication Directorate of Campus France. He is a recognised expert in international mobility trends. He has authored numerous publications on student mobility. Olivier has a strong academic background with degrees in various fields from prestigious institutions including Sorbonne University, EHESS, and Ecole Normale Supérieure Paris-Saclay.



**Erika Boak** is the British Council EU Education Director. She has a strong track record in international and domestic education policy, having worked with the Department for Education, the UN, UNICEF, and UNESCO. Erika was Head of International Strategy at the UK Department for Education, overseeing the Education World Forum and managing the Fulbright scholarships programme.



**Jamie Arrowsmith** is the Director of Universities UK International (UUKi) since November 2022. He previously led UUK's research and innovation policy programme and served as Assistant Director for Policy Engagement. Before joining UUK, Jamie was a research associate and ESRC research fellow at Manchester Metropolitan University.

## Moderator



**Katherine Nathan** is the CEO of RATCHET and the presenter and writer of the Great Taste Podcast. Trained at the Daily Telegraph and BBC, she combines journalistic and creative production skills to deliver premium content globally. As a former BBC Creative Director, she has worked in North America, Australia, Singapore, and South Africa. Katherine founded RATCHET to meet evolving customer needs and optimise content reach. She specialises in impact and presentation media training, drawing on consumer neuroscience and psychoanalysis, with a strong focus on Diversity and Inclusion.

## Panellists



**Daniel Finch-Race** is an Assistant Professor in Geography at the University of Bologna and a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Global Fellow. He serves on the editorial boards of *Modern & Contemporary France* and *Storicamente*. His solo work includes publications in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, *Journal of Historical Geography*, and *The Professional Geographer*. He has co-authored studies in journals like *ACME* and cultural geographies, and co-edited books such as *French Ecocriticism* and *Italian Science Fiction and the Environmental Humanities*.



**Pulkit Ghoderao** is a PhD student in Theoretical Physics at Imperial College London, specialising in the early universe. He has researched reheating (1 second post-creation) and phase transitions (before the first second). Currently, he studies gravitational waves from phase transitions. Pulkit enjoys sharing his research with non-specialists, such as through his blog post "The Universe as an Ice Cream."



# ALUMNI DAY



**Daniel A. Gordon** is a Senior Lecturer in European History at Edge Hill University and a member of the *Acteurs et mouvements sociaux* research seminar at Sciences Po Paris. He studied at Oxford and Sussex Universities and was an Entente Cordiale Scholar at the Université de Nice. He has taught at the Université de Rouen and the Université de Oldenburg. Daniel authored *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May '68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France* and has published articles in various journals. His research focuses on the history of free public transport in French towns since the 1970s. He co-hosts the French Talk podcast for French A-Level students in the UK.



**Crina Grosan** is a Senior Lecturer at King's College London, specialising in Digital Health and Applied Technology Assessment. She co-leads the Digital Twins for Health Centre and serves as deputy chair of the Subject Advisory Board. An affiliate member of the King's Institute for AI, her research focuses on AI, optimisation, and data analytics in healthcare. Dr. Grosan develops methods for machine learning and data analysis, aiming to advance AI-driven health technologies and ensure fairness in healthcare.



**Jason Robinson** FIMMM holds a Professorial Chair in Materials Physics at the University of Cambridge, where he leads the Department of Materials Science & Metallurgy and directs the Quantum Materials & Devices Group. His research focuses on multifunctional materials and devices in spintronics, superconductivity, and quantum technologies. He has made significant contributions, including discovering triplet Cooper pairs and pioneering superconducting spintronics.



**Ke Li** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Nottingham, specialising in electrical energy conversion systems. He holds an MEng from Ecole Centrale de Marseille and a PhD from the University of Lille. His research aims to enhance efficiency, reliability, and intelligence in support of sustainable development and Net Zero goals. With over 50 published papers, he has led research projects worth over £1M and collaborates with French universities and industries.



**Stephen Cowan** has led the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham since 2014, achieving three landslide victories. He pioneered initiatives like free adult social care, free primary school breakfasts, and a STEM<sup>3</sup> industrial strategy, attracting £6 billion in investment. Stephen co-founded the White City Innovation District in 2017 and launched the second chapter of the Upstream London industrial strategy in 2024. A municipal politician since 1998, he also volunteered on Barack Obama's 2007-2008 presidential campaigns.

# ALUMNI DAY



**Kourosh Francisco Shirazi** is the co-founder of Bluco, an AI tool assisting recruiters on the filtering of candidates. After studying Management Sciences and Software Engineering at UCL, he pursued a degree at HEC Paris and Ecole Polytechnique. Based at STATION F, the start-up hub in Paris, Bluco has flourished and now operates in multiple European countries, including France, the UK, Italy, and Spain.



**Ghida Ibrahim** is VP of Product and Data at Sector Alarm. She previously spent over 5 years as Technical Manager at Meta, developing AI systems for Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Ghida has also worked with leading European telecom operators. She holds a PhD and an Engineering degree from Telecom ParisTech and advises on new technology trends for the World Economic Forum and other organisations.



**Gregor Lenz** is a deep-tech entrepreneur specialising in AI, robotics, and embedded systems. He holds a PhD from Sorbonne Université and has worked at Imperial College London and AI startups in Paris and Zurich. He co-founded Neurobus and Open Neuromorphic. His work earned 1st place at the European Defence Tech Hackathon. In 2025, he joined Paddington Robotics in London. Trilingual in German, English, and French, he advocates for stronger Franco-British innovation ties.



**James Peach** is COO of OutSee, an AI for genetic analysis start-up. He founded Genomics England and two other tech-bio companies. He chairs the BIA Data Access subcommittee and sits on several health data committees. An Entente Cordiale Scholar, he studied at Sciences Po Paris and worked in defence consulting. His career includes roles at McKinsey, Cancer Research UK, and Syncona VC. For the past decade, he has advised and mentored health data science companies and government initiatives.



**Sandeep Sandhu** leads strategic stakeholder engagement at Innovate UK Business Connect. She has cultivated partnerships with government, industry, and academia. Previously, she directed Innovate UK's international programmes and served as Senior International Policy Manager at UK Research & Innovation. At the Medical Research Council, she managed global health programmes. Sandeep holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Birmingham.



**Antoine Martin** specializes in European industrial, energy, and innovation policy. He holds a Master's from Université Libre de Bruxelles and a Bachelor's from Institut Catholique de Paris. As European Affairs Policy Officer at IMT, he focuses on sustainable economic development. Antoine's career includes roles at the Assemblée nationale, European Parliament, Athenora, and Naval Group. Based in Brussels, he bridges innovation ecosystems and public decision-makers.

# ALUMNI DAY

## Alumni Day Evening United Kingdom

### *Our alumni innovate*



**Date:** June 16, 2025



**Location:** French Residence, 11 Kensington  
Palace Gardens, London W8 4QP



**Moderator:** Katherine NATHAN

#### 6:30PM Official speeches

**Sébastien BIDAUD**, Deputy Head of mission, French  
Embassy in the UK

**Maddalaine ANSELL**, Global Education Director, British  
Council

#### 6:50PM Talents to change the world / Our alumni innovate

**Sarah DE LAGARDE**, ESCP alumna, Director of Strategy and  
Institutional Affairs at Janus Henderson Investors.

*"AI in healthcare: accelerating innovation and accessibility - Sarah de Lagarde,  
80% human, 20% bionic"*

**Aziz KAOUECH**, EDHEC alumni, Co-founder of Dooda.

*"Let's eat insects for breakfast! - Delivering sustainable food to a hungry planet"*

**Grace VANSTONE-HALLAM**, INSP alumna, First Advisor, UK  
Treasury.

*"Innovation in public services"*

**Pierre-Clément HERBERE-DESMIER**, Alumni Sorbonne  
Université, Head of Sales, Google.

*"AI for social equity: demonstrating NotebookLM to prepare for job interviews"*

**Charles HERVET**, cellist, Franco-British Young Leader

#### 8:00PM Cocktail

# ALUMNI DAY



**Maddalaine Ansell** joined the British Council as Director Education in November 2018. Prior to this she was Chief Executive of University Alliance. Maddalaine previously worked for 15 years as a Civil Servant with stints in the Treasury, Number 10, the Home Office and the then Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. She began her career as a corporate lawyer, working for both Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Sullivan & Cromwell. Maddalaine leads the Global Education Strategy and Portfolio working collaboratively with colleagues in British Council offices across the world and with HMG, the Devolved Administrations and the Higher Education Sector.



**Sarah de Lagarde**, Global Head of Corporate Affairs at Janus Henderson, is the epitome of resilience and hope. With over 20 years in communications and public relations, and advanced degrees from ESCP and Cornell, she excels in translating complex investment concepts into engaging narratives. After a near-fatal accident in 2022, she became the first woman to conquer Mount Kilimanjaro on two prosthetic limbs. As a pioneer in prosthetic technology and AI, she inspires audiences globally with her story of overcoming adversity. Her talks cover the transformative impact of AI in healthcare, showcasing her journey of thriving against all odds.



**Aziz Kaouech**, a proud Tunisian, left his home country in 2012 to study Financial Economics at EDHEC Business School in Nice and London. After earning his master's degree in 2018, he worked in technology and the fast-moving consumer goods industry in Paris and London. Aziz then founded Dooda, a startup that produces nutrient-rich protein powder from insects to promote climate-friendly food production and reduce food scarcity. Featured in the short film "Leader Generation," Aziz continues his journey with EDHEC, now leading research at the Centre for Net Positive Business to develop sustainable business models and assist businesses in transitioning to more sustainable operations.



**Grace Vanstone-Hallam** works in the International Group at HM Treasury. She obtained her undergraduate degree in European Social and Political Studies from University College London with a year abroad at the Sorbonne University Paris IV. Since graduating, her career has spanned multiple Government departments and roles, including as Assistant Private Secretary to the Leader of the House of Commons, and a posting in Brussels at the UK Representation to the EU. She recently returned from a secondment to the Institut national du Service public where she completed a work placement at the Africa Directorate in the French Foreign Ministry and obtained a masters in Political Science from the University of the Sorbonne Panthéon.



**Pierre-Clément Herbère-Desmier** is currently Sales Account Manager at Google. He began his career with a degree in History at the Sorbonne, followed by a Masters in Business and European Affairs. He has navigated various European and African markets, previously working at Triptease, UnitedHealth Group and BlackBerry. In addition to his role at Google, Pierre-Clément is actively involved in AI for Good, running job re-entry masterclasses with Oreegami, training new generations in AI for interviews, and lecturing on the History of AI, with the aim of democratising access and promoting ethical use.