

A FRENCH LANGUAGE & CULTURE TOUR with Brian McKay

JUNE 2012

PARIS & the LOIRE VALLEY

(9 days in and around Paris, 9 days in and around Amboise and Angers)

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

In Paris :

The morning language classes including vocabulary and pronunciation exercises will prepare you to participate actively in the afternoon walking tours and visits, as well as full-day excursions, on various themes such as the history and architecture from the medieval period to the present-day, French Impressionist painting, Paris parks and gardens, an in-depth exploration of one or two historic “quartiers”, together with evenings at both the cinema and the theatre – for which you will be well prepared beforehand!

Highlights in Paris will include : *Versailles en fête*, the final programme depending on the major events to be announced in September for summer 2012; a chamber music concert in the exquisite *Sainte Chapelle*; two of the greatest Paris gardens of them all, *Bagatelle* and the Père Lachaise cemetery, the World Heritage *Château de Fontainebleau*; lunch in Auguste Renoir’s favourite restaurant at Chatou...

A special day for the group will be an excursion on the theme of a First World War memorial day tour to the town of Le Quesnoy where the group will be officially welcomed by the town and given lunch. (Le Quesnoy is the town liberated by NZ troops and ever since twinned with New Zealand). In the afternoon you will go to Arras, with its glorious central *place*, and to visit among other things the Maori drawings left on the walls of the 10th century underground tunnels. And not forgetting that your last night in Paris will coincide with the annual *Fête de la Musique!*

In the World Heritage part of the Loire Valley : you will spend 5 nights in Amboise, and 4 in Angers. Group sessions will be of shorter duration, but the coach speaker system will be used generously, and your tutors will sit next to each of you in turn during the drive to talk individually with each participant about the day’s programme. During the Loire Valley part of the tour, you will visit Chenonceau as well as see it from the river; see one of the great collections of furniture in Cheverny (the château which was the inspiration for Moulinsart in the Tintin books) and visit Ussé, forever associated with the legend of the Sleeping Beauty, as well as the exquisite Prieuré de St-Cosme where Pierre Ronsard lived and died. You will explore the Troglodite way of life (visiting a château and a farm!); enjoy a magnificent lunch in the wine-cellars of Montlouis; not forgetting the great châteaux themselves, from the mighty medieval fortress of Angers built by Saint Louis and which houses one of the world’s greatest tapestries, *L’Apocalypse* (you need nearly an hour to see it properly!), to Renaissance Amboise and classical Cheverny, the famous gardens of Villandry, and the fairytale Azay!

THE FINAL DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

will be published as soon as all the events in June 2012 which might be of interest are known, and when we have some more detailed knowledge concerning the cultural interests of the participants