

FINANCIAL TIMES

Gaelic influence

By Emiko Terazono July 11 2009

It's that time of the year again, when London's French expats get to vote for the "Français of the Year" awards to choose fellow countrymen who live in the UK working the areas of business, art, food, and sports.

In spite of the credit crunch, with more than 350,000 French expats, London is the seventh largest French city in the world. Voting starts next week on July 14, Bastille Day, through to the end of September.

This year's business nominees include London Stock Exchange boss **Xavier Rolet**, **Geoffroy de la Bourdonnaye** of retailer Liberty, and **Tidjane Thiam**, chief executive of Prudential. Chefs include **Joel Robuchon** of L'Atelier and **Claude Bosi** of Hibiscus and with sportsmen including **Nicolas Anelka** of Chelsea and **Patrice Evra** of Manchester United. For more information, go to www.francais-of-the-year.com

People



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No NoW, no comment

Interviewing the boss is never easy, but it's never good politics to ask about a possible sticky business situation even if it is the talk of the town.

Chatting to **Rupert Murdoch**, at the Allen & Co media conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, Fox Business News anchorman **Stuart Varney** opened up by saying the whole country (US) and New York was "buzzing" about the News of the World story. When Mr Murdoch answered "nah, I'm not going to talk about that issue today, sorry" Mr Varney backed off in milliseconds. "OK, no worries Mr chairman, that's fine with me."

Mr Murdoch then noted the gloomy outlook among executives at the conference on an economic recovery, noting: "It's going to take years and years... five years at least." Asked about turning "analogue dollars" into "digital dollars" he said "we're doing it now at the Wall Street Journal", adding that the paper had more plans up its sleeve.

Nebraska to Idaho

Evan Williams, chief executive of Twitter, made his debut at the Allen & Co conference this year. "I'm in Idaho. Never been to Idaho. Hello, Idaho!" he



Sun Valley love-in: **Bill Gates** of Microsoft (left), **Rupert Murdoch** and his wife **Wendi** (middle), **Twitter's Evan Williams** (right)

Bloomberg/Reuters

Tweeted excitedly on his arrival.

In spite of the pessimistic predictions about Twitter's business model by some leading media executives there, his enthusiasm failed to dim throughout the week: "Met **Warren Buffett** today! Told him I was from Nebraska; he said he had to check me out - a lot of people claim to be from NE just for status."



M&S's **Kate Bostock** and the **Duchess of Cornwall**

Live another day

Having survived the annual meeting this week, Marks and Spencer boss **Sir Stuart Rose** welcomed **Prince Charles** and **Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall** to the retailer's Westfield store to mark the chain's 125th anniversary celebrations.

Camilla, wearing an M&S outfit from its *Per Una* range, sampled the wine, smelled the melons and walked around the lingerie department with M&S director **Kate Bostock**.

To Sir Stuart's relief, the Duchess said she frequently shopped at M&S's *Marble Arch* store and bought her swim suits from the retailer.

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Africa's choices

At the start of the week, the FT's world trade editor **Alan Beattie** celebrated the publication of his book *False Economy: A Surprising Economic History of the World* - which explores the smart or stupid choices that determine whether a country's economic development is successful.

Labour MP and former development secretary **Clare Short** sipped on white wine, and opined how some celebrities had gotten more out of Africa than Africa had gotten out of them, before complaining about her teeth after her visit to the dentist earlier on.

Young gun

Daily Mail and General Trust's **Lord Rothermere** is to chair the new Imperial War Museum Foundation, set up to raise funds for its long-term re-development programme and the permanent World War galleries, which last had a refurb in the late 1980s.

Lord Rothermere is said to be a regular visitor but his family's link with the Imperial War Museum dates back to the 1890s when the first Viscount **Rothermere** offered the museum the use of the **Bethlem Royal** hospital. He had originally intended to demolish the building to create a park in memory of his mother, **Geraldine Mary Harmsworth**, but in the face of various petitions, he provided the use of the building, with a new museum opening in 1936.

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