

<b>Institution:</b> University of Cambridge
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA30
<b>Title of case study:</b> The history of the relationship between France and Britain, c. 1688 to present
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The publication of a book in both English and French versions on this subject led to many media interviews in several countries, wide press coverage in the UK and USA especially, the appointment of Robert Tombs to the Franco-British Council, many invitations to lecture to diverse audiences, and to take part in private discussions and seminars with French and British diplomats. Diplomats, whether French or British, now rarely have more than minimal historical knowledge, and this research enables them to understand the cultural and political ramifications and ambiguities of a relationship central to both countries' foreign policy.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>The research for the book (the principal piece of underpinning research, <b>ref 1, 2</b>) was carried out by Professor Tombs between approx. 2002 and 2006 while a University Teaching Officer in Cambridge. He became Professor of French History in 2007. The research was conducted in collaboration with Dr Isabelle Tombs. Material in the Royal Archives, the National Archives, the French Foreign Ministry Archives, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and the Prefecture of Police Archives was identified and analysed. Contemporary printed sources and iconography in English and French were also exploited and a synthesis of a vast secondary literature was also incorporated. The research includes, for example, the first use of French diplomatic documents on the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, and the first use of French police reports on the activities of Edward VII in France in conjunction with his own appointments diaries from Windsor. Such detailed studies form only a small part of a wide-ranging analysis of a multi-level relationship between France and Britain, In summary, the research aimed to take a comprehensive view of the relationship as it existed not only between states and governments (however important that has been and remains), but also the cultural, economic and social exchanges between peoples. It is therefore both an international and a transnational study, treating both sides of the relationship equally The broad chronological span covered in the book, beginning with the 1688 'Glorious Revolution', itself a consequence of resistance to French power, and continuing to the present day, enabled the authors to demonstrate how ideas and stereotypes continue to influence actions, both private and public. The authors emphasise that the relationship at all levels has been marked by ambivalence and an inseparable combination of admiration and resentment. This contrasts markedly with the conventional emphasis on hostility between France and Britain adopted by such historians as Linda Colley, Paul Langford, and Jean Guiffan.</p>
<p><b>3. References to the research</b> (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Principally the research, supported in part by research leave financed by the Leverhulme Trust, took the form of a book, Robert and Isabelle Tombs, <i>That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British from the Sun King to the Present</i> (2006), pp. 780. The book has been published in hardback and paperback in London and New York, in updated editions (Heinemann 2006, Pimlico 2007, Knopf 2007, Vintage 2008).</li> <li>(2) A further updated edition has appeared as <i>La France et la Grande-Bretagne: des ennemis intimes</i> (Paris, Armand Colin 2012).</li> <li>(3) Robert Tombs, 'La Grande-Bretagne dans le jeu international, 1815-1848' pp 59-75, and 'La Grande-Bretagne dans les relations internationales, 1848-1873' pp 145-53, in <i>Le Monde britannique, 1815-1931</i>, eds D. Barjot and C.-F. Mathis (Paris, SEDES, 2009) pp 363</li> <li>(4) Robert Tombs, 'La nouvelle Arcadie ou l'évolution des représentations britanniques de la</li> </ol>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

France rurale au XIXe siècle', in L. Fournier-Finocchiaro and T.-I. Habicht, eds, *Gallomanie et gallophobie : Le mythe français en Europe au XIXe siècle* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012) pp 19-37

- (5) Robert Tombs, 'Two Great Peoples', in Robert Tombs and Emile Chabal, eds, *Britain and France in Two World Wars: Truth, Myth and Memory* (Bloomsbury, 2013) pp 1-19

#### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

*That Sweet Enemy* (item 1) received considerable **media** coverage (press, radio, television) in the UK, the USA, and France, as well as in several other countries, that began on publication in 2006 and continued into the survey period after paperback publication in the US and UK in 2007-08 and in French translation in 2012. Interviews and/or reviews in the scholarly and general press included the TLS, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The New Statesman*, *The Independent*, *The Sunday Times*, *the Literary Review*, *The Financial Times*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *L'Express* etc. The book was runner up for the Duff Cooper Prize (a literary prize awarded for 'the best in non-fiction writing').

Media references include:

- In *Times Literary Supplement* ('startling and insightful things to say about the lives of exiles, sports, food, literature and cross-pollination in countless other fields'), 12 May 2006
- In *New York Review of Books*, by Julian Barnes ('grand and luminously detailed'), 29 March 2007
- In the *Atlantic Monthly* ('A remarkably inventive, stylish and audacious work... one of the most engaging and invigorating works of international history I've read in years'), 27 Feb. 2007

This initial reception ensured that the book would become a frequent point of reference on Anglo-French relations in the French media – see for example *Liberation*, 13 Feb. 2012, and *Le Point*, 15 Feb. 2012 (**5a**); it established Professor Tombs and his work in political, diplomatic and policy circles, recognized by the award in Oct. 2007 of a French government decoration, *the Ordre National des Palmes Académiques*, for 'services rendered to French culture', and made possible the following impacts in the survey period on both sides of the Channel.

In **political and diplomatic** circles:

- The last three French ambassadors (Gérard Erréra, Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, and Bernard Emié) have all referred to the book in public speeches on several occasions and have described it as essential to the understanding of present Anglo-French relations. Newly appointed French diplomats in London are expected to read it for that reason. In 2012 the French Ambassador to the UK celebrated the translation of this 'now classic book' which would make it 'from now on the standard work for all those interested in this extraordinary and unique relationship'. (**5e, 5f**)
- William Hague, as Foreign Secretary, referred to the importance of the book (item 1) in a public speech (29 June 2011) on Anglo-French relations, and it is widely read in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. His special adviser testifies that he 'personally found the book a great resource for help in putting together the Foreign Secretary's speech. . .and I know other policy makers in the Foreign Office have drawn on [it] for insights that help them with their work'; it is, he continues, 'a hugely helpful one stop shop in understanding not only the deep history behind the current Franco-British relationship. . .but also just how embedded parts of the French world view. . .are in their national history'. (**5c**)

**Policy advice:**

The research has had demonstrable influence in European discussions of policy and cultural

diplomacy. For example, in Nov. 2011 Robert Tombs was invited by the European Directorate of the **Foreign and Commonwealth Office** to speak at a policy seminar on Anglo-French relations in preparing for the Anglo-French Summit of 2011; the other speakers were two French ambassadors, the UK National Security Advisor, Sir Peter Ricketts (now ambassador in Paris) and the FCO European director Mr Simon Manley (reference was made to the book by all the other speakers). Professor Tombs, drawing on the research summarized in Section 2, spoke of the historical roots of present day policy, and how historically informed expectations among politicians and diplomats continue to influence present-day decisions, and help to explain, for example, converging French and British policies in Africa and simultaneously diverging policies in Europe. He warned that the closeness of the Anglo-French security relationship should not be expected to deliver support over internal EU policy. This led to a lively discussion and positive feedback from participants. **(5d)**

Robert Tombs was also appointed to the **Franco-British Council** in 2008 following the publication of his research on Franco-British relations. The Council, an independent body established in 1972 by the British and French governments and financed by the two foreign ministries, promotes joint action through meetings of leading representatives of the worlds of culture, science, education, the academy, parliament, and business, and provides advice to governments as well as diffusing information to the public, to policy makers, and to business. As a member he has been particularly responsible for organizing conferences and publications on Franco-British relations, including co-organizing a conference in Paris which led to a co-edited report, *L'Histoire coloniale en débat en France et en Grande Bretagne*, 2010, which compares present day public attitudes to the memory of empire in both countries, and is addressed to a broad readership, including policy makers, teachers and the general public. **(5b)**

Robert Tombs was invited by the **French Foreign Ministry** to contribute in May 2013 an essay on the influence of France in the United Kingdom for an official French publication.

### Business

In Sept. 2012 Robert Tombs was invited to give a talk on the Anglo-French relationship in Marseilles to a conference of senior managers (of French, British and other nationalities) from Kingfisher plc (which includes the French group Castorama), as part of the company's efforts to bring about a more effective merger of its French and British subsidiaries and their workforces. He drew attention to some of the myths and stereotypes that influence attitudes, to some of the real cultural differences that can cause problems, and to similarities that are sometimes overlooked.

### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- a. <http://fr.news.yahoo.com/paris-londres-manche-partout-092156608.html>;  
[http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/margaret-thatcher-et-francois-mitterrand-ce-drole-de-couple-15-02-2012-1431579\\_24.php](http://www.lepoint.fr/monde/margaret-thatcher-et-francois-mitterrand-ce-drole-de-couple-15-02-2012-1431579_24.php) .
- b. Person 1 (Secretary-General of the British section of the Franco-British Council) can provide details of Robert Tombs' membership and activities.
- c. Email from person 2 (Special Adviser to the Foreign Secretary on European issues).
- d. Person 3 (Foreign and Commonwealth Office Director for Europe) can confirm the invitation to speak at the policy seminar in Nov. 2011.
- e. Letter from person 4 (the French Ambassador to the UK), 9 Mar. 2012.
- f. Person 5 (Director of the French Institute in London and Cultural Counsellor at the French Embassy) can provide details of the impact on French diplomats working with Britain.