

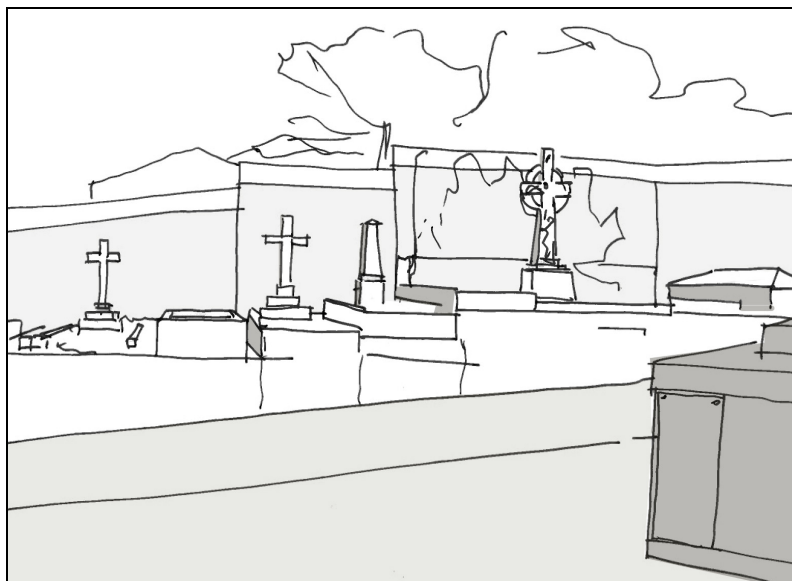
# WE ARE THE DEAD: THE ENGLISH GRAVES IN THE ALPHONSE KARR CEMETERY OF SAINT-RAPHAEL

by Lindsay Benoist

Every year at the beginning of November, French families pay homage to their dead. It is a time for family reunions, a time to remember loved ones. Tombs are visited and maintained. Flowers are laid on the graves in remembrance of those departed.

The Alphonse Karr cemetery of Saint-Raphael is no exception. On November 1<sup>st</sup> at *La Toussaint*, a day in advance of the *Fete des Morts*, the cemetery is alive with activity. The site becomes almost joyful, full of visitors carrying multi coloured flowers to place on the graves: yellow, orange, pink or white; crysanthemums, cyclamens, daisies and roses.

Circulating amongst the tombs and the flowers, one may find oneself in the oldest part of the cemetery. There, near the uppermost wall, the scene is different. There are no flowers, no visitors. There are English names on the tombstones: *Anderson, McIntosh, Wilson...* The inscriptions are familiar: "*In loving memory*", "*Rest in peace*". The tombs are dilapidated: the crosses are crooked, the marble is broken and the names are often illegible. Time and the elements have begun to erase the past.



Who were these people with the English names? Why were they buried in a separate section of the cemetery?

## History of the graveyard and origin of the name 'Quartier des Anglais'

Graveyards can tell us many things about the history of a town and of the people who lived there. At the end of the nineteenth century, as Saint Raphael grew with the coming of the railway and the development of tourism, the existing graveyard had become too small.

Formerly in the countryside, it was now situated not far from the centre of the village and was considered unhealthy.

In January 1888 plans for a new cemetery were prepared by the architect S. J. Ravel. The land chosen, in the Quartier du Peyron, was “about one kilometre from the last house of the town” in an area that was planted with grape vines, olive trees and cork oak<sup>1</sup>. The town acquired 13 910 m<sup>2</sup> from the Cauvin family, at 0.611F the square metre, and the ‘New Cemetery’, as it was first called, was completed in August 1890<sup>2</sup>. The name “Cimetière Alphonse Karr” was given in honour of Alphonse Karr, journalist and humorist, often cited as the inventor of Saint Raphael. He died in October 1890 and was buried in a concession donated by the municipality<sup>3</sup>.

In the original plans for the new cemetery, drawn up by Ravel in 1888, a significant amount of land was to be set aside for “different religions other than the Catholic cult”<sup>4</sup>. It was stated that the followers of these other faiths had become numerous in Saint Raphael and that of the foreign colony, the majority were Protestants<sup>5</sup>. The top of the cemetery then seems to have been reserved for all followers of the Protestant religion and not exclusively for members of the Church of England, even though the majority of the foreign visitors at the time were English speaking. This explains why, amongst the English graves, there are at least two graves of non English Protestants: that of Lucien Alfred Noel a *rentier* from Nantes whose death certificate was signed by a Protestant minister, and that of Johannes Marius Janszen (1814-1899), a Protestant born in Amsterdam, who built a chapel in the garden of his villa<sup>1</sup>, today the Église Reformée of France.

The financial means of this British colony were also a contributing factor to their being buried separately. Parts of the cemetery, along the walls or bordering the paths, were reserved for “*Concessions Perpetuelles*”. These concessions, theoretically of indefinite duration, were more expensive than concessions valid for merely 15 or 30 years. In addition, those that were to be found at the top of the cemetery where the British are buried today, that were both perpetual and isolated<sup>ii</sup>, were double the price of the ordinary perpetual concession situated along the transversal alleys or along the north wall<sup>iii</sup>. Part of the explanation for the high cost of these concessions could be that, according to a plan dated 1893, they seem to be situated in a vast garden at the top of the cemetery served by winding paths, of a design different from the rectilinear one found lower down<sup>6</sup>.

The consequences of this difference in financial means between the English and the local population become clear in a report sent to the mayor by the engineer responsible for the cemetery in 1929. The only land available for perpetual concessions at this date was in what was referred to then as the “Quartier des Anglais”. The high price of these concessions (500f the square metre as opposed to 250f the square metre elsewhere) made them prohibitive for the general population<sup>7</sup>. In 1930, in order to liberate land for perpetual concessions the plan of the cemetery was modified: the northern lateral avenue was extended and another transversal alley created. The English garden disappeared and the municipality recovered land worth 45 500F for new concessions<sup>8</sup>.

---

<sup>i</sup> Villa Janszen, today the Clinique Notre Dame, Avenue Lyautey.

<sup>ii</sup> “*Concessions Isolées dans le fonds*”.

<sup>iii</sup> 200 francs the square metre at the top as opposed to 100 francs the square meter further down. Délibération du Conseil Municipal le 8 Décembre 1895

This is the first use found in the archives of the expression “Quartier des Anglais”, a term that is still used today to refer to this area at the top of the cemetery.

### **Who were these people?**

Who were these people who are buried together in the Quartier des Anglais of the Alphonse Karr cemetery, in dilapidated graves that are badly in need of repair?

By looking carefully at the inscriptions on the grave stones one can learn a certain amount about the people buried. The name of the property or the place of residence often follows the name of the person buried, for example we find: “James Kinder Bradbury (1847-1913) of Altringham, Cheshire” or “Francis Crawley (1863-1914) of Stockwood, Luton”. These properties were often manor houses in vast domains and thus reflected the condition of the owner. In addition, writing the name of the property in England on the tomb was perhaps a way of retaining a contact with the homeland.

Civilian or military distinctions found on the tombs bear homage to the distinguished careers of the occupants of the graves. “William Alexander Marr ((1873-1928) C.I.E.” had been awarded the distinction of Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire for his work for the British government in India. Two senior members of Oxford university colleges have their titles engraved on their tombs: “Paul Ferdinand Willert (1844-1912) Fellow of Exeter” and “Henry Parker (1827-1892) Late Fellow of Oriel”.

The name of Admiral Sir E. S. Poe, who died on April 4, 1921, is followed by the initials of two of the highest distinctions awarded in Britain: “K.C.B” Knight of the Bath and “G.C.V.O.” Knight of the Royal Victorian Order.

One can usually find out more about such illustrious people simply by entering their name on an Internet search engine. Admiral Poe (1849-1921), for example, was formerly an aide de camp to both Queen Victoria and to King George V. Promoted to admiral in 1910, he commanded the British fleet in the Mediterranean from 1910 to 1912. He died suddenly while staying at the Hotel Beau Rivage<sup>9</sup>.

Several of those buried in Alphonse Karr had connections with the military. Hugh William John Robertson 1909-1928 was the “son of Field Marshal, Sir William and Lady Robertson”. He died at the Golf Hotel in Valescure in 1928 at the age of 18. His father was the first British soldier to rise through the ranks, from private in 1877 to field marshal in 1920

James Kinder Bradbury of Altringham Cheshire died on February 1, 1913 in his 66<sup>th</sup> year. A lawyer then a judge, he passed away before learning of the death of his only son, Edward Kinder Bradbury, captain in the artillery, who was killed on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1914 at Néry sur Oise where he is buried. For his courage he was decorated with the Victoria Cross, the supreme military distinction for bravery in Britain. The name of Judge Bradbury’s widow, Grace, who died on March 9, 1924 is also inscribed on the tomb.

Charles Frederic Moore Cleverly was “born at Hong Kong in 1852”. Many of the English who came to Saint Raphael had lived in the British colonies where they had benefited from a temperate climate and a life of ease difficult to replicate in England. Charles Frederic was the son of Charles St George Cleverly who had built Government House, completed in 1855,

while Surveyor General of Hong Kong. Charles Frederic died on March 9, 1921 and is buried in an imposing grave with an ornate copper plaque against the east wall, next to Admiral Poe.

One can also learn many things by consulting birth, death and marriage certificates, or census reports. By tracing the genealogy of Henry Parker, already mentioned as being a “Fellow of Oriel”, we find that he was the son of Marianne Darwin, making him the nephew of the well known Charles Darwin. Studying the “Cadastre”<sup>iv</sup> in the municipal archives, one finds that Henry Parker was one of the first two Englishmen to build villas in Saint Raphael. The Villa Esterel was completed in 1883 and still stands on the road today called Boulevard des Anglais.

The minister who officiated at the funeral of Henry Parker noted that he passed away in his villa as the result of a fainting fit at the age of 65. A bachelor, he died on January 12, 1892 and was interred in a brick vault in the Saint Raphael new cemetery. The minister added that he “blessed the grave as the Cemetery is unconsecrated”<sup>10</sup>. Henry Parker was the first English person to be buried in the Alphonse Karr cemetery. His grave, along the Allée des Bengalis, is difficult to identify as the inscription is now partly hidden by a broken marble cross.

Next to the grave of Henry Parker is the grave of Charles Marshall Earle who died the following year at the age of 40. Charles Marshall Earle (1852-1893) who had resided in Saint Raphael for several years before his death from illness, was from a family of ship builders in Hull, Yorkshire. Little remains of his tomb today.

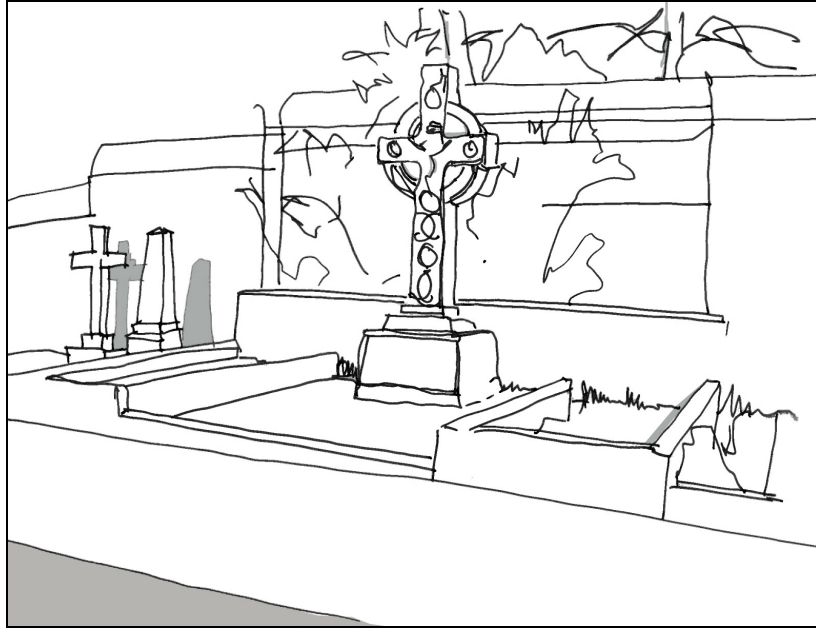
Moving up the Allée des Bengalis towards the top of the cemetery, one passes before a large grave of red porphyry stone, that of Paul Ferdinand Willert, Fellow of Exeter, who died in 1912. Further along, on a grave in the form of a stele or pyramid is that of Caroline Jane Stable 1845-1908. Beside her name is written in English that she was the daughter of the late Reverend Stable. The inscription at the base of the monument is written in French: “Je suis la resurrection et la vie.”

The most original grave in this sector, and one that is listed in the inventory of the DRAC<sup>v</sup>, is that of the Crohan family. An ornate Celtic cross dominates the tomb. The limestone cross is decorated with interlacing Celtic motifs and a figure of Christ is carved at the centre. An inscription at the base reads “Sacred to the memory of my dearly loved wife Eleanor Franklyn Crohan daughter of the late Colonel Frederick Macbean, grand daughter of General Benson who entered in to rest Feb 13, 1909”. Another descendant of a military family. Her husband, Percy Crohan, was a “well known resident” of Saint Raphael and an active member of the Anglican Church of St John’s, Avenue Paul Doumer. Church records indicate that he contributed a “sweet and powerful harmonium” to the church which was used for the first time on Christmas Day 1911. After the death of his first wife, Percy Crohan remarried and in 1913 built Crohan Lodge, Avenue Notre Dame, a villa yet to be identified. The name of Percy Crohan, who died in Saint Raphael in 1921, is engraved on the monument along with the Biblical inscription “Behold we count them happy who endure”. The presence of Biblical inscriptions on the tombs seems to be common in the Protestant tradition.

---

<sup>iv</sup> A repertory of proprietors and the list of their properties designed for municipal tax purposes.

<sup>v</sup> Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles



To the right of the Crohan monument is a solid stone grave in the form of a sarcophagus with the inscription “T. Sydney Bentall M.A. CANTAB. 1847-1912”. His name comes up regularly in archives concerning Saint Raphael<sup>vi</sup>.

Theodore Sydney Bentall, from the family of E. H. Bentall, agricultural machinery manufacturers in Essex, was only 37 when he settled in Saint Raphael. He participated actively in the life of the town: he was secretary of the Valescure Golf Club at its beginnings and organised the official inauguration in 1900. He supported both morally and financially the Stade Raphaélois in its first years and, before his death, he saw the Stade win the French Football Championship in April 1912 with three of his second cousins on the team. He was also an active member of the Anglican community of Saint Raphael and was the secretary of the committee that organized the construction of the Anglican church of Valescure in 1899. He was also a member of the Société Civile Estérel-Valescure and thus, with Lord Rendel and others, contributed to the residential development of Valescure on the edge of Saint Raphael. In his obituary in the Saint Raphael Journal of December 1, 1912 we learn that “Mr Bentall was the oldest member of the English colony; he was the first to build in this pretty corner of our resort the first villa and was, if we can employ this expression, the person who launched Valescure”. His villa, called the Villa Bentall at the time of its construction by Leon Sergent in 1885, is today Les Asphodèles, Avenue de Valescure, the Mairie d’honneur of Saint Raphael.

Another person buried in the Alphonse Karr cemetery who left his mark on the town is Amédée Baillot de Guerville (1869-1913). His grave, marked by a simple marble cross, is to be found far to the left of the others along the north wall. His name is French but the inscription is in English: “Born May 3, 1869, died Valescure May 21, 1913”. He was French by birth but English in heart. His first wife was American and his second was English.

In 1909 his name can be found in the minutes of the Saint Raphael town council regarding the Valescure Golf Course<sup>11</sup>. At that time A. B. de Guerville was the co-director and the

<sup>vi</sup> See « Les Bentall Sergent, Une famille Franco-Britannique à Saint-Raphaël (1880-1914) », Bulletin de la Société d’histoire de Fréjus et de sa Région, Numéro 8, Septembre 2007.

representative in France of the English “Valescure Land Company Limited” which had just bought the property of M. Martini and which proposed to enlarge and improve the golf course with the support of the municipality. At that time the golf course had only nine holes and “the fairways, cut through the *maquis*, were narrow and stony”<sup>12</sup>.

His project comprised: the extension of the golf course from 9 to 18 holes, the creation of tennis and croquet courts, and the construction of a club house with restaurant, salons and a smoking room<sup>13</sup>. When the work was completed in 1910, the municipality considered its investment worthwhile as the golf course “had brought back life to an area that had been abandoned for a long time and had procured resources to the town”<sup>14</sup>.

In 1924 the land of the Valescure Land Company was acquired by another English company, “Valescure (France) Properties Limited”<sup>15</sup>. Henceforward it was the name of this new investor, Lord Ashcombe, which was to be associated with the history of the Valescure golf course.

A. B. de Guerville died in Saint Raphael on May 21, 1913 at the age of 43, probably of the tuberculosis that had haunted him from his youth.

### **What is the future of these tombs?**

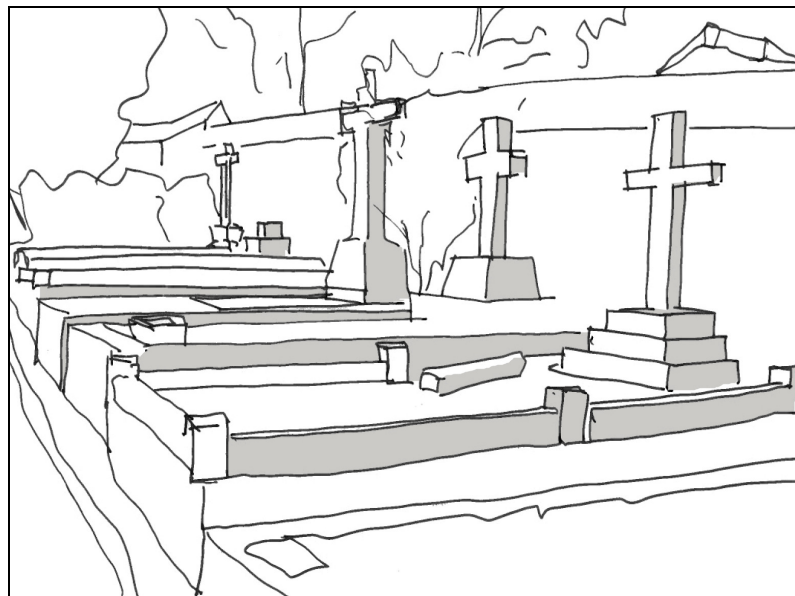
Contrary to popular belief, perpetual concessions remain perpetual only if they are maintained in good condition. If the graves present signs of dilapidation that spoil the aesthetic of the cemetery they are considered to be in a state of abandon and may be reclaimed by the town. Many of the graves belonging to English families are in this category: some monuments are broken or dirty, the iron railings are rusted or twisted, the tomb stones are broken or worn and the names are barely legible. The town of Saint Raphael which is responsible for maintaining good order in the cemetery began the procedure of reclaiming the tombs in the Alphonse Karr cemetery in November 2008<sup>16</sup>. It is in the process of making an inventory of the tombs. About 50 tombs belonging to English families are concerned. About the same number of other tombs, elsewhere in the cemetery, are in the same category.

The priority of the commune at present is finding descendants of the person buried, or of the owners of the concession, which generally comes to the same thing. The tombs that are restored and maintained in a satisfactory condition will endure. The difficulties of finding descendants are numerous. Many of those buried in Alphonse Karr were bachelors, spinsters or otherwise childless. Possible relatives would live far from Saint Raphael, most probably in Great Britain, perhaps further away. In addition, of those that were buried between 1892 and 1930, possible family members would be of the fourth or fifth generation. However with the recent interest in genealogy and the facility of finding birth, marriage and death certificates on Internet, it is possible that a few descendants may be located. Efforts are being made in this direction.

The commune has stated its desire to take measures to protect tombs that have an architectural or a historical interest<sup>17</sup>. The Crohan tomb, already listed in the inventory of the DRAC, is worth preserving for its architectural interest. This family was also well known and well respected in Saint Raphael at the beginning of the century. Other people buried in Alphonse Karr contributed to the historical development of Saint Raphael. The contributions of Henry Parker, A.B. De Guerville and Sydney Bentall for example have been described.

Other English people who left their mark on Saint Raphael are not buried in the Alphonse Karr cemetery. Some lie in Valescure, in the churchyard of the Catholic Church of All Saints<sup>vii</sup>. Others rest in places other than Saint Raphael<sup>viii</sup>. These people are not the subject of this article.

However, in the Alphonse Karr cemetery, it is important to save as many of these tombs as possible in order to keep alive the memory of the English and the important contribution that they made to the development of Saint Raphael in times past. By patronizing the hotels and shopping in the town they sustained the local economy. Frequent reference is made in the records of the town council to the importance of keeping satisfied “foreign visitors who come here to spend their money for the greatest good of the inhabitants”<sup>18</sup>. Félix Martin, mayor between 1878 and 1895, understood the importance of English visitors when he advertised the merits of Saint Raphael in English newspapers as early as 1882. The same year he converted one of his shops into a chapel to serve the Anglican community. The English were later to construct two Anglican churches: All Saints in Valescure, today a Catholic church, and the Anglican Church of Saint John the Evangelist<sup>ix</sup>. The English built villas and employed local people. They also developed the golf course in Valescure, today internationally renowned. Their memory is worth preserving. May they rest in peace.



---

<sup>vii</sup> Rose Ellen Cooper (1863-1927) the daughter of Lord Rendel who developed Valescure; W. H. Hall (1837-1904) of Le Maquis, his wife Berthe Goulden (1838-1929), his daughter Sibylle Hall (1880-1932) and her second husband the Admiral Godfroy (1885-1981); George Nelson Hector (1831-1918) and his wife Annie Isabel Bruxner (1952-1931) of the Villa Nelson, now Clair Bois. More recently were buried near the same church Donald Gurrey (1887-1976) and his wife, Jeanne (1900-1968). All of these people were active members of the Anglican church and were granted special permission to be buried in the Valescure churchyard.

<sup>viii</sup> The English that are the most often cited in relation to Saint Raphael: Lord Rendel, Harry Stuart Goodhart-Rendel, Lord Ashcombe, Lord Amherst and Colonel Brooke are buried in England. W. F. King is buried in Chantilly.

<sup>ix</sup> See “Les Débuts de l’Église Anglicane à Saint Raphaël” in the *Bulletin de la Société d’histoire de Fréjus et de sa région* No 8 (2007) par Lindsay Benoist.

## SOURCES

---

Unless otherwise specified, the documents consulted can be found in the Saint Raphael municipal archives in a file called 'Cimetières' under the reference 2M2/1 1807-1934.

<sup>1</sup> Rapport sur l'emplacement du nouveau cimetière Dressé par l'architecte S. J. Ravel, 10 janvier 1888.

<sup>2</sup> 25 août 1890 Procès verbal de réception. Lacreusette, architecte, directeur des travaux. Travaux exécutés par Lorenzetti.

<sup>3</sup> Délibération du Conseil Municipal 4 octobre 1890.

<sup>4</sup> Op. Cit. « Une bonne place a été réservée pour les cultes divers autres que le culte catholique ».

<sup>5</sup> Op. Cit. « Il est bon de remarquer que les adhérents de ces cultes sont de plus en plus nombreux à Saint Raphaël et que le culte protestant entre autres comprend la plus grande partie de notre colonie étrangère ».

<sup>6</sup> Grand plan en couleur. Projet d'assainissement. Devis et cahiers des charges dressés par A. Chacot, architecte de la ville 8 septembre 1893.

<sup>7</sup> 30 juillet 1929 : Lettre de l'Ingénieur-voyer à M. le Maire « Seuls les terrains du quartier des Anglais restent disponibles, mais leur prix élevé (500f le m2) ne leur permet pas de satisfaire les demandes faites pour la généralité des concessions perpétuelles ».

<sup>8</sup> Plan, dressé par l'Ingenieur-Voyeur à St Raphaël le 16 juillet 1930 et Travaux d'aménagement du cimetière Procès verbal d'adjudication 18 août 1930.

<sup>9</sup> Log Book and Service Register 1881 - , Church of St John the Evangelist, St Raphael, Var.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Délibération du Conseil Municipal du 23 juillet 1909.

<sup>12</sup> L. E. Jones, I Forgot to Tell You, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1959, p. 117.

<sup>13</sup> Délibération du Conseil Municipal du 23 juillet 1909.

<sup>14</sup> Délibération du Conseil Municipal du 26 décembre 1910.

<sup>15</sup> Archives privées Maplethorp, vente de Valescure France à Valescure Bois, 27 avril 1979.

<sup>16</sup> Délibération du 24 novembre 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Délibération 24 novembre 2008.

<sup>18</sup> Délibération du 26 décembre 1881.

## Acknowledgements

Martine Alison (for research), Caroline Benoist (for the illustrations), Martial Duteil

Agnès Barra, Blandine Château-Arene, Nathalie Martin (Archives Municipales de Saint Raphaël)

