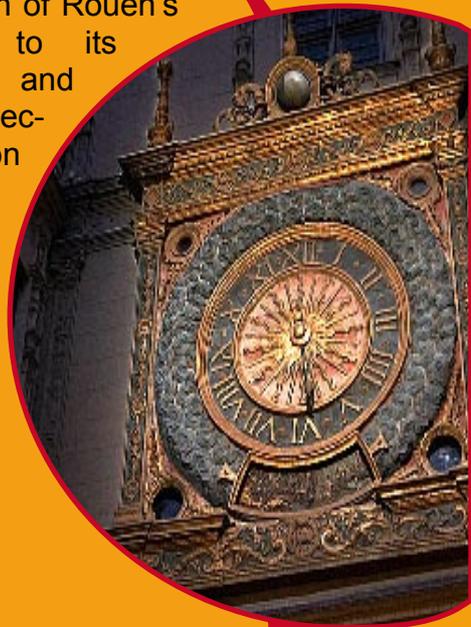


The Dragon of Rouen



Already present at the Viking ship's prow, the dragon was used to frighten enemies. The Normandy's history and particularly Rouen's past are affected by the Viking's traditions. The Dragon Boat Festival is an expression of Rouen's return to its roots and its reflection on its own history.



Gargoyles are well known in Rouen. A water dragon once haunted the region. Saint Roman, bishop of Rouen in the 7th century, got rid of him with the aid of a man fated to die. Hereupon, the gargoyle festival was created which prompted the annually release of a prisoner sentenced to maximum penalty. The gargoyles of gothic architecture are representing subdued dragons serving the church by draining baneful waters.



Chinese Dragons

Dragons are mythic Chinese creatures. They also appear in other East Asian civilisations. The occident casually calls them "East Asian dragons".

Usually pictured like a snake with countless claws, dragons were a symbol of strength and conditioned Chinese folklore and art. They are also the embodiment of "Yang", the climate's allies and responsible for both, rain and water in general. Chinese often employ the term "descendants of the dragon" as an ethnic identity figure..



Origin of Dragon Boats: a legendary history

The Dragon Boat is a traditional boat whose legendary history has origin in China.

More than 2000 years ago in the Kingdom of Chu in South China, a corruption criticising poet called Qu Yuan (340 – 278 B.C.) was prosecuted and they run him away from the kingdom. He morosely precipitated himself into the river Milo. Willing to rescue the poet, the villagers started searching for him. In order to sate the fish and to keep them from scoffing him, the villagers threw overboard a sort of cake called "Zongzi" (made of glutinous rice wrapped into bamboo leaves). According to the legend, the fish were put

to flight by the drums on the approaching fishing boats.

This story is considered to be the origin of the custom to eat "Zongzi" and to organise Dragon Boat Festivals. Since

then this event is commemorated in several Chinese regions on the 5th day of the 5th moon (= mid-June).

On the one hand, the Dragon Boat Festival commemorates the destiny of Qu Yuan. But on the other hand, it also heralds the onset of the summer's warmth and the period of epidemics. Numerous associated ceremonies conduce to conjure daemons.



Dragon Boats... Why?

The city of Rouen is working on the intensification of its partnership with the city of Ningbo, China since more than five years. To strengthen the link connecting both cities, the city of Rouen asked our Association to organise a Dragon Boat Festival on the Seine. This activity was not accidentally chosen. Beyond the relationship to our Chinese colleagues, the Dragon Boat Festival is an original concept. This event is not only a sport competition, but combines it with a cultural festival and a fair, both based on Chinese traditions. Amidst a colourful landscape, the participants meet each other in a warm-hearted and convivial ambiance..



The organisers

Festival
Dragon Boats
Rouen



- French Association for the Advancement of Dragon Boat Sport
- City of Rouen, especially the Event-Division, Department for Youth and Sport
- Norman Canoe Club Rouen
- Canoe Club Belbeuf
- Euro-Chinese Association for Sport and Culture





A Dragon Boat measures about 40 yards in length and 0.4 feet in width. It weighs 550-650 pounds. Most boats are designed for 20 paddlers: two rows, side by side, of 9 paddlers on each side of the boat, a steersman in the back and a drummer who sets the pace. Beyond this folkloristic characteristic, the boat is highly decorated – particularly the prow adorned with a dragon's head.

Dragon Boat is an aquatic team sport. Albeit different, it has a lot in common with the canoe: the participants are rather paddling than rowing. Therefore, Dragon Boats share a category with log-boats.

Both, the cadence and the force of the paddle stroke, affect the paddler's performance. A swift cadence reduces the force, whereas paddling too forceful lowers the cadence. Every paddler accomplishes its maximal efficiency on a level determined by force and cadence. Finally, the sum of all individual skills decides about the boat's speed. Beginners usually paddle slower and forceful, but the more experienced they are, the more increases the paddle strokes' cadence frequency.

Technical information

- length: 40ft, width: 0.4ft
- weight: 550-650 pounds
- paddle length 3.3'-3.9'
- 4-8 boats per race
- distances: 100m, 250m, 500m, 1km
- average speed (500m): 2:30min
- crew: 20-22 paddlers
- 2 rows of 8-10 paddlers on each side of the boat
- 1 steersman, charting the course
- 1 drummer in the back, setting the pace with his drum
- mixed teams



Cohesion – impulse for a shared success

Beside the high values of sport, the Dragon Boat proves to be a source of team spirit. This sport, easily learnable, rapidly conveys the importance of synchronous paddling to the participants. One of this sport's strong points is the fact, that neither force nor individual technique guarantees a success, but especially the teams' synchrony, irrespective of the individual "physical strength". Every year anew, this system of values is referred to young beginners in their training.

Hospitality – open up to the world

Strictly speaking, Dragon boat is a game based on hospitality, more than a competition. The Dragon Boat allows teams from different nations to gather; it advances cultural exchange and makes recreational sportsmen meet professional athletes (participation of high league clubs such as Rouen Hockey Elite, Football Club Rouen, SPO Rouen Basketball, ...) – as well as meetings between junior teams and companies' teams... The Dragon Boat Festival puts this hospitality by a "village" into action. It will be installed near the competition area and is dedicated to China. Due to this event concept connecting sport and culture, arise encounters between different personalities, as well as it broadens our geographical, sociological, sporty and cultural horizon.

In accordance with the environment

Paddling is free of pollution and meets all demands concerning the environment. It supports regaining a harmonic relation to nature: on a level with the water amidst green environs, conjointly... Against the background of sustainable development, you discover the landscape's beauty as well as the anthropogenic damages sensitising our ecological awareness. The Dragon Boat brings us closer to nature. Therefore, the French Association for the Advancement of Dragon Boat Sport plays a role at the environmental consciousness.