



Dear British friends,

For British people who have settled in our town of Matha, it is interesting to know that Matha has been associated with England since the 12th century.

In 1152 the provinces of Aunis and Saintonge were given as dowry by Eleanor of Aquitaine to her second husband Henry Plantagenet (*Henry II of England*).

Matha was already prosperous at this time, thanks to the trade in salt, wood and wine. This wine would later become cognac since it was easier to transport by ship for trade in Europe after distillation.

When the Hundred Years' War ended in 1453, Matha became French again and continued the distillation of the wine as introduced by the English.

Matha also has a rich religious heritage with two jewels of Romanesque (Norman) architecture in the churches of Marestay and Saint-Hérie which are well worth visiting.

Matha today is a small rural town of 2214 inhabitants which keeps its charm within the surrounding well maintained green areas.

Matha has its own cultural centre "Le Forum" with its cinema and library, where you can see films, enjoy re-broadcasts of concerts and theatrical productions, and borrow books.

In Matha you will discover the covered market, open on market days, and the monthly market the first Friday of every month.

Matha also has its schools and high schools, both state and private, and its sports facilities. You will also find tradesmen, shops, doctors, and professional people to help you settle in Matha.

Our small country town in the Charente-Maritime continues to prosper largely due to its excellent location between the departments of Charente and Charente-Maritime. Through its dynamism, Matha is in second position economically in the district of Saint-Jean d'Angély.

Matha also perpetuates the "Entente Cordiale". Initiated by Queen Victoria and King Louis-Philippe in 1843 to foster closer diplomatic relations between our two peoples, the "Entente Cordiale" manifests itself today in Matha by cultural exchanges between the British and French inhabitants of the region thanks to the Franco-British association "Nous & You".

For our British friends who come to discover the Poitou-Charente region for the first time or who settle in Matha, we would like you to share our affection for our town.