2018 marks the 22nd anniversary of the establishment of La Route du Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon (The Route of the Prince Impérial, Louis Napoleon).

This bold tourism initiative follows the 1880 scenic pilgrimage through KwaZulu-Natal, of a mother in mourning as the Empress Eugenie followed the footsteps of her son, The Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon, to the site where he was ambushed and killed during the Anglo-Zulu War at uQweqwwe, near Nqutu, on 1 June 1879. The Empress held a night vigil at the spot where a monument has since been erected.

La Route du Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon was launched on 1 June 1996 by the then Chairperson of the Battlefields’ Route Association, Ray Heron, and Mme Jenny Bustin, President of the French Teachers’ Association of KwaZulu-Natal.

The uQweqwwe community living adjacent to the Prince Impérial monument has benefited substantially from this cultural tourism research development project, which, in 2011, was extended to include Dundee’s nearby eMaphayipini community, as well as the Zanimpilo Drop In Centre and Crèche, France. In Pietermaritzburg, the project has grown to include the Eastwood, Sobantu and Grange communities.

138 years on, the Prince Impérial monument and its historical context play an important role as a small, but vibrant tourism initiative. This year, the Alliance Française, Pietermaritzburg and the French Presence in KwaZulu-Natal’s Cultural Tourism Research Development Project and its partners, present a programme of engaging activities to celebrate Africa Month. Both associations play a valuable networking function in connecting France, Reunion and other Francophone countries to South Africa.

“We welcome Francophiles and everyone who enjoys a slice of history, as well as those who are keen to experience the value of creating and developing fascinating historical and cultural links between different cultures to benefit our communities both rural and urban.” Glenn Flanagan, Project Leader: French Presence in KwaZulu-Natal.

28 MAY - 3 JUNE
MONDAY 28 MAY 10H00: MSUNDUZI MUSEUM, PIETERMARITZBURG: Guided visit of the Prince Imperial exhibition. Explore our Franco-Zulu connection through King Dinuzulu’s 7 year 10 month exile on St Helena; our South African Francophone connections on the African continent and on the Indian ocean Francophone islands. All welcome!


WEDNESDAY 30 MAY 13H00 - 14H00: PROJECT GATEWAY, PMB, OPC: Annual Prince Imperial lunch time concert - featuring Chidlehurst Academics & Arts. All welcome!

18H30: DANTE ALIGHIERI, GOLF RD, SCOTTSVILLE: Soirée Franco-italienne to commemorate the Prince Imperial’s father’s (Napoleon III 1808 - 1873) participation in the 1831 uprising in the Papal States and his grandfather, Louis (The King of Holland 1778 - 1846), Napoleon Bonaparte’s youngest brother who retired to Italy after the Waterloo débacle in 1815.

FRIDAY 1 JUNE 18H00 FOR 18H30: TATHAM ART GALLERY, PMB: IFAS, the Napoleon Foundation and the Alliance Française, PMB present a concert to celebrate the 22nd anniversary of La Route du Prince to profile Pietermaritzburg musicians and to welcome our VIP guests from the Embassy of France in South Africa and local dignitaries. Featuring the Pietermaritzburg Caledonian Pipe Band, Nigel Fish’s Musical Ensemble, Chidlehurst Academics & Arts Dance Group, Inspirations, The Famous French CAN CAN and African Gypsy & The Tarot. Glenn Flanagan’s The French Prince: Tragedy to Transformation will be available, courtesy of Otterley Press.

SATURDAY 2 JUNE 09H30: THE ALLARD HOUSE CHAPEL, PMB: 18th annual memorial mass for the Prince Imperial and this year, for Jean-Claude Lachnit, French specialist on the Prince Imperial. The memorial mass for the Prince is said in liaison with the requiem mass in the Imperial Chapel, Biarritz, France. A commemorative ceremony in KZN’s very first Catholic Church (1852) featuring the Scola Musicae Sanctae choir led by choir leader: Michael Lambert.

12H00: Dignitaries depart for Dundee via La Route du Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon
14H45: AUGUSTINIAN CONVENT, POMEROY: Stopover for tea-time pause with the French Augustinian Sisters.


SUNDAY 3 JUNE 10H00, PRINCE IMPERIAL MONUMENT, UQWEQWE & EMAPHAYIPINI, UMVUNYANE AREA: Visit to Jojoinsi Primary School and inspection of Antalis/Panteix rain tanks & library.

11H00, PRINCE IMPERIAL MONUMENT, UQWEQWE, EMAPHAYIPINI, UMVUNYANE: Start of 22nd annual commemorative ceremonies. Wreath laying by Guest-of-Honour, Mme Sonia Dora-Pérez, the Consul General of France and the Delegate General of the Alliance Françaises of Southern Africa, Mr Gérard Candelle from the Embassy of France in South Africa, local traditional leaders iNkosí Mdlalose, iNduna Mblatha and volunteer community guides Mme Buyi Mtshali and Mme Gugu Buthelezi. Sports Events organized by Nathi Sibisi, Busizwe Foundation and former learner of Uqweqwe Secondary School.

The 22nd Anniversary Celebrations of the La Route du Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon are supported by the Embassy of France in South Africa, IFAS, the Napoléon Foundation, the Alliance Française, PMB & Renault, PMB.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Glenn Flanagan: Project Leader; French Presence in PMB/KZN: La Route du Prince Impérial, Louis Napoléon / President; Alliance Française, PMB
gflanagan@webafrika.org.za / +27 (0) 82 677 9997 /www.princeimperial.co.za

28 MAY - 3 JUNE