

Minutes of the GT AGM February 16 2023 Chateau de Cherveux 11am

Present: Annette Green, Eric Hansford, Michele Hansford, Lesley Ritchie, Neil Ritchie, Julia Murray, Peter Murray, Kate Sangster, Grant Sangster, Gerry Riley, Ann Riley, John Chard, Pat Chard, Margaret Baldwin, Geoffrey Little, Stephen Pond, Yvonne Pond, Keith Mousdale, Diane Mousdale, Helen Horton, Dorothy Peel, Alan Peel, Bradley Warden, Andy Walmsley

1 **Apologies:** Jackie and Jeremy Lockett, Roger and Anne Amsden, Maria and Rob Portbury, Les Green, Martin Hughes, John and Maureen Buckley, Carol Andrews, Lynn Chamberlin

2 **Minutes of the 2022 AGM** held on 16 March at the Chateau de Cherveux were accepted in full, proposed by Dorothy Peel, seconded by Kate Sangster. all present voted in favour.

3 **Matters arising:** Michele Hansford reported that the GT website now has the correct membership fees and the correct reference number, given by the Prefecture. However the constitution has not yet been amended. The website is under serious replanning and all should hopefully be in order by the next AGM.

The GT book Library redistribution has begun but there are a lot of books and there will be further distribution at coming GT events.

4 **President's Report:** In the absence of President Martin due to ongoing health problems the report was delivered by Annette, as Vice President. She started by sending all our good wishes to Martin with hopes for a speedy return to good health. The report is attached to these minutes but shows that following the 'paralysis' induced by covid GT has returned to offering a wide range of activities distributed geographically to cater for as many members as possible. It concluded with a plea to all members to think of activities they would like to see on offer from our Association.

5 **Financial Report:** Eric went through the 3 pages of the financial report, which has been distributed already to all members. It was noted that the largest single expenditure was insurance. This was researched last year and quotes obtained from Allianz and from AXA but they were more expensive than GAN. However members suggested a second round of research, including MAIF and GAN itself which both offer cheaper insurance to other groups. It would be useful to find out why! Suzette offered to send details of the MAIF offer for Association Violet for comparison. Keith asked whether depreciation of 25%/year on assets was calculated on the basis of previous year's value or on initial cost. Eric said it was previous year's value. Following discussion it was agreed that henceforth the calculation would be based on 25% of initial cost and that therefore assets would be 'written off' after 4 years. The accounts were accepted and adopted by all present. Proposed by Diane, seconded by Julia.

6 **Election of Officers:** Julia Murray wished to step down as membership secretary after 5 years in office. Diane Mousdale was nominated as the new membership secretary. Proposed by Michele, seconded by Suzette. Since Martin will not be continuing as President because of health issues. Annette proposed Michele Hansford as President, seconded by Suzette. This left a need for a new secretary. Neil Ritchie was proposed by Eric, seconded by Dorothy. The Newsletter Secretary, Annette Green and the Treasurer, Eric Hansford were willing to continue in office for another 2 years so no election was necessary. Lesley Ritchie, Walks Coordinator, was not up for election this year. The new committee was accepted by all those present.

7 **Election of Auditor:** Bradley Warden agreed to act as auditor for the coming year. Proposed by Michele, seconded by Suzette. All present voted in favour.

8 **Membership fees for 2024:** Membership has declined since Covid and the treasurer suggested an increase in Family membership from €10 to €12 year, with single membership remains at €7. There was some discussion about ways to publicise the Association among the Deux Sèvres English speaking community. Peter explained the issues he had found with using FaceBook as an information/recruiting method. This will be followed up over the coming year. In the meantime the increase was put to the vote, proposed by Kate, seconded by Alan and accepted by all present.

9 **AOB:** Lesley explained that declining involvement by members in the 'South' had led to the roles of Southern and Northern Walks Coordinators being combined as 'Walks Coordinator'. In this role she welcomes offers from all members to organise walks and is happy to assist in newbies with their planning. She asked for volunteers to organise walks from late spring onwards.

Michele, in her first action as President, presented Julia and Peter with Amazon vouchers in thanks for their years of participation in the work of the GT Committee. Brad was given wine as thanks for his work as Auditor. Andy was given beer in recognition of the work involved in maintaining the website. He took this opportunity to explain a little of what the issues are in updating the website and making it more attractive to potential members.

Kate Sangster, as the only ex-President in attendance, gave a vote of thanks for all the hard work done by the Committee and thanks to new members of the Committee for agreeing to share the load. She pointed out how important it is for all members to be involved in the Association if it is to survive into its second half century.

The meeting closed at 12 noon.

President' Report 2023 delivered by Annette on behalf of Martin

Thank you all for coming today, what a fantastic turnout, the committee appreciate your attendance and as the french like to say 'your solidarity'!

We have had a better year now that Covid is becoming a distant memory, and long may it continue.

It's surprising, when you look back, how many events we have actually offered to our members this year.

Walks, followed by lunch, are slowly becoming more popular again and I would like to thank all those members who took the time to organise a walk in the last 12 months, so in no particular order:-

Diane and Keith

Steve and Yvonne

Margaret and Geoffrey

Neil

Annette and Leslie

Peter and Julia

John and Maureen

Neil and Lesley

Michele and Eric

Helen

and Martin with the bluebell walk.

At the beginning of the year we were offering a Longer walk 10 - 13 kms, organised by Peter and Julia. There were the same handful of members each time, but the walks were most enjoyable, with some fantastic scenery and getting lost on at least one occasion added to the adventure. Thank you both for taking the time to arrange these walks.

Wine and lunch goes from strength to strength with lots of members vying for places. It's an opportunity to try different wines around France and the Rest of the World with food to go with it. A big thank you to Diane as chief organiser and to Keith who diligently tries and tests the wines for us to sample, it's a hard life but somebody has to do it! So a big thank you to you both.

As an off shoot from the wine and lunch club, Keith and Diane thought they would offer a fine wine experience, they generally organise two a year and they are well attended. It's surprising that we often declare the slightly cheaper wines as our favourite - perhaps we just haven't got refined tastebuds! So again thank you both for organising these evenings.

Reading group run by Lesley and Michele, has a strong following. The books are varied and not always liked but it allows interesting discussions to take place covering various topics, often nothing to do with the book! They now offer a bring and share lunch, which they agree makes it very convivial.

Unfortunately, we saw a parting of the ways with the photographic group who continued to flout GT rules.

We have had two well attended quizzes this year, one run by Michele And Eric, the second one by Annette and Leslie. They are always light hearted affairs and there is always lots of discussions and scratching of heads but it's surprising what you guys know with prizes eventually being won.

I'm pleased we managed to celebrate the Queens jubilee back in June, given events later in the year.

We had our own Queen attending, Margaret Baldwin arrived resplendent in her Pearly Queen costume, including a hat, which she had made and worn to another event 20 years before! Pat Chard also did us proud and had also gone to great lengths in her red, white and blue outfit and hat, the stars of the show. The weather was perfect and the bring and share lunch enormous! We must thank John and Maureen, for hosting and their team of helpers for assisting with setting up and probably clearing away.

This years Summer event took place in Exireuil on another sunny day. Yet again, we had a bring and share feast to eat! We raised 159 euros for the Association Violet Charity by holding 3 horse races, it was very competitive and good fun. The bookies furiously updating the odds to the punters, you would have thought you were at Cheltenham! It was a great day, thank you Annette and Leslie for hosting again - at least this time the heavens didn't open! And also many thanks to their team of helpers.

We had 4 history talks this year - Eric Hansford gave a talk on The birth of French Aviation, Anthea Libby gave a talk on The history of french art from 1700 to the 1850's, Jocelyn Simms gave a talk on Georges Simeon in hiding and finally Robert Pierson gave a talk on an aspect of the French Revolution.

We would like to thank them all for the hard work it must surely take in putting such comprehensive and fascinating talks together We appreciate their efforts and courage it must take to stand in-front of us all!!

I am highlighting the Christmas walk and lunch as it is a special time of year, when it is good to catch up with a few friends you haven't seen in a while and this year was no exception. We had around 30 members all meeting at Le planchers restaurant in Niort. We had a free champagne raffle, which Lans and Ans won and we sadly said goodbye to Roger and Anne Amsden.

We must thank Annette for organising the walk with the little green men and the event and Alan for sorting out the restaurant.

Please let the Committee know if you have any recommendations for next year - no rush!

So what about this year, certainly all the above activities will continue and we would like to do something different this summer, suggestions on a postcard! We have a lot to look forward to.