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*French
Association
3035*

September 2015 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news
and reports for members*



Vine at Vias, Languedoc

Don't Forget the GT 2016 Calendar Competition – Closing Date End of This Month, September 30th!

Send in your entries for the 2016 GT calendar competition NOW!

The theme for this year is "La Belle France". Your snaps can be of any subject matter which you feel best expresses the beautiful side of France and obviously must have been taken somewhere within France.

The subject matter is wide-ranging, perhaps a favourite view, holiday destination, wildlife, building, pastime, food, sport - absolutely anything - be as creative as you wish!

Each family member may submit up to four photographs. Photographs must be in landscape format (rather than portrait) and your entry must state where in France each photograph was taken.

Closing date for submission of entries is midnight **30th September 2015**.

Once the competition has closed, all entries will be displayed on the GT website and members will be invited to vote for their favourites, with the most popular 12 photographs used for the calendar.

*In addition, this year prizes will be awarded for the photograph considered to be the most creative image and also the most voted for picture, this will be judged by an independent person.

Please send your entries as low resolution jpeg attachments by email to gtphotocomp@gmail.com, providing the name of the photographer and details of where each photograph was taken. If your photograph is selected, you will be asked for a high resolution copy at a later date.
Full rules of competition entry are available on the GT website.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Horse Racing	Sun 6 th Sept	2.00 pm	Niort Hippodrome
Walk	Sat 12 th Sept	10.00 am	St Leger de la Martiniere
Book Club/ Library	Mon 14 th Sept	2 – 4.00 pm	Mazieres en Gatine
History Group	Thurs 17 th Sept	3.00 pm	Menigoute
Reading Circle	Tues 22 nd Sept	2.30 pm	Oroux
Walk	Fri 25 th Sept	10.00 am	Moulin des Prés, Azay sur Thouet
Second Circle	Mon 5 th Oct	10.30 am	La Bourse nr L'Absie
Lunch & Wine Club	Tues 6 th Oct	11. 30 am	Le Tallud
Walk	Sat 10 th Oct	10.15 am	Chenay
Walk	Fri 23 rd Oct	10.00 am	La Chapelle Baton

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Thursday 8th October, Chez Hansford**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Monday 21st September**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Horse Racing **Sun 6th** **2.00 pm** **Niort** **Rebecca**
 Sept **Hippodrome** **Sewell**

Do you fancy coming along and losing - sorry winning - some Euros on the horses? Niort Hippodrome is holding a race meeting on Sunday 6th September and is situated just south of Niort off the N11. The French betting system is similar to the Tote system in the UK (e.g. no bookmakers), minimum bet is 2 Euros.

Entrance will be approx. 6 Euros for men and ladies are free. We will meet at 2.00 pm in the car parking field off Chemin Du Lac. You can arrive earlier and have a picnic here if you wish (weather permitting). The racing usually starts at about 2.30pm. There are also snacks and drinks available to buy.

Afterwards (this is optional) we will go and celebrate or commiserate at La Mulan Chinese Restaurant, Route de la Rochelle, Bessines, 79000, Niort.

Where there is an 'all-you-can-eat' buffet for approx €17.00 (plus drinks).

<u>Walk</u>	<u>Sat 12th</u> <u>Sept</u>	<u>10.00 am</u>	<u>St Leger de</u> <u>la Martiniere</u>
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The walk will start from St Leger de la Martiniere which is 1.5km from Melle on the D950. We will meet in the church car park, as you come through the village on the D950 from Melle take the very small road on the right just before the Mairie with the flags. Toilets are available near the car park.

Both walks of 8km or 3.5km start with a 10 min road walk before being on quite rough grassy tracks, and woodland paths, sturdy footwear is recommended. There are no hills or inclines but the tracks will be muddy if it's been raining.

Lunch is in Lezay at Le Petit Berlands, easy to find in the centre of Lezay with plenty of parking. 4 courses with wine and wine - €16.50. Bookings to be received by Sunday 6th September,

<u>Book Club</u>	<u>Mon 14th</u> <u>Sept</u>	<u>2 – 4.00</u> <u>pm</u>	<u>Mazieres en</u> <u>Gatine</u>
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Note the change of date – it's the second Monday in September NOT the first.

<u>History Group</u>	<u>Thurs 17th</u> <u>Sept</u>	<u>3.00 pm</u>	<u>Menigoute</u>
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Songs, Scribes, and Society in 15th Century France: the History and Reception of the Loire Valley Chansonniers.

This month we have a Guest speaker: Jane Alden, Professor and Chair of Music at Trinity College, Dublin.

Jane will talk about the assumption of aristocratic provenance for chansonniers, such as those produced in the Loire Valley during the 15th Century, which has only recently been overturned. Discoveries by David Fallows and others have shown that the earliest owners of deluxe chansonniers were from the upper middle classes and lower nobility, not traditional aristocrats. In particular, notaries and secretaries were active patrons of paintings, tapestries, sculpture, metalwork, jewellery, manuscripts and printed books, and music. Chansonniers would have had a particular appeal to these individuals, who are now also known to have collected and written poetry. Approaching chansonniers as mixed media representations allows us to explore these objects in ways that better relate to their original milieu.

The cost is **€5.00 per head**, to cover refreshments, hire of the room & heating (if needed).

Directions to Auberge des Voyageurs in Menigoute.

From North (Parthenay), exit towards Pompaire then via Vausseroux and La Pagerie, on mainly D176 and D21. **From South** (Lezay), via D45 and D5 through Chey, La Mothe Saint Heray and Saint Germier.

From West (Champdeniers), via Saint Georges de Noisne, Chantecorps and La Pagerie, mainly D329.

From East (Poitiers), via La Torchaise and Sanxay, mainly D3. The restaurant itself is in the centre of the Bourg, opposite the small chapel.

N.B. We have to confirm numbers to the Auberge one week before the meeting. As a result we will be charged for any people who DO NOT TURN up on the day.

So, we will have to charge individuals for "No Shows" on the day, sorry about this, but we have no choice!

Reading Circle**Tues 22nd
Sept****2.30 pm****Oroux**

For our next meeting we shall be discussing *Elizabeth is Missing* by Emma Healey. This book is described as both a gripping detective novel and a haunting depiction of mental illness. So no doubt as usual we will have a lively debate to look forward to. You can look up all our previous book reviews on the website.

Walk**Fri 25th
Sept****10.00 am****Moulin des
Prés, Azay
sur Thouet**

The walk starts from the picnic area at the Moulin des Prés, between Secondigny and Azay-sur-Thouet. Its 8kms. along drovers' lanes, woodland paths and 'petits chemins'. Mainly gently undulating and varied countryside route with some excellent long distance views. There is a 15 minute upward slope (on tarmaced lane) 40 minutes into the walk, and a stretch on the 'home straight' can be rather muddy. So please come well-shod. Unfortunately there are no toilets near the start point, and there is no shorter version of the walk. However, it's only a few kilometres from Secondigny with its cafés, shops, and toilets, for any non-walkers.

Lunch will be at the Hotel L'Ecu in Secondigny at a cost of 14.50 Euros.

Please indicate, when booking, your choice of main course.

Menu

Buffet:

Main course, from Brochette de Boeuf, or Steak, or Poisson:

Desserts au choix

Wine & coffee included

Parking for lunch.

Hotel L'Ecu is next to the traffic lights in Secondigny. Coming from Moulin des Prés, turn right at these lights and then left, into the large SuperU car park.

Directions to Moulin des Prés:

From Parthenay, take the D949b, (direction Secondigny) passing through Le Tallud and Azay sur Thouet; continue towards Secondigny, passing the Notre-Dame church (on your left, about 1km. from Azay) and turning left after another 1km. on to lane marked 'Moulin des Prés'. The Moulin is 1km from the D949b. There is car parking space but it is limited, so please park carefully.

From Secondigny, at traffic lights, take the D949b (direction Parthenay), passing the Maison de Pays de la Pomme (2kms) on the right before turning right, after another 1km, on to lane marked 'Moulin des Prés'.

Second Circle**Mon 5th
Oct****10.30 am****La Bourse
nr L'Absie**

We will be discussing *Squares of the City* by John Brunner.

Lunch & Wine Club**Tues 6th
Oct****11.30 am****Le Tallud**

The theme for the next lunch club with wine tasting will be the Harvest Festival and Vendage with a tasting and explanation of Rhone Valley reds presented by Keith Mousdale. The cost of the wines will be split amongst those attending.

Anyone wishing to attend must bring along either a starter or dessert/pudding. Numbers may be limited.



Walk

Sat 10th
Oct

10.15 am

Chenay

The walk is around the roads and tracks of Chenay, which can be found on the D950 between Melle and Poitiers. We will meet in the village car park opposite the Marie which is on the D307 to Rom - a very small turning at the centre of the village then approximately 100 metres along the road and it is on the left. Toilets are available at the church on the main road.

The main walk is just under 8kms of mixed form with no major hills. There will also be a short 4kms walk for those who would prefer it. Sturdy footwear should be worn due to the time of year and terrain.

Lunch is within a very short walking distance from the car park at Les Trois Pigeons in Chenay where there will be a three course meal (no cheese) with coffee and wine included for 13.50€.

Walk

Fri 23rd
Oct

10.00 am

La
Chappelle
Baton

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS NOT THE LAST FRIDAY IN OCTOBER.

La Chapelle Baton from the north is a left turn off the D743 Parthenay/Niort road approx 7Km south of Maziere en Gatine, opposite a small estate of factory units, signed La Chapelle B. Follow road for 2Km then turn right following signs to village.

Shortly after passing village name sign there is parking on the left. If coming from the south, from St Maxient take D6 towards Champdenier until approx 7 Km after Auge then take a right turn on to D122 for La Chappelle B. After entering village bear left up hill to Mairie and church, follow road around to left where parking is on right. There are toilets available near start. Satnav coords N46.47448 W0.32944

The walk is approx 8km with a shorter option available. It is on tracks and lanes through undulating countryside, no steep hills longer slow climbs, but if wet, could be muddy in places so appropriate footwear is recommended.

Lunch will be at La Gare restaurant at Monplaisir and consist of buffet starter, meat or fish main course, cheese, dessert, wine and coffee for €13.50. Monplaisir is just off the roundabout for Champdenier on Parthenay/Niort road.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Walk

Fri 31st July

Vouvant

Report by Tanya Lazar

A group of 18 walkers, led by Barbara Whitehouse and accompanied by one dog, meandered from Vouvant up and down little hills through some lovely shaded bits of woods. We followed along tracks and roads, which brought us through one hamlet, past several equestrian centres, a dairy farm or two, and through fields of gilded grain. The sky was a picturesque brilliant blue studded with puffy clouds, perfect for our expedition.

Lunch for 20 convivial participants was at the restaurant at Hotel du Lac about 6k from Vouvant, where we enjoyed entrée choices of pâté or salade des gesiers, pork or fish plates, and dessert of either cheese plate, chocolate cake, or poached pears with chocolate. Altogether a very enjoyable day!



Walk

Sat 8th August

Thorigné

Report by Neil Ritchie

28 walkers and 3 dogs (although it sounded like 33 at the start) assembled at Thorigné for a thoroughly agreeable walk in the woods (mostly). Bob Seager led the way, because he knew it. But then his divine powers were also evident in the cloud cover he arranged at the end of a week of scorching sunshine and the fact that he delivered us to the feeding station at Celles sur Belle before the first rain for several weeks arrived.

Half way round, Maureen was brought to earth by a dastardly rock which meant that the GT first aid kit saw the light of day for the first time that anybody could recall. Having verified that her wounds (one cut and two bruises) were only superficial Maureen was doubtless much consoled by a) offers to report the offending rock to the council; b) observations that she was the first to get plastered on a GT walk; c) suggestions that no win no fee lawyers capable of garnering enormous compensation awards must surely exist in France too.



The extreme temperatures endured earlier that week prompted some of the older GT hand to recall the canicule of 2003. At one point my reverie about the beauty of the ferns I was admiring was overwhelmed by a tale I overheard about naked people tiling a bathroom and making pipe boxes needing to get into a cold bath to revive themselves. I'm not making this up I promise.

Having survived the steep bit at the end many weary bodies were glad to sit down to food and drink, and conversation which was

so voluble that Stewart (?) got lots of laughs when he induced a silence by drumming on a wine bottle with a knife and then telling us when he had our undivided attention that he had done so because he wanted to hear what the person sitting next to him was saying.

All in all a typically entertaining GT outing. Thanks to Saint Bob for arranging it.

Second Circle

Wed 12th August

Exireuil

**Report by
Lesley Ritchie**

The Second Circle Reading Group met on 12th August for a very enjoyable discussion of Iain Banks' last novel, *The Quarry*.

Although we all rate him highly as a writer, we agreed that this was not one of his better novels.

Michele has read and enjoyed his science fiction works. As few of us have read much science fiction, we have chosen *Squares of the City* by John Brunner for our next meeting.

Race & Games Afternoon

Sat 22nd August

Lezay

**Report by Chris
Parsons**



At around 12 noon 38 punters and players arrived chez Maureen and John Buckley for the annual Horse Racing and Games Event. We were all guided to a parking space and as the sun was shining brightly the shaded areas were soon taken.

Tables and chairs were also shadily placed alongside friends.

Aperitifs were on offer and people gathered around to catch up and share news and where Roger welcomed us all and gave thanks to Maureen, John and dogs Lucy and Poppy for the use of their garden.

The first event was the picnic lunch where various dishes were eaten and shared - and then on to the sports! Dotted around the garden were numerous games such as table tennis, Molky, table football, swimming pool and the custom made boules area. This led us into the explanation of the horse racing and tote by David, who had to repeat it once or twice for those still sipping! We then formed an orderly queue (well, almost!) and placed our bets with Roger and Ann who were kindly manning the Tote. They're off!! Horses were cheered and encouraged along their way with various amusing amateur commentaries from the spectators. Winnings were collected and smiles prevailed. After the second race there was a break and the lovely pool was put into use to cool off by some of our number, where an impromptu exhibition of synchronized swimming was given by some of the ladies. (An Olympic team from Deux Sevres, perhaps?)

After the break the opportunity was available to buy a horse and the bidding was thick and fast.

The winner's owner received a proportion of the profits with the balance being used as a donation for the charity CLIC Sargent which reached a wonderful 120€. On completion of the racing the chatting and games continued to be played after which, at the end of the afternoon's fun, and as the sun went down, people packed their cars and headed for home.

Many thanks to Maureen and John for their hospitality and hard work in providing the venue and backdrop to this GT event.

NON GT ITEMS OF INTEREST

TheatriVasles:

Come along and meet the members at the Jim Luff Cockney Fun Night, with 60's and 70's music, dancing and laughter, a themed fun quiz, a Cockney sing-along PLUS a Ploughman's Supper and a taster 10-Minute Play to whet your appetite for the coming Festival.

Tickets €10 from Sally at FestiVaslestickets@gmail.com

(Tickets are also available for the 10-Minute Play Festival on 16,17,18 October - contact Sally for more details)

PATRIMOINE WEEKEND (19th, 20th September):

Oroux (79390) is a tiny commune a few kilometres from La Ferrière-en-Parthenay which has 3 chateaux, 2 of which are open for the weekend. However "Les Amis d'Oroux" are also organising guided visits both afternoons which will give a unique insight into the secret life of Oroux and how people used to live, with true anecdotes that have been passed down the generations. There will also be an exhibition of old photos and a traditional refreshment. On both Saturday 19th and Sunday 20th there will be guided visits in English at 2pm, with visits in French at 3pm and 4pm according to demand.

For more information call 05 49 63 41 09

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