

**Founded
1989**



**French
Association
3035**

January 2016 Newsletter

***Events, activities, news
and reports for members***



Fireworks, St Pardoux Photograph by David Brennan



Happy New Year to all Get Together Members

Last Chance for GT Committee

The GT AGM will be in February 2016 (see AGM details in Forthcoming Events) where new officers for the Committee are elected.

If you would like to get involved, please call the President, Roger Amsden to discuss anything you might be able to offer before 22nd January 2016.

Is there a task you could take on? Could YOU share it?

Being on the committee does take a small amount of time, but it is very rewarding – and fun!

We all have other commitments – family, UK responsibilities and such-like but we support each other – and the association, so why not give it a try?

2016 Renewal Form

Don't forget to download the **2016 Get Together Renewal Form** which is with this email (or at the back of the newsletter if you receive it by post) if you have not already renewed your membership for next year.

Please note there is a discount if you send it back with your 2016 subscription before 31st December 2015.

First Aid Volunteers Wanted

As we now hold many different events the GT Committee think it would be a good idea to have some of our members trained in first aid.

We have been in touch with John Hoyland who is an English ex-fireman living over here, as he has many links with the Fire Brigade in Parthenay.

It would probably be a full day course at a Fire Station in the area in January or February.

There might be a small cost to members cover expenses. Until we get an idea of numbers – unfortunately it is all a bit hazy.

When we know how many we are likely to have we can take it further.

Summer Event Venue

DON'T FORGET - After having held the GT summer event at Le Tallud this July and last year, we thought it would be nice to move to a new venue for 2016. Therefore would all members please keep an eye open for any local salles or other possibilities that would be suitable. We need a venue that can accommodate approximately 65 people – hopefully outside and under-cover. We need a kitchen (or decent washing up facilities at least), toilets of course and parking. Tables and chairs would be nice (but members could always bring their own if necessary). Central Deux-Sevres would be ideal but we are willing to deviate for the right place!

Any ideas ?

If so email me at gtnewsletter79@gmail.com and I will pass them onto the committee for discussion.

Walk Organisers for the South

I am really pleased to report that we now have organisers until May. Thanks to Bob Seager, Chris & Bob Parsons, Linda & Colin Vane and Jane & Fred Oram. That only leaves 7 more months to fill! So come on you volunteers – we need you!

John Buckley

Southern Co-ordinator

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Thursday 14th January, Chez Ritchie**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Tuesday 26th January**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Book Club/ Library	Mon 4 th Jan	2 – 4.00 pm	St Pardoux		
Reading Circle	Wed 6 th Jan	2.30 pm	La Villedé		
Bowling	Thurs 7 th Jan	5.00 pm	Niort		
Second Circle	Fri 8 th Jan	10.30 am	Exireuil		
Photographic Group	Mon 11 th Jan	2.00 pm	Nr L'Absie		
Walk	Sat 16 th Jan	10.30 am	Lezay		
Walk	Fri 29 th Jan	10.00 am	La Chapelle Thireuil		

Walk	Sat 13 th Feb	10.30 am	Pamproux		
History Group	Thurs 18 th Feb	3.00 pm	Menigoute		
GT Annual General Meeting	Fri 19 th Feb	11.00 am	Mazières en Gatine		

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Book Club/ Library **Mon 4th Jan** **2 – 4.00 pm** **St Pardoux**

Reading Circle **Wed 6th Jan** **2.30 pm** **La Villedé**

For our first meeting in the New Year our book choice is *Levels of Life* by Julian Barnes. It is a slim novel (only 117 pages) consisting of three separate and distinct stories but interconnected as a whole thesis. The equally short and precise review from *The Times* described it thus: 'To read it is a privilege. To have written it is astonishing'.

We shall see what our group think of it in due course.

The completed set of reviews for 2015 is published on the website and can be consulted any time.

Bowling Night **Thurs 7th Jan** **5.00 pm** **Niort**



Due to its popularity, Lesley & Neil have planned another bowling night for Thursday 7th Jan near to Niort.

Cost of bowling is approx 8 Euros per person including shoes.

It will start at 5.00 pm at the bowling alley- please allow an extra 15 mins to sort out shoes and drinks, this will be followed by a meal at Les Pyramides at 7.00 pm which is 15.00 Euros per person including wine.

Non-bowlers are also welcome to come and watch, or just join us at the restaurant.

Second Circle **Fri 8th Jan** **10.30 am** **Exireuil**

Book chosen is *Elisabeth is Missing* by Emma Healey.

Photographic Group **Mon 11th Jan** **2.00 pm** **Nr L'Absie**

The next Photography group meeting will meet at Michele & Eric Hansford's house near to L'Absie.

Come and join in and learn how to use YOUR camera!

Walk **Sat 16th Jan** **10.30 am** **Lezay**

Please note the revised date for this walk (restaurant availability).

There will be a walk of approximately 8Km, with a shorter option of 4 to 5Km. The walk will be on the flat and will comprise by-roads and well made tracks.

Never-the-less, suitable footwear should be worn given the season.

The starting point will be the extremely wide junction of the D14 Lezay to Couhé road and the D17, which goes to St Sauvant. Grid Ref: 46° 16' 34" N, 0° 0' 24" E. There are no toilets at the start.

Lunch will be taken at the Market Restaurant in Lezay, and will consist of starter, main, cheese & dessert including a ¼ litre of wine and coffee. The cost will be 16€50 and a choice of chicken or fish.

Walk **Fri 29th Jan** **10.00 am** **La Chapelle Thireuil**

The walk will start from the car park in the centre of La Chapelle Thireuil, where public toilets are available.

The main walk is 8km which will be mostly on tracks which could be muddy, so please bring appropriate footwear. A shorter walk of 4km is also available, but please note that due to the nature of the Gâtine countryside, BOTH WALKS ARE QUITE HILLY.

Lunch will be taken at L'Edelweiss Restaurant in Coulonges-sur-L'Autize (5 rue de la Gare) and the cost for a 3 course lunch with wine and coffee is €14.00 per person.

Any non-walkers are most welcome to come along and enjoy the lunch.

We must submit menu choices in advance for all three courses, so when booking your place, can you please choose from the following selections.

Starter: **Salade de Gesiers**
 Tulipe de Saison (oignons rouge, jambon de Vendée, croutons, oeuf)
 Croustilants de Misotte (fromage de Vendée)

Main: **Filet Mignon de Porc et ses légumes**
 Jambon au miel et à l'orange avec tagliatelle
 Pavé de perche, riz et petits légumes

Dessert: **Nougat glacé maison**
 Crème Brûlée
 Fondant au chocolat

Walk **Sat 13th Feb** **10.30 am** **Pamproux**

This walk will take place in and around the village of Pamproux, which is situated to the NE of La Mothe St Heray. We did it about five years ago, this time we'll do it backwards - not actually walking backwards, just in the opposite direction.

It is about 8km on quiet roads and tracks, with optional cut offs at 4km and 6 km and no, it's not flat. There are some short, sharp slopes, but not very steep or very long.

The going is generally very good, but there is a short stretch that could be muddy after a lot of rain, and strong footwear is recommended as usual.

The start will be from the car park in the centre of the village, opposite the Mairie and the Auberge du Trefle à Quatre Feuilles, where we will partake of lunch for 14€, including coffee. GPS ref N46°23.71', W 0°03.325'

History Group **Thurs 18th Feb** **3.00 pm** **Menigoute**

This month we have another Guest speaker: Nick Wells, Senior Archaeologist at Foundations Archaeology. Nick has previously undertaken analysis of a coin hoard in

2010. He has over 20 years experience in all aspects of archaeology. He has also run several projects from Cornwall to Perth. His Topic Today is:

From Gallia to Francia; The transformation of Aquitania Secunda from the 4th to the 6th centuries.

Aquitania Secunda in the 4th century was a relatively peaceful province far enough away from the Rhine frontier to be untroubled by constant border wars. Various civil wars, often fomented by rebellious military leaders in the provinces of Britain, passed the region by heading to the centre of imperial government via Arles and onwards to Rome. The province's capital, Bordeaux, and the main military post, Poitiers, were thus unscathed and the picture painted by our aristocratic sources of the region is one of tranquillity and wealth. Yet this idyllic world would come tumbling to the ground in the first two decades of the 5th century. First by the migration of a loose confederation of Germanic tribes who crossed the frozen Rhine in the winter of 406 and pushed southwards to Spain, and then in 418 by the settlement of the Visigoths in Aquitania fresh after their sacking of Rome.

Over the next hundred years the region became the centre of power politics between Imperial Rome and the dominant Visigoths – until the battle of Vouillé near Poitiers in 507 when the Visigothic king, Alaric II, was defeated by Clovis I, king of the Franks. This talk will explore the nature of late Roman society in Aquitania Secunda, the effect of the Germanic incursions into the area and examine the transition from a Visigothic kingdom to the precursor of what was to become France.

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

Please book by Thursday 11th February 2016.

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!

As many members are now choosing to arrive early and enjoy a lovely social lunch at the Auberge, Charlotte has asked that if possible, you book ahead. Please call 05 49 69 13 66.

Speak to Charlotte, her English is very good.

GT Annual
General
Meeting

Fri 19th Feb

11.00 am

Mazières en
Gatine

In accordance with article 11 of the constitution of Get Together, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Friday, 19th February, 2016 at 11.00am, at the Maison Pour Tous, Mazières-en-Gâtine. All members who have paid their 2016 subscriptions are welcome and entitled to come to the AGM without giving prior notice.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the previous AGM.
3. Matters Arising from previous Minutes.
4. President's report.
5. Treasurer's report, adoption of the 2015 accounts and appointment of an auditor to represent the membership for the 2016 accounts.
6. Other Officers' reports.
7. Election of Members to serve for a term of two years.
8. Any other business.

Members are requested to forward items pertinent for an AGM for discussion under Any Other Business to the President, Roger Amsden, by 22nd January 2016.

The President would also like to hear from anyone willing to stand for election to the Committee. Committee nomination forms are available from the Secretary and President. Completed nomination forms for election as a Committee Member must be received by the Secretary by 22nd January 2016.

The elected committee consists of the following positions:

President, Secretary, Treasurer and 3 other members (one of the three other members is elected to serve as Vice President).

Roger Amsden (President) is standing down.

John Buckley (Southern Co-ordinator) has agreed to stay for a fourth consecutive year but would prefer to stand down if anyone else is willing to step into his shoes.

Annette Green (Northern Co-ordinator), is willing to continue for a third consecutive year.

Neil Ritchie (Secretary), Eric Hansford (Treasurer), Michele Hansford (Membership Secretary) & Rebecca Sewell (Newsletter Editor) each have another year to serve.

Directions: Mazières-en-Gâtine is on the D743 between Niort and Parthenay.

Mazières has a by-pass so follow the signs into the village. In Mazières take turn towards Champdeniers follow this past the garage, take left turn into small housing estate signposted to college. At the college turn right. The Maison Pour Tous is about 50 metres further on the left, near the sports field.

At 12.00pm after the AGM there will be a Speaker - David Hardy of Blevins Franks France will be speaking on the subject of The French Inheritance Rules and the implications of the new European Succession Regulation.

Following this there will be a **Bring & Share Informal Lunch** from 12.30 pm – 3.00pm.

Wine, juice, tea & coffee will be provided free but please bring a Plate of Food to Share.

There is no need to say in advance if you are coming to the AGM but if you are staying on afterwards please fill in the booking form below as Rebecca needs to do some pre-planning.

If you would like some advice on what to bring, please call Rebecca 05 49 95 43 73.

You will also need to provide your own, crockery, cutlery, glasses, cups etc.

Please let Rebecca know if you are willing to help set-up and /or clear up the room.

If you wish to attend the lunch please complete the form below and post it back, call

or email the information to rebecca.pm@orange.fr before **Saturday 13th February 2016**

Name:

Number of People Attending:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Name of Dish:

Approx Number of Portions:

Rebecca Sewell, 6 Allee de Longeville, Fenery 79450

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Southern Xmas Walk & Lunch

Sat 5th Dec

Rom

**Report by Julia
& Peter Murray**



For our annual Christmas bimble, we all met at the appointed car park in Rom. It was well attended consisting of twenty one walkers and three dogs. It was a fantastic sunny day in December while in the UK they were being battered by eighty mph winds and rain causing extensive flooding. This is probably the result of global warming, but there are always going to be winners and losers! We set off at the appointed time and because it was so warm most people shed clothing en route. Not too much I may add! The route was along quiet roads and country lanes so the dogs had a run and behaved well, even Lucy remained within sight. Most people opted for the long walk of 8 km. The Christmas dinner was held at Mad Hatters and 24 people had an excellent meal. After all the eating and drinking had finished there was a raffle for a bottle of bubbly, which was won by Jane, Fred and Janice. I'm sure everyone would like to thank Brian and Joan for once again organizing the Christmas event.

**Northern Xmas
Walk & Lunch**

Fri 11th Dec

Menigoute

**Report by Bob
Seager**



The heading says that there was a Christmas Walk and Lunch, but to judge by the numbers it was more of a Christmas Lunch with a walk as an appetite stimulant for the hardy walkers. Sixteen of us plus three of our energetic four legged friends assembled at the Etang de Bois Pouvreau on a day which was not very promising, though, happily, it got steadily better and it didn't rain. We set off up a muddy path with just enough of a slope to liven up the circulation. After this we followed a route on quiet roads interspersed with more mud, guaranteed to ensure that the dogs would get into a state designed to produce a filthy car.

The last stretch was around the lake (where one dog did thoughtfully go for a swim to wash off the worst of the mud) bringing us back to the cars and ready for lunch. By the time the non energetic had been added we numbered 46 who sat down to lunch at the Auberge des Voyageurs in Ménigoute, where a festively decorated dining room awaited us. A copious and enjoyable English style Christmas meal was served, and by the time we had finished eating, drinking, and generally carousing it was turned four o'clock.

At the end of the meal there was a free raffle and the first prize of a bottle of Champagne went to a particularly worthy cause - thanks, that'll go down nicely over Christmas.

Our thanks to Les Green for another enjoyable event – and Annette for much of the organisation by proxy via China!

**Xmas Social
Happening**

Mon 14th Dec

Chey

**Report by David
Sewell**

Lots of members from both the North & South filled Bob & Margaret's kitchen to catch up, swap gossip and Christmas cards.

The room was full of noise and Christmas hugs and discussions of who was going back to UK and who was staying in France for the Festive season. The last of the GT Calendars were sold, so well done to everybody who took photos, voted for them or bought a calendar.

We all chatted and ate the best home-made mince pies I have ever tasted. I believe a big thank you must go to Maureen Buckley for these! We also drank Bob's Mulled Wine and after interrogation, I'm not sure exactly how much alcohol was in there. Bob claimed it was quite weak – good job I wasn't driving home – or was I? Can't remember, it must have been the wine!

Anyway a big thanks to Bob & Margaret Seager for opening up their home, as they do this time every year.



On this warm winter's day we were given an even warmer welcome by Kate and Grant to their annual invitation to board their model trains.

The locomotives were ready, the fires stoked up (in the woodburner) and great clouds of steam billowed from the kettle in the kitchen where numerous cups of tea and coffee were served to all new arrivals. Twenty five of us tucked into a weihnachtstollen, gevulde speculaas, but most of all the Mince Pies that we all came for!

There were some faces that were new to some of us so new acquaintances were made.

Then two floors upwards and, once recovered from that, we admired the long trains winding their way

through the rafters and roofbeams, crossing bridges spanning the stairwell, then stopping at stations and

departing again for their next journey. All together a thrilling experience!

That leaves us to thank Kate and Grant for their hospitality and hope that we will be invited again next year!!

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

Martin Hughes – Menigoute

Russell and Linda Ridley - Exireuil

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