

**Founded
1989**



**French
Association
3035**

February 2016 Newsletter

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



Bread, Parthenay Photograph by David Sewell

Walk Organisers for the South

As last month's appeal for organisers seems to have fallen on deaf ears, can I re-iterate the need for volunteers for June onwards. September is already covered.

There seems to be a feeling out there that it is difficult to find restaurants which are open or will open on a Saturday lunch time. In the south, it is clearly not the case.

Anyone who is reluctant to organise a walk for this reason should contact me,

John Buckley
Southern Co-ordinator

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Book Club/Library	Mon 1 st Feb	2-4.00 pm	St Pardoux
Reading Circle	Mon 8 th Feb	2.30 pm	La Lande
Walk	Sat 13 th Feb	10.30 am	Pamproux
History Group	Thurs 18 th Feb	3.00 pm	Menigoute
GT AGM	Fri 19 th Feb	11.00 am	Mazières en Gatine
Photographic Group	Mon 22 nd Feb	2.00 pm	Cherveux
Lunch Club	Thurs 25 th Feb	11.30 am	Seran
Walk	Fri 26 th Feb	10.30 am	Mouilleron en Pareds, Vendee
Walk	Sat 12 th March	10.00 am	St Vincent la Chatre

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Monday 15th February, Chez Green**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Wednesday 17th February – *NOTE EARLY DATE***
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Book Club/ Mon 1st Feb 2 – 4.00 pm St Pardoux Library

Love reading? Miss your library? Want to try new authors without it costing you? You can always go along to your local Biblioteque who carry a selection of English books. Or an even better idea is to go along to the monthly Book Club/Library which has over 1,500 paperbacks, a selection of which are available free at the monthly meetings. It's a great way to spend an afternoon, including a cuppa and biscuits.

Reading Mon 8th Feb 2.30 pm La Lande Circle

At February's meeting we shall be discussing *Custard Tarts and Broken Hears* by Mary Gibson.

It is the story of a factory girl in Bermondsey through World War I.

This is the Pearce Duff custard factory - and the girls who work there are of course known as "custard tarts". But now they are up in arms about pay and condition as the shadow of the war looms ever closer.

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 3.00 pm Menigoute Feb

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. The topic 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).

**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 11.00 am, 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.

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.

<u>Photographic Group</u>	<u>Mon 22nd Feb</u>	<u>2.00 pm</u>	<u>Cherveux</u>
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The next Photography group meeting will meet at Jim Hutchison's house at Cherveux.

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

<u>Lunch Club</u>	<u>Thurs 25th Feb</u>	<u>11.30 am</u>	<u>Seran</u>
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The next Lunch club will be held chez Stubbs on Thursday 25th February at 11.30am.

<u>Walk</u>	<u>Fri 26th Feb</u>	<u>10.30 am</u>	<u>Mouilleron en Pareds, Vendee</u>
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Please note later start time

We will meet at the large car park in the centre of the village on the main La Chataigneraie/ Chantonnay road D949B. Toilets available. A walk of approx 7.5 kms. Shorter option available.

Walk consists of country tracks which may be muddy therefore appropriate footwear needed, hilly in places, good views and points of interest.

Lunch at Le Clemenceau Restaurant in the centre of the village of Mouilleron en Pareds.

Directions to the start-

From Parthenay take the La Chataigneraie road D949B via Secondigny, then the Chantonnay road D949B.

From Niort take D744 via Coulonges l'Autize to L'Absie then D949B to La Chataigneraie then D949B to Chantonnay. Mouilleron en Pareds is approx 10kms from La Chataigneraie on the main road.

Satellite co-ordinates 46.676 degrees north , 0.849. degrees west.

Directions to restaurant-

Le Clemenceau is situated in the centre of the village at 24 rue National. It is a short walk from the main car park. There is parking at the rear of the restaurant for non-walkers.

Lunch

Starter, main course, dessert, coffee +wine for 15 Euros.

Please indicate when booking your preferred choice of main course either- lemon +garlic chicken or fish pie or mushroom+ blue cheese parcels.

Walk**Sat 12th Mar****10.00 am****St Vincent la
Chatre****PLEASE NOTE THE 10am START**

The walk will start in the centre of St Vincent la Chatre which can be found on D105 from Lezay or the D305 from Melle. We will meet in the car park at St Vincent in front of the church and by the side of La Poste.

If approaching from Lezay turn right at the roundabout having entered St Vincent but if

you are approaching from Melle you will see the car park on your right. There are no toilets here for our use.

The walk will be 8kms on small roads and tracks, with a couple of slight hills, around the countryside of the area. There will also be a short walk of 4kms for those who prefer. As the route is through countryside and woods stout walking shoes should be worn, as always.

Lunch will be at Berlands (under new management) in Lezay and will consist of starter, main course, cheese and dessert, including wine and coffees for 15€. Anyone preferring a fish main course should specify at booking.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Walk

Mon 28th
Dec

La Grimaudière

Report by John
Matthews



After the excesses of Christmas dining, it was a delight to gather in La Grimaudière for the final GT Walk of the year. 15 eager souls, and one representative (Yorkie, Bess) of the GT canine section, set off in unseasonally fine weather on the 'figure of 8'



route cunningly devised by Kate and Grant, to enable anyone with walking difficulties to take a shorter route, if necessary- though no-one took up the opportunity! Starting with the obligatory group photo (to ensure the same number of members return as set out-and to identify anyone going missing en route?) we admired the lavoir near the car park before passing on, via a small lake, to the church then on to the renovated flour mill, in the hamlet of Surin.. Here we learned that the 17th Century water wheel had been restored to its former glory and that now, on a number of days in the year, the mill was again producing flour. A further lavoir was admired as were many large logis and maisons de maitres hinting at the former economic importance of the area. During the walk we marvelled at the impressive source of the River Dive (from which the walk 'Le Sentier Divin' takes its name), and the intricate network of streams leading off it, along with the well-kept small bridges enabling walkers to cross them. The water was so clear that wild 'mache' grows in it, while the mild weather meant we were able (at the end of December!) to spot some kingcups growing along one of the banks. For lunch, there were 18 of us who (having pulled the crackers provided by Kate) were able to enjoy the excellent meal (both content & value for money) served by the cheerful staff of Le Bacchus in Martaizé. Our grateful thanks to Kate & Grant for organising yet another fascinating walk and arranging such an enjoyable lunch. A fitting end to GT's 2015 walking programme, and our appetites have been whetted for this next year's programme.

Bowling

Thurs 7th
Jan

Niort

Report by Chris
Parsons



At 5.00 pm 22 people gathered together at Bowling de Chauray near Niort. There should have been 26 but unfortunately 4 of the players were mislaid for a short while at the other bowling alley just down the road. Who were they? Shhhhhh! When we finally joined our teams (whoops!) and had chosen a bowling ball to suit our requirements from the rainbow coloured selection available, scores were quickly brought up to date and the competition

continued.

Each team played 2 games and the banter was flowing as were the drinks either with or without alcohol! There were lots of smiling faces and supporting cheers from team

members.

After the score had been calculated we repaired to Les Pyramides Restaurant, just along the road, where a substantial meal was enjoyed by all from the broad selection of all courses available (especially the desserts!) After we were replete our Chairman, Roger, stood and gave our thanks to Lesley and Neil Ritchie for organising a superb evening for us. Then came the announcement of the best score prizes. Ian, with a score of 165, won a bottle of Champagne for the men's highest score in one game, as he did last year. Chris Parsons also received a bottle of Champagne with 119 for the ladies. Bob Parsons received a mention for the highest overall score.

Thank you again to Lesley and Neil for this fun filled evening.

*We are hoping to organise another bowling night in October – look out for details.



**Photographic
Group**

**Mon 11th
Jan**

Nr L'Absie

**Report by Jim
Hutchison**

GT Photo Group meeting was hosted on January 11th by Michele and Eric Hansford at La Bourse and organised by David Brennan. Including David there were eight enthusiastic members all determined to find out more about understanding their cameras and improving their photography. Roger Amsden showed us a lovely selection of close up flower shots from his garden this summer, Annette Green had good Xmas scenes.

In the short time the group has been in operation David Brennan has helped all of us to better understand our cameras and a good friendly atmosphere exists. Rebecca Sewell photographed a statue against the light, - by using spot metering and zooming in she was able to pick out the detail which before was black. This is just one of the techniques on most modern cameras and finding out about them and how to use them is very worthwhile. I showed a selection of pictures I took in Paris at Christmas, one of which was the Big Wheel which created much interest, especially when I said I went up in it to get pics of traffic in the Champs Elysses.

Plans are being made for Photo Shoots, outdoors as the weather improves and members can put into practice getting the best out of their cameras and indoor shoots like Still life as well. A Picture of the Month could also be chosen

Thanks to Michele and Eric for a continual supply of tea and coffee and delightful cake. The next Photo Group meeting will be at Cherveux on 22nd February, newcomers will be welcome.



Lunch Club**Tues 12th Jan****Exireuil****Report by Julia Murray**

Although this month's lunch and wine club theme was "Scottish" as it was close to Burns night. The chosen wines were from the "new world " and as Scotland apparently tried to produce their own wine last year but failed miserably, as there was not enough sun, what a surprise !!! We started with a white wine from south Africa, followed by 3 reds from Australia, New Zealand and Argentina. As we tried the wine Keith gave us a very interesting description and history on each one.

For lunch there was a salmon dip and toast, followed by 2 soups, Cock-a-leekee and a fish soup. Then came the puddings and all 3 contained Whisky, cream and all things bad, so it follows that they tasted good, all bowls were scraped clean without any complaints. The clan meeting ended with a feeling of being full, contented and very pleased with ourselves.

Thank you Annette for hosting, Keith for the wine talk and everyone else for all the good cooking.

Walk**Sat 16th Jan****Lezay****Report by Roger Amsden**

On a beautifully crisp, frosty and sunny morning 13 happy walkers and 4 even happier dogs set off for a bracing walk around the byways of Lezay. As it was frosty, the mud was minimal with the exception of a flooded lane that we looked at in disbelief when we were directed that way! Wet suits were not needed however as it looked worse than it was! So suitably refreshed and invigorated we headed off to the Market Restaurant where we were joined by 1 other for a splendid 4 course feast! With many thanks to John and Maureen for organising the lovely walk and splendid lunch.

**First Aid Course****Mon 25th Jan****Parthenay****Report by John Buckley**

Nine GT members arrived at the Centre de Secours in Parthenay on a lovely sunny morning at the ridiculously early hour of 9am. For some of us, this had involved a start at 7.30am – unheard of in recent years!

We were made very welcome initially by John Hoyland, a retired British fireman who works as a volunteer for the Sapeur-Pompiers mainly in Parthenay. Following a very welcome coffee we met the Station commander, who spoke excellent English and Nicholas, a professional member of the team, who spoke only limited English and was bravely presenting his first course to a group of English people, which he did with great good humour.

The Department of Deux Sèvres is very keen to increase the numbers of people trained in basic life saving and resuscitation techniques because of problems of response times in the remoter parts of the Department. Following successful completion of the course, attendees become certified "first aiders" at the most basic level and will be included on the lists of such people maintained by the Prefecture.

We were taught the basic techniques of assessing situations, reducing hazards, determining what action to take in terms of severity of injury/illness. Following on from this, we then learnt how to deal with choking events, situations where the casualty is not breathing including CPR and the use of defibrillators. We had plenty of opportunity to practise our newly learned skills on each other and their collection of dummies.



After lunch we had the rare privilege of being shown the Control Room followed by the Garages and the vehicles including their newest appliance with it's' state of the art equipment. The course was mainly delivered in very clear French (as is the law!), with aided and abetted by John Hoyland in English when clarification was necessary.



By 5pm, we were all exhausted and practically brain dead but a lot wiser! All in all, a very worthwhile day and I would highly recommend it to anyone should the opportunity arise again. Thanks are due to the Sapeur-Pompiers and John Hoyland in Parthenay and Roger Amsden for organising our participation.

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

There are no new members this month.

Non GT Items of Interest

Panto Time Again!

A date for your diary: On the evenings of 11th & 12th March, Pommeraie Players will be performing their version of "Puss in Boots", a traditional pantomime. The performances will take place in the "Salle des Fêtes" at La Pommeraie. Tickets will cost 7€ (adult) and 3€ (child).

In previous years Pommeraie Players have met the major part of the cost of a defibrillator for the commune and last year made donations of 800€ and 200€ to Cancer Support Deux Sevres and La Croix Rouge (following the attacks in Paris) respectively.

Further details will be circulated as soon as they become available

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