

**Founded
1989**



**French
Association
3035**

March 2016 Newsletter

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



The Towers, La Rochelle Photograph by Annette Green

Walk Organisers for the South

Following last month's appeal, we now have volunteers for July & August. We really do need volunteers for June and then October to December inclusive. Thanks once again to those who have volunteered already – especially to those who are organising more than one walk in the year.

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 John Buckley for a chat to sort something out.

GT History Group Library Donation

The John & Pauline Tonks Book Collection

GT History Group are very pleased to accept the collection of history books and genealogical tables

of English and European royal families from the estate of John and Pauline Tonks who died within a few months of each other recently.

John and Pauline had been members of GT since coming to France in 2007, following their retirement and their marriage in England. Both had a longstanding interest in genealogy and as well as running courses in the subject for GT members, John had traced his own family back as far as King Canute. A particular interest was the family trees of English and European royal families and their interconnections as a result of which the Collection contains a large number of history books on monarchs and prominent public figures of their time.

These have now been incorporated into the History Group Library, details of which

are available on the GT website, and can be accessed by all GT members. The History Group is delighted to receive this kind donation from John and Pauline who, as well as being members of Get Together were also members of Les Jardiniers de Poitou gardening club and active in raising funds for the Combined Services Support Group.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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
Book Club/Library	Mon 7 th Mar	2 – 4.00 pm	St Pardoux
Walk	Sat 12 th Mar	10.00 am	St Vincent la Chatre
Reading Circle	Mon 21 st Mar	2.30 pm	Seran
Walk	Fri 25 th Mar	10.30 am	Rouille
Walk	Sat 9 th Apr	10.30 am	Loizé
Quiz Night	Thurs 14 th Apr	7.00 pm	Menigoute
History Group	Thurs 21 st Apr	3.00 pm	Menigoute

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Wednesday 2nd March, Chez Ritchie**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Friday 25th March**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Photographic Group **Mon 22nd Feb** **2.00 pm** **Cherveux**

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!

Lunch Club **Thurs 25th Feb** **11.30 am** **Seran**

The next Lunch club will be held chez Stubbs on Thursday 25th February at 11.30am.

If anyone is interested in joining us for a very convivial lunch please call Annette Green.

Walk **Fri 26th Feb** **10.30 am** **Mouilleron en Pareds, Vendee**

Please note later start time

We will meet at the large car park in the centre of the village on the main La Chataigneraie/ Chantonay 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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

Anyone preferring a fish main course should specify at booking. Please confirm your booking no later than Monday 7th March with Chris and Bob Parsons.

Reading
Circle

Mon 21st Mar

2.30 pm

Seran

We have a 600-page book chosen for us for the March meeting. *The Paying Guests* by Sarah Waters is set in 1922 and described as a love story that is also a crime story. It won the Sunday Times Fiction Book of the Year with its "magnetic storytelling" so we should have lots to talk about when we come to discuss it. All our previous book reviews can be found on the GT website.

Walk

Fri 25th Mar

10.30 am

Rouille

Our walk will be at Rouille, 10.30 am start from the car park in front of the restaurant, Le Saint Valentin, 11 Place du Puits, 86480, on the D611, very easy to find.

The start and finish of the walk will be through the town otherwise we will be on quiet and very, very flat tarmaced lanes and grassy tracks which could be muddy, suitable footwear needed.

The walk is approx 8.5 km with a shorter option of 5 km. Toilets are available near the car park.

Lunch is at Le Saint Valentin - €15:

Buffet D'entrees

Noix de joue Porc confite, pomme de terre qieueille

ou

Saumonette avec sauce de mer et pomme vapeur

Fromage

Buffet dessert

Cafe et Vin

Please indicate your choice of Pork or Saumonette when booking

Walk

Sat 9th April

10.30 am

Loizé

We would like as many people as possible to come on this walk and that includes members north of the A10!

This walk of 8km and shorter version of 4.5km is on flat open countryside in and around Loizé, which is situated on the D110 between Les Alleuds and Chef-Boutonne.

The walk is on by-roads and tracks, some short stretches are very muddy but we hope that they will be dried out by April.

There are public toilets and ample parking in the Rue de la Mairie, Loizé.

Lunch will be taken at the Hotel Voyageurs, Chef-Boutonne. Three courses, wine and coffee at a cost of €16. Non walkers are very welcome.

Quiz Night

Thurs 14th
April

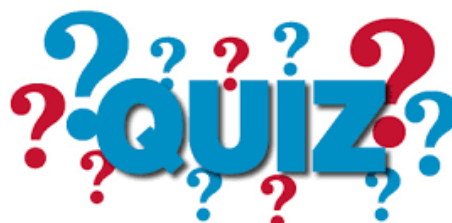
7.00 pm

Menigoute

GT Quiz Night at the Auberge des Voyageurs, Menigoute

This popular general knowledge quiz makes a welcome return for those of you who like to put your wits (and memory) to the test.

The evening will follow the usual format with four rounds of questions, a simple meal served during the interval followed by a further four rounds of questions.



The quiz will start promptly at 7.00 pm but the doors will be open from 6.30 pm for those wishing to stimulate their brain cells with a pre-quiz drink.
 Your quiz master will once again be Jonathan Townsend and the questions have been devised by Jackie Lockett.
 Maximum of four quizzers per table with an entry fee of €2 per person.
 Supper will cost 10 euros each and consist of a main course plus desert followed by tea or coffee. Details to follow but fish and vegetarian options will be available.
 As usual there will be the glittering array of prizes for the know-alls and a consolation prize for "les nuls". All good fun.

History Group **Thurs 21st** **3.00 pm** **Menigoute**
April



This month our presenter is Gaynor Mickelborough speaking on *The Search for Marianne.*

The search for Marianne began with the advent of the *First Republic* in 1792.

The new Republic sought a new and distinct symbol to represent its aims and philosophies, and sought a figurehead that would unite a divided nation behind the ideals of *liberté, égalité, fraternité* rather than the absolutist dictat of the *Ancien Régime*. In order to achieve this end, Marianne has had to be essentially all things to all men, and (to quote the French government's official website) had to appear 'at times fiery and warlike', whilst at the same time displaying the 'pacific and nurturing' republican breast. An obviously impossible task for a man, but no less difficult for a woman in a man's world: unless, of course, one accepts that Marianne's obvious and well-endowed femininity was (and still is?) nothing other than a male construct – a product of the search by innumerable French revolutionaries, presidents and politicians for the perfect allegorical image in an imperfect social and political milieu. Consequently, Marianne has been born and reborn in various guises during the course of five republics and two world wars – a topic that provides us with an illuminating study in itself. But perhaps the more pertinent question is – have they found her yet or is it a question of 'dreaming on'? The cost is **€5.00 per head**, to cover refreshments, hire of the room & heating (if needed).

Please book by Thursday 14th April 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.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Walk

Fri 29th Jan

La Chapelle Thireuil

Report by
the Canine
Contingent



Seven of us dogs set off from the village of La Chapelle Thireuil on a foggy morning, with 22 of our human companions. We were two black labs, a border collie, a cocker spaniel, a border terrier and a pair of setter/collie crosses. Everyone was wrapped up well at the start of the walk, but we could see that the sun was trying to break through.

The day was a rare break in a spell of rainy weather, so as we headed for the country lanes, the seven of us canines looked forward to trudging through the mud.

We weren't disappointed. As we ventured through the Gâtine countryside, our paws, legs and underbellies were caked in the stuff, it was great!

Back at the car park, it was time to transfer the dirt into our owners' vehicles. Well, after hearing that we wouldn't be invited to lunch at the Edelweiss restaurant in Coulonges, we felt it was the very least we could do.

As we waited patiently for our owners to finish dining, our highly trained noses detected all manner of delicious aromas, pork, ham, even a whiff of freshly caught perch. The desserts were not quite as appealing to us carnivores however, so as the humans chatted over crème brûlée, chocolate fondant and nougat with ice-cream, we settled down for a well-earned nap.

We would also like to thank Brad and Sally for putting together such a lovely walk, arranging perfect weather and finding such a great restaurant!

Walk

Sat 13th Feb

Pamproux

Report by
Margaret Baldwin

Before leaving for the walk I had an email from my brother in Boston, Massachusetts. "Hi, I hope that your weather is lousy, wet, cold and cloudy because we are into snow with freezing temperatures of -5 and I'm jealous of the warmth you're having" I think I will send him a copy of this report!

When the monsoon dissipated and an early April shower replaced it, walkers, who had parked up, reluctantly emerged from their cocoons and after a short discussion it was agreed that the walk could not take place. OK, but then the clouds parted and the sun came out, so seven of us, and two dogs (who had no choice in the matter) decided to give it a go. We set off and were just venturing into the countryside when the heavens opened deluging us with stinging rain, so much so it was necessary to shelter by a

hedge until it was possible to continue. Our leader said if we carried on up the road we would shortly come to a left hand turning where we would be more sheltered. Somehow the shortly became somewhat elasticised, but resolutely we continued up to the turning and across the fields immersed in periods of rain, heavy rain and strong winds and in addition to all of this we also somehow managed to encounter two of Bob's 'slight' inclines, amazing! On level ground again it was then decided it would perhaps be inadvisable to do the full 8 K and that enough was enough. I mean just how wet can you get? We continued past a very fast flowing waterway, which contained slightly more water than the paths we had just walked, and back to the car park to find some dry clothing.

Thank you Bob for arranging the walk and Restaurant and could we please try the walk again in more favourable conditions, because it looked, through the veil of rain, to be very picturesque.

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

There are no new members this month.

Non GT Items of Interest

EU UK Referendum – VOTING

A GT Member Writes:

We have received an application to remain on the Electoral Register of the constituency in Yorkshire where we lived before moving to France and where we have been registered annually for a postal vote to enable us to vote in UK General Elections. This is due to expire in April and we have applied for its renewal.

I spoke to the lady in the office dealing with voter registrations and she confirmed that so long as we have been absent from UK for less than 15 years we would continue to remain on the electoral roll and would therefore be eligible to vote in the Referendum on continued UK membership of EU which is likely to be held later this year and could be held as early as June.

I understand that the criterion for voting in this Referendum, which has only recently been agreed, is inclusion on the current Electoral Register which is being updated at this time.

You may be already aware of this, but there may be other members who will wish to vote in the Referendum who are not aware of the need to be included on the current electoral register.

So act now!

Reaction Theatre Association Grand Quiz Night

The Reaction Theatre Committee are pleased to announce a Grand Quiz Night to be held on Saturday 5th. March 2016 in the Foyer of the petit theatre in Secondigny open to all members, their families and friends – including GT members. Doors open at 7.00 pm snacks and aperitifs 7.30 pm and quiz starts at 8.00 pm

We are asking for a donation of one euro per person to provide for the prizes. Drinks and snacks will be available at the bar, however we would ask members to bring a plate of food and there will be an honesty box for the drinks which will be on a self service basis with a suggestion of one euro per drink.

We are looking for teams of four with a minimum of three and a maximum of five

persons. This is very much a fun quiz and will feature video clips, pictures on a large screen and short comedy clips between quizzes. There will also be audience participation. Points will be awarded for correct answers and points mean prizes to winning teams. So it is very much a quiz with a difference.

With apologies to the late lamented Humphrey Lyttelton the lovely 'Samantha' will be maintaining the scores and hopefully keeping the teams in some sort of order.

This will be an evening just to enjoy yourselves, have some fun, meet members of Reaction Theatre. So get your teams organised and come up with suitable team names. I would appreciate knowing your team name before the evening so it can be put on the scoreboard.

We very much hope to see you on Saturday 5th. March.

Ralph Bramley For Reaction Theatre.

ralph.bramley@hotmail.com 05 49 64 65 54

The UK Car Hire Rip-off

Before recently going over to the UK I was mindful of comments friends have made over the perils of hiring a car in the UK – problems with insurance and age of the driver.

The question of my being older than 70 did not arise as the web sites seemed to cater for a range up to 99 years of age. It was insurance where there was a trap for the unwary.

I booked a car on the internet through an agent [HolidayAutos] which offered a genuine discount on the prices published on the Hire Companies' websites at the same time offering insurance to cover the excess charges which would be at risk as these excess charges varied between £900 and £1200. I chose to ignore this opportunity and left it until arriving at the point of collection of the car – big mistake!

The cost of Excess Protection Insurance through HolidayAutos would have been £6.60 per day. At the collection of the car the charge offered by Hertz was £20 per day which I refused because the hire charges for the Ford Focus were only £12.50 per day. To me, clearly a rip-off.

Surprisingly, when I returned home I checked on the internet with all the Hire Companies that were at the airport only to find that not one of these companies advertised the cost of their Excess Protection Insurance each stating that it could be purchased when collecting the car [not when booking the car through their website.]

The Hertz check-in employee rubbished the Insurance offered by HolidayAutos but when checking it at home I found that it was a good policy provided by AXA.

Therefore,

*Do book through an agent to obtain a better hire price,

*Do take out Excess Cover Insurance either privately or through an agent before collecting the car.

*Do NOT rely on a Car Hire Co. to give you the best prices for hire or insurance.

K. R. Mousdale

PS For my next trip to the UK I attempted to follow my own advice only to find that the cheaper Insurance through Holiday Autos was not an option. Following a telephone conversation with them in which I “asked” them to prove that they were not discriminating against me for some unstated reason, they confirmed that Enterprise Car Rentals would not allow Holiday Autos to advertise this insurance when

Enterprise's cars were chosen for hire – presumably as an “encouragement” to take out the insurance when collecting the car, at a greatly inflated price.

Cheap and reliable cover can be obtained through www.insurance4carhire.com

Panto Time Again!

Just to remind members, due circumstances beyond our control, Pommeraie Players have had to cancel the show in March. It has been rescheduled for November and further details will be circulated closer the time.

We also hope to put together a revue, consisting of sketches & music (?....) in March 2017.

John Buckley
(on behalf of Pommeraie Players)

Published by: Get Together, 10a Rue du Four a Tuiles, 79410, Cherveux
05.49.17.11.20 2ritchies@orange.fr

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