

*Founded
1989*



*French
Association
3035*

September 2016 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news
and reports for members*



La Montgolfiade de Thouars Photograph by Rebecca Sewell

GT Photographic Competition 2017 – CLOSES END OF SEPTEMBER

The theme for this year is *La Vie Française*. Your pictures can be of any subject matter which you feel best expresses life in France and obviously they must have been taken somewhere within France. What do you think best portrays France and why we have chosen to make it our home (or even second home)? The seasons, landscapes, French holiday destinations, local animals and wildlife, French food, sports, heritage – in fact anything.....FRENCH! Over to you!

Each member may submit up to four photographs.

Photographs must be in landscape format (rather than portrait). Closing date for submission of entries will be **midnight 30th September 2016**, please email your photos to **gtphotocomp@gmail.com** including your name and stating where in France the picture was taken.

After the closing date the members will be invited to vote for their favourites.

The 12 photos with the most votes will be chosen for the 2017 calendar. There will also be a prize for the picture that receives the most votes.

Full terms and conditions on GT Website www.gettogether-france.org click on the EVENTS Tab, then click on Forthcoming Events and scroll to the bottom and find Calendar Competition Rules.

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Tuesday 4th October Chez Brennan**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Tuesday 20th September – NOTE**
EARLY DEADLINE
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

Proposed Family History Group

I propose to host Monthly meetings from January - April 2017, followed by (if they are a success) October 2017 - April 2018. At the first meeting we would discuss what dates would suit most people.

Meetings would be at St Jean de Sauves. I am not a professional genealogist but have more than 50 experience in "doing" my own trees and several years experience mentoring others. I can offer quite a lot of expertise to the general researcher and point people in the right direction for research in anything out of my experience. As well as hosting the meetings I would be able to help online.

I would not follow a strict programme as I think it is highly unlikely that all attendees would be at the same level of research and half the fun would be helping each other. Coffee, tea and biscuits provided.

If you are interested, please let me know.

Kate Sangster

Any Ideas?

After having held the GT summer event at Le Tallud again this July, we thought it would be nice to possibly move to a new venue for next year. So 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 the ideal area to be looking!!

Any ideas?

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Second Circle	Mon 5 th Sept	10.30 am	La Bourse
Book Library	Mon 5 th Sept	2 – 4.00 pm	St Pardoux
Walk	Sat 10 th Sept	10.00 am	Rouillé
Photo Club	Mon 12 th Sept	2.00 pm	Saivres
History Group	Thurs 15 th Sept	3.00 pm	Menigoute
Historical Walk & Picnic	Wed 21 st Sept	10.00 am	Scillé
Vinyard Tour & Lunch	Sat 24 th Sept	12.00 Noon	Domaine d'Enchantoir
Reading Circle	Thurs 29 th Sept	2.30 pm	Clave
Walk	Sat 15 th Oct	10.30 am	Châtillon, Vienne
Quiz	Thurs 10 th Nov	TBA	Menigoute
Bowling Night	Wed 23 rd Nov	TBA	Niort

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Second Circle Mon 5th Sept 10.30 am La Bourse

We will be discussing *Hope in a Ballet Shoe: Orphaned by War, Saved by Ballet* by Michaela de Prince.

Book Library Mon 5th Sept 2 – 4.00 pm St Pardoux

The next library day will be as usual at Chez Brennan at St Pardoux. It's a great way to spend an afternoon, including a cuppa and biscuits.

We are always pleased to receive donations of paperbacks in good condition!

Walk Sat 10th Sept 10.00 am Rouillé



Our walk starts at 10am from the Etang du Moulin, Rouillé. Rouillé is on the D611 approximately mid way between St Maixent l'Ecole and Lusignan.

From the centre of Rouillé take the D26 towards Sanxay and Etang du Moulin.

Whilst still in the town, continue straight ahead at the cross roads direction St Germier, Etang du Moulin and Crieuil (rue de Gatine). The car park is about 3km on the left. (GPS 46° 26' 16.5"N 0° 00' 58" E.

The walk will be approx 7km with a shorter walk of 3.5km. A slight hill at the start of the walk then we will be walking on quiet lanes and over the 'plains' on good tracks, ideal for the dogs to be let loose. We pass through a couple of hamlets one which has farmed geese for centuries, there are several information signs telling us the history of the area. There are toilets at the car park.

The meal will be at the St Valentin in the centre of Rouillé at 12 noon. The cost will be 16€ and comprises buffet starter, main course, cheese and buffet dessert. Wine and coffee included.

The choices of main course are duck, salmon or pasta ratatouille.

Photo Club Mon 12th Sept 2.00 pm Saivres

The next Photography group meeting will meet at Roger Amsden' house at Saivres. Come and join in and learn how to use YOUR camera! This time we will be discussing computer programs to enhance your photos.

History Group Thurs 15th Sept 3.00 pm Menigoute

***Agnes Sorel, the first official mistress to a French King* – Presenter: Robert Pierson**

It was Joan of Arc who got the Oscar. It was Joan the martyr whose gilded statue would stand in Paris.

It was Joan who was beatified, "Saint Joan". Plays extol her courage. And yet, her true impact on the 100 years war, against the English was small. Perhaps she did crown and encourage the timid, fearful, dithering Dauphin who became Charles VII. And yet, there in the shadows, stands a second woman who really did inspire

Charles to earn his title, "Charles the Victorious", for expelling the English, the mighty English, from France: and she was Agnes Sorel.

Pope Pius II, a contemporary, wrote of her, "A certain Agnes, called the Beautiful, of noble origin, came to the court of the king (1444). She was so very, very, beautiful that she stole a king's heart. In a little time, his passion became a kind of madness; he could not bear to live even an hour without her. Whether dining, or in the Counsel chamber, or in his bed chamber he wanted her by his side."

The story of Agnes Sorel is, in one sense, bright and lovely; we know, precisely, what she looked like and we know something of her influence at court. In another sense, she remains a tragic figure, dying young. She might have been murdered. Courtiers were ever competitive, conniving, often nasty, often vicious.

So, be reminded of a modern tragedy and of another beautiful, tragic mistress who died young and who might have been murdered. Perhaps Agnes Sorel and Marilyn Monroe compare notes, out there....somewhere over the rainbow.

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

Please book by Thursday 8th September 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, call 05 49 69 13 66. (She speaks excellent English.)

Historical
Walk

Wed 21st Sept

10.00 am

Scillé

& Picnic

Joyce Roberts is organising a walk with a difference for GT in Scillé on Wednesday the 21st of September, which will begin with around 5km in the morning to see Chateau La Verdonniere and La Touche-Paris (now in a hamlet called La Fouctiere), followed by a bring-your-own picnic lunch.

After lunch there will be a 6 or 7km walk in the afternoon to see Saint-Marc, the church at Scillé and

La Volette. The theme is local history, concentrating on the Vendée War in 1793-5.

Vinyard Tour Sat 24th Sept 12.00 Noon Domaine d'Enchantoir Beryl Brennan



Visit to Domaine de l'Enchantoir, Chavannes, 49260, Le Puy-Notre-Dame. See www.enchantoir.fr

Price €15 per person. What is included?

We will meet at the Domaine at noon for a buffet lunch of local produce plus two wines from the vineyard.

After lunch we will have a conducted tour of the vineyard to include an explanation of the vine growing and soil working, and a visit to the cellar with an explanation of the wine making process.

We'll also go into the troglodyte cave where there is a pictorial explanation of the 'methode traditionnelle'.

Booking in advance is essential

Reading Circle Thurs 29th Sept 2.30 pm Clave

What would you do if you found out that your husband, father, son was not who you thought. All his life Luke has hidden the truth about himself and his identity but now he has nowhere left to run and must reveal the truth no matter the cost to himself, his family and the community. *The New Woman* by Charity Norman is Luke's story and we shall be reviewing this novel at our meeting.

Walk Sat 15th Oct 10.30 am Châtillon (nr Couhé), Vienne

Please note this walk will take place on the THIRD Saturday of October

This walk will take place from Châtillon which is on the northern outskirts of Couhé, just to the east of the N10. The walk is about 8km, with a shorter walk of 4km.

Some ground may be soft, but it is mostly flat; there are a couple of little hills at the beginning of the walk.

From the N10, coming from the south, leave at junction 39, from the north leave at the junction signed Chatillon. Follow the Châtillon signs all the way to the Mairie. (GPS 46° 19' 04"N 0° 11' 56"E).

Lunch will be at The Promenade hotel/restaurant (parking opposite), which can be found on the right just past the 4 star campsite heading south into Couhé.

Quiz Thus 10th Nov TBA Menigoute

STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Keep this date free. Another Quiz Night has been arranged for Thursday, 10 November. No details as yet but usual format and usual venue for this popular event in the GT calendar.

Make a note in your diary NOW!

Bowling Night **Wed 23rd Nov** **TBA** **Niort**

Put this date in your diary. More details to follow nearer the date. It was a great night last time. So make sure you don't miss it!

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Walk **Fri 27th July** **Cherveux** **Report by**
Martin Hughes

Some twenty of us plus two black canines [more on that later] gathered for our walk under an overcast sky accompanied by a vigorous breeze, which was a blessing for walking at this time of the year.



We met at the Temple, complete with its rather ominous crack in the stonework, on the road into Cherveux with the chateau as a backdrop.

Cue - Chateau = group photo.

Life needs some romance.

This was real. Disney eat your heart out.

The walk was to be vigorous given the undulations in the countryside that we encountered as we strode out along metalled roads, farm tracks and paths.

Often under whispering trees, with the deep silence in places only broken by human voices and vociferous bird calls,

even the white cows in the occasional meadow conspired to mute out progress.

We had gone but a kilometre when, no one knows who the guilty party was, we indulged in a little dog napping. We suspected our two dogs gave the invite to the collie who joined our party, much to the annoyance of the owner. It was to be our additional companion all through the walk.

And so we passed through Lussais, to the lavoir de trousse chemise, where our dogs went splashing about much to the frustration of the collie who only got its paws wet.

Over the stone pont a gue de Roche Putet we went [see both on Google Earth] and then sauntered through the pretty hamlet of Les Petites Fougères all lending to the charm of this walk.

Pause on the bridge over the river before the last stretch up into the village.

And so to car to drive the odd five kilometres to the Café des Sports in St. Gelais where we had a very pleasant lunch before departing to our respective homes. Here we met up with the 'short-walkers' who had enjoyed their easy walk and finished up having a drink Chez-Ritchie.

Many thanks to Lesley and Neil Ritchie for organising this very enjoyable walk.

Postscript. We returned the collie to its rightful and grateful owner. Who knows if we had been arrested for dog napping. Given the chaos of Brexit we might have been given no choice but to return to the bosom of Nigel, Boris and AI!

Second Circle**Mon 1st Aug****Scillé****Report by Lesley
Ritchie**

The Second Circle book group met at Joyce Roberts' house in Scillé to discuss *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society* by Mary Ann Shaffer, which we all really enjoyed and would recommend.

As ever there was a very enjoyable and wide ranging discussion that nearly managed to avoid Brexit!

**Summer Garden
Party****Sat 6th Aug****St Coutant****Report by
Kaye & Tony Scott**

Although Steve and Noreena regrettably had to postpone their garden party on the 18th June due to unseasonal cold wet weather, they most warmly welcomed us to their magnificent garden on Saturday 6th August.

There are 'garden parties' and then there are 'garden parties'. The last garden party I remember attending was at Buckingham Palace in the late 60's; a very crowded and overrated event. The down to earth relaxed atmosphere provided by Steve and Noreena yesterday was vastly superior in every way.

The scene was set. Bunting and balloons created the atmosphere and umbrellas were in abundance with not one spike in the lawn. Although I did worry about the dog seen digging a hole further down. The weather gods shone down on 37 of us with wall to wall sunshine as we drank, ate and wandered through the garden admiring their loving efforts in creating a place of real beauty.

As the afternoon warmed up, lots of fun was had by all. Starting with a bird identification competition there was much excitement and an opportunity for some to stretch their wings. Being colonials from the Southern Hemisphere we felt decidedly handicapped. Although some feathers were ruffled by the need for precise answers required by Judge Steve, congratulations go to Keith Mousdale for his talent in 'bird watching' and identification. Then it was onto a seriously competitive game of boule; some regarding themselves as contenders for the next Olympics. However after several closely contested games the outcome ended in a draw.

Thank you to 'Get Together' for providing an apero, nibbles and a glass of wine. A very special thank you to Steve and Noreena for once again being the perfect hosts and warmly opening up their beautiful home and garden for all of us to enjoy. It was a pleasure to be there.



Photo Group**Mon 8th Aug****Fenery/Clesse****Report by Martin Hughes**

Some dozen of us met at Bec's house to view photographs taken by various members of the group, accompanied by coffee and chocolate biscuits which in their variety could have made a subject for a still life.

The photos embraced the tranquility of the river and the old river gate in Parthenay, a richman's folly in Bulgaria and views of Paris.

The latter were formatted in a calendar, taken by various photographer relations following a New Years eve family party, rather along the lines of the GT calendar. A nice idea for a present?

We then encarrred to the local plan d'eau to individually take photographs using various features of our cameras - the lone fisherman under the dead tree with the backdrop of a ruffled water surface, a Monet style bridge, Becs in freeze frame descent amongst the subjects.

And so to home to download and possibly photoshop the fruits of our day.



Picture of the month (left) by Rebecca Sewell taken on the Photo group's shoot around Parthenay.

Walk**Sat 13th Aug****Pamproux****Report by Margaret Baldwin**

In the newsletter for March I submitted a report on the Pamproux walk trying to make light of its complete wash out, as those seven of us and two dogs who attempted it found out.

However when forty-three members and two dogs (not the same ones, they were obviously not going to risk it again) turned up for a second attempt, it was the sun that produced an air of 'dampness' around them as the temperature rose.

The walk kept up a good pace across



fields and roads, interspersed by small housing areas, farms and alongside a stream so clear and cool that the fish were rising to say 'Good morning'.

Normally one would associate walking in the countryside with listening to the birds, but on this one it was the number of dogs barking!

Bob's hills, which are legendary steep, were negotiated with ease. (Perhaps I shouldn't say that, he might try harder next time!) The walk also took in an area where ammonites, extinct cephalopod mollusc, a flat coiled spiral shell can be found.

In front of one of the houses someone had stacked a pile of these very large fossils and facsimiles could be seen on weather vanes and incorporated in garden walls. All in all a very interesting and picturesque walk.

Thank you Bob for arranging this walk again and the meal at the Auberge du Trefle a Quatre Feuilles.

Horse Racing & Games Afternoon

Sat 20th Aug

Lezay

Report by David Brennan



The sun shone, (well, apart from a slight shower just as we all sat down to lunch!), the going was hard, the jockeys were sporting their colours, and the keen members of the GT Jockey Club were ready to spend their reduced value Euros in aid of a worthy cause.

The Clerk of the Course produced the usual imaginative and amusing programme, the official Accountants ably controlled the finances and after all winnings were paid out, 70 Euros was

raised for Cancer Support Deux Sevres, then with a few donations from generous members we reached 100 Euros.

Thank you to John and Maureen for providing their delightful venue, David and Rebecca for organising the horse-racing, Anne and Roger for taking the money and everyone who took part.

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

Nick and Veronica Ward

Clavé

Non GT Items of Interest

If you know of an event that you think other members might be interested in – please email the details to gtnewsletter79@gmail.com and we can publicise it in the following newsletter – if space permits.

5th Fun Dog Show at St Pardoux

Sunday 4th September 2016 at Les Metairies, 79310 St Pardoux

Judge is Mrs Lesley Oldham.

Classes include: prettiest bitch, most handsome dog, best crossbreed, best brace (not necessarily the same type), musical chairs, fastest round over jumps, best handler –

under 14 years and over 14 years.

Rosettes and prizes to 3rd place, plus Best in Show.

Reel fish 'n chips will be serving, plus coffee, tea and cakes on sale; Pet-a-brac stall with dog coats, dog toys, bedding, collars etc; Photo Portrait of your dog (and you), decorative plaques and key racks, raffle.

Entries 3 Euros per dog per class, registration from 10am, first class 11am.

Showground signposted throughout the village, follow signs for Manifestation.

More info and entry forms email me banddbrennan@yahoo.co.uk

Emergency Phone Numbers

15 SAMU (Medical)

17 Gendarmes

18 Pompiers (Fire Service – also trained for Medical Emergencies)

112 European Emergency Number

Don't Forget to Download the 'In Case of Emergency' Leaflet off the Get Together website, gettogether-france.org, move your mouse to 'information', then click on 'Useful Links'. You will find the ICE leaflet at the top of the list. Why not keep a copy by your phone and in your car.

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