

*Founded
1989*



*French
Association
3035*

October 2016 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news
and reports for members*



Rouen Photograph by Jackie Lockett

[GT Photographic Competition 2017 – CLOSING MIDNIGHT 30th 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.

Walk Organisers needed for 2017

It's getting to that time of the year when we need to think about walks in both the North and the South for the early months of 2017. If you would like to organise a walk and lunch, the Co-ordinators would be delighted to hear from you. As ever, Annette and John will be happy to help with booking the meal if required.

John: john.buckley@free.fr

Annette: annette.jgreen1960@gmail.com

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Tuesday 4th October Chez Brennan**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Wednesday 26th October**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Reading Circle	Thurs 29 th Sept	2.30 pm	Clave
Book Library	Mon 3 rd Oct	2 – 4.00 pm	St Pardoux
Walk	Sat 15 th Oct	10.30 am	Châtillon, Vienne
Photo Club	Mon 17 th Oct	2.00 pm	Maziere
Walk	Fri 28 th Oct	10.30 am	Pompaire
Walk	Sat 5 th Nov	10.30 am	Montjean, Charente
Special Book Library	Mon 7 th Nov	10.00 am	Verruyes
Second Circle	Mon 7 th Nov	TBA	Cherveux
Quiz Night	Thurs 10 th Nov	7.00 pm	Menigoute
History Group	Thurs 17 th Nov	3.00 pm	Menigoute
Walk	Fri 18 th Nov	10.00 am	Vernoux-en-Gâtine
Bowling Night	Wed 23 rd Nov	5.00 pm	Niort

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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.

Book Library **Mon 3rd Oct** **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.

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

The walk will start 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. The meal will consist of starter main and dessert, ¼ of wine included, price 18€ (tea/coffee extra).

Photo Club **Mon 17th Oct** **2.00 pm** **Maziere**

The next Photography group meeting will meet at Carol Andrew's house at Maziere. Come and join in and learn how to use YOUR camera!

Walk **Fri 28th Oct** **10.30 am** **Pompaire**

We will meet in the car park of the Eglise Saint Pierre, centre ville, Pompaire. Toilets are on the main road through Pompaire before turning off for the Eglise where the walk starts.

The walk is 7 kms with a shorter version of 5kms. It is mostly on minor roads, where there is one longish but gentle climb, and tracks which may be wet so suitable footwear should be worn.

Lunch will be at L'Eldorado on the D938 in the centre of Pompaire and consists of buffet starter, main course of chicken or fish, cheese, choice of dessert and wine or cider and is priced at 13€ coffee included.

Non-walkers and guests are very welcome to join us for lunch - please be at the restaurant around 12.20.

L'Eldorado is open all morning for non-walkers and those doing the shorter walk.

Walk **Sat 5th Nov** **10.30 am** **Montjean,**
Charente



The walk starts in the village of Montjean in the northern Charente, a few kilometres south of Sauzé Vaussais on the D54. Ample parking can be found adjacent to the tennis court and the Salle de Fêtes, where there are toilets.

The walk consists of open country and wooded areas along quiet country roads and lanes. As ever, given the time of year, suitable footwear should be worn. The main walk will be about 8 km in length, with a shorter option.

Lunch will be taken at Relais de la Peruse in Montjean and is four courses (buffet, main, cheese & dessert), wine and coffee included for 13€.

There is a main course choice of meat, fish or vegetarian, which should be specified at the time of booking.

**Special Book Mon 7th Nov 10.00 am to Verruyes
Library 4.00 pm**

Books will be available all day and books and jig saws, etc. will be on sale in aid of the Macmillan Nurses. Jo Ashworth will be there with Phoenix cards for sale. As usual tea/coffee cake and biscuits will be available and donations to the charity would be appreciated. Please come and make it a fun day to raise money for this worthy charity.

Second Circle Mon 7th Nov TBA

Reading *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding. Prospective new members would be very welcome.

Quiz Night Thus 10th Nov 7.00 pm Menigoute

GT Quiz Night at the Auberge des Voyageurs, Menigoute. If you missed it last time or want to try your luck again, our general knowledge quiz evening 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 10.50€ 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 a glittering array of prizes for the know-alls and consolation prizes for "les nuls". All good fun.

**History Group Thurs 17th 3.00 pm Menigoute
Nov**

Four Generals and a Salient - Verdun 1916 presented by Vaughan Wells

Centenary commemorations of 1916 in Britain tend to concentrate on the terrible death toll of the Somme, those in France that of Verdun. As a result, both British and French commentators have paid little attention to the intimate connection between these two supposedly separate battles, or indeed to the profound short and longer term consequences of their outcome for both countries.

This discussion, the third in our series of commemorative talks on the Great War, seeks to address these anomalies, and examines in particular the impact of Verdun on French attitudes towards the war at the time, and over the following two decades. The cost is **5€ per head**, to cover refreshments, hire of the room & heating (if needed).

Please book by Thursday 10th November 2016

Walk**Fri 18th Nov****10.00 am****Vernoux-en-Gâtine**

The route for this walk is still in the planning stages, but it will be 8km and we will set off from Vernoux-en-Gâtine, or the surrounding area.

Lunch will be at La Petite Noisette restaurant, 15 rue du Vieux Logis, 79240 Vernoux-en Gâtine at a cost of 15€ to include 3 courses, one glass of wine per person and coffee.

The restaurant is a little more expensive than others we have used in the past, however, the food is excellent and we think that for the standard of cuisine, it is excellent value for money.

Anyone wishing to purchase more wine, either by the glass, or the bottle can do so on the day.

Bowling Night**Wed 23rd Nov****5.00 pm****Niort**

Due to its popularity, Lesley & Neil have planned another bowling night at the Bowling Alley behind Geant Supermarket. Cost of bowling is approx 8€ 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 13.50€ per person including wine. Non-bowlers are also welcome to come and watch, or just join us at the restaurant.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS***Cheque Presentation of the 285 Euros raised at the GT Summer BBQ for the Dumbarton Doodahs and Monte Carlo or Bust Banger rally***

The picture shows Bradley & Sally on either side with Ali Sherwin on behalf of Cancer Support Deux Sevres and Beryl Brennan GT President, in the centre.

This money was raised by generous GT members.

Bradley and Sally, along with friends Ian and Sue, as the Dumbarton Doodahs, took on the challenge of the Monte Carlo or Bust Rally, a three day journey in an 'old banger' – a 23 year old Saab which cost them only 100 Euros! They

drove over 700 miles and finished in third place out of 83.

All the money they raised was donated to Cancer Support Deux Sevres and Cancer Research UK.

Walk**Sat 10th Sept****Rouillé****Report by
Martin Hughes**

We gathered on a sunny and balmy day in the twilight of summer, marked by that transition of the natural brilliance of sunflowers passing into agricultural decay.

Some twenty odd of us met at the delightful Etang de moulin, 3 kilometres out of Rouillé on the Sanxay/St. Germier road. None too soon as it transpired as 3 vans appeared as we were about to start that proved to be the vanguard of a French fête that was to take over the area in the afternoon.



Accompanied by our regular four footed friends we walked first past the site of the old moulin [built 1353, demolished in the C17] along tracks and very quiet country lanes, including an alley of high hedgerow and shrub. Through two hamlets we passed with our route interspersed by a protestant graveyard, old corn stores, a goose farm protected by two, large fierce dogs [think risen hackles] and an ancient crossroads. The hedgerows full of blackberries provided sustenance for the humans, breakfast anyone?

A spring 250m from the car park fed the old wash house but also a crystal clear pond which provided refreshment for the dogs. A hotter day and very warm human feet may have been tempted in, as demonstrated by Lucy.

Sounding a little Austenish, altogether the walk was most pleasing with light and shade, vistas and cosseting tracks and gently undulating countryside.

And with the car park filling up we departed for the St Valentin restaurant in the centre of Rouillé where we were joined by further members for a very hearty meal under the canopy, quaffed with numerous carafes of wine. Thank goodness the gimlet eyed gendarmes we passed nearby had gone to pastures new by the time the meal was over! Many thanks to Julia and Pete for organising this walk.

Photo Club**Mon 12th Sept****Saivres****Report by
Rebecca Sewell**

We met at Roger Amsden's house and primarily sat outside in the sunshine enjoying tea and cake before going inside to discuss computer programmes.

David Brennan brought his laptop along and we put it alongside Roger's to compare 2 photo enhancing programmes. The programmes discussed were Fotor and Aviary. We assessed them side by side using similar photos and compared the different effects and how to use them.

Surprisingly they were both very easy to use, and we were able to edit pictures without problems.....well with David and Roger explaining to us novices exactly what to do! Since the meeting I have successfully downloaded Fotor and have used it! All for Free! We also looked at members' photos from the Plan d'Eau at Clesse where we went for the previous month's meeting and Vinny Galloway's photo was chosen as picture of the month (see below).



History Group

Thurs 15th Sept

We liked the simple structure and composition.

So we all left intending to download a programme and start to improve our own offerings. It was an enjoyable afternoon we all definitely learned something.

Thanks to David for taking the time to research various programmes which he felt were not too daunting and not difficult for us to use.

And thanks to Roger for hosting the afternoon.

Menigoute

**Report by
Martin Hughes**

Agnés Sorel - first official mistress of Charles VII - presented by Robert Pierson

We met, as usual, in the Voyageurs in Menigoute to hear this very stimulating talk that followed on from Robert Pierson's previous talk about Jean d'Arc, Charles VII's first muse.

The first chapter of the talk laid the historical context of the ebb and flow of the 100 Years War, noting that the defeat of France at Agincourt in 1415 led to Charles VI of France, the 'Mad', and Henry V of England signing the treaty of Troyes in 1420. This enabled Henry to marry the king's daughter, Catherine of Valois, and his heirs to inherit the throne of France effectively disinheriting Charles, the Dauphin. One does ponder whether his relative periods of degenerating madness coloured his judgement though he was embroiled in the byzantine politics of France of the time.

Charles VI died in 1422 and Charles VII was not to be crowned until July 1429 in Reims by Jean d'Arc.

Next we heard briefly how he had a Pontius Pilate moment in the trial and death of Jean d'Arc in 1431 even though in her martyrdom she had become the catalyst for the final defeat of the English.

And so to Agnés Sorel:

Born in 1422, daughter of a minor member of the aristocracy, at 11 she became a lady in waiting to Isabella of Lorraine[and other lands]. Her husband, René of Anjou, was brother-in-law to the king.

And so for the next decade she was to learn the ways of a minor court, including its intrigues and politics.

In 1433, at the age of 21, the demure, 'blue-eyed blonde of well developed frontage' [Robert's words, not mine!] was introduced to the 40 year old king who was instantly smitten with the beautiful ingénue.



She was faced with the choice of insulting the king with rejection or accepting his advances and becoming his mistress with the disapprobation that could entail. She was soon ensconced in royal quarters as part of his wife's entourage, apparently with the latter's acquiescence. Mind you the latter was to bear 11 children so perhaps exhaustion was a factor.

The besotted king was soon to give her the chateau in Beauté sur Marne followed by a further 3 along with the accompanying income producing lands and the power that that entails. These and other gifts were showered on this new royal favourite which inevitably led to resentment and other, baser feelings towards her by some members of the court. This included the dauphin whose resentment was to become ever bitter, even to the extent that in later years, duly armed, he was to chase Agnès into the king's bedchamber.

Then, in that unique French way, Charles made her his official mistress which gave her a recognised status.

She accumulated power and influence in the court, the queen being marginalised. Agnès was to cultivate the friendship and protection of Pierre de Brezé, Seneschal [PM] of France and Jacques Coeur, Minister of Finance. Both were commoners who had bettered themselves, the latter as an international merchant who was to be the source of Agnès' luxuries.

Thus Agnès was to indulge in furs, cloths of the East and to be in receipt of the first cut diamond earning the soubriquet the 'Queen of diamonds'. It was at this point that the simple innocent was to become the fashionista of her generation, with the height of her couture being a décolletage rather lower than was considered appropriate along with her trains that would rival a royal princess on marriage.

We have a historical depiction of her boldness as she is the subject of a diptych, 'Virgin and Child Surrounded by Angels', painted by Fouquet at the request of a rich patron. [This can be viewed in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp].

Through the years the dauphin's hate towards Agnès and his father was sufficient to have him banished by his father to pursue military matters.

Over the near decade of her influence Agnès and her protectors were to transform the introvert king into the leader that France desired and known as 'le Victorieux'. During their all consuming relationship she was to bear him three daughters. Her fourth pregnancy was to be the tragic end of a glittering life. In late 1449 during his campaign to take Honfleur she travelled some 300 km to support him. On her arrival, and in his distress, he had her housed in the Manor of Mesnil awaiting the birth. Nature in her cruelty decreed neither child nor mother were to survive with Agnès succumbing to her fast diminishing health on the 9th February, 1450.

The whispers surrounding her death lead to Jacques Coeur being charged with her murder though he was to be exonerated but stripped of his wealth by Charles.

Following her death her remains were to have a 'journey' of their own. Her heart was buried in Jumieges abbey, the rest in an urn in a tomb in Notre Dames de Loches. Her crumbling tomb was refurbished in 1777 by Louis Seize only for it to be vandalised in the revolution and the urn containing her remains discarded. However this was later retrieved and reburied in the Agnès tower at Loches.

By way of postscript in 2004 the remains in the urn were analysed with the following results: a) a high dosage of mercury was found - this could mean she was poisoned but one is mindful that in her time mercury was used in certain medicinal purges as well as make up. [in her paintings she does appear to have a very light complexion a la Elizabeth I]; b) the remains indicated a woman who had had 3 term pregnancies; c) 3D facial reconstruction show features similar to those depicted in her known portraits.

Robert left us with a final thought comparing her to Marilyn Monroe and her alleged hold over a certain POTUS, encapsulated in her breathless rendering of 'Happy Birthday'. Thus proving the point that kings and gentlemen prefer blondes. And maybe scooter riding presidents.

Our heartfelt thanks to Robert who flew in for this talk.

[Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS](#)

Graham & Julia McGrath

Le Breuil Bernard

[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](#)

Thank you to all members who supported my Fun Dog Show on 4th September in aid of Pepis Dog Refuge. I was pleased to be able to take 830 Euros to the vet but there's still 5,000 Euros outstanding. Most of it is from an outbreak of Parvo disease in the puppies last year, 22 born, 14 survived.

To see pix from the show, go to my blog Deux-Sevres Life.

Beryl Brennan

<http://www.thisfrenchlife.com/deuxsevres/2016/09/5th-fun-dog-show-st-pardoux-sunday-4th-september-2016-photos.html>

[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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