

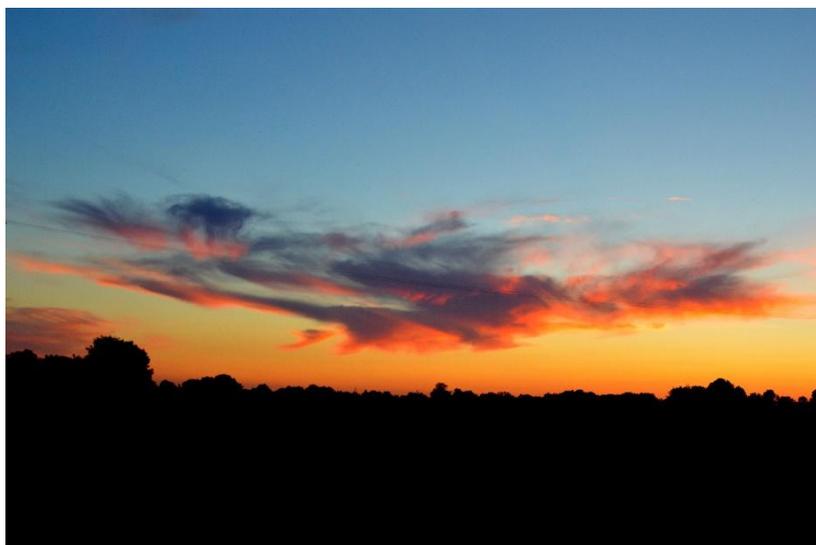
*Founded  
1989*



*French  
Association  
3035*

## February 2018 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news  
and reports for members*



Dragon of Fomperron Photographed by Steve Marshall

### [Don't Forget the Baby Equipment](#)

Jonathan Townsend has offered to store and organise our baby equipment.

There is currently a travel cot, full size cot & mattress, high chair (the sort that fits on a normal chair), stair gate, car seat and some toys.

### **Do you have anything you no longer need that you could donate?**

If you need to borrow any of the equipment when you have visitors, simply contact Jonathan to book your time and arrange collection and return dates. It would be a nice gesture if anyone borrowing the equipment could perhaps add to it. For example if you needed to buy a little something for your young visitor, then add it to the collection for somebody else in the future.

This way it will soon mount up and help us all out when our grandchildren come over.

Please contact Jonathan with any baby stuff you would like to donate NOW.

**Email:** [jonathan.townsend86@live.co.uk](mailto:jonathan.townsend86@live.co.uk) Tel: 05 49 51 06 47.



### [Date for your Diaries](#)

Just a forward notice that this spring's quiz will be on Thursday, 10th May. As before this will be held in 'Les Voyageurs' in Menigoute, starting at 7p.m.



**Family**                      **Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> Feb**      **2.00pm**                      **St Jean de**                      **Kate Sangster**  
**History Group**                      **Sauves**

February's Family History Group meeting is the rearranged talk by Jan Howse on backing up and storing your family history data by means of a software package on your computer. I am sure that this talk is going to be extremely useful to all of us so please bring your pen, paper or I pads.

**Walk**                      **Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Feb**                      **10.30**                      **La Chesnaye**                      **Julia & Peter**  
**Murray**

Saturdays walk is at Aigonnay, La Chesnaye 79370 near Sainte Neomaye. We will meet by the Mairies at 10.30. There are some parking spaces down the hill from the Mairies, otherwise park on the road around the village. There are no toilets. The walk will take us through the **undulating** countryside on grassy tracks and quiet lanes past a chateau and lavoirs. Distance is approximately 7km with shorter options available. Being February the grassy tracks will be wet, hopefully not muddy but good footwear is recommended. Lunch is at Les Pryamides, La Creche. 13€ for the buffet starter, main course and dessert. Extra for wine 50c for 1/4 and coffee 2 euros. Choose your meal on the day. Closing date for restaurant is Tuesday 6th Feb.

**Photo Club**                      **Mon 12<sup>th</sup> Feb**                      **2.00pm**                      **Chanay**                      **David Brennan**

The next meeting will, as usual, be the second Monday in February (12th) and we will again be meeting at Jan's where we will be exploring the intricacies of focussing. Our project for the month is "Fungi" if you can find some or "Raindrops" if you can't find any fungi.

**AGM**                      **Wed 14<sup>th</sup> Feb**                      **11.00am**                      **Mazieres en**                      **The Committee**  
**Gatine**

#### **Future arrangements for health care in France**

**After the AGM and before lunch (around noon) Isabelle Want of BH Assurances has agreed to talk to us about health insurance post Brexit. Many of you will be aware of the name because she contributes a regular column on insurance matters in the Deux Sevres Monthly magazine.**

**As you must surely know by now the AGM itself will be held on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 11.00am, at Maison pour Tous, Mazieres en Gatine.**

All members who have paid their 2018 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 2017 accounts and appointment of an auditor to represent the membership for the 2018 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, Beryl Brennan, by Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**The elected committee consists of the following positions:**

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

Michele Hansford is standing down as Membership Secretary. Neil Ritchie (Secretary), Eric Hansford (Treasurer) and Beryl Brennan (President) have also each completed or in some cases long exceeded their initial two- year terms.

The President welcomes expressions of interest from any members interested in filling these positions. The current post holders are happy to discuss what is involved and potential volunteers can be assured that appropriate training and support will always be available. Nomination forms are available from the Secretary and should be completed and returned to him by Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**At 12.30pm after the AGM there will be a Bring and Share Informal Lunch**

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 Beryl needs to do some pre-planning. If you would like some advice on what to bring, please call Beryl 05 49 69 86 16 or email [banddbrennan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:banddbrennan@yahoo.co.uk).

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

Please let Beryl 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 attached form and post it back, or email the information to [dbanddbrennan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dbanddbrennan@yahoo.co.uk) before **Saturday 10th February 2018**.

**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.

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**History Group**    **Thurs 15<sup>th</sup>**    **3.00pm**    **Menigoute**    **Penny Taylor**  
**Feb**

The next meeting of History Group will be on Thursday 15 February at 3.00pm when Bob Seager will give a talk on the Dreyfus Affair.

***J'accuse - The Dreyfus Affair***

After the loss of the Franco-Prussian War, the discovery by a French agent in the German Embassy of a leaked document about a new French gun caused a panic search for the author. By devious means a connection was "proved" to a Jewish officer, Alfred Dreyfus. There followed a series of lies, suppression of the truth, and forged "evidence" leading to a trial at which Dreyfus was found guilty, stripped of his rank and transported to Devil's Island where he was imprisoned in appalling conditions.

From his arrest in 1894 to his pardon and release in 1899 Dreyfus suffered unimaginable physical and mental abuse but for many French people he remained a Jewish traitor, despite being fully reinstated and serving as a commandant in the Great War and being awarded the Legion d'Honneur.

"J'Accuse" was the title of an article by Emile Zola, which condemned the injustice and was one of the major factors in activating the retrial and final exoneration.

The meeting will be held, as usual at L'Auberge des Voyageur in Menigoute. The cost will be 5€ per head to cover refreshments, hire of the room and heating (if required).

Please book by **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

**Curry Club      Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Feb      12.00 noon      Menigoute      Fiona Green**

The next two dates for curry club are as follows:

Monday 19th Feb chez Martin Hughes in Menigoute - 11 places

Monday 9th April chez Louse and Mish Tamblin near Moncoutant- details to follow but no reservations taken until after 19th Feb.

As a reminder curry club is open to all GT members. Guests will be asked to bring a starter, side or dessert and whatever they wish to drink. The host provides the main and rice etc. Vegetarians are well catered for and the food is always delicious! Bookings are taken on a first come first served basis and if you aren't lucky enough to secure a place you go to the top of the list for the next lunch.

**Craft Club      Tues 20<sup>th</sup> Feb      2.00pm      Chantecorps      Beryl Brennan**

Anthea Libby offers an Introduction to painting. Oils, watercolours, acrylics, surfaces, mediums, tools (brushes etc.). All materials supplied, once a short demo is over, you can choose your medium and have a go yourself. Even if you think you have no ability, you WILL be surprised! I have many years of experience in adult education in leisure Art classes in Cornwall, am a fully qualified teacher, and done many demos to art groups in the South West, so you are in safe hands.

**Bowling      Wed Feb 21<sup>st</sup>      5.00pm      Niort      Lesley & Neil Ritchie**

The annual GT tenpin bowling championship will take place on February 21st 2018. Same arrangements as last year, for venue (the one right next door to the whopping great Geant supermarket, not the one down the road somewhere else in the Espace Mendes black hole) time (5pm start), post event social (Les Pyramides at 7pm - about 14 euros for four courses with wine. This is advance notice so you can start working on your demon curveball. Further details will follow when bookings have been made. The Ritchies will take care of these arrangements but are away a lot over the next few months so you need to register your interest with Martin Hughes.

Tell him the usual things: how many of you there will be; meat, fish or veggie; the name you want to be engraved on the enormous trophy when you win (I'm making that up, obviously).

**Walk      Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb      10.30am      Sanxay      Martin Hughes**

The walk of around 7.5 km will start from the car park outside the Tourist Office/garish cafe beside the bridge over the river Vonne.

Directions: From the West, approaching from Menigoute, follow the signs for Sanxay. The carpark will be found after about 5km on the right hand side just before the bridge.

Approaching from the North, South or East 100 metres down from the church on the main road in the middle of the village dive down between the houses on the road signposted for Menigoute. Just over the bridges you will find the carpark on the left.

Stout footwear should be worn as there are some tracks which can be wet and muddy, as well as minor country lanes. There is one short climb, otherwise the gradients are gentle.

There will be a short version of the walk, about 4 km

Lunch will be at Les Voyageurs in the centre of Menigoute. Starter followed by a meat, fish or vegetarian main course, cheese, dessert and coffee. Wine included. Price 14€.

Nonwalkers are most welcome to join us for lunch.

Any non-walker or short walker who would like somewhere to chill out before lunch is most welcome to do so in Martin's house. Please advise.

**Second Circle**    **Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Feb**    **10.30am**    **Exireuil**    **Lesley Ritchie**  
**Reading**  
**Group**

Discussing *The Greatest Knight* by Elizabeth Chadwick.

**Lunch & Wine**    **Tues 6<sup>th</sup> Mar**    **11.30am**    **Benet**    **Diane & Keith**  
**Club**    **Mousdale**

The March Lunch and Wine club meeting will be held at Gloria and Brian's home in Benet, with the theme being Spain with, of course, Spanish wines.

**Walk**    **Sat 10<sup>th</sup>**    **10.30am**    **La Foret de**    **Linda & Peter**  
**March**    **Tesse**    **Bains**

Walk will be on pathways through woods and roads not too many hills and boots advised. Walk will start at La Foret de Tesse and will be about 8 km with a shorter walk of 3 km. Meet at the Church and park cars there. No access to toilets. The nearest toilets are in Montjean at the salle de fetes or in the bar, distance 3 km along the D303. La Foret de Tesse is at grid N 46 04 813 E 0 04 999 according to my Tom Tom The best route for most people will be via Sauze Vassals and then South to Montjean and then West to La Foret de Tesse.

Lunch will be in Montjean at Le Relais de la Peruse and will consist of four courses, wine and coffee for €15.

Please indicate if you want vegetarian meat or fish

## **REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS**

**Walk**    **Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Dec**    **Martaize**    **Report by Ken**  
**Chamberl**



The day dawned wet and overcast at first light, but by 11o'clock it was dry and bright when 15 members started the post-Christmas ramble from the parc at Martaizé, along with three dogs.

After barely half a kilometre the first stop was at the village lavoir for a photo opportunity and then briskly onwards crossing a main road and off into open but soggy countryside, stopping for the second photo by the tower of a disused windmill. The group then returned to the village centre via streets passing the Mairie and Church en route and were all back safely within the hour.

Lunch was taken at the Bacchus restaurant which was a short walk or drive up the street. A further six members joined us for lunch, which everyone agreed was a splendid 'repas' complete with Christmas

crackers.

Many thanks are extended to Kate and Grant for making all the arrangements and preparing the restaurant for our arrival.

**Traditional Mince Pie Specials**      **Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Dec**

**St. Jean de Sauves**

**Report by Ken Chamberlin**



The traditional mince pie special was held at the home of Kate and Grant Sangster on the afternoon of Friday 29<sup>th</sup>. Our two hosts had 'hotfooted' it from the Bacchus restaurant following the morning walk and lunch, to light the fires and lay out the mince pies ready for the arrival of twenty something people. Numbers had fluctuated as the day had progressed. Some apologized in person for arriving at all and others apologized by phone for not coming. Nevertheless Kate and Grant managed admirably and soon tea and coffee flowed whilst Christmas treats were quietly consumed.

A few late Christmas cards were exchanged as well as some gifts that hadn't made it under the appropriate Christmas tree. Conversations were curtailed when Grant announced that trains were to start, at which time most of the men and many of the ladies retired to the second floor to admire Grant's 'O' gauge layout running round the entire roof space. Two locos, each with a rake of coaches circled round the room with much approval from the audience.

Most then returned to the lounge to continue the chatter that had been stalled earlier with a fresh brew and another mini stollen. And so the afternoon continued.

The members once again thank Kate and Grant for opening their house for the GT group. Their hospitality at these occasions is fabulous.

Happy New Year to everyone.

**Second Circle Reading Group**

**December Meetings**

**Report by Bernadine Smith**

First Reading Circle met on 12 December to discuss *The Psychopath Test* by Jon Ronson, a non-fiction exploration of the intriguing world of psychopaths and sociopaths. Although some struggled with the quirky writing style, most agreed it was an interesting eye-opener into how psychopaths were and are diagnosed and treated. Some interesting discussion following and all of those who enjoyed the book found that they are viewing people in a new light since reading it... hmmm.

In true festive spirit, the meeting concluded with a Christmas Craft Moment, embellishing bookmarks kindly provided by Joyce Roberts to take along and share at the first ever Joint Reading Circles Christmas Lunch held at Le Chapeau Rouge at St Loup sur Thouët (what a lot of capitals!). The lunch was delicious and a delightful and successful first joint event. We had a lively moment each nominating our Desert Island book - either the book that you would *take* OR the book that you would *banish* to a desert island.

**Walk**

**Sat 13<sup>th</sup> Jan**

**Vanzay**

**Report by Jane Oram**



Chris and Bob provided us with a delightful walk starting from the mairie car park in Vanzay. It was lovely to have sunshine accompanying us after so many wet gloomy days. Fourteen of us and 2 dogs set off to do the walk which showed up on my gps tracker as a wonky figure 8. This meant we started at the car park and did a circular walk of about 5 kms, at the end of which we could decide to call it a day, or continue with another circular walk of about 3 kms in the opposite direction. An inspired way of ensuring an option for a shorter walk and a longer walk. About half of us decided to

continue, and were pleased to do so as we passed a scenic lavoir and etang, with the distant

hum of the occasional tgv train on the new Bordeaux line. Afterwards we met up at Berlands restaurant in Lezay.

Considering that there had been a mix up in our booking, and the restaurant was also catering for a party of 80 people, we had an enjoyable meal with excellent service. It helped that we were served before the other party. Malcolm especially enjoyed the attention of the maitresse d'. Thank you Chris and Bob for organising the walk and meal.

### **Photo Group**

**Mon 15<sup>th</sup> Jan**

**Maieres-en-Gatine**

**Report by David Brennan**



The weather was atrocious so all 11 of us were thankful that an inside meeting was planned as no-one wanted to go outside to take photos. At our last meeting we put some professional studio lights through their paces but decided that for our purposes such equipment was very over-the-top, and after further research a much more lightweight and portable set was found at a considerably lower cost. This meeting we put this set to the test and found it very easy to use.

Everyone present was able to use their own camera simply by activating the built-in flash, and once the external flashgun was set up on its

stand with either a shoot-through translucent umbrella, diffuser or softbox this was triggered by the camera's built-in flash. This was much more convenient than the professional set as there were no trailing wires to trip over. The results from everyone were very comparable with only minor differences due to the settings chosen on (or by) the camera. The willing model pronounced himself to be very satisfied with what he saw of the results of everyone's efforts. The project for the two months since the last meeting was "Seasonal Colours" to take in both the autumn and festive seasons, and this brought 32 very widely differing shots from the attendees. We all agreed that the standard of the photographs being submitted for the light-hearted "Shot of the Month" competition had improved greatly over the months, and the one which was chosen as this month's winner was Roger's shot taken after the Presidents' Lunch at Le Petit Moulin, St Soline and shows wonderful autumn colours.

### **Craft Group**

**Tues 16<sup>th</sup> Jan**

**Chanay**

**Report by Kate Sangster**



Six ladies met in Jan's craft room to learn how to make lasting memories from treasured old and new photographs. Jan told us of the importance of using acid free papers, card, glues and covers etc. to prevent the photos deteriorating. From her vast stocks of supplies she showed us how to create pages of decorative backgrounds and accessories to show our photos off to best advantage. We were also given the opportunity to create our own greetings cards. A super afternoon, thank you Jan for your time and hospitality.

Walk

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Jan

Fomperron

Report by Martin Hughes



### **A walk from Fomperron, 26th January**

My January has been wet. However Malcolm had sacrificed a chicken, read the entrails, and lo the day burst upon us a brilliant blue. Crispy after an overnight frost, but only a breath of a breeze.

A group of hardened walkers gathered in the car park in the centre of the bourg, adjacent to the gardens [very pretty in the summer], and set off with the obligatory dogs, two of, and out along the ways and byways outside Fomperron.

We pounded the tarmac and drove down narrow paths under overarching boughs. Some of the ground under

foot was unsurprisingly muddy and in places acted as streams draining away the soaked fields. At one point Holly the labrador had a bow wave as she greeted her natural habitat.

The local wildlife had sensibly built their front doors above the water level though it was a close run thing.

Through Le Marchais we passed, where we were greeted by a canine cacophony of half of the dogs in Deux-Sevres and hence back to Fomperron with only gentle slopes to navigate.

A pleasant lunch was taken in Les Voyageurs in Menigoute, where we were joined by four more members

As Bob Seager observed, 'a proper winter walk'.

Many thanks to Malcolm and Jan for organising this walk in another pretty part of our region.

### **WELCOME to our NEW MEMBERS**

Jenny Allen

Thenezay

### **Non GT Items of Interest**

#### **SCRAP METAL COLLECTION, THENEZAY/LA FERRIERE AREA**

**Donate your scrap metal for a good cause!** Thenezay area twinning association has recently twinned with Grand Gapé in Togo, West Africa, and has a huge project to provide wells supplying clean water to villages. During February we are collecting all types of scrap metal to raise funds, including: old cars (with *carte grise* if still in one piece), agricultural machinery, batteries, copper, iron and ferrous metals, electrical appliances, radiators, saucepans, barrels and drums, empty paint pots, the list is endless. Clear out your outbuildings and help a good cause at the same time.

Contact **Jean-Michel Russeil on 06 08 91 82 45** to drop off your metal or to arrange collection or Bernadine on [bernadine.smith@me.com](mailto:bernadine.smith@me.com) if you want to know more - the Deux-Sèvres has a long history of twinning with Togo, one of the least developed countries in Africa. Jean-Michel only speaks French, but if you contact me before 8 Feb I will try to help as well.

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

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