

*Founded
1989*



*French
Association
3035*

March 2018 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news
and reports for members*



Pompaire Photographed by Roger Amsden

[Announcing the Photographic Competition for the GT Calendar 2019](#)

You can now start thinking about your entries for the 2019 GT calendar competition.

The theme for this year is "Seasonal with obvious French content".

Seasonal views of:-

Landmarks, local wildlife flora and fauna, French food and wines, markets, heritage sites, village, town and city views, in fact anything reflecting French Life and Events. Your photographs must be clearly definable as having been taken in and of France".

Over to you!

Each family member may submit up to four photographs.

Photographs must be in landscape format (rather than portrait) and your entry must specify where in France each photograph was taken. Please email your photographs to gtphotocomp@gmail.com

Closing date for submission of entries will be **midnight 30th September 2018**.

So start snapping!

[Message from the President.](#)

I am still missing 3 serving spoons from the AGM lunch. One has a rose pattern on the handle, the other 2 have a scallop shell. I will appreciate them being returned to me asap. Thank you.

Dates for your Diaries

Quiz Night

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.

GT Garden Party

Noreena & Steve Parker once again have agreed to host the GT Garden Party. This will be held on Saturday 23rd June. More details to follow at a later date.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

First Reading Circle Group	Fri 2 nd Mar	2.30pm	Cherveux
Book Library	Mon 5 th Mar	2-4pm	St Pardoux
Lunch & Wine Club	Tues 6 th Mar	11.30am	Benet
Family History Group	Thurs 8 th Mar	2.30pm	St. Jean de Sauves
Walk	Sat 10 th Mar	10.30am	La Foret de Tesse
Photo Club	Mon 12 th Mar	2.00pm	La Mothe St. Heray
Craft Club	Tues 20 th Mar	2.00pm	Scille
Walk	Fri 30 th Mar	10.00am	Pont Romain, Cerzeau
Book Library	Mon 2 nd Apr	2.- 4pm	St Pardoux
Walk	Sat 14 th Apr	10.30am	T.B.A.
History Group	Thurs 19 th Apr	3.00pm	Menigoute
Curry Club	Mon 30 th April	12.00noon	Mancoutant
Quiz	Thurs 10 th May	7.00pm	Menigoute

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Thursday 15th March Chez Howse, Fomperron**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Monday 26th March**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

First Reading **Fri 2nd Mar** **2.30pm** **Cherveux** **Bernadine Smith**
Circle Group

The March meeting will be held at Lesley Ritchie's and the book she has chosen is: "People of the Book" by Geraldine Brooks which takes place in the aftermath of the Bosnian War, as a young book conservator arrives in Sarajevo to restore a lost treasure...

Book Library **Mon 5th Mar** **2-4pm** **St Pardoux** **Beryl Brennan**

March's library day will be as usual at Chez Brennan at St Pardoux. There will be tea & biscuits plus the usual selection of paperbacks. We are always pleased to receive donations of paperbacks in good condition!

Lunch & Wine Club **Tues 6th Mar** **11.30am** **Benet** **Diane & Keith 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.

If you would like to join us or would like more information please contact Diane & Keith. Would you please state, at the time of booking, whether you wish to bring a starter, cheese or dessert. If anyone needs directions to the venue these will be sent upon request. As there is a maximum number of 14 attendees bookings are on a first come basis but in the event of oversubscription anyone who cannot be accommodated will be offered first refusal on the following meeting.

There will not be a meeting in April

Family History Group **Thurs 8th Mar** **2.30pm** **St Jean de Sauves** **Kate Sangster**

There have been requests to do another session on military records so that is what we will concentrate on in the first half of the meeting. After tea we will do a question and answer session and I will give updates on "news" in the family history world.

Walk **Sat 10th Mar** **10.30** **La Foret de Tesse** **Linda & Peter 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

Photo Club **Mon 12th Mar** **2.00pm** **La Mothe St. Heray** **David Brennan**

We will be looking at focussing in detail. The project for this month is 'silhouettes'.

Anyone interested in joining us please contact David Brennan.

Craft Club **Tues 20th Mar** **2.00pm** **Scille** **Beryl Brennan**

A workshop on cross stitch. There will be a demonstration of the basic technique, how to follow a chart and an opportunity to make an individualised greetings card featuring a cross stitch design.

Walk **Fri 30th Mar** **10.00am** **Pont Romain, Cerzeau** **Anne & Roger Amsden**

From St Maxient L'Ecole take the D8 to Cerzeau, carry on for a further half a km, after crossing a stone bridge on the right will be seen signs for Pont Romain. Follow this road for 500m on the right again signs will be seen to Pont Romain. Take this track to the start. From the North Take D6 to Augé then take the D174 from the centre, after approx.. one and a half Km at the cross road turn left onto the D8 direction of Cerzeau, after 1km Pont Romain signs will be seen on the left just before stone bridge, follow as above.

The restaurant is planned to be the Restaurant de la gare at Montplaisir, on the rue de

gatine Montplaisir. Update to follow. This is just off the D6 before it meets the roundabout on the main D743 Parthenay Niort road. There will be a short walk of 4Km and a longer one of 7+Km. Some hills, not too steep, probably mud and an exposed section that could be windy. As always appropriate boots and clothing should be worn. More details to follow.

Book Library **Mon 2nd Apr** **2 – 4pm** **St Pardoux** **Beryl Brennan**
Although it is Easter Monday April's library day will be as usual at Chez Brennan at St Pardoux. There will be tea & biscuits plus the usual selection of paperbacks. We are always pleased to receive donations of paperbacks in good condition!

Walk **Sat 14th Apr** **10.30am** **T.B.A.** **Maureen & John Buckley**

There will be a walk of about 8 km and a shorter one of about 4/5 km on flat ground in woodland. the price about 18€ vin et cafe compris the general area with details to follow later ...

History Group **Thurs 19th Apr** **Menigoute** **Penny Taylor**

The next meeting of History Group will be on Thursday 19 April at 3.00pm and the Talk will be given by Robert Pierson entitled: ***The Reformation Revolution***.

French thinking has ever been at the heart of Europe. Her civilisation and her language have echoed around the World. For one hundred years, from, 1309 to 1377, the Papacy was based in Avignon and not in Rome, forcing the broadest schism within the Catholic Church - at one stressful moment, three Popes claimed the papal throne. Much later, in 1536, a French theologian from Noyon, John Calvin, would be seen as even more effective even than Martin Luther, in driving forward the Protestant Reformation from his base in the Swiss City of Geneva.

Robert Pierson has spent a year considering the Reformation and offers (with some trepidation) the results of his study on April 19th.

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

As many members are now choosing to enjoy a social lunch at the Auberge before the meeting, Charlotte has asked that you book ahead (Tel: [05 49 69 13 66](tel:0549691366)). Charlotte speaks good English.

NB. We have to confirm numbers to the Auberge one week before the meeting. As a result, we will be charged for anyone who does not turn up on the day and will have to charge this back to those members.

Curry Club **Mon 30th Apr** **12.00 noon** **Mancoutant** **Fiona Green**

Chez Louise and Mish Tamblin near Moncoutant. 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.

Quiz **Thurs 10th** **7.00pm** **Menigoute** **Martin Hughes**
May

There will be another Quiz night so start sorting out your teams and general knowledge. Full details to follow.

GT Garden **Sat 23rd Jun** **T.B.A.** **Noreena & Steve**
Party **Parker**

Noreena & Steve Parker have once again agreed to host the Garden Party in June. This is at present a date for your Diaries with full details to follow later.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

First Reading Circle **Fri 2nd Feb** **Craon** **Report by Bernadine**
Group **Smith**

Feedback on February meeting of First Reading Circle *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. We all met at Wendy Greenfield's on a wintry afternoon, just right for sitting round the fire and discussing a good book, followed by tea and homemade cake (lemon and ginger, very nice). This was Gail Honeyman's first novel and winner of the Costa First Book Prize. She was drawn to the theme of loneliness when planning the book, although we didn't think it was about loneliness so much as the portrayal of two people, one (Eleanor) who changed and evolved so much as the story developed and one (Raymond) who stayed the same, but in a nice way, as a constant. One person wondered if it should have been a short story rather than a full length novel, which was interesting since Honeyman had originally written it as a 3-chapter story, which then won a 3-chapter story competition. Overall a good choice, easy to read, absorbing and flowing style.

Lunch & Wine Club **Tues 6th Feb** **Seran** **Report by Martin**
Hughes

On a snow riven day appropriate to our cooking theme [not Christmas Day] ten of us gathered in Seran in Frank and Margaret's lovely warm maison. This was our postponed meal from early January and we were still decimated by illness and other absence.

After tasting a white from Muscadet and a red from Cahors we sat down to a multi dish meal, ranging from an al fresco soup, through a five gold ringed upside down pineapple sweet. There were actually six, but who cares in this day of alternative facts. Six is 5 plus 1 after all. Then on to a dessert of 'ten swans a swimming' - yes really. In the true Hans Christian Andersen tradition they had started out as ugly ducklings, majestically blossoming into graceful cygnae in their travels [ask Julia, their mother, how this modern miracle occurred].

Our final course was accompanied by a dessert wine, Sainte-Croix du Mont, a surprising revelation.

Many thanks to Margaret and Frank for their hospitality and as always Keith and Diane for choosing the wines and organising us.

Family History **Thurs 8th Feb** **St Jean de Sauves** **Report by Beryl**
Group **Brennan**

Kate was delighted to see the sun shining when she drew back the curtains...the snow was melting so the group meeting could go ahead! Was it 2pm or 2.30 to start...no matter, the kettle was on and biscuits on the table ready! Jan was busy setting up the screen and projector and 12 of us gathered to learn how to back up our family history research. We were introduced to the programme Legacy, a free download to our own computer where we could create and store

our family history information and records safe from any Internet access – unlike on sites such as Ancestry and Find My Family. As backup, Jan recommended using a separate hard drive and acid-free sleeves for storing old documents and photos. Thank you to Jan for an excellent and interesting presentation and to Kate and Grant for the warm welcome and refreshments.

Walk

Sat 10th Feb

Aigonnay, La Chesnaye **Report by Roger Amsden**



What a day! Anne and I were a little late but no need for 'a Llama!' We thought as not many dogs were coming the addition of a Llama would be a good idea, see picture. Could be why we were late, trying to get it in the boot. Seriously we were very lucky to have a lovely day, cold and crisp but dry and sunny. 13 souls and Holly the Labrador, minus the Llama which was actually in a field, set off on what turned out to be an invigorating much needed outing after the grim days that had gone before and only one hill of any significance and of course not forgetting the interesting lavoire. After returning to

the car park we then went on to les Pryamides for a welcome lunch joined by a further 5 non walkers. Many thanks to Julia and Peter Murray for arranging the walk, the weather and a delightful meal.

Photo Club

Mon 12th Feb

Chanay

Report by Martin Hughes



We met at Jan's house for a meeting devoted to focussing, giving new meaning to the term 'focus' group. Our guru led us through the complexities of the most important issue of taking photographs, explaining the use of the boxes or grids that appear in viewfinders or on screens.

We learnt also about the restrictions on the capabilities of our cameras. The more sophisticated, the more able some of our peer's cameras were. Sometime with the use of the zoom feature focussing was negated and the highly technical term of 'stand further back from your subject' was mentioned.

Most of us probably need to read our manuals more but...they are mostly written in the far-east in the original language and probably translated into English by someone sitting in an office in St Petersburg.

For the second part of our meeting we reviewed the photos taken by the group on the theme of 'fungi' or 'raindrops' and decide that Vinny won the former group, Martin the latter.

Many thanks to Jan for hosting the afternoon. Sorry about the empty biscuit plates.



History Group

Thurs 15th Feb

Menigoute

Report by Martin Hughes

L'affaire Dreyfus

A large number of GT historians met in our usual haunt in the backroom at Les Voyageurs, log fire burning.

Bob Seager filled out the flesh of a story we all probably knew the bones of.

From Dreyfus' birth in Mulhouse on the 9th October 1859 we learnt of the family business of

textile manufacturing and the move from Alsace-Lorraine when the annexation of 1871 took place following the Franco-Prussian War. Notwithstanding the appropriation the family still retained its mills and hence its wealth and Dreyfus continued with his quiet home life.

Following the war the French were rebuilding the army and amongst the threads of this rebuilding was the manufacture of a new type of 120mm gun.

In September 1894, a Madame Bastian was a cleaner in the German embassy in Paris and also a French spy who garnered information from any papers thrown in the bin, especially by the rather careless military attaché. Amongst the documents was a bordereau, a list, detailing highly secret information about the gun.

On the flimsiest of evidence, some fraudulently concocted, Dreyfus was arrested, tried just before Christmas, 'degraded' and transported to Devil's Island, off French Guiana, in April, 1895. His crime had been to be a Jew, set up by certain elements of the establishment. This was following a wave of anti-Semitism that arose in the 1888 Panama Canal financial scandal.

For not only the establishment but the papers of the day were involved in inflaming the situation, with one mentioning Dreyfus' mad love for an Italian beauty'. The Sun anyone?

In March 1896 evidence [a petit bleu] was found pointing to Major Walsi-Esterhazy, a known womaniser and gambler, as the spy. Esterhazy was tried in January 1898 but acquitted. In another cover up.

We then learnt of the turn of events through 1898 involving the famous 'J'accuse' of Emile Zola, his trial and condemnation, the confession of Colonel Henry who fabricated evidence [he committed suicide on the discovery] and the flight of Esterhazy, following his dishonourable discharge from the army. The latter fled to Harpenden where he died in 1923.

Events then turned on Dreyfus' return to France in 1899, a retrial where he was found 'guilty with extenuating circumstances' you could not make that up - and his pardon in September by President Loubet. He was not officially exonerated by the military until July 1906.

Dreyfus, who went on to serve with distinction in the First World War as a reserve officer, died in July 1935, where his cortege passed through the ranks assembled for Bastille Day.

Bob wound up his talk, with a reflection on a country with an element of some hating the Jews, others not. On the hypocrisy of the press and 'fake news'.

Many thanks to Bob for his really interesting insight into this period of French history, and your correspondent's observation as to whether the modern world has learnt much from history.

Craft Club

Tues 20th Feb

Chantecorps

Report by Helen Horton



The February meeting of the craft club took place on Tuesday 20th February chez Anthea who gave a very interesting and informative art workshop. It was attended by 7 members and great to see that it was a mixed gender group. After showing us some of her own work, Anthea first demonstrated some basic water colour techniques and showed us how different brushes can be used to create specific effects. She impressed upon us that much patience is needed for watercolour painting since each stage must thoroughly dry before proceeding to the next layer of paint and to be wary of 'cauliflowers' appearing as the paint can puddle as it dries particularly when creating a background wash. Anthea then demonstrated a number of techniques for using chalk pastels to create a range of different effects. Following a break for coffee and some

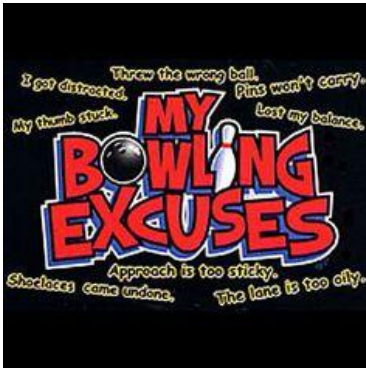
delicious home- made scones, we all had the opportunity to try a small piece of our own and we all opted to use pastels. Thank you Anthea for a great afternoon.

Bowling

Wed 21st Feb

Niort

Report by Annette Green



Much laughter, hair pulling and a variety of techniques were all on show at the Niort bowling alley! 16 of us tried our hand at the GT annual bowling event (we all declared that really we needed a couple of trial runs for practise before the next one!) One member even used the children's dragon!

Anyway, the 'Green's' came out on top for both the ladies and gents (conspiracy theories abound!) Leslie scoring 3 strikes and 6 spares scored an impressive 251, whilst Annette had 2 strikes and 5 spares scoring 196. After working up an appetite, 19 of us went off to 'Les Pyramids' at the Routiers for dinner.

Thank you to Martin and Neil for organising another very successful bowling evening.

Walk

Fri 23rd Feb

Sanzay

Report by Helen Horton



On a bitterly cold but gloriously sunny day 7 intrepid walkers accompanied by 3 canines set out from Sanzay to face what initially felt like Siberian temperatures on a walk around the local area, led by Martin. In spite of the cold, however, the sun made for a glorious walk and the previous night's frost had made the going 'good'. The walk took us along the bridle paths, past a tuilleries where the group stopped to admire the range of tiles, all made from locally quarried clay. The route then took us

along what would have once been the railway track supplying the tuilleries. There was clear evidence of horses in the area, since we passed a number of stables and there were many horses hoof prints en route although, fortunately for all, Martin had, on this occasion, left his destrier at home! We also passed a local apiary and as we headed back towards Sanzay, could see in the distance the local chateau that appears to be well worth a visit on another occasion. The walk culminated in a very welcome and convivial meal at Les Voyageurs in Meningoute.



WELCOME to our NEW MEMBERS

Irene & Richard Knowles

Menigoute

Patrick Pelouin & Anne-Marie Turbe

La Chapelle Bartrand

[Non GT Items of Interest](#) [Showtime 2018](#)

Pommerai Players are producing a Revue – **Showtime 2018** in the “Foyer pour Tous”, La Pommerai on the evenings of 23rd & 24th March at 19:00, tickets cost 7€ per adult and 3€ per child. The poster for the show was attached to the email sent out on 24th February. Tickets are available as indicated therein or by emailing me on john.buckley@free.fr. I will arrange for tickets to be available for payment on the door

La Pommerai is situated on the D45 about 8 or 10 km south east of Lezay in the direction of Sauzé Vaussais and the “Foyer pour Tous” (village hall) is almost the last building on the left.

[Wellness for women using Chinese Reflexology](#)

Calling All Women

Are you a menopausal woman who is fed up suffering from hot flushes mood swings or fatigue? Are you a younger woman who is worried about getting breast lumps? Or are you just a woman who would like to take more control over your own health? You can get practical advice on these issues and how to optimise your health and wellbeing in a Wellness for Women Workshop from Pearl Heatley.

Pearl will teach you a 10 minute simple foot massage routine based on Chinese Reflexology which when done on a regular basis will restore balance to the body and can help with many health issues specific to women and boost your vitality

I would like to organise a workshop with Pearl, possibly in St Maixent soon. We need another 7 or 8 ladies to make it worthwhile for her to come from the Charente where she lives. Pearl charges £35 per person and a hostess who is willing to let Pearl use her house/gite is not charged. It will be a fun and sociable afternoon

Pearl also teaches a “Zap that Cold” reflexology technique.

If you are interested please email me

Juliehutchison67@gmail.com or ring 0672222014

[Salon Du Vin | Niort | Salon Du Vin, de la Gastronomie et du Chocolat](#)

Anyone interested in this event please visit the website link below

<https://www.salonvinniort.com/>

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.

Published by: Get Together, 10a Rue du Four a Tuiles, 79410, Cherveux 05.49.17.11.20
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