

*Founded  
1989*



*French  
Association  
3035*

## July 2018 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news  
and reports for members*



Saint Martin De Ré Photograph by David Brennan

### [SPEED LIMITS IN FRANCE](#)

The government confirmed that an 80km/h speed limit will be introduced on countryside roads in France from July 1st as part of its of new measures to make the country's roads safer despite opposition to the move. The reform, which will see the speed limit reduced from 90km/h to 80km/h on all two-lane highways or specifically "on all secondary roads without a central reservation", will be implemented from July 1st 2018 until July 1st 2020 as a two-year trial.

At the end of that period further changes may be made, depending on the "effectiveness" of the measure in terms of saving lives and cutting down on injuries, said government spokesperson Benjamin Griveaux on Wednesday.

The government is determined to lower the speed limit despite continuing opposition which has been ramping up since it was first announced as a possibility in January.

### [A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY](#)

History Group will be having a **special meeting on 10 November** to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice which brought an end to the First World War. Under the heading of 'Nothing to Report....Women's Voices and the Great War ...', the presentation explores the contribution of the female voice to wartime propaganda and protest.

**The meeting will be held in the theatre in Vasles**, and comprises the presentation followed by a short remembrance ceremony at the War Memorial in the village, held in conjunction with the local branch of the Union Nationale des Combatants. There will also be an exhibition of Great War propaganda and associated artwork in the salle below the theatre, where drinks will be served.

The doors will be open from 14.30h and the performance begins at 15.00h.

It will be possible to book places for this event in the usual way, and more details of this and of the Event itself will be published in due course.

No action is required at this time but please make a note of this date in your diaries.

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Book Library	Mon 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jul	2-4 pm	St Pardoux
First Reading Circle Group	Fri 6 <sup>th</sup> Jul	2.30 pm	Aubigny
Photo Club	Mon 9 <sup>th</sup> Jul	2.00 pm	Mazière
Second Reading Circle Group	Tues 10 <sup>th</sup> Jul	10.30 am	Menigoute
Walk	Sat 21st Jul	10.30 am	St Coutant
Walk	Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> Jul	10.30 am	Allonne
GT Summer Event	Sat 28th Jul	12.30 pm	Verruyes
Walk	Sat 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	10.30 am	T.B.A.
GT Horse Racing	Sat 18th Aug	12 noon	Lezay

- **Next Committee Meeting** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at Chez Ritchie
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July  
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Book Library**    **Mon 2<sup>nd</sup> July**    **2-4 pm**                      **St Pardoux**                      **Beryl Brennan**

July'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!

**First Reading Circle Group**    **Fri 6<sup>th</sup> Jul**                      **2.30 pm**                      **Aubigny**                      **Bernadine Smith**

The June meeting was postponed to July so it will be chez Diana Stubbs on Friday 6th July and we will finally get to review *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett.

**Photo Club**                      **Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Jul**                      **2.00 pm**                      **Mazières**                      **David Brennan**

Our next meeting is on Monday, 9 July, at 2.00 pm chez Carol in Mazières. The subject matter for this month's project, is - "interesting buildings and detail therefrom". David says that what he is looking for is a photograph of what you think is an interesting building and a close-up of a detail of that building which can be identified on the general photo. A maximum of 2 general building photos and 2 detail photos, please. If you have any queries please contact David.

**Second Reading Circle Group**

**Tues 10<sup>th</sup> Jul**

**10.30 am**

**Menigoute**

**Lesley Ritchie**

The second reading circle will meet at Chez Hughes on the 10th July at 10.30. The book that is the subject of our deliberations is *A Man Called Ove* by Fred Backman. This is the new Swedish literary sensation.

The novel's protagonist, Ove, is a lonely curmudgeon who screams at his neighbors for parking in the wrong place and punches a hospital clown whose magic tricks annoy him. Six months after his wife's death, he's planning to commit suicide and has turned off his radiators, cancelled his newspaper subscription and anchored a hook into the ceiling to hang himself. But he keeps getting interrupted by his clueless, prying neighbors. He strikes up a friendship with an Iranian immigrant and her two young daughters, who find Ove's grumpiness endearing.

**Walk**

**Sat 21<sup>st</sup> Jul**

**10.30am**

**St. Coutant**

**Brian & Joan Stead**

Note that this walk is a week later than normal due to that date being the 14th and many other events taking place.

The start of the walk is at the Salle in St. Coutant. There is an 8km walk and shorter walk about 4.5km. It is mostly on the flat on dry routes but be prepared for hot or even inclement weather.

The Salle can be found from Lezay by taking the D105, signed 'St. Vincent le Chartre/Chef-Boutonne'. After 2km turn left, signed St. Coutant, after a further 1.8km turn right at the sign 'Salle des Association Parking' and then turn left into the car park.

The lunch at 12.30pm, is at the Petit Moulin in Sante Soline.

Non walkers are as always very welcome and for those not familiar with the location, take the D15 South East out of Lezay for 5 kms. Turn right immediately after passing the '**SAINTE SOLINE**' sign. The restaurant is along the first lane on the left. If the weather allows us we will eat al fresco.

There will be a complementary beer or kir on arrival and the menu is a starter of homemade pate or quiche, mains of B B Q chicken or trout, both with minted potatoes and salad and desert of chocolate tart or poached pear.

1/4 litre of wine per person and coffee included. The cost is 18€ per person.

Any extra drinks to be paid for individually.

If anyone has a dietary need please book early with your requirement.

**Walk**

**Fri 27<sup>th</sup> Jul**

**10.30am**

**Allonne**

**Beryl & David Brennan**

Many years ago we organized a walk on this route when unfortunately part of the track was extremely wet. This year, unless we get any more exceptionally heavy rain, there are only a couple of puddles! The walk will start at the Car Park outside the Church in the centre of Allonne, and comprises some quiet lanes, part of a GR route and farm tracks. There are a few hills, gradual rather than steep, otherwise it is flat. Stout walking boots should be worn and if you have a walking



even out the odds, and Molky. In addition, if the day is warm, a small heated pool will be available for the more adventurous - bring your own cossie & towel - no skinny dipping! For the less active, a variety of board games will also be available.

The Committee is pleased to offer "un pot d'amité". Please come equipped with a picnic lunch and whatever you wish to drink. A gas bbq can be made available if required. Tables, chairs and parasols would be appreciated, though we can supply quite a few. And, as it is that season of the year, your summer visitors will be very welcome!

Please let John & Maureen know if you are intending to take part by no later than Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August.

### REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

#### Second Reading Circle Group

Tues 29<sup>th</sup> May

Chez Horton

Report by Martin Hughes

#### **Second reading circle. 29th May at chez Horton Review of *Burial Rites* by Hannah Kent.**

This was an interesting choice as the book written by an Australian was set in Iceland in the 1820's.

A literary debut, inspired by a true story: the final days of a young woman accused of murder in Iceland in 1829.

Set against Iceland's stark landscape, Hannah Kent brings to vivid life the story of Agnes, who, charged with the brutal murder of her former master, is sent to an isolated farm to await execution.

Horrified at the prospect of housing a convicted murderer, the family at first avoids Agnes. Only Tóti, a priest Agnes has mysteriously chosen to be her spiritual guardian, seeks to understand her. But as Agnes's death looms, the farmer's wife and their daughters learn there is another side to the sensational story they've heard.

*Burial Rites* evokes a dramatic existence in a distant time and place, and asks the question, how can one woman hope to endure when her life depends upon the stories told by others?

The only potential downside to this novel was that as readers we knew that the main protagonist would lose her life at the end given that it was based on the life of the last person to be executed in Iceland. However as an observation of the harsh life of living in Iceland in those times it was a revelatory piece. For instance window glazing was fish skin.

Generally a satisfying read.

#### Lunch & Wine Club Tues 5<sup>th</sup> Jun

Le Tallud

Report by Martin Hughes

Thirteen of us sat down for an enjoyable meal at Keith and Diane Mousdale's based on a main theme of Italian wines and a mix of Italian/French cuisine.

After an aperitif of Prosecco DOCG we sat down for a starter of Italian sausage pasta soup followed by a selection of meats and other delicacies.

Further wines of Chianti Ruffina and Barolo Nebbiolo d'Alba were much appreciated as



we followed with a cheese plate and finally so many puddings that the eyes bulged.

What a very pleasant way to spend the middle of a day with good food, good wine and good company. Even Donald Trump was only mentioned, was it, twice?

Many thanks to Diane and Keith for their organisation and hosting of yet another successful lunch.

**Photo Club**

**Mon 11<sup>th</sup> Jun**

**Sanxay**

**Report by Jackie Lockett**



Seven of us gathered at Steve's house for another enjoyable and informative session, this time on landscapes. As usual we viewed our entries (3 per person) as a collection of about twenty in all. We had an enormous variety of subjects leading to much lively debate on technique and subject matter (sorry Martin we didn't think your photo of a bull in a field was a "landscape", please try harder next time!!). After much deliberation

my photo taken of our village, La Mothe St Héray, was selected as 'Shot of the Month' - see below. I was amazed: never thought my photos were good enough but it just goes to show that it is all in the eye of the beholder! Many thanks Steve for your kind hospitality and sharing your box of scrumptious biscuits and to David as always for his useful insights and constructive suggestions.

**Walk**

**Sat 16<sup>th</sup> Jun**

**Chaunay**

**Report by John Chard**



The citizens of Chaunay were decorating the town centre with flags and paper flowers to welcome us as we arrived for our walk. The day was undecided, dull in the morning but brightening later. Fifteen walkers, and just two dogs, started on a tour of the nearby countryside. Four more friends joined us for a very enjoyable lunch in the Central Hotel which was rounded off when France won their world cup match.

**History Group Day**    **Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> Jun**

**Brèze**

**Report by Jeremy Lockett**

22 of our group of 33 met promptly at Les Belles Caves, a pretty little restaurant about 15 minutes from the Chateau. We sat on two long tables and enjoyed a traditional French lunch to satisfy all tastes and served efficiently by a waitress who was eager to practise her English. Paying was rather more time consuming. One lady to manage the till and take booking at the same time. However, we joined the rest of the party who had enjoyed a delightful picnic lunch in the shade of the chateau grounds and managed to check in on time for the guided tour.

The tour was a tale of two halves. Firstly, our entertaining English speaking guide, Jean-Luc, gave us a brief chronology of the chateau, built between the 11th and 19th centuries. Originally belonging to the powerful Dreux-Brézé family, it passed by marriage to the Colbert family, descendants of Louis XIV's Minister. Indeed, Jean-Luc himself is a member of this family and as such was able to give us not just the broader historical picture of the past but lots of little anecdotes about life in the chateau through the ages. So as we passed from reception rooms, salon, dining room we learned about the customs of the time, not just what the nobles did but how the servants lived and served them and the bishop in residence. Her ladyship's bedroom even had an en suite "powder room".

For the second half of the tour Jean-Luc took us around the below ground chateau surrounded by one of the deepest dry moats in Europe. An extensive network of about 8 kms extending out well beyond the castle walls provided for a complete troglodyte accommodation for the safety of the villagers, their cattle and horses from attack. From the depths of the moat we saw a bakery still in use today and the grape presses and barrels used for the production of wine.

Some of the group then enjoyed a wine tasting during which Jean-Luc also demonstrated his wine expertise. The chateau bottled crémant, a dry white, and a pleasant red may not have enthused a connoisseur but it was a refreshing finale to our tour.

Overall this was a successful day out despite earlier difficulties in finding a suitable lunch venue which caused a lot of extra work for the organisers, Gerry and Anne Riley. Our thanks go to them and to Jonathan Townsend and Penny Taylor for an excellent day out and for organising warm sunny weather."

**GT Garden Party**    **Sat 23<sup>rd</sup> Jun**

**Noreena & Steve Parker**

**Report by Chris Parsons**

About 1pm Saturday around 35 GT Members and friends found their way, with the guidance of some unmissable signposts, to Noreena and Steve's beautiful garden. There was plenty of parking available and, on arrival, we made our way to the lower end of the garden where there were many tables and chairs to make ourselves comfortable. The weather was lovely and warm if not a little windy but in the shade of the trees and parasols, it was very comfortable. We were welcomed with an aperitif and invited to take a tour of their superb garden. After a stroll around and lots of chat, comparing notes about our own gardens, we sat down to eat our lunch sharing our food and wine.

When replete, we embarked on the quiz prepared by Noreena and Steve entitled 'Creepy Crawlies'. On a board, there were pictures of various garden critters and we had to name them. After a lot of discussion, answer papers were given in for marking.

The quiz was won by Maureen Buckley. Well done Maureen! However, there was another brain teaser in the form of a small crate of balls each with a tiny hole. What was their use? “The ceramic balls we think come from China and are scattered about the gardens in the sun and when they warm up the butterflies are encouraged into the garden and onto the balls so in coming into the garden they pollinate the flowers!” We were advised. The prize was won by Gary Whitwell for the nearest explanation to the answer. Well done Gary!

The remainder of the afternoon was spent playing a variety of games which were played with audible enthusiasm.

Thank you very much to Noreena and Steve for providing us all with a wonderful setting and great hospitality.

### Walk

Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Jun

St. Maixent l'Ecole

Report by Beryl  
Brennan



Saint Maixent l'Ecole is well known for its Abbaye housing the tombs of St Maixent and St Leger, its military school and its excellent Saturday market. Armed with sun hats, sun cream and walking sticks, 24 walkers and 3 dogs followed Leslie and Annette along the lesser known paths by the banks of the Sevre river which winds through the town. Picturesque floral window boxes adorning riverside balconies, picnic tables in the cool shade of trees – plenty of scenes for the keen photographer. Several times I heard the

exclamation ‘well, I never knew this was here’ with note being taken of the road name to enable an easy return by the speaker. Tables were set outside at the Restaurant l’Abbataile – David B went in search of the owner and parasols to shield diners from the glare of the midday sun, and 34 members enjoyed an excellent meal and good conversation. Many thanks to Leslie and Annette for a delightful day

### [Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS](#)

Mme Martine Bourreau

Saint Radegonde

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

**Wanted** The Railway Group is looking for a working video player so that members can view a collection of railway videos that have become available. If you can help out please contact Kate Sangster on [katesangster@orange.fr](mailto:katesangster@orange.fr) .

Also if you think that you would be interested in joining an informal group of railway pals who meet up regularly to have lunch, chat and visit each other's layouts please use the same contact detail

## **Something for music lovers**

There will be a concert at Cherveux Chateau at 21 h (that's 9pm to us) on Saturday August 4th. A chamber quartet (name of le Festin d'Alexandre- from Niort) will be playing works by Vivaldi (who I have heard of) and Mondonville and Porpora (whoever or whatever they may be). 10 euros entrance fee. More information from 06 43 46 98 23. There's also a Facebook page for those of you who go in for that kind of thing. [facebook.com/ChateauDeCherveux](https://www.facebook.com/ChateauDeCherveux).

## **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](http://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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