

*Founded
1989*

get together
A friendly association of English speakers

*French
Association
3035*

December 2018 Newsletter

*Events, activities, news
and reports for members*



Christmas Time in Perré Photograph by Roger Amsden



A Word from the President

Hard to believe that another year is drawing to a close, so many things happening in Get Together and so many events in which to participate. Welcome new members, thanks to everyone who has organised an event/group...all volunteers without whom the monthly diary would be empty. Lots of lovely photos submitted for the 2019 Calendar, thanks to Andy Walmsley and Michele Hansford for organising it. New faces are always welcome on the committee and vacancies needing to be filled for 2019 are President, Secretary and Newsletter Editor, so maybe newer members might like to consider joining the committee as a good way to make friends. Remember, without a committee there is no association. May I wish you all a healthy, happy and prosperous (despite the dire exchange rate!) 2019 to you all.

Beryl Brennan

To all members

I expect most of you now know that this is going to be my last year being your editor as Malcolm & I are returning to the UK and would once again like to thank everybody who has supported me and contributed to the newsletter with their various reports. I have enjoyed my time being editor and have made some lovely friends. We've had another busy year in GT with lots of fun. I would personally like to thank Martin Hughes who still seems to have continued being the chief reporter. He has sent me numerous reports, always without complaining and always on time. **I hope you have a healthy and Eventful 2019 everybody!**

Jan Howse

GT Photographic Competition 2019 – The Winners

Thank you to all members who entered their photos and all members who voted. We now have a fantastic calendar full of pictures with obvious French content. The picture that received the most votes from members was number 8 2CV near Rom by Julia Murray.

The most suitable photograph for the Front Cover was judged to be number 22 Villeneuve-sur-lot by Jan Howse.

The rest which will appear in the 2019 Calendar in number order are:

1 Marais Poitevin- Steve Marshall, 4 Saumur - Jan Howse, 9 La Limousiniere - Carol Andrews, 13 Mont St – Michael - Sally Warden, 15 Verteuil sur Charante - Kaye Scott, 17 Parthenay - Anne Amsden, 27 Grape Harvest Chateau Cantenac Brown - Roger Amsden, 28 Le Château, Angers - David Brennan, 53 Château de la Flocelliere - Kaye Scott & 63 River at Pontivy - Sally Warden

GT Membership

The time for GT membership renewal is looming. Please complete the form sent along with this newsletter and post it along with your cheque ASAP to **Julia Murray 7 La Coiraudière 79120 Rom.**

Prices are on the renewal form.

Remember if you renew before the end of this year you will save money!!!!

GT 2019 Calendar

There are still some Get Together 2019 Calendars available, full of wonderful scenes of France – taken by YOU – our members.

So an ideal Christmas present, and easy to post!

They are the same size as last year A4 but opening to A3 size when hung on a wall, and still only €5 each.

The order form is at the back of this Newsletter, so please send in your order to Michele ASAP.

If you are at either of the Northern or Southern Xmas Lunches – you can arrange to pick up your order then.

New Blood Needed

The last couple of newsletters have included an appeal for volunteers to serve on the committee. Not one of you responded. This is a bit disappointing to say the least. But I can't say it's a surprise, which is why there is behind the scenes activity to persuade some of you to fill the forthcoming vacancies. The next steps will be blackmail and

thumbscrews. Bribery isn't on the agenda because GT hasn't got enough money for that. It shouldn't really be necessary to point out that GT cannot function without a committee to organise the things that you joined GT for. Nor is it reasonable to expect the same people to continue doing this forever and a day. So if you value what GT offers it really is time to give it a little bit of your time. This needs to happen before the AGM next February if GT is to continue.

Any of the existing officers will be pleased to tell you about what's involved and to reassure you that if they can do it you most certainly can. You can find the details you need at: <http://www.getogether-france.org/committee/>

History Group - An Appeal

Following a successful Commemoration event (see report write up) the HG "steering group" have begun to put together a program of activities for 2019. We are currently considering a number of ideas for talks and/or visits for 2019.

We are looking for some "new blood", whether existing members of History Group or new members who have recently joined GT, who can spare a couple of hours every three months or so to meet informally - usually with tea and cake at someone's house -to put together ideas for meetings or events which have some historical/French connection and to plan future activities for the group. Our steering group currently comprises Penny (Taylor), Jonathan (Townsend) and myself (Jeremy) and we should welcome some additional support and ideas.

If you enjoyed the recent Commemoration event, or have heard good things about it and would be interested in participating in our future activities, please contact one of the above for more information and a chance to meet. Our first History Group meeting next year will be in February and we already have a speaker for this event.

We look forward to hearing from you."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Book Library	Mon 3 rd Dec	2-4 pm	St Pardoux
Southern Walk & Christmas Lunch	Sat 8 th Dec	10.30 am	Ste. Soline
Photo Club	Mon 10 th Dec	2.00 pm	Mazieres en Gatine
First Reading Circle Group Xmas Lunch	Thurs 13 th Dec		St. Loup
Northern Walk & Christmas Lunch	Fri 14 th Dec	10.30 am	Menigoute
After Xmas Amble & Lunch	Fri 28 th Dec	11.00 am	Martaize
Mince Pie Specials	Fri 28 th Dec	3.00 pm	Saint Jean de Sauves
Walk	Sat 12 th Jan	10.30 am	Limalonges
Bowling	Wed 16 th Jan	5.00 pm	Niort
Walk	Sat 9 th Feb	10.30 am	Sainte Neoyame
A.G.M.	Mon 11 th Feb	11.00 am	Mazieres en Gatine

- **Next Committee Meeting** **Thursday 6th December Chez Hughes**
- **Final Copy Date for Newsletter Items** **Thursday 27th December**
(gtnewsletter79@gmail.com)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Book Library **Mon 3rd Dec** **2–4 pm** **St Pardoux** **Beryl Brennan**

The monthly book library will meet as usual Chez Brennan at St Pardoux. Each month there are over 300 paperbacks to choose from, different ones each month as we've a total of over 2,500 books in the book store. There is a wide range of popular authors, with a lot to be said for holding a book in your hand rather than a Kindle! St Pardoux is within easy travelling distance from St Maixent, Lezay and Melle so members from these areas are very welcome to join us any month and especially this month where. Mulled wine, mince pies and the usual coffee and tea are on offer, what better way to spend an afternoon, everyone welcome.

Southern Walk & Christmas Lunch **Sat 8th Dec** **10.30 am** **Ste. Soline** **Maureen & John Buckley**

This year's Christmas walk and meal will be held in Ste. Soline. From the Lezay "ring road" take the D15 towards Ste. Soline and Chaunay. On reaching the village, pass the Plan d'Eau on the right and then look for the blue "P" sign on the left. Take this left turn and park outside the church. There are toilets close to the parking area.

The walk is on level ground along quiet roads and tracks. The short walk is about 4km and the longer one 8km approximately. As it is December, stout footwear is recommended.

Lunch will be at Le Moulin Petit on the outskirts of Ste Soline. From the parking, turn right on to the D15 and just after the Plan d'Eau turn left towards St Coutant, passing the cemetery on your right. After about a kilometre, turn left at the first crossroads and the restaurant is at the end of the road on the right.

It will be necessary to choose each course in advance – and include details when booking.

Starters

Home-made tomato and roasted red pepper soup or home-made mulligatawny soup served with home-made baguette.

Or

Large mushroom stuffed with Roquefort or Camembert served on a large garlic crouton.

Mains

Roast turkey served with roast potatoes, sprouts and bacon, pigs in blankets, honey roasted parsnips, carrot puree, cauliflower cheese, stuffing balls and gravy.

Or

Roasted cod fillet cooked in lemon butter, with a creamy horseradish sauce served with dauphinoise potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

Desserts

Home-made Bailey's bread and butter pudding

Or

Traditional Christmas pudding served with home-made Bailey's ice cream

Price is 20 euros per head including 25cl of wine per person

Red, White or Rose.

Extras

Aperitifs 2.00 euros

Beers from 2.00 euros

1 litre carafe of wine 10.00 euros

½ litre carafe of wine 5.00 euros

By the glass 2.50 euros

Photo Club

Mon 10th Dec 2.00 pm

Mazieres en Gatine

The December meeting of the Photo Club will be held at Carol Andrews house in Mazieres en Gatine

Roger suggested that we all bring our laptop computers to the next meeting so that we can have a "workshop" where everyone can practice and get help at the same time. As a result I plan to spend some time to explore and use photo editing software to show how it can be used to tease out hidden detail in our photographs and thereby enhance the photos we are taking, I have done some research on the internet and there is something I would like you to do before the next meeting.

You will recall that I have been advising the use of FastStone, a piece of free to download photo editing software, and I know that some of you have downloaded and are using it. The latest version (v6.7) was released on 30.10.2018 and I have downloaded it although I have not noticed any obvious differences from the v6.4 I have been using. I would like us as a group to use the same software for our photo editing so that we are all singing from the same hymn sheet and able to follow any edits we do at our meetings. I know that you may have your own favourite software for editing photos and I am not trying to turn you away from them, simply asking you to use FastStone for group exercises.

For those who do not have the software simply enter "FastStone Imaging Viewer" into your search engine and follow the instructions on screen to download. If you already have the software (albeit an earlier version) do the same and your software will be updated to the latest version - simple, and free! (although they do ask for donations to help with their development costs, but as private users this is purely a matter of personal choice)

Please do download the latest version and once downloaded go into the "help" tab

and download the tutorial which, although it's based on a very old version (v4.5) is very helpful to lead you through the basics of the software as they have stayed strictly to their original format. Try to get a "feel" for the software before the next meeting, and I would like you to bring your laptop computer with the software installed to the meeting so that everyone can get "hands-on" experience, and please make sure that your batteries are fully charged. You will also need to have your camera and its card so that you can import some photos and then use the software to enhance your own shots, and if you have taken the current month's challenge they would be ideal subjects.

First Reading
Circle Group
Xmas Lunch

Thurs 13th
Dec

St Loup

Bernadine
Smith

Our next meeting is a Christmas lunch at the chapeau rouge at st loup and the book we will be discussing is *Sabrina* by Nick Drnaso. It is a graphic novel and the first of its type to be long listed for the Man Booker prize.

Northern Walk &
Christmas
Lunch

Fri 14th Dec

10.30 am

Menigoute

Martin
Hughes

The walk will take place in the wooded grounds of IFFCAM, which is situated 3km west of Menigoute on the road to Coutieres.

We will meet in the car park there ready to walk at 10.30am. The walk is divided into a short walk of a little over half an hour followed by a longer walk of around an hour. There are one or two steeper paths to negotiate, some stepped, but they are short, just requiring a little care.

As usual proper winter footwear is highly recommended for this walk.

Those members who would like to participate in the shorter walk or who would like to wait for lunch are very welcome to make coffee etc. in Martin's home in the middle of Menigoute [10, Impasse des Jardins]. This is where toilet facilities are available though there are public toilets in the village opposite his house and next to the cemetery.

Lunch will be taken at Les Voyageurs in the middle of Menigoute, priced at €23 per head There will be a kir awaiting us and with the meal we look to enjoy the usual festive trappings. As in previous years there will be a light hearted quiz for a prize.

Christmas lunch - Friday 14th December

Kir

Baluchon de jambon italien à la chair de crabe [Italian ham stuffed with crab salad]

or

Warm breaded goat's cheese salad

or

Potimarron soup [veggie] with Toasted seeds

Roast turkey with Pigs in Blankets, red wine and onion gravy

or

Herbed cod fillet with sauce Beurre Blanc

or

Carrot and courgette nut roast, red wine and onion gravy

All served with sage and onion stuffing, potatoes, Brussel sprouts and parsnips

Profiterole du Voyageurs

or

Walnut tart and ice cream

1/2 wine and coffee included

Price per person €23

All GT Members Welcome

After Xmas
Amble & Lunch

Fri 28th Dec

11.00 m

Martaize

Kate & Grant
Sangster

Walk off your Christmas fare!! An amble/walk for just over an hour between Christmas and New Year on flat ground on the tracks and small roads in and around Martaize. The walks between them will be suitable for all abilities with no substantial hills but there could be a couple of wet patches so suitable footwear please. You can choose between walk and amble on the day.

The **amble** will take place around the interesting village roads of Martaize and will be led by Grant. There are several short cuts for those that need them.

The **walk** will be led by Kate along the roads and tracks surrounding the village and will be at a faster pace.

Martaize is between Moncontour and Loudon just over the Deux Sevres border in Vienne. We will meet at the village park which is on the junction of the D52 and D20 where there is a small car park. There are loo facilities and further parking places next to the church which is 50 yards from our meeting point.

Lunch, as in previous years, will be taken at Le Bacchus restaurant in Grand Rue, 86330, Martaizé. It is just up the road from the walk but also has its own car park if you want to move your car. We have booked for 12.15. It is €13.00 for three courses with wine, coffee and crackers included. There will be two starters, two main courses and a choice of desserts or cheese.

Because a lot of people are away over the Christmas period and our walks are always on the edge of our "catchment area" there will be plenty of room for your Christmas guests. Also please feel free to book just for the lunch if you fancy a communal yuletide meal out.

Mince Pie
Specials

Fri 28th Dec

3.00 pm

Saint Jean de
Sauves

Kate & Grant
Sangster

Grant will be running the by now traditional 'Mince Pie Specials' on his 'O' gauge railway layout the same afternoon. Come and play with and watch trains and have a cup of tea, mince pies and cakes. Non-playing partners, all other members and their visitors are welcome to come just for the chat and refreshments. There is no need to telephone beforehand if you are just coming for the afternoon just turn up!

Walk **Sat 12th Jan** **10.30 am** **Limalonges** **Jane & Fred Oram**

The walk will be in the neighbourhood of Limalonges, full details in the January newsletter.

Lunch will be at the Trois Fleurs restaurant in Limalonges, 4 courses including wine and coffee for €19 per person (meat or fish).

Bowling **Wed 16th Jan** **5.00 pm** **Niort** **Lesley & Neil Ritchie**

Be the GT tenpin bowling champion.

The annual tournament is scheduled for January 16th at the bowling alley next door to the Geant supermarket where the trophy has been won several times before.

Directions can be found here <https://www.bowling-niort-chaury.com/> if you need them. As usual all the benefits of the athletic endeavour will be dissipated by the post tournament meal at Les Pyramides (4 courses with wine for around 13 euros) which is a 5 minute car journey away.

Walk **Sat 9th Feb** **10.30 am** **Sainte Neoyame** **Julia & Peter Murray**

Brief details for February 9th walk.

Which will be around the Sainte Neoyame. We will plan the usual short and long walks.

Lunch will be at Les Pyramides at La Creche 15 euros.

More information in January's newsletter.

AGM **Mon 11th Feb** **11.00 am** **Mazieres en Gatine** **The Committee**

In accordance with article 11 of the constitution of Get Together, notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Monday 11th February 2019 at 11.00am, at Maison pour Tous, Mazieres en Gatine.

All members who have paid their 2019 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 2018 accounts and appointment of an auditor to represent the membership for the 2019 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 Monday 14th January 2019.

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).

Beryl Brennan (President) Neil Ritchie (Secretary), and Jan Howse (Newsletter Editor) are all standing down this year.

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 Monday 14th January 2019.

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

We will be having a bring-and-share lunch after the AGM, from 12.30 pm – 2.30 pm.

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 Julia needs to do some pre-planning. If you would like some advice on what to bring, please call Julia 06 04 06 77 55 or email murrayjulia79@gmail.com

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

Please let Julia 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 form over the page and post it back, email the information to murrayjulia79@gmail.com before **Thursday 7th February 2019.**

<p>AGM 2019 Bring & Share Lunch Form</p> <p>Name:.....</p> <p>Number of People Attending:.....</p> <p>Phone Number:.....</p> <p>Email Address:.....</p> <p>Dish:.....</p>

Julia Murray 7 La Coiraudière, 79120 ROM

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Walk

Fri 26th Oct

Chantemerle

Report by Eric Hansford



A somewhat cooler day welcomed the walkers to Chantemerle for a walk in the forest. There was a good turnout plus a few four legged friends who led the way (although one was a bit reluctant on hearing some hunters shooting in the distance). The walk was very pleasant as we wended our way through the Chantemerle forest and out into the gently rolling countryside. The weather had improved by the time we reached the Chaudron to be joined by a few non-walkers for a very nice buffet style

lunch. Many thanks to Louise and Michel for organising and guiding us through the woods.

Walk

Sat 3rd Nov

Montjean

Report by John Chard

On a nice but dull morning fifteen walkers, but unusually no dogs, set out from Montjean to roam the surrounding countryside. We were treated to several views of TGV trains hurrying to destinations both north and south. Three walkers opted to take a short cut but the remaining dozen carried on to enjoy a view of the château. The walkers ere also delighted to see a sow with around a dozen piglets relaxing in a field. The morning finished with the usual very enjoyable lunch. Thanks to Linda and Peter for their organization and guidance.



History Group Commemoration Event

Sat 10th Nov

Vasles

Report by Jeremy Luckett

On Saturday 10 November at the Theatre in Vasles GT History Group staged a Commemoration Event to mark the 100th Anniversary of the end of the First World War. With the title of "Nothing to Report..... Women's Voices from the Great War", this was the culmination of a series of presentations written by Vaughan Wells and delivered annually to History Group meetings, each of which was concerned with a particular year of that bloody conflict.

The presentation this year consisted of a narrative with a series of poems and prose accompanied by a number of vignettes portrayed by our actors with four songs

conveying the overall theme including "Where Have all the Flowers Gone"..

After the presentation the supporting charity organisations, Royal British Legion, BLESMA, the *Union Nationale des Combatants Vasles/ Les Forges* and *Croix Rouge Française (Red Cross)* all attended a wreath-laying ceremony which was led by the Maires of Vasles and Les Forges and supported by a representative of GT. "God Save the Queen" and "La Marseillaise" were both sung afterwards.

After the ceremony, everyone went to the salle where we had laid on an exhibition of artifacts and posters from WW1 with stands organised by RBL, BLESMA, Croix Rouge and GT. These created a lot of interest while people enjoyed the traditional vin d'honneur. On leaving, both Maires, members of the charities, and members of the public were enthusiastic about the event, the location and the organisation which, we believe, has enhanced the standing of GT within these organisations and the wider communities.

A collection of donations was organised which amounted to approx. 480 euros. Once we know finally the financial outcome of this event we shall be able to determine the contribution we can make to participating charities.

A team of more than 50 front-of-house and backstage 'staff', together with sound and lighting technicians, actors and administrators, gave unstintingly of their time over a period of several months to bring this Get Together History Group production to the stage.

The performance attracted a mix of French/ English speaking audience of over 200, and from feedback received I think we can say that it was a great success and a worthwhile promotion which brought French and ex-pat communities together in an act of remembrance. I'm sure you will join me in expressing our warm and heartfelt thanks to all those involved.

Every team requires a Leader and in Vaughan we had a very professional writer and organiser who conceived, planned and motivated the production team led by Richard Smith to produce a moving and thoughtful event which captured the pathos of the time and the impact on women and their families of the consequences of the War. We should say a special thank you to Vaughan and Richard for the success of this unique event.

Photo Club

Mon 12th Nov

Chanay

Report by Roger
Amsden



Having arrived a little bit late and fraught from a car based hiccup to find eight hungry photo group members deeply involved on eating delicious looking cakes and biscuits, photographs not high on their agenda, (well done Jan) we eventually, having moved aside the feast, set up to view our latest efforts. The set task being Autumn colours and cemetery pics that we took at the previous meeting (don't ask). It was agreed the quality and thought behind the photos are really getting better every month, after much

enlightened advice and useful critique, pleasingly I won with the adjacent photo. We then briefly previewed the photographs of the commemorative event that GT were very much involved with at Vasles, on the 10th. Our next meeting will be on the 10th of

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS

Diane & Terry Southall

Vouhe

Non GT Items of Interest

CHAPLAINCY OF CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD, POITOU-CHARENTES

Tuesday, 18th December 2018 at 7.00pm in the Parish Church at Pompaire. Followed by refreshments in the nearby salle (l'Ancienne Ecole)

Everybody welcome.

Further information from the Chaplaincy Office 05 49 97 04 21 or from John & Barbara Matthews 05 49 75 29 71

TheatriVasles Presents... Relatively Speaking by Alan Ayckbourn Friday 7th December 8pm and Saturday 8th December 8pm

As the beats of the Beatles and the Small Faces ring out across the theatre, here at TheatriVasles we've been busy rehearsing our upcoming production of Alan Ayckbourn's Relatively Speaking. With our costumes and interior design, our music and miniskirts, we're stepping back fifty years to the swinging sixties to bring you classic Ayckbourn - a wonderfully characteristic mix of humour and sharp observation. We promise you a fabulous night to remember.

Come and join us at the theatre in Vasles 79430 on Friday 7th December at 8pm and Saturday 8th December at 8pm. Tickets are available from theatrivaslestickets@gmail.com or by ringing Dorothy on 05 49 05 67 41.

So what a brilliant way to start the festive season! Come along to the theatre in Vasles, 79340 and have a great laugh, a drink and a catch up with friends. Le Zinc, the bar opposite the theatre will be doing their usual theatre-goers early bird menu so why not make a night of it!

We look forward to seeing you there!

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.

Published by: Get Together, 10a Rue du Four a Tuiles, 79410, Cherveux 05.49.17.11.20 2ritchies@orange.fr

Produced by: Jan Howse, Lieu dit Chanay, 79340 Fomferron 05.49.69.78.62. gtnewsletter79@gmail.com

Website: Andy Walmsley, 5 Jarzay, 79200 St Germain de Longue Chaume jarzay@gmail.com