

*Founded
1989*



*French
Association
3035*

May 2019 Newsletter

***Events, activities, news
and reports for members***



**Verteuil sur Charente
Photograph by Kaye Scott**



History Group Commemoration – Distribution of monies raised - 27th April

Some forty of us, French and British gathered in the Marie in Vasles as the final scene of the unforgettable Commemoration event took place.

After a warm welcome from the Cultural conseiller, Richard and Bernie Smith compered the proceedings bilingually, reminding us of the co-operation between the commune and all the team involved with the production.

Special mention should again be made of Vaughan Wells, who conceived the Commemoration, and Richard who produced it.

The President then presented cheques for €203 each to the local veterans association [UNC], Croix Rouge, the Royal British Legion and BLESMA.

Afterwards we all enjoyed a vin d'honneur, bringing down the final curtain.

Lunch & Wine Club

Tues 7th May

11.30 am

Cherveux

Diane & Keith Mousdale



The Lunch and Wine club for May will be held at Lesley and Neil's home at Cherveux. The theme for the food will be Mexican with appropriate wines.

If you would like to join us or would like more information please contact Diane & Keith. If anyone needs directions to the venue directions these will be sent upon request. As there is a maximum number of 14 attendee 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

DON'T FORGET TO BOOK YOUR TEAM IN THE GT QUIZ!!

GT Quiz Night

Thurs 9th May

6.30 pm

Fomperron

Martin Hughes



Our next quiz is to be held in Le Bistro des Amis in Fomperron. Please note the start time of 6.30 prompt. The bar will be open from 6. The format will be similar to last November's quiz with conundrums, music and pictorial rounds along with 60 general knowledge questions. There will be a meal somewhere in the middle, which will consist of a main course [plenty of veg], dessert course followed by coffee, all for the price of 12€. For the main course there is a choice of meat, fish or a vegetarian dish. Drinks are extra

As usual there will be a veritable treasure trove of prizes!!

We are looking for teams of four and to book your place please email Martin Hughes on **martinhughes88@aol.com** detailing the team name, the team members names and their choice of main course.

There will be an entrance charge of 2€ per head payable on the night.

P.S. We have a new venue as Les Voyageurs has closed for the time being.

Southern Walk

Sat 11th May

10.30 am

Chey 79120

Maureen and John Buckley



The walk will begin from the "parking area" alongside the N950 some 200 metres from the junction with the D45 (Lezay – La Mothe St Heray road). GPS 46° 18' 01" N, 0° 3' 22' 20" W. The parking is

Northern Walk **Friday 31st** **10.30** **Pont Romain** **Roger & Ann**
May **am** **Nr. Cerzeau** **Amsden**



Our walk will start from the Pont Romain where there is plenty of parking but unfortunately no toilets. From St Maixent l'Ecole at the Lidl roundabout take the D8 to Cerzeau, then carry on for a further half a km after crossing a stone bridge on the right will be signs for Pont Romain. Follow this road for 500m on the right again signs will be seen to Pont Romain. Turn in here and further down will be the car park and the start of the walk.

From the North take the D6 to Augé, then take the D174 from the centre signposted Coutant, after approx. 3kms at the crossroads turn left onto the D8 direction of Cerzeau, Valette & Mautre, after 1km Pont Romain signs will be seen on the left just before the stone bridge, follow as above.

The walk is about 7kms and there will be a shorter walk of approx. 4km. There are some hills, not too steep, could be muddy if there's been rain and there is an exposed section that could be windy. As always appropriate boots and clothing should be worn.

Lunch will be taken at the Restaurant de la Gare, Monplaisir on the rue de gatine Montplaisir, this is just off the D6 before it meets the roundabout on the main D743 Parthenay/Niort Road. The cost of lunch will be €12.90 and will consist of buffet starter, meat, fish or vegetarian main course, buffet cheese/dessert & wine. Coffee will cost a Euro extra. Order food on the day. The restaurant is open early so any non-walkers could pop in and have coffee if they so wanted.

Lunch&Wine **Tues4th** **11.30** **Menigoute** **Diane& Keith**
Club **June** **Mousdale**

The Lunch and Wine Group for June, being the last one for this season, the next being October, will be held at Martin's home at Menigoute. The theme for the food and wines from Italy.

If you would like to join us or would like more information please contact Diane & Keith.

REPORTS ON RECENT EVENTS

Northern Walk **Fri 29th**
Mar

Le Beugnon

Report by Ken & Lyn
Chamberlin



On a warm and sunny Friday morning, 17 or so walkers and 5 dogs gathered by L'Eglise St. Maurice de le Beugnon, the assembly point for the Northern area March walk. Those taking the longer route of 7.5kms boldly headed east past the church and followed Michele, I know not where. The remaining group turned West and followed Eric – we were 'the

short walkers' a most inappropriate title as at least half of those present were 6 foot tall at least.

We crossed the local football field and stopped by the style to admire the huge amount of tree surgery that had taken place, this was severe pollarding bordering on tree-felling but completed before the spring growth commenced. We ambled past fields and meadows to enter a small hamlet where basket weaving had existed. We admired the ingenuity of a previous weaving generation in damming the local stream to create a pool in which they soaked and softened the chataignes stalks prior to weaving into useful products.

Our time was half up so we turned about and re-traced our steps back to Le Beugnon, a very pleasant and informative randonnee thank you Eric. Before moving to L'Absie for lunch at Chez Chantal, we sat for a few minutes in the sunshine waiting for the long walkers to return, then they arrived from behind us– where had they been We had been on a wild flower adventure, guided by Michele up and down the contours of the surrounding countryside – stopping to admire the beautiful views, marvelling at the amazing variety of wild flowers on show, testing our knowledge of names either in English or French, Latin or local dialect! It was a truly lovely walk.



Shades of Last of the Summer Wine

Lunch & Wine **Tues 2nd**
Club **Apr**

Le Tallud

Report by Michele Hansford

The Lunch and Wine Club met this month for a Vegetarian Experience in the home of Diane and Keith Mousdale. We were treated to a wide range of delicious meat free starters and desserts as well as a tasty cheese platter. The featured wines were all from Alsace and we enjoyed a range of different styles: sparkling, dry and sweeter, but all delicious.

If you would like to join us on an occasional or regular basis or would just like more information please contact Diane and Keith.

**First Reading
Group**

**Mon 8th
April**

Craon

**Report by Gaynor
Mickelborough**



Six members of the 1st Book Group met in person on a chilly Monday afternoon to discuss Wendy's book choice 'The Tattooist of Auschwitz' by Heather Morris, plus emailed review contributions by another three group members who were unable to attend.

Wendy in her introduction to the book firstly gave us a good deal of background about the author's approach and her extensive self-promotion of this her first novel, and then went on to explain that instead of selecting as her own particular choice for the Group a book that she really liked, she had taken a different approach and put forward the much promoted best seller which she had disliked intensely and wanted to see what others in the group thought of it.

As it was, 'The Tattooist....' was critically and universally 'panned' by the Group on a scale of eight to one, but nevertheless the book did elicit a stimulating discussion. The novel was comprehensively and forensically picked apart and we all agreed that it was badly written, un-researched, dishonestly inaccurate, unbelievable, fake history, a Mills & Boon fantasy, and that it trivialised the great stain on history that is the Holocaust, and whose victims deserved better than to be so badly represented by a novel which purported to be based on fact. It was suggested that instead of passing on 'The Tattooist' to be read by others it should be 'recycled' and 'lost', hopefully for ever! However, the point remains that young readers may have a different perspective and it may have been their uncritical acceptance of the novel at face value that ensured it became an international best seller.

After we had expended all that emotional energy we were thankfully revived by tea and a delicious chocolate cake plus an unusual, but equally yummy orange and walnut number! Thank you, Wendy, for a thought provoking choice and a delightful afternoon.

Photo Group

**Mon 8th
Apr**

**Mazieres en
Gatine**

Report by Lyn Chamberlin



The Photo Group met for another informative meeting at the home of Carol Andrews in Mazieres-en-Gatine. Our subject on this occasion was Composition – the first visit to a very emotive subject.

The 'Rule of Thirds' – became the 'Suggested Option' – there are no rules in composition, it is down to the individual who took the photo and the person who views it. This was obvious from the lively conversation which arose around a collection of photos Steve had supplied to open discussions. We all had varied opinions but it does prompt thought when taking a photo or cropping a view on the computer at a later date. Trouble is, I have hundreds that could do with this treatment – where do I find the time to carry it out!!

Having built up a thirst from all the discussions. Carol supplied copious amounts of tea and coffee and the most delicious cakes – it was rude not to try a piece of each.

Thank you, Carol, very much.

Our theme for photography was 'Patterns' and the top score was given to Anthea Libby for a fascinating image of tree bark and lichen – Mother Nature's hand in making a pattern.

**Southern
Walk**

**Sat 13th
Apr**

**Clussais la
Pommeraiie**

Report by Bob Seager



This walk was not without its problems for our esteemed Southern Coordinator. Mr Chard was faced with the failure of the planned organiser to organise – some poor excuse, dry rot in his wooden leg, or something like that, whoever he was - so he had to do it himself at short notice. Having decided to reuse last October's walk on the basis of not being able to have too much of a good thing, he then organised a very

promising lunch. Having whet our appetites with an enticing menu, the restaurant staff decided they couldn't come up to our exacting standards and cancelled at the last minute – more dry rot, perhaps?

Whereupon our intrepid leader cancelled the whole thing. Whereupon seventeen walkers said hang on, we don't just come for the lunch, we want a walk. Whereupon the aforesaid leader said oh all right and thus seventeen walkers and six dogs set off on a lovely sunny morning, just a bit fresh but ideal for walking. The route took us along a mixture of roads and tracks, through several little collections of houses, including the inevitable one with a pack of hounds that decided to have a shouting match with our lot. Not sure who won that, but it looked a bit dodgy when one of ours – you know who you are, Poppy - decided to nip in an open front door. Fortunately John B stopped her before she found someone's lunch.

We were able to admire – jealously in my case – some very attractive gardens, as we wended our merry way, and all in all it was a very pleasant walk. Well, that's the first bit. As I had an early appointment with a couple of delicious lamb chops at Le Mine d'Or at Brioux, I had to leave at the half way mark, but if my memory serves me right from the October walk, the rest of it would have been equally pleasant. Our thanks to John and Pat for climbing out of the dooh dah they were dropped into.

History Group

Thurs 25th Apr

Fomperron

**Report by Michelle
Hansford**

On a stormy afternoon some 40 people squeezed into the back room of the Bistro des Amis at Fomperron to learn about the development of St Maixent from small hermitage to thriving military town. It was fascinating to hear about its growth, trials and tribulations over the centuries and to know about the few remaining spots where this history can be seen - from sections of city walls, old houses and origins of some of the names to be seen around town. Who knew that 'Panier Fleuri' is the name given to the red light district of a military town!!! Alan gave us a really interesting account and I for one will look much more carefully at the buildings and states in the town. Many thanks to Alan for all his hard work.

Northern Walk

Fri 27th Apr

St Maixent L'Ecole

**Report by Annette
Green & Martin
Hughes**

On a day threatened by rain 19 of us plus 5 dogs undertook a split walk in and around St Maixent.

The long walkers, led by Annette Green, comprised 12 walkers and 4 mutts. We started along the quai des tanneries where 13 tanneries used to operate in the 18th century. Initially we walked along the Sevrés Niortais river, admiring the few houses positioned along the bank and also the abundant wild garlic so pretty with its white flowers and pungent smell. After 4 kms we crossed the river at the picturesque hamlet of Veillons and then we climbed slowly up the edge of the valley giving us beautiful views of St Maixent L'Ecole. We finally came back to the town via a slow descent back down to the river.

Meanwhile the short walkers, led by Martin Hughes, started with the town streets. Gently making their way upwards they turned off towards the kayak school and out into the countryside. Down to the river, crossing over by the old river swimming pool - a throw over from the decades of the last century, this smaller group then trod their way back along the same banks the Green party had earlier used.

The sun even came out for a while, notable in itself, giving a temporary summery feeling for about 45 minutes.

Back to the town and The Marmite restaurant, where we were joined by one other, for a very pleasing meal, washed down with cider.

Many thanks to Annette for organising these walks,

**DON'T FORGET THE EARLY DEADLINE FOR COPY FOR THE JUNE
NEWSLETTER – SAT 18TH MAY !!**

***Organisers and Reportees don't worry if you have missed this edition
there will be another one along within three weeks!!***

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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