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French
Association
3035

March 2024 Newsletter



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wine and lunch club	Tues 5 th March	11.30 hrs	La Bourse	CANCELLED
Bowling	Wed 13 th March	17:00 hrs	Chauray, Niort	Neil Ritchie
Book Group	20 th March	11:30 hrs	Le Retail	Beverley Lockett
Fine Wine Evening	Thurs 21 st March	19.30 hrs	Le Tallud	Diane Mousdale
GT Walk	Fri 29 th March	10.30 hrs	La Bourse	Michele Hansford
Wine and Lunch Club	Tues 2 nd April	11.30 hrs	La Bourse	Diane Mousdale
History Talk	Wed 17 th April	15:00 hrs	St Gelais	Eric Hansford
Book Group	Wed 24 th April	11.30 hrs	TBC	Beverley Lockett

Next Committee meeting 10th April 2024

URGENT - Walk organisers needed for 2024

I am currently trying to organise the 2024 walks. **ONLY MARCH, APRIL AND SEPT BOOKED!**

Please let me know if you are willing to step in. We can help you plan the walk or organise the restaurant if you've never done it before.

Please contact me if you would like to talk about it or sign up.

Lesley Ritchie, walks co-ordinator.

Lunch and Wine Group Tues 5 th Mar L'Absie Diane and Keith Mousdale

CANCELLED - Unfortunately, due to insufficient bookings, this meeting has been postponed until 2nd April with the same theme, Languedoc updated

Bowling Wed 13th Mar 2024 17:00 hrs Chauray Neil Ritchie

Glory beckons

The annual GT tenpin bowling competition will take place on Wednesday 13th March at 5pm (17.00 if you've gone native) at Bowling de Chauray, Rue de Gay Lussac, 79180, Chauray. That's the one next to the monster Casino supermarket that we have used in the past (i.e. not the gloomy one we went to last time). <https://www.bowling-niort-chauray.com/> for directions. It will cost €11.50 (which includes a drink) for two rounds of triumph or embarrassment. Hiring shoes will cost you a couple of extra euros. When it's all over and you have finished chortling at all the bowls I sent hurtling into the gutter we will repair to Les Pyramides (at about 7pm-ish) for some sustenance and to proclaim the champion. From memory this will be €14 or so for 4 courses but it's a while since we have been there.

Contact Neil to secure your participation. The deadline will be **7th March but feel free to let us know at your earliest convenience.**

Next Reading Circle 20th Mar 11:30 am Le Retail Hosted by Yvonne

The book is *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus.

THE NEW YORK TIMES AND SUNDAY TIMES BESTSELLER, WITH OVER 6 MILLION COPIES SOLD

Chemist Elizabeth Zott is not your average woman. In fact, she would be the first to point out that there is no such thing. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute take a very unscientific view of equality.

Forced to leave her job at the institute, she soon finds herself the reluctant star of America's most beloved cooking show, Supper at Six.

But as her following grows, not everyone is happy. Because as it turns out, Elizabeth Zott isn't just teaching women to cook. She's daring them to change the status quo. One molecule at a time.

Fine Wines Evening Thurs 21st March 7.30pm Le Tallud Diane & Keith Mousdale



A fine wine event will take place at the home of Diane & Keith in Le Tallud. The wines to be tasted will comprise one white and three reds each of significant quality accompanied by a selection of nibbles appropriate to each wine. The cost will be €12 per person. For those wishing to attend this event please contact Diane & Keith. Numbers are limited to 12 person on a first come basis.

LTL Tues 26th Mar 13:00 hrs Champdeniers Sheila Oldroyd

Ladies That Lunch will be meeting on Tuesday 26 March, at Bar le Paradis, 3 Place du Paradis 79220 Champdeniers.

The menu is extensive and inexpensive and will cater for all tastes.

Please ask all interested parties to confirm their attendance to Sheila by Monday 18th March.

Please also advise that if they do not receive a confirmation reply from me, then I will not have received their mail.

Walk Fri 29th Mar 10:30 hrs La Bourse Michele Hansford

Walk details to be confirmed in a later email, however Lunch will be at Chez Chantal, L'Absie – Choose on the day, €14, coffee and wine extra.

Please contact Michele to book your place

Lunch and Wine Group Tues 2nd April 11.30am L'Absie Diane & Keith Mousdale

The April meeting will be held at Michele & Eric's home at La Bourse, L'Absie. The theme of the meeting for wines is looking at the difference in Languedoc past and present. Food, a starter, cheeses or a dessert is anything from the south of France, but which item is needed to be in collaboration with Diane to ensure all items are covered. A small charge is made to cover the cost of the wines, usually around €3 -4.

A maximum of 14 bookings are on a first come basis, due to restriction on size of hosts houses and how many reasonable tastings from a bottle of wine, but in the event of over subscription anyone who cannot be accommodated will be offered first refusal for the following meeting. If you would like to book to join us or would like more information, please contact Diane or Keith.

You do not need so to be a culinary expert, it is just a fun social gathering with a lot of chat and lots to eat and drink so why not come along and give it a try?

History Talk Wed 17th Apr 15:00 hrs St Gelais Eric Hansford

The next History Group talk will be on 17th April at 3:00 pm at the Cafe de Sports in St Gelais. The subject will be the development of aviation after the first world war. This was a time of rapid advances in technology and feats of bravery or foolhardiness in which French and British aviators played their part. This is a continuation of my previous talk 2 years ago.

Contact Eric Hansford if you wish to attend.

Book Group 24th April 11:30am Hosted by – tbc

Book chosen *Becoming* by Michelle Obama

An intimate, powerful, and inspiring memoir by the former First Lady of the United States.

In a life filled with meaning and accomplishment, Michelle Obama has emerged as one of the most iconic and compelling women of our era. As First Lady of the United States of America - the first African American to serve in that role - she helped create the most welcoming and inclusive White House in history while also establishing herself as a powerful advocate for women and girls in the United States and around the world, dramatically changing the ways that families pursue healthier and more active lives and standing with her husband as he led America through some of its most harrowing moments. Along the way, she showed us a few dance moves, crushed Carpool Karaoke, and raised two down-to-earth daughters under an unforgiving media glare.

GT Event Reports

AGM President's speech February 29 2024 Salle de Familles, Exireuil

Good morning and welcome to the Get Together annual get together! It is good to see those of you who have been able to come.

2023 brought us some new faces but also meant we said farewell to others. Sadly we lost Gerry Riley in March. It has been a difficult time for Anne, but I know she has had support from her many friends - in particular Kate and Grant Sangster.

We have had a considerable variety of activities on offer over the course of the year. These are advertised both through the Monthly Newsletter, edited for the past 4 years by Annette Green, and through our Facebook page which has been managed until recently by Julia and Peter Murray but since they have given in to Wanderlust it has now been taken over by Suzette Jeapes. Our thanks to all. I am not at all sure how we will manage without a Newsletter Editor if none steps in to replace Annette. That will be discussed in AOB.

Our monthly walks have covered the kilometres and introduced us to many different areas of our department. We must thank Lesley Ritchie for her role as Walks Co-ordinator and the members who have taken responsibility for the individual walks. Many are repeat offenders but we always welcome newcomers and I know Lesley is very happy to help anyone who comes forward. It can be difficult some months to find volunteers yet this is a very popular activity.

Our wine and lunch club and Fine Wine evenings are organised by Keith and Diane Mousdale and continue to be very well attended. As a regular participant I can tell you what enjoyable occasions they always are. We are given the opportunity to understand a little more about the wines we enjoy - not just those of our adopted country - and to sample the cuisine of the corresponding areas. If you haven't tried either of these events you need to remember to sign up as early as possible as they tend to be oversubscribed. Thanks are due to Keith and Diane for the work they put into this.

Another regular activity is our Reading Group which meets monthly in members homes. This has been organised by Lesley Ritchie but she has now passed the baton to Beverly Lockett. Our thanks are due to both ladies. We always welcome new readers into this popular group. Please contact Beverly if you are interested in joining.

We continue to offer History Group talks. We moved venues this year because much as we loved using the Chateau de Cherveux it was increasingly obvious that access was a problem for several of our members. We now meet at the Café des Sports in St Gelais. This has the additional perk of offering a very reasonable lunch beforehand! We have started using this as the venue for our GT quiz as well. You may have noticed that the November quiz was cancelled due to lack of support. It would be helpful to know if this was just unfortunate timing, the venue or the time of day: would an afternoon quiz be preferred?

“Ladies that Lunch” is a new GT offering that seems to have been instantly popular. Our thanks to Annette Green for the idea and the organisation.

Apart from our regular activities, we have also had some one off events, starting with our annual trip to the Bowling in Niort organised by Lesley and Neil Ritchie.: this is always a great evening with a high standard of bowling from some - and abysmal skills displayed by others (me!). The next outing is on March 13th: sign up with Lesley and Neil if you are up for the challenge or if you would like to watch!

We went to the Chateau de Montreuil Bellay for our History Group summer outing in June. This was a very interesting venue and we were all impressed by our guided tour. Les and Annette found us an excellent lunch venue on the outskirts of Doué la Fontaine. Our two summer events were both well attended and offered different challenges: Horse Racing at John and Maureen Buckley's in July, board games at Brad and Sally Warden's in August. Thanks are due to both hosts. In December we met at the 10:20 restaurant in Reffannes for our annual Christmas meal. This was well attended and enjoyed by all. Once again we had Champagne raffle. Thanks to Les and Anette for organising our pre-lunch walk around St Lin.

As you can tell, we have continued to organise a wide variety of activities to suit all tastes. We do try to cover those areas of the department where we have members , in order to reduce travel times as much as possible. It should also be clear that much of the responsibility for planning falls on the shoulders of the committee and I would like to thank each and everyone of them for their hard work over the year. I worry that lacking a newsletter editor it will be harder to let people know what is being arranged. I think Get Together has played a valuable role in fostering friendships among the English speaking inhabitants of the Deux Sèvres, both native speakers and those who speak English as an additional language. We need our members to be more proactive, to be prepared to join the committee, to suggest and organise activities. Failing this, I fear that the Association will wither and die. 2024 is a key year. If you value our association and all that it offers, many more of you need to give up your time to making it work.

Book group report

It was a small and select few who met for the review of *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Anthony Deor. Thank you Joyce for hosting

We all only finished the book either the day before or that morning!

We all felt that it felt disjointed at the beginning and that it took ages for us to understand what the story was about and where it was going and the characters involved. However, once you had figured it out, it was a good story which connected together in the end very well. Both Yvonne and myself read reviews about it which convenience us to preserve!

The story centres about an ancient Greek book, lost to time called Cloud Cuckoo Land. It contained a fantastical, silly tale of a shepherd who longs for a far away place, only to want to return home once he is there.

The book covers from Alexandra the Great's siege of Constantinople to hundreds of years in to the future. There are many main characters throughout the time period, but all of them are affected in some way the tale of the shepherd and it gives them hope. We all loved the stories in the end, but the ending was a bit abrupt!

Our favourite characters were Anna who was a very determined character.

Words to describe the book were:

Imagination

Home

Connected

Quotes were:

“Repository – a resting place. A text or book is a resting place for the memories of people who have lived before. A way for the memory to stay fixed after the soul had travelled on”

“Somewhere inside the city walls, a glow rises; a sunrise in the wrong place and time. Strange how suffering can look beautiful if you get far enough away”

“Some days, walking to school, or simply rising from bed, he is knocked off-balance by a sudden, stomach-churning sense of spectators ringed around him, their shirts soaked in blood and accusation on their faces. Pansy, they say and level their outstretched fingers at him. Sissy, Fruit Punch.”

“The things that look fixed in the world, child – mountains, wealth, empires – their permanence is only an illusion. We believe they will last, but that is only because of the brevity of our own lives. From the perspective of God, cities like this come and go like ant-hills. “



Non GT Events.....

Update from Julia and Peter Murray, who are touring Europe.....

We moved to the outskirts of Valencia on Friday 26th January to check out a motorhome site ready for our daughters visit. Spent the 2 days exploring Valencia, hired electric scooters which was great way to get around the city.

On Sunday 28th went an hour south to Benissuera. A little village with no facilities except for a nice moterhome area.

Then back to valencia for 2 nights with our daughter and granddaughter (2.5yrs) who thought it was great fun going in the passenger door ,through the motorhome and out of the rear door,



round and round she went.

We went to valencia zoo which was very good.

On Friday 2nd we went north of valencia where there's a nice beach with bars. Trampolines and kiddy rides.

Sunday morning we took our guests to the airport and returned to the Benissuera site south of Valencia.

The weather's been good ,in the 20's and its been very peaceful and problem free since my last update.

Monday 5th we were treated to a firework display right in front of our motor home.

Tuesday we set off towards Benidorm and stopped for the night at Denia , a big seaside town.

On wednesday we stopped in the hills upbove Altea. Found a peaceful spot with great views and only one other motorhome there.

Next day we did a long walk to the town, it has a nice seafront and the old town is very nice with narrow winding streets and white cottages.

Certainly a tourist hotspot and I imagine over crowded in the summer.

Good weather sunny, low 20s. Just one night of rain.

Friday wasn't a good day ,we as we decided to move to a small town with a parking area, but the satnav couldn't navigate the town and we got stuck on the narrow streets. Thankfully a very kind man hooted his horn and flashed at us , so we stopped which is a good job as the route we were about take would of been really really bad. The next move was very scary, we had to reverse down the hill and then turn around on a steep incline on narrow streets, we really thought van was going to fall over onto its side!. The man actually took us to the parking area. Some people are so kind and go out of their way to help you.



Unfortunately parking area was shut.

After that experience we went back the safety of a place we had already visited, Benisseura.

Saturday 10th we travelled just 15 mins to the small town of Otos, which has 30 sundials.

Unfortunately we spent the next 2 days trying and failed to mend the fridge that decided to stop working and on monday we realised we had lost our passports and with the fridge still not working we decided to head back to France and sadly end our Spanish adventure and travel around France instead.

Of course the journey didn't go smoothly , as we approach Tarragona the wind pick up to 100km an hour .It was very scary, the van weaved alot and felt like was going to tip over in the gusts of wind. We decided to stop in Tarragona for the night.

The next day we set off to France only to get caught up in the tractor blockade, took an extra 2 hours to navigate around the closed ap7 road. Arrived in France and stopped just outside Perpignan in a campsite to make life easy!

Sunny and warm 19c.

We ordered the part for the Fridge which arrived promptly the next day, thanks to Amazon.

Thursday 15th February, fridge mended and feeling refreshed we went to castelnou, one of Frances beautiful villages, overnight parking is allowed and we had the carpark to ourselves, with excellent views.

For the next 4 weeks we will just be loitering around the south of France and seeing as many of the "Les plus beaux villages de france" as we can before we go home.

Looking forward to catching up with you all in April x

POMMERAIE PLAYERS

Present

AN EVENING OF TWO COMEDY PLAYS

On 22nd and 23rd March 2024

At the Salle des Fêtes La Pommeraie

Doors & Bar open 7.00pm Curtain up 8.00pm

Tickets 8.00 Euro



Pommeraie Players version
of the classic British Sit Com

AND



Four northern girls learn to Pole Dance at the local
village hall with hilarious results

Not suitable for children under 14 years of age

Tickets can be reserved by phone from

OR

Paul Tel 06 02 04 98 93

Bev Tel 06 02 04 37 50

ON THE DOOR ON THE NIGHT.

IPNG Ne pas jeter sur la voie publique

For walks in the Deux Sevres take a look at www.tourisme-hautvaldesevre.fr

Cancer Support Deux Sevres

Aims to improve the lives of people affected by Cancer in Deux Sevres
CSDS direct number is 06 40 77 27 35
or contact Cancer Support France on freephone number 0800 240 200
or email Cancer Support France on helpline@cancersupportfrance.org
Cancer Support France will forward your details if you need local support

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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