

THE FRENCH CONNECTION NEWS & EVENTS

JANUARY 2017 VISIT BY FRENCH STUDENTS

We got 2017 to a most auspicious start by hosting a visit by 12 students from *Sérignan*. This location is like Churchill in that it provides education for older children in the surrounding area, including our twinned community *Villeneuve-lès-Béziers (VLB)*.

[PLEASE SEE THE BUTTONS ON THE HOME PAGE FOR A DETAILED REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHS](#)

PLANNED ACTIVITIES IN 2017 AND WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST YEAR

THE REDHILLBILLIES Following the incredibly successful visit to VLB last year by *Tom Vowles & Jo Dean* of *The Redhillbillies* they are looking to return there this year with the full band! What great ambassadors they are.

OTHER EVENTS & SPORTING ACTIVITIES

- A *film evening* on Wednesday 15 February at the *Reading Room*. The film is *Les parapluies de Cherbourg*. Drinks / nibbles will be provided from 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m. There will be an entrance fee of £10. *Please note that only members are permitted but membership is available at the door £5 per person or £10 for a couple or family.*
- There is a *gastronomic visit to Goodfellows* in Wells on 7 April following a successful visit last year.

GOODFELLOWS GASTRONOMIC MEAL - £35

MENU

Kir

Ballotine de saumon aux herbes, crème fraîche, caviar avruga

Boeuf Bourignan, petits oignons, champignons et lardons

Fromages Français, pains aux noix et raisins

Choix d'une selection de patisserie Goodfellows

Café ou Thé

MENU VEGETARIAN

Velouté de champignons sauvages, huile de truffes noires

Fromage de chèvre grille, polenta saffrané, courgettes grille et vinaigrette aux herbes

- There is a *quiz evening* for Members and friends at The Reading Room on 26 April with nibbles and wine. The questions will have a French orientation.
- *Sporting exchanges* are also being pursued.
- Our involvement in the *Wrighton Fair & Pageant* with our French friends is under review but it conflicts with the French Presidential election so presents us with a challenge!
- Other events and activities are in the early planning stage

We also welcome suggestions for activities so please contact us!

THE FRENCH CONNECTION has had a busy year with several successful events and more planned for 2017. Our membership continues to grow and many of our events are now attracting people from throughout the Wroughton Vale, ensuring that the association has a lively and active programme for all those interested in France and things French.

In February, the association hosted a very enjoyable **Film Evening** at Barley Wood, showing **'Intouchables'**, an award-winning French film. It was the second biggest box office hit in France. A true story of two men who should never have met — a quadriplegic aristocrat who was injured in a paragliding accident and a young man from a criminal background who reluctantly becomes his carer. They gradually form an immensely strong bond of friendship.... An amazing, moving film.



In March we held a highly enjoyable evening of French cuisine at **Goodfellows** restaurant in Wells, with an authentic French menu cooked and served by a French and French-trained team. The evening was well attended and great fun was had by all.

In April, we hosted an extremely interesting illustrated talk on the difference between English and French art given by **Lindsey Shaw-Miller**. The evening was held in the **Reading Room** and accompanied by wine and canapés. Lindsey led the audience on a fascinating journey taking in Monet, Stubbs, Turner, Manet amongst others. She challenged the audience to think about how the English often want to understand their art whereas the French are content to absorb and enjoy it. A thoroughly entertaining and informative evening!

In June **Anthony Hancock**, our secretary, finished his book **"FRANCE WITHOUT TEARS"**. This is the **Serious Guide** to France! Anthony spent many years living and working in different parts of France. He loves the country and its people and significantly knows France and how it works. This reference book is bang up to date to the result of the referendum and tells you **how** to navigate its culture, laws and bureaucracy. The book is a **MUST** to answer the following questions!

- Do you go to France on business or holiday?
- Might you move to France?
- Do you already have a residence there? Do you or may you let it out?
- What about starting a business or being employed in France?
- Do you know about taxation, social security and pensions?
- What about wills and inheritance?
- What about their culture, customs, table manners and driving?
- And sadly, do you know what do you do in an extreme emergency?

The book is selling extremely well and we received a bulk order for 200 from a property company in France. All proceeds go towards supporting **The French Connection** projects.

[PLEASE SEE THE SEPARATE BUTTONS FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO ORDER THE BOOK](#)



REDHILLBILLIES AT VILLENEUVE

– A report by John Adams

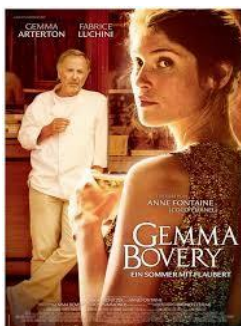
Summer came late to the South of France last year but right on cue for the Soirée Musicale in our twin village **Villeneuve-lès-Béziers (VLB)** in the south of France - and the perfect setting for the headline performance by **Tom Vowles** and **Jo Dean** of the **Redhillbillies** on 22nd June. As the sun dropped behind the mediaeval buildings, the floodlights came up on the music

stage set up in the central **Place Michel Solans**. In the warm dusk the festival started with 'Le Coeur des Guitares' – 21 acoustic guitarists providing a range of up-beat Spanish dance music – followed by various other musicians providing a remarkable range of music. Then Jo and Tom took the stage and, from the first number, were on top form a mix of country rock and ballads. The square teemed with locals revelling in the warm summer night and, before long, was alive with impromptu line dancing, young people jiving, and an appreciative audience beating time and sipping drinks under the plane trees. As the local paper said the following day Tom et Jo 'had shown the full range of their talent with the superb guitar and banjo playing'. Putting a play-list together earlier that day, Tom and Jo had sought a quiet rehearsal space under the impression that they would provide about 40 minutes of music. Such was the demand that they were still playing well after midnight. The evening had began with aperitifs and an excellent seafood supper on the square in front of **Les Enfants Terribles**, a popular stop for Wington visitors. Winding down after the event, those with energy remaining joined Tom and Jo at the excellent brasserie **La Crémade** beside the Canal de Midi for post-concert refreshments. A tremendous visit and we all hope there will be a repeat Watch this space (but please don't tell Glastonbury fans – there could be a mass exodus next year). The event was organised by the Villeneuve Mairie and we thank them as always for their warm welcome and generous hospitality towards the contributors. Finally, a special thank you to Jo and Tom for making this tremendous contribution to the twinning relationship.

PRESS THE BUTTON "REDHILLBILLIES AT VILLEUVE" ON THE HOMEPAGE FOR PHOTOS!

On 29 July the final of the *Boules* competition for the **NICK WALTERS CUP** was held at **The Plough Inn**. The competition is held in memory of **Nick** a very active member and past Chair of our association. 18 teams took part and the cup was won by **Roderigo's Hunters**. Congratulations to them. **Janet Walters** presented the trophies. See the pictures on the website. Our 2 boules teams, **The French Connection** and **Les Villeneuvois**, participated in **The Plough Inn** boules league and **The French Connection** was narrowly pipped at the post to come second at the end of the season.

PLEASE SEE SEPARATE BUTTON FOR PHOTOGRAPHS



On 18 October there was another **FILM EVENING** at the **Redhill Club**. The French comedy film **Emma Boverly** was shown. In this engaging and thought-provoking comedy, taken from the graphic novel by Posy Simmonds, life begins to imitate art when the beautiful Gemma (Gemma Arterton) and her furniture restorer husband Charles Boverly (Jason Flemyng) move to the very same Norman village where Flaubert's novel **Madame Boverly** was written. Local baker and Flaubert fan Martin Joubert (Fabrice Luchini) falls for the newcomer and it doesn't take long before his wild imagination leads him to draw parallels between the literary

character and the real life woman. As events unfold it seems that Gemma's destiny is mirroring that of Flaubert's doomed heroine.. It was a most entertaining evening!



BRISTOL FRENCH HONORARY CONSUL

On 2 November we hosted a visit in the **Reading Room** by the **HONORARY CONSUL, Mme Josette Lebrat**. She talked about her (unpaid) work as the Consul and much of what she did was new to most of the attendees. We presented Mme Lebrat with a copy of the book "**FRANCE WITHOUT TEARS**". It was a fascinating evening and we seemed to have gained a very influential friend and ally. She has referred the book to several local French related organisations.

The **COMMITTEE** **Anthony Hancock, John Adams, Janet Walters, Jill Rawlins, John Rawlins, Annabel Scott, David Simpson** and **Colville Greaves** all did sterling work in supporting me and the association. During the year David replaced John Rawlins as the Parish Council nominated committee member. Jill Rawlins left the Committee having been appointed as vice chair of the Board of an NGO was taking a significant amount of her time and involved London meetings. We thank her for her very valuable contribution to our association and we wish her every success in this very important role. Colville was co-opted onto the Committee and has already made a very great contribution.

The **FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUPS** continue to flourish and attract new members from Wrington and neighbouring parishes. Membership of these groups is free to our association members. We are all indebted to **Anthony and Margaret Hancock** and **Annabel** for hosting these groups. Anyone seeking to join should contact Margaret on margaret@wringtontwinning.co.uk.

SCHOOL COLLABORATION **Annabel Scott** continues to extend and strengthen the ties between pupils in our local schools and those in VLB. We thank her for all her efforts and may she long continue!

VISITS TO VILLENEUVE Quite a few people visited VLB during the past year including **THE REDHILLBILLIES** and **John Adams, Janet Walters, Jane Finn, Anne-Marie Morris** and **Ivan Cornock** and his family.



THE 2016 AGM was held at Redhill Village Hall on 29 November. It was accompanied, against a French café backdrop, by wine & charcuterie tasting. It finished up with an enthusiastic game of skittles