

CITYLINK



Chairman's Letter

Michael Bevis writes:

In this edition **Pamela Kemp** writes about her experiences of music in the Dordogne. We have another delicious recipe from **Paul Everett**. **Jean-Claude Grouteau** sends us an amusing piece about the masculine et feminine in French with a cheeky postscript by **Ellen** who has also written us her usual 'Just for Fun!'. It has been frustrating having to postpone events but we now have a programme which takes us up to Christmas.

We had all looked forward to being able to meet in person again and it was disappointing to have to postpone the talk about Uppark by **David Bridges** and our visit to the house. **You will see that this is now planned for 7th of September followed by the visit to Uppark on 9th September.**

The British have a reputation for being obsessed with the weather and the forecast is a frequent topic of conversation. On 25th July a storm was predicted to strike at 3.00pm - just as our Garden Party was due to start and the decision was reluctantly taken to postpone. It was lucky that we did as thunder, lightning and rain akin to the monsoon arrived exactly on cue! The delayed event took place two weeks later and was thoroughly enjoyed by the 23 members who attended. Thanks to **Clare and Ralph Apel** for hosting us.

A good time was also had by all who attended our petanque, fish and chip supper and quiz evening at the Fishbourne Centre on 27th August.

Changes in the regulations for people wanting to travel to and from France this year have been bewildering but we will shortly be discussing with our Friends in Chartres how our exchange visit can go ahead next year as it is the personal contacts and friendships which are so important in keeping the twinning vibrant.

Letter from the Présidente of the Amis de Chichester



Yvonne Chrétien writes:

After all these long months when we were unable to meet except on Zoom, we had planned to meet on 2nd of July to celebrate our freedom recovered. We went to visit the Castle of the «Comtes du Perche» in Nogent-le-Rotrou. The donjon is said to be the oldest médiéval donjon in Europe. There is no furniture but since 2019 there is a museum about the Comtes du Perche story and the Perche which is part from Normandy. I enclose a picture of it and surroundings.

Then we went for lunch in a nice restaurant situated on the side of a river. It was formally a moulin (mill). So it is a peaceful place where we can hear only the noise of water and the birds singing. We have been lucky, it was the only sunny day of the week. We were only 18 persons but I can say that we all enjoy the day and were happy to see one another again.



Editorial

Contributions to **Citylink**, including *Just for Fun* ideas, would be very welcome and should be sent to foccitylink1959@gmail.com. Calling all "Tweeters"! Our Twitter account has not been active since October 2020... we would like to ask a member who is a regular Tweeter to undertake to Tweet about the Friends' activities. Please get in touch if you can help.

Recent Events

Garden Party 25th July



Members' News

Pamela Kemp writes: *Music in the Dordogne*



In November 2002 my husband and I bought a house in the Dordogne, sold our London house and moved to France at the end of January 2003.

Both of us loved music and felt sure of being able to find concerts to attend in Bordeaux, two hours' drive west and perhaps in Perigueux, the capital, which was less than one hour north. What neither of us expected was the quality of the music at concerts given in some of the village churches; a wonderful surprise which simply awaited discovery.

The first of such concerts was not actually in the Dordogne but in the Lot, the department immediately south of us, where the Ysaye Quartet were to play in an Abbey. I was able to get tickets and we greatly looked forward to it. We were not disappointed as it was absolutely marvellous. The following year I was really looking forward to their return, but it didn't happen so in 2004, disappointed that they had still not returned, I looked them up on the net. I found that they had been giving concerts all over the world and the nearest one to us that year would be at the International Festival of Music in Orange such was their renown.

In the meantime, we discovered the Festival of Baroque Music in Perigueux when for about eight days there would be three concerts each day, those in the morning for young musicians of potential, the other two for established ones of repute, a veritable feast of music. In the winter there was a series of evening concerts with, again, musicians of international standing either soloists or chamber music including a chamber orchestra. Such a treat to find this quality of music so nearby.

However, what was really astonishing were the musicians who came to play locally.

The City of Chichester twinned, since 1959, with the City of Chartres.

www.friendsofchartres.org.uk

I well remember going to a concert given by a wind quintet where each player was a member of a well-known orchestra such as those of Bordeaux and Paris and the flautist played with the Concertgebouw. I was so surprised that at the interval I just had to go and ask them why they had come to play here. It transpired that they had known each other from their days at the University of Toulouse when they had formed the quintet. They had agreed that they would continue to meet to give concerts together when their schedules permitted. One of the groups had family living locally hence coming to play here where they could stay with family and friends and have a short break in the country as well as playing together.

News From Chartres:

Jean Claude Grouteau writes:

Le COVID or La COVID 19?

When one learns the French language, one has to learn if a word is masculine with le or un, or feminine with la or une. As you have been taught, there is no rule, you just have to learn it. We say La lune (the moon) and Le soleil (the sun). Why? In the German language, the moon is masculine (der Mond) and the sun is feminine (die Sonne). Why? An easy way to remember it, is just to think of the Charles Trenet's song about a date between the moon and the sun. "Le soleil a rendezvous avec la lune." A very good friend of mine learned a lot of the English language by learning song lyrics. What happens for the native French speaker when a new word appears? There is a common feeling which cannot be explained. So, every French person will know at once if it is masculine or feminine and it normally works... but not all the time. So, last year, when the word Covid became a common French word, everybody in France talked about le COVID. In French speaking Canada, they said, from the beginning La Covid and they were right. The Académie Française, an assembly of 40 wise persons, most of whom are famous writers, rules the French language and its evolution. Usually, the opinion of the Academy is decreed a long time after a new word is launched and sometimes by then this word is out of use. But COVID is not really a new word and a rule exists. COVID is an acronym which means Corona Virus Disease. The gender must, therefore, come from its origin which is "disease" or "la maladie." This means Covid must also be feminine. For this reason, French people say la SNCF (la Compagnie des Chemins de Fer Français) or la CIA as the word for "une agence" is feminine but le FBI (with the letters pronounced as in English) because "un bureau" is masculine. But there is another rule which says that the popular use is the right use. Politicians, journalists or scientists are now using more la covid, but it can be heard or read very often du (for de+le) Covid instead of de la Covid.

The French word used for "lockdown" is confinement. According to my dictionary, in the English language, this word could mean the same as in French but has also other meanings: to be sent to prison or to deliver a baby. So do not be scared if you read in a French newspaper "une vieille dame doit être mise en confinement". She did nothing wrong to deserve to go to jail nor she will have a baby soon. She just has to Stay at Home Now!

Gascon Gastronomy

Here is the final course on **Paul Everett's** delicious menu.

Tarte aux myrtilles (Blueberry Tart)

Ingredients: (Serves 6)

For the pastry:

- 220g plain flour
- 145g salted butter cut into cubes
- 80g caster sugar
- 1 egg yolk
- cold water (if needed to form a ball)

For the filling: -

- 3 vanilla or 'Nice' biscuits crushed to fine crumbs
- 400g blueberries (fresh preferred over frozen)
- 1 egg plus white from the egg used for the pastry
- 100g caster sugar
- 60g crème fraîche (I suggest to use full fat)

Preparation: -

- Mix together the pastry ingredients to form a smooth mixture. Cover with cling film and place in the fridge for one hour.
- Pre-heat the oven to 180°C (Fan 170°C) and place a metal baking sheet or tray in the oven to heat up.
- Crumble the biscuits into small pieces.
- Roll out the pastry and using a 10" loose base fluted flan case, butter the inside and line it with the pastry. Cut out a disc from baking paper and place inside pastry. Add baking beans.

Cooking:

- Place dish on the heated baking tray and blind bake for 10 minutes.
- Remove the paper and baking beans and sprinkle the biscuit crumbs across the base. Spread the blueberries over the base and return to oven for a further 15 minutes.
- Make up the liquid filling in a bowl. Beat together the eggs, caster sugar, and crème fraîche. Remove the tart from the oven and pour the mixture over the blueberries and return to the oven and continue baking for another 15-20 minutes or until mixture is set.

Just For Fun!

Please skip this section if you are of a delicate nature....

Reading Jean Claude's contribution on the masculine/feminine in French, it put me in mind of the latest Netflix series, "Emily in Paris." This is a comedy/drama about a young Chicagoan who is sent to Paris by the ad agency she works for to give the Paris office an American perspective on social media marketing. Her dream of living in Paris has come true but she speaks no French. Of course, her French colleagues disdain her work ethic, smartphone, and lack of French. In Episode 2, while working on an ad campaign for Vaga-Jeune, she learns the French for vagina is le vagin, masculine article. The vagina is not masculine, says Emily and uses her social media to share her chagrin about the misogynistic ideas that underlie French grammar. The meme goes viral and it is picked up by Brigitte Macron who shares Emily's comment with her followers with enthusiasm ("Absolument!"). This is all picked up by the ad's client and the head of office causing Emily's star to rise. If you haven't seen this series, it is fun with a killer wardrobe for Emily. And the same goes for "le soutien-gorge." How can a bra be masculine?

Learning a language can be hard. Memorization and practice can be boring at times; but they can be made more interesting. Listening and speaking skills can be improved by watching French films and series. Start with the subtitles. Watch with the English subtitles on, and pay attention. (Some of the translations can be a bit strange and even at times, there are the rare mistakes.) Switch to French subtitles to train your ear and learn new vocabulary, and last of all, switch off all subtitles and see how much you understand. Below are some suggestions and where they can be found:

BBC iPlayer (free to view)

- Spiral (crime drama)
- Missions (science fiction drama)

Netflix (subscription)

- Je ne suis an homme facile (comedy)
- Emily in Paris (comedy/drama)
- Call my agent (comedy)
- School life (drama/comedy)

Amazon Prime (subscription)

- 10 jours sans maman (comedy)
- Up for love (comedy)
- Lost in Paris (comedy)

All 4 (free to view) go to category World Drama

- Detective Cain (crime drama)
- Vanished by the lake (crime drama)

And many more French and French speaking Belgian tv series.

Friends of Chartres Autumn Events

Events can be booked by email to focevents1959@gmail.com or by returning the booking form provided with this edition.

Tuesday, September 7

The Guide Hall, Whyke Lane, Chichester
7.30 pm

Uppark: The French Connection

Illustrated talk by
Volunteer Guide, David Bridges



Thursday September 9: 10:00 am
Garden tour at 11:00

Visit to Uppark House and Gardens

Meet for coffee
Self-guided visit to house
Bring a picnic lunch
Pay on entry £8 or
free to National Trust members

Tuesday November 9

The Guide Hall, Whyke Lane, Chichester
7.30 pm

In the National Interest: Art, the Sun King and the Academic Revolution

Lecture by artist Richard Whincop



The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture was founded in 1648 under Louis XIV of France, the "Sun King", and placed the visual arts under direct royal control. The lecture looks at the origins of the Académie and its evolution in the centuries which followed.

Tuesday October 5

The Guide Hall, Whyke Lane, Chichester
7.30 pm

Tasteful Protests: Wine, Cheese and Radical Protest in France

Illustrated talk by Dr Andrew Smith,
Senior Lecturer in Contemporary History
and Politics, University of Chichester



In his talk, Andrew will look at the consequences of globalisation for wine producers in the Languedoc region.

Thursday November 25

Christmas Social

The Sherbourne Room, Bishop's Palace,
Canon Lane, Chichester

7.30 - 9.30 pm



**Numbers limited so book
your place early.**

Information Page

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Chichester

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David Nason 573716

John Wilton 788833

Conversation Circles: September to December 2021

Groups meet monthly for lively, informal conversation in French. We welcome new members, whatever your level of French at Petit Cercle meetings. For the Cercle Avancé, you need to be reasonably fluent to contribute to the conversation, but we are happy for you to listen if you wish to improve your French.

We hope that from September onwards it will be possible for us to resume indoor sessions. If not, the conversation groups will meet on Zoom. Login details will be sent out shortly before each meeting.

Petit Cercle du mardi

10.30 - 12.00 (First Tuesday of month)

Tuesday September 7

Tuesday October 5

Tuesday November 2

Tuesday December 7

Venue: The Coffee Bar, The Festival Theatre, Oaklands Park, Chichester PO19 6AP

Cercle Avancé

5.30 - 7.00 pm (2nd Monday of month)

Monday September 13

Monday October 11

Monday November 8

Monday December 13

Venue: The Rainbow Inn, St Paul's Road, Chichester PO19 3BW

Petit Cercle du jeudi

10.30 - 12.00 (3rd Thursday of month)

Thursday September 16

Thursday October 21

Thursday November 18

Thursday December 16

Venue: The Coffee Bar, The Festival Theatre, Oaklands Park, Chichester PO19 6AP

If you would like to attend a conversation circle and have not done so before, call **Julia Sander 01243 527435**.