

CITYLINK



Chairman's Letter

Anne Scicluna writes:

We have had a successful few months, one of the highlights being the excellent garden party in **Michael Bevis's** garden, when a good number of members enjoyed very good company, with excellent variety of food – brought by the members - on a lovely summer's day. Thank you to Michael for making this possible.

The language circles have been thriving so that members have been able to get to know each other better while also practising their French language in a friendly social gathering. Sunday evening Cine Club has also proved popular. Thanks to **Ellen Haigh** for providing an enjoyable selection of films we had never seen before.

Another highlight was at the end of November, when a considerable number of members gathered in the Sherborne Room at the Bishop's Palace for our Christmas Soiree. Friendly chat was accompanied by boxes of cheese, grapes, chutney and French bread. The evening was finished by committee member **Canon David Nason** telling us about the history of the room and the ceiling paintings – tremendously interesting for us all. Thank you David, and thank you to **Julia Sander** for organising the evening and to **Anne Louise Briggs** – helped by **Peter Tudge** – for providing the food.

Sadly we have recently lost our long-standing member and former Chichester Town Clerk, **Eddie Saunders**, and we send our love and condolences to his wife, Sue.

Our Annual Dinner will take place in late February, so please look out for the date, and our AGM is to take place in March, and I look forward to seeing as many members as possible on both occasions. Meanwhile, we now look forward to 2024, wishing all members peace and good fortune for the future.



News from Chartres

Présidente of Les Amis de Chichester, Yvonne Chrétien writes



Le mardi 10 octobre 2023, la Commission de Chichester a organisé une sortie amicale et culturelle au **Château de Breteuil** dans les Yvelines.

Comme nous n'étions qu'un petit groupe, nous nous sommes rendus sur place en voiture, en covoiturage pour certains.

Nous avons commencé la visite guidée du château à 10h30. Nous avons suivi notre guide dans les nombreuses pièces du château qui sont toutes meublées et habitées par des personnages d'époque, réalisés en cire, grandeur nature. Partout de très beaux meubles, lustres, tapisseries et bibelots. Sauf un immense salon, toutes les pièces sont à taille humaine et donnent envie d'y habiter ! C'est une maison de famille . Elle est la propriété de la famille de Breteuil depuis plus de quatre siècles. Son propriétaire actuel, à qui l'on doit cette belle réhabilitation du domaine, habite l'un des deux beaux pavillons à l'entrée du parc.

Ce magnifique parc de 75 hectares, bien entretenu, nous en avons visité une partie l'après-midi après un repas pique nique à l'ombre d'immenses marronniers. Il y faisait 29 degrés. Ciel bleu et temps superbe pour un 10 octobre !

Louis de Breteuil, l'un des ancêtres du propriétaire actuel, était ministre des finances de Louis XIV et Charles Perrault l'un de ses proches collaborateurs.

Les Contes du Passé sont mis en scènes à Breteuil de façon ravissante et variée. Ils surprennent le visiteur au fil de la visite. Le Chat Botté, La Belle au Bois Dormant et Peau d'Ane font partie des sept contes de Perrault mis en scène au Château.

De l'avis des participants, ce château de Breteuil est très intéressant à visiter et nous en sommes repartis ravis d'avoir passé une belle journée dans un cadre magnifique et enchanteur.

A translation of this article can be found on page 8.

EDITORIAL

This edition includes members' news and reports on events taking place since June this year. We also include a longer article about the life of André Hue, an Anglo-French resistance fighter who retired to Chichester. The last page includes information about future events.

As always, we would appreciate your comments on this edition and suggestions for future editions. Please send these to foccitylink1959@gmail.com.

MEMBERS' NEWS

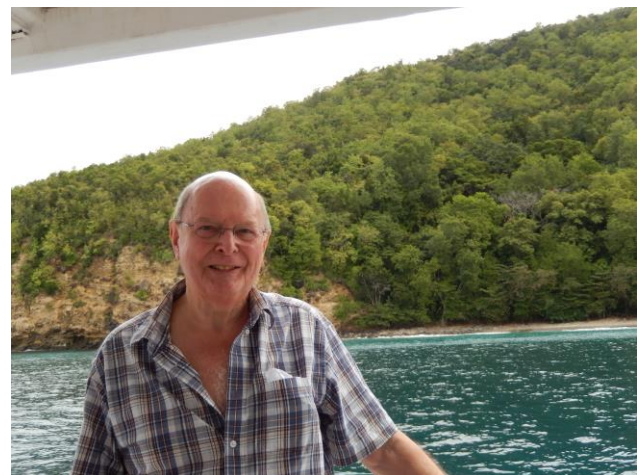
François Rémy

We were sorry to learn that François' has suffered from poor health since we saw him last April. François is a key member of the Amis de Chichester, guaranteed to light up any gathering he attends. He has been ever-present with his camera to record exchange visits, and has directed and starred in many skits at social events, including an unforgettable appearance as a cancan dancer during our 60th birthday celebrations. He even served as an unofficial traffic policeman in Lewes this year when our coach was blocking the traffic. Our thoughts and prayers are with him and his wife Martine at this difficult time.



Eddie Saunders

Anne Scicluna writes: We very sadly report the death in November of long-standing and deeply committed member Eddie Saunders. Eddie became the Town Clerk of Chichester City Council in 1990, retiring from that post in 1998. He sadly lost his first wife, Jean, during this time, and subsequently married Sue, with whom he lived happily for more than twenty years until his recent death. I knew him for all this time, and he was always a smiling figure and also polite and friendly. As Town Clerk he knew when to be formal and when to be relaxed and good-humoured



with people with whom he mixed. I don't think I ever knew him to be either stressed or ill-humoured. He was extremely good at his job, and had total integrity. He and Sue were strongly committed members of our association, visiting Chartres on numerous occasions. In short, Eddie was a very nice man, who will be greatly missed.

We send our sincere condolences and love to Sue, and also to Eddie's grown-up children - all are supporting each other in this very difficult time.

Lois Brown

Lois Brown, who died last year, was a long-standing member of the Friends of Chartres. **Ellen Haigh** met Lois a couple of years ago and heard her interesting life story.

Ellen Haigh writes: When I interviewed Lois, she was living at St. Mary's Almshouses, a lovely 800-year-old building in the centre of Chichester. Her background and how she came to live here is fascinating.

Lois was born in Montreal in 1932 to English-speaking parents. She trained as a shorthand/typist and worked as a roving stenographer, travelling extensively, always able to find employment. She would negotiate leave of absences from her employer, the Royal Bank of Canada, and off she would go.

Travel during the 50's was expensive and difficult and there was one period when Lois didn't see her family for four years. In the 1960's, she joined the Canadian International Service. and was posted to Belgrade for two years. While there she became a member of a hiking group and went as far as the Albanian border, Turkey and Greece. During her posting, she became friends with a young woman whose father was an aide-de-camp to the last King of Yugoslavia.

Next on the list was Hungary where Lois stayed a year, then back to Canada where she worked in the International Office. During her time in Ottawa the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) began escalating its terrorist activities. The British Trade Minister James Cross was kidnapped and held hostage for nearly two months while the government negotiated his release. The office had to be staffed 24/7 during the times to listen for radio reports and Lois later met Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau when he came to thank staff personally for their efforts during the terrible times.

From Ottawa Lois was off to Pakistan and its new capital of Islamabad. While in Pakistan she met her future husband, a widower with 3 adult daughters, who was working for the British Government. While there, violence erupted and the foreign governments were given 24 hours to leave the country.

Arriving at the airport with just onesuitcase Lois flew to Teheran, leaving behind angry crowds at the airport. She decided to come to England with her fiancé who had phoned his grown-up children informing them he was returning with "a woman".

They were married by special license in England with a honeymoon in Paris. Although no accommodation had been booked, the hotel found a room in the loft accessed by a ladder for the honeymooners. Before long, they were off once again, this time to Germany. When her husband eventually retired, they returned to Britain.

When she was widowed, Lois applied to and was accepted by St. Mary's Hospital and Alms houses. Lois was resident there for over 30 years and was their longest resident—not their oldest. She said she was happy and lucky to be living in such a lovely place. She told me to visit the gardens on my way out as she said how lovely they are. And indeed, they were such a calm and beautiful part of hidden Chichester.

Thank you, Lois for sharing your fascinating memories.

EVENTS JUNE-DECEMBER 2023

An Evening with Simon Brett: June 26

Julia Sander writes:

This year, the three twinning associations, Friends of Chartres, Ravenna and Valetta were joined by the newly formed Friends of Speyer to host an event as part of the Festival of Chichester on June 26. Author and raconteur Simon Brett spoke to a full house about his long and varied career. His output is impressive, over 100 crime fiction books as well as numerous radio and TV dramas.



Simon entertained us with tales of his childhood and early education and claimed to have been inspired as a seven-year old by his English teacher, Mr Wright, who set his pupils lists of long and difficult words to learn. The same teacher also asked his charges to write their own epitaphs, which Simon claims gave him a taste for the black humour often found in his books.

After studying English at Oxford and a spell as President of the Oxford University Dramatic Society, Simon looked for employment. After a brief stint playing Father Christmas in a local department store, he landed a one-year contract with the BBC as a radio producer. The one-year contract was extended and Brett stayed with the BBC for many years, writing the sitcoms *After Henry* and *Smelling of Roses* and produced a number of panel games including *Just a Minute* and *I'm Sorry, I Haven't a Clue*.



From the start, Simon showed a penchant for comedy, drawing on his own experiences to create his plots. Many of his best lines were taken directly from people he met, including his relatives. He remarked that a lot of comedy is based on sadness; The crime fiction in which he specialises always starts with a death.

Brett's one serious book, *A Shock to the System*, about a business executive who takes revenge after being passed over for promotion, was made into a film with Michael Caine in the lead role. Profiting from the film, Brett and his wife added a large conservatory to their Arundel home, dubbed The Michael Caine Annex.

Simon's presentation was followed by a lively Q&A session before which we were warned not to ask the two questions writers find most irritating

- Where do you get your ideas from?
- Are you writing anything at the moment?

The evening was rounded off with the opportunity to sample delicious canapés and wine from France, Italy and Malta.

Visit of the Grand Choeur: July 1st



Rosie Speer Writes

On 29th June 36 singers arrived in Chichester from Chartres to go straight into a packed schedule of rehearsals for a special concert in aid of the charity Sanctuary in Chichester, given by Le Grand Choeur and the University Choir and Orchestra

They had a small amount of free time on the Saturday morning when many of them dropped by at the Friends of Chartres stand at the Gala event in Priory Park and were entertained to coffee at Fenwick's.

The concert was held on Saturday evening 1st July in the Cathedral, the second time many of the French singers had performed there. However, this time there were many new younger members, including a sixteen-year old bassoonist who joined the University Orchestra.

Under the direction of their own Conductor, Philippe Fremont, the Grand Choeur performed Stravinsky's Symphony of Psalms, accompanied by the University Orchestra.

The audience were then treated to the beautiful sound of the Cathedral Choir performing Stanford's Three Latin Motets followed by The Flower by Alec Roth then A New Song by James MacMillan.

There was then a very special performance by Liliya Sholomey, a renowned Ukrainian opera and chamber singer. She had travelled from Ukraine to perform for Chichester. Liliya performed Four Last Songs by Strauss.

After the interval, during which the Chartres singers were pleased to be reunited with some of their Chichester Singer hosts from 2019, Rebekah Edwards, Claire Gale and Friends of Chartres Committee Member, Keira Smitheram gave a beautiful polished performance of the "Hab' mir's gelobt" trio from Der Rosenkavalier by Strauss. The finale of the concert brought the Grand Choeur back to the stage to give a wonderful rendition of Faure's Requiem.

After the performance the choir were welcomed by the new Franca Manga restaurant for a well-earned supper. They returned to Chartres early on Sunday morning. The University music department is already planning their return visit to Chartres in June 2024.

Summer Garden Party: July 23

Members enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea on one of the few sunny afternoons in Summer 2023, in the garden of our Vice Chair, Michael Bevis. Thank you, Michael for your hospitality and thanks too to all the skilful cake makers who made this a truly memorable occasion.

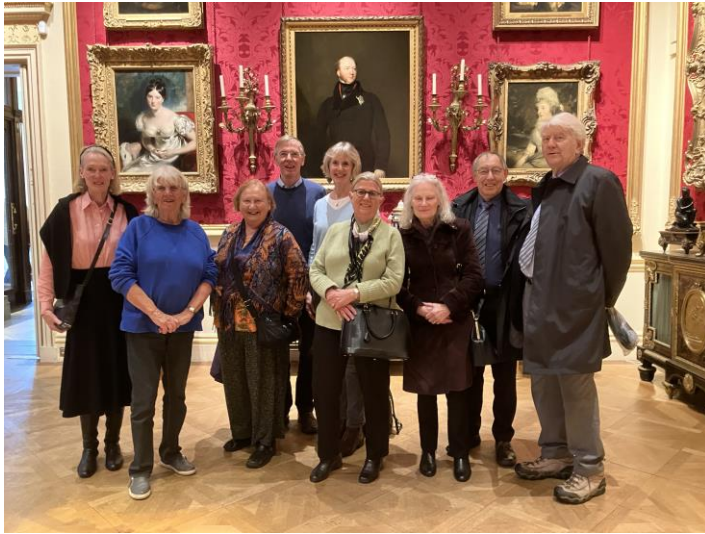


Social Evening: Fishbourne Centre, September 15



Members tried their hand at boules before enjoying a fish and chip supper at the Fishbourne Centre. The evening was rounded off by a fun quiz about France.

Visit to The Wallace Collection: October 21



Members travelled by train to London and navigated Marble Arch where thousands of demonstrators were gathering for a march to support Palestine. Some of us were obliged to abandon our taxi and continue to the Wallace Collection on foot. Nevertheless, we had time to lunch in the Courtyard before meeting our guide who took us on a fascinating tour of the gallery with its vast variety of treasures.

Christmas Soirée: November 30

Our pre-Christmas celebration took place in the historic Sherborne Room in the Bishop's Palace. Friends enjoyed a convivial evening with wine and cheese and Canon David Nason gave us a short talk about the history of the room and its famous ceiling. This was painted by Lambert Barnard in the 1520's at the time of Bishop Sherborne. The Bishop was hoping for a visit from King Henry VIII, but in the event, the monarch never came to Chichester. Just as well, perhaps, as 16 of the 32 panels were painted to honour King Henry and his first wife, Katharine of Aragon, whom he later divorced. They show the Tudor Rose, made from the red rose of Lancaster and the white rose of York, and Henry and Katharine's initials appear in the corners.



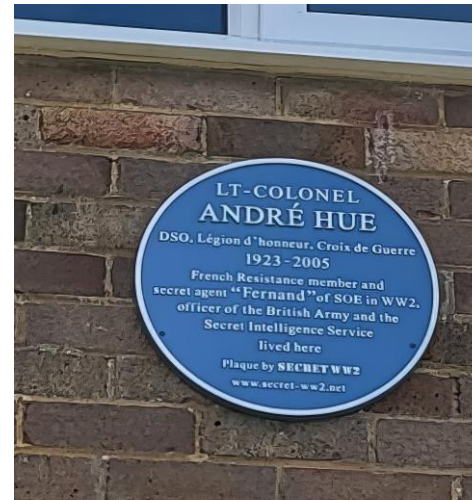
Visit to the Château de Breteuil (Translation from page 2)

On Tuesday October 10, 2023, the Chichester Commission organized a cultural outing to the Château de Breteuil in Yvelines. As we were only a small group, we went by car, with some car sharing. We started the guided tour of the castle at 10:30 am. We followed our guide into the many rooms of the castle which are all furnished and inhabited by life-size models of period characters. Everywhere there are beautiful furniture, chandeliers, tapestries and ornaments. Except for a huge living room, all the rooms are on a human scale and make you want to live there! It is a family home and has been the property of the Breteuil family for more than four centuries. Its current owner, to whom we owe the beautiful restoration of the estate, lives in one of the two beautiful villas at the entrance to the park. We visited part of the magnificent 75- hectare park in the afternoon after a picnic meal in the shade of immense chestnut trees. It was 29 degrees there. Blue skies and superb weather for October 10! Louis de Breteuil, one of the ancestors of the current owner, was finance minister of Louis XIV and Charles Perrault one of his close collaborators. Perrault's Tales from the Past are staged in Breteuil in a delightful and varied way. They surprise the visitor throughout the visit. Puss in Boots, Sleeping Beauty and Peau d'Ane are among the seven tales by Perrault staged at the Château. In the opinion of the participants, the Château de Breteuil is very interesting to visit and we left feeling delighted to have spent a beautiful day in such a magnificent and enchanting setting.

The Next Moon: Book Review

On the 17th July 2023 a WW2 blue plaque, funded by the Gerry Holdsworth Special Forces Charitable Trust, was unveiled in Worcester Road, Chichester, former home of Lt-**Colonel André Hue**, an Anglo-French businessman, soldier and spy best remembered for his work as an operative with the Special Operations Executive in France and Burma during World War II. After an active life which often brought him into danger, Lt-Colonel Hue retired to Chichester, where he died in 2005.

Wanting to learn more about this intriguing figure, Committee member, Peter Tudge, read André Hue's autobiography, 'The Next Moon', which he reviews for us here.



Peter Tudge writes:



Born in Swansea on the 7th of December 1923 - his mother Welsh, his father French in the French Merchant Navy – **André Hue** died in Chichester on the 11th of January 2005.

In June 1940, having joined the merchant navy at the age of 15, André was aboard the 28000-ton liner SS Champlain at anchor off La Rochelle when the ship was struck by a drifting mine. He describes the incident thus. 'Abandon ship!' I was under a hot shower, and froze. I was still tired from the night before, but now that terrifying cry drove away all fatigue, ending my own phoney war and launching me upon adventures undreamed of in my tiny cabin.' Covered in soap, wearing only a towel as a loincloth, he jumped into the sea and started to swim ashore, at which juncture he was saved by a rescue boat.

At this stage in the invasion of France, the situation was still fluid enough for French citizens to escape from Nazi control and make their way to, for example, in André's case, Casablanca in the part of the North African littoral controlled by France.

After some time aboard a sweltering ship in the harbour at Casablanca, he was sent to Marseille and thence on a sealed train to Le Havre. His mother had moved to Guer in Brittany where he found her. It was here in Guer where Andre started his career as a 'resistant'. He was given a job at the local railway station and marshalling yards serving a large military base which the Germans had taken over. The French

stationmaster, although removed from office, was retained by the Nazis because of his professional expertise and a German soldier with little knowledge of railway procedure placed in command.

The stationmaster, already a committed resister recruited Andre who passed on information about movements of men and material via the local resistance network, to London, until his activities came under suspicion, at which time he went undercover.

After a period of activity in Brittany during which Andre organised sabotage, the Special Operations Executive (SOE) realised what an even greater asset he could be with professional training, and had him smuggled out to England. For this work and his work also in Brittany in 1944, he was awarded the DSO, one of the youngest ever to be so honoured.

In England he was given the rank of second lieutenant in the British Army, later promoted to Captain, and began training in Scotland where he was taught how to use explosives and other related skills. Others in André's cadre were uniformed officers with documents showing that they were on the British Army's General List; Andre was not so protected. His role was to appear to be a local Breton and his false papers were the only documents he carried.

Parachuted into France on the cusp of D Day he set up his command post at a farm owned by M and Mme Pondard near the town of Malestroit not far from Guer where his mother lived. The farmer had five daughters one of whom, Genevieve became a close friend of André. Along with the rest of her family she risked her life to help the parachutists who had landed near the farm and the wider circle of maquisards from the surrounding area. It was Hue's job to organize these disparate units into an effective resistance.

The purpose of their mission was to cause disruption in the area so that the local German forces would be unable to reinforce their comrades in repelling the Allied landings further north.

A few instances will give you an idea of the risks they undertook. The region was swarming not only with front-line German troops but also with Gestapo. Furthermore, also present were The Milice, uniformed French Fascists, especially feared because they spoke French and could distinguish between different regional accents thus identifying strangers, were active in Brittany; not to mention the French Police force who often collaborated with the Germans.

Against this background Hue's group were compelled to assassinate a senior Gestapo officer, Hauffmann, hated for his savagery. The man chosen to lead the team was Alexis Babin, a name which will have a particular significance later in the narrative. Hue at first had forbidden a revenge attack on Hauffmann because it would have brought the enemy down on their heads. However, it became known that Hauffmann possessed detailed information on the location of Hue's group. To prevent this from being passed on Hauffmann had to be killed. It was Alexis Babin who killed him under Hue's leadership.

By this time Hue had become very close to Genevieve Pondard. They took messages to other groups passing through roadblocks on their bicycles posing as lovers, thus convincing German soldiers that they were innocent civilians, on several occasions Genevieve carrying false identity papers in her underwear.

On another occasion the two spent hours in a barn which afforded them a view of the search of a village by Germans, Milice and Cossacks. Yes! Cossacks! These brutes had been released from Soviet POW camps in Russia as the Germans advanced on Moscow in 1941. They were highly skilled horsemen who could shoot from horseback; they brought their horses to Brittany.

As Genevieve and Andre spied on the operation, they overheard some Milice talking outside the barn about the need to search it. The two spies were deeply buried in the straw in the loft and were sure they hadn't been spotted. But then, two of the Fascists decided to probe the straw with their bayonets. Drawing a blank they pretended to leave, in order by this chicanery, to draw out the two lovers. More time passed and eventually the Fascists did leave, setting fire to the barn as they withdrew, convinced by now that the barn was unoccupied; an act of vandalism replicated many times throughout The Occupation.

By this time in August 1944 the Allies were chasing the Nazis out of Brittany to the East. Liberation came to André Hue's region and a few weeks later he was re-assigned to a part of France which was still occupied.

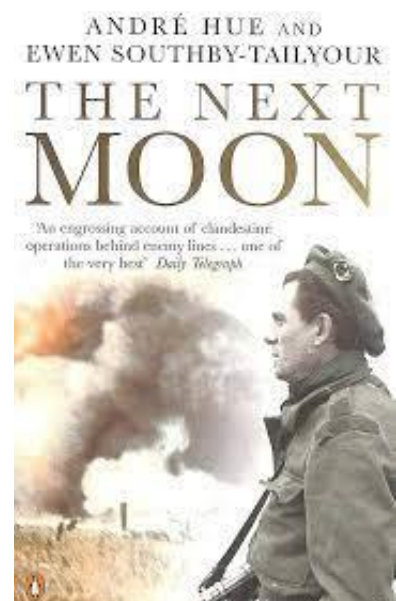
At this point I thought, incurable romantic that I am, André would declare his love for Genevieve and vow to return for her. However, my hopes were dashed. After the liberation of France, Andre Hue was sent by S.O.E. to Burma and eventually married a fellow spy whom he met there.

So, on Googling 'Genevieve Pondard' - she is famous in France as a Maquisarde - I found a wedding photograph of her marriage to Alexis Babin, who you will recall assassinated the Gestapo Hauffmann. The photograph looks as if it were taken immediately after the war. Did Genevieve decide that a romance engendered in such fearful times could not prosper in peacetime? Or did André end it?

'The Next Moon' is an account, graphic at times, of an extraordinary man performing heroic deeds in the face of a savage, relentless enemy. It is told with humour and humanity, even to the extent of understanding those civilians who provided information to the occupying forces.

Andre Hue himself had moments when he could reflect upon the privilege of being surrounded by 'the glorious French countryside in June' amid the death and destruction.

It is to be hoped that on settling near Chichester in retirement, he was able to enjoy the glorious English countryside which in peace surrounded him.



THE CITY OF CHICHESTER (WINNER SINCE 1959 WITH
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Information Page

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**The Right Worshipful the Mayor of
Chichester**

Councillor Craig Gershater

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Treasurer: Stephen Northdale 722148

Members

Clare Apel 783738

Anne-Louise Briggs 784346

David Nason 573716

Julia Sander 527435

Peter Tudge 023 9273 2538

John Wilton 788833

Friends of Chartres Future Events.

Sunday January 21: 5.30 pm

Cine Club

The Studio, New Park Community Centre

Tuesday February 6: 10.30-12.00

Friends' Coffee Morning

Combines with Petit Cercle and includes a presentation by Annette Barker on her research into her French family

Venue to be confirmed

Thursday February 29: 6.00 – 9.00 pm

Annual Dinner

64 Restaurant and Bar, Chichester College

Thursday March 21: 7.30-9.30 pm

Annual General Meeting

Jubilee Hall, New Park Community Centre

Details of these events and how to book will be circulated a few weeks in advance.

Thursday May 2 – Monday May 6

Exchange to Chartres

Conversation Circles

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.

Petit Cercle du mardi

10.30 am to Noon

Tuesday, January 9

Tuesday, February 6 (Friends' Coffee Morning)

Tuesday, March 5

Tuesday, April 2

May: No session due to exchange

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

Petit Cercle du jeudi

10.30 am to Noon

Thursday, January 18

Thursday, February 15

Thursday, March 21

Thursday, April 18

Thursday, May 16

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

Cercle Avancé

5.00 - 6.30 pm

Monday, January 8

Monday, February 12

Monday March 11

Monday April 8

Monday May 13

Venue: The Duke and Rye, West Street, Chichester PO19 1QU

For further details, call **Julia Sander**
01243 527435/ 07788 641926