

ACTIVITIES IN 2016

Welcome

Café du samedi-----Sue Gauntlett – Saturday 10:00 to 12:00

On Saturday mornings the Club is open to all, members or not, to come in for a chat, to find out about and join the Club, to book activities and events and, of course, to enjoy good coffee or tea with, since summer 2016, a slice of Sue's homemade cake.

Language Workshops

Beginners French-----Sue Gauntlett – Wednesday 13:30 to 16:30

Autumn of 2016 saw a significant increase in students, no doubt due to the number of English-speaking people moving to the area and joining our Club.

Because of the varied abilities of those attending the classes, the format was successfully changed in September to attempt to offer the correct level of aid to all, so that the first hour was dedicated to simple basic French, the second to understanding grammar, and the third to comprehension and conversation. In all of these, reading, listening, writing and speaking play their part to offer balanced learning.

Most of the students choose to attend 2 of the 3 classes according to their abilities, and each class usually has between 6 and 10 attendees. Thanks go to Colette Guichard who has helped with the conversation class every 2 or 3 weeks.

Intermediate French-----Philippe Ertzer – Thursday 11:00 to 12:40

The intermediate French group has proved very popular again in 2016 with 8 attendees a week on average. Recorded conversations were used to develop core skills of speaking and listening and to aid understanding of grammar and pronunciation.

Beginners English-----Geoff Price – Wednesday 10:30 to 12:00

The workshop focused on the acquisition of basic language skills, of grammar, vocabulary, phrases and number. There were 3 to 5 participants each week who enjoyed Geoff's friendly, relaxed approach.

Pre-Intermediate English-----Anne Gibbs – Wednesday 9:00 to 10:30

The workshop, aimed to develop and build on the core skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, in a friendly, supportive environment. The variety of topics used, related to everyday situations and provided the opportunity to practice new skills in pairs and groups. 5 members regularly attended the workshop in 2016.

Bilingual Workshop-----Julia Jones – Monday 10:00 to 12:00

The workshop for both French and English speakers has provided an opportunity for all participants to practice and develop their communication skills, in a sharing environment. The class was divided into mixed groups of both English and French speakers. Each group endeavoured to communicate the meaning of one English and one French newspaper or magazine article, in the other language, by any means possible, vocabulary, miming etc. The aim being, to gain confidence in their ability to make themselves understood. About 20 members attended the workshop each week and lots of fun was had by all.

Café philo-----Nicolas Barret and Ed van Weerd – Friday 11:00 to 12:30

For many years, Cafe Philo has taken place at the Club. It is a discussion group which numbered around half a dozen French, English and Dutch speakers in 2016. Topics, chosen a week in advance, covered a variety of everyday subjects such as: 'Feminism', 'An objective idea, is it possible?', 'I haven't the time, is it a good excuse?' and 'History, does it teach us any lessons?'.

Artistic and Practical Workshops

IT-----Carol Fenn and Alan Castle – Tuesday 10:00 to 12:00

The computer session, has provided its participants with both support and encouragement, to resolve their computer issues. The class is based on a problem solving approach, in which participants have been encouraged to discuss, share knowledge and ideas and work together to find a solution. This approach has been facilitated by Alan Castle, who due to his wide knowledge of computers, has almost always found a solution to posed problems (around 2 or 3 a week in 2016).

Pottery (Ceramic Sculpture)-----John Massey – spring and autumn

The 2 successful pottery workshops in spring and autumn, each lasting 5 weeks, were open to all levels of ability including beginners. Our thanks to Johan and Thea Berris for the use of their workshop in Dausse. Basic techniques of hand building with terracotta were taught (coil, slab, and pinch pot methods). The finished products were fired and glazed and enabled participants to take home their own work of art. The pieces produced were only limited by imagination, creative skills, range of glazes and size of kiln. Students pay only for the materials used.

Sewing Group-----Anne Golesworthy and Rosemary Keeley – Friday 14:00 to 16:00

The sewing group, held on Friday afternoons, had an enjoyable and productive year, which culminated in a significant display of needlework in September. Members participated in variety of craft activities, which included; knitting, quilting, cross-stitch, patchwork, embroidery and crochet. Everyone is encouraged to help one another and share their knowledge and expertise. It is a friendly group, usually numbering 10 to 15 each week in 2016, who also lunch together once a month.

Summer Arts Workshop-----Giles Elliot – July

8 participants enjoyed the four week workshop which focused on 'landscapes', in a variety of media, produced interesting and varied artworks, which culminated in a successful vernissage. The Club would like to thank Don and Betty Lilly for providing the venue. Now that Giles has left France, the Club is seeking a new workshop leader for 2017

Events

Plant Exchange-----Anne Golesworthy and Rosemary Keeley – April

Once a year, at the end of April, club members have an opportunity to bring and exchange their plants with others. It is a very convivial occasion and attracts many members. A productive time is had by all.

Social Events at the Club-----Sue Gauntlett – regularly throughout the year

A Mardi Gras lunch; a "practice" wedding cake tasting in April; a Sunday tea party with traditional British cakes in June; 2 open mornings during the autumn, one for new members and the second open to all; and finally in November a simple 3 course autumn lunch. Thanks, without a doubt, to the talent and efforts of Sue and hardworking and enthusiastic team, these events were very well attended.

Another successful experiment was the Club BBQ, when almost 40 members gathered in Chris Barrington's garden for lunch on a glorious August day, thanks to his hospitality and expertise with the barbecue.

Exhibitions-----Ed van Weerd – every two months

We are fortunate to have a regular exhibition group, led by Ed, which is responsible for setting up the exhibitions. In 2016, the club hosted a variety of exhibitions, which showcased the works of art created by club members. A variety of media was used with great effect which included the following: photos related to specific subjects, paintings (oil, watercolour and pastels), mosaics, serigraphy, ceramics and creations in textiles. Exhibits were usually displayed for 6 weeks.

Eating Out-----Shirley Sears-Black – March, July and December

On a sunny spring day following the 2016 AGM at Saint Beauzeil's salle des fêtes, 35 members partook of the buffet lunch prepared by the Auberge du Brélan. The mid-summer dinner, which began with apéros in the grounds of the Brélan before sitting down to a fine dinner in the restaurant, drew 40 members and their guests. And in December 38 of us enjoyed a generous lunch at Les Voyageurs in Tournon d'Agénais. These 3 events have become a Club tradition.

Vide-greniers-----Jan Emery and Julia Jones

The Club participated in 2 successful vide greniers in 2016 (Beauville in August and Montaigu de Quercy in September). Our thanks to all club members who donated generously to our stall and to those who helped to man the stall on the day. We raised €400 thanks to their support.

Information

Bulletin-----Jan Emery – beginning of the month

The Club Bulletin reviews the previous month's events, announces those of the current month and provides information of general interest to members. Jan took on the publication of Club information in February 2016 and produced a bi-lingual bulletin with a crisp appearance every month during the rest of the year.

Cultural Calendar-----Ed van Weerd – Monthly

2016 was the 8th year of publication. Originally produced by Ed for the information of Club members, today he also distributes the calendar to other associations nearby. It provides information about events such as theatres, concerts and cultural exhibitions, in the region around Montaigu de Quercy including Agen, Villeneuve sur Lot, Cahors, and Montauban. Any queries can be sent by email to calculat@hotmail.fr.

Leisure

Bridge-----John Button and Patrick Keeley – Thursday 13:30 to 17:00

Usually between 6 and 10 members of the multinational bridge group met each week at the club in 2016. New members are welcome and tuition is available either for beginners, or those wishing to adapt to the French bidding system. In November John, who had led the group for many years, handed over to Patrick.

Board Games-----Maroussia Romanoff – Tuesday 15:00 to 17:00

New in 2016, the group has provided members with an opportunity to enjoy a game of scrabble and socialize with others in a friendly welcoming environment. Maroussia would welcome new members who wish to extend the range of games played.

Chorale « la Joie du Chant » -----Jenny Grimshaw – Monday 17:45 to 19:00

The choir, which started in June, became properly established in September. 'La Joie du Chant' is an informal choir held on Monday evenings for any age and ability. During the autumn its 20 members prepared a Christmas concert of carols sung in English and French. The performance in December before an audience of 70 members and their guests provided an afternoon of wonderful singing, followed by festive refreshments.

Sports

Badminton-----Gaëlle Devroux – Tuesday 18:00 to 19:30 at the Salle des Fêtes

Started in March on Gaëlle's initiative with a Club investment of €920 for equipment, badminton immediately brought the Club 10 new young members. The games, which are played on 3 movable courts, also tempted some older members to be among the 6 to 10 players at each session in 2016. The group welcomes players of all abilities. Sadly, as a result of Gaëlle's other activities during the summer season (as a qualified sports trainer) and the closure of the Salle des Fêtes during the autumn, there was virtually no play from June until it resumed in December.

Tennis-----Peter Buck – Friday 15:00 to 17:30 at the tennis court

During 2016 the tennis group met at Montaigu's tennis court every Friday afternoon, winter and summer, with very few days being missed through bad weather. The tennis sessions provided an afternoon of good exercise and hard play followed, during the summer, by a post-match beer at the Midi. The group had 10 members in 2016, 4 to 6 of whom played each week.

Other Club members have formed informal groups and those which play regularly may request a permanent reservation of the tennis court – provided they used it.

The court at Montaigu, which is run by the Club, is available at no charge to all comers (Club members, local inhabitants and visitors) by booking at the Bar du Midi.

Table Tennis-----Peter Wilkinson – Thursday 14:30 to 17:00 at the Salle des Fêtes
Peter offered to set up and run the activity in April 2016. There was a table (broken but repairable) at the Salle de Fêtes, a friend had offered to donate one and the Club agreed to invest €320 in a third. The 3 tables were set up ready for play on 3 May but... no players showed up. For all sorts of reasons, there were no table tennis sessions in 2016 – but they did at last begin on 2 March 2017.

Short Country Walks-----Peter Gauntlett – first Tuesday of the month
The walks take about 2 hours and usually start at 14:00 from a point within 30 minutes drive from Montaignu de Quercy. In 2016, to avoid the high afternoon temperatures from early July to early October, the start time was brought forward to 10:00. There were usually 12 to 15 people on each walk; the pace was relaxed and conversations flowed.

All-day Country Walks-----David Howat – third Friday of the month except June, July and August

By 09:30 on the third Friday of the month, from January to May and from September to December, the club walkers set off on foot to discover the beautiful landscapes of the Quercy Blanc which lie within a 30 minute drive from Montaignu de Quercy. In 2016 between 14 and 33 of them tackled the morning walk of 9 to 14 km. Strangely, at lunch in a friendly auberge, the group was often more numerous but then would shrink back to between 10 and 18 walkers for a more leisurely afternoon circuit of up to 6 km. Each monthly walk was prepared by one or more experienced walkers in turn.

Yoga-----Pat Dron – Friday 17:00 to 18:30 at l'Oustal

Yoga, suitable for all ages, involves stretching and breathing exercises and ends with a calming relaxation. The activity was well supported by Club members and, despite the heat, continued throughout the summer months. All regular participants in this friendly and welcoming group made good progress.

Dancercise-----Kathy Leech and Liz Illing – Wednesday 10:30 to 11:30 at the Salle des Fêtes

The sessions begin with a warm up, followed by a variety of dance movements and steps linked to a selection of modern music. They end with a warm down. During her visits to France Kathy, who resides in the UK, was able to run a session in April 2016 and further sessions from end July until the end of the summer. Fortunately, Liz was able to step in during June and early July. The Club is grateful to them both for keeping this popular activity going and is seeking a stable solution for 2017.

Travel

Day Trips-----Sarah Pegg et Betty Lilly – regularly throughout the year
2016 was a busy year for Sarah and Betty:

-) Partnering with Combedouzou Voyages on 6 day-trips by coach, we explored our unique part of France through festivals, food and camaraderie: Aéroscofia – Toulouse; Fête de la Transhumance – Aubrac; Figeac and Le Célé river area; Fête du Piment – Espelette in the Basque region; and finally 2 trips to Bordeaux - a cruise with lunch on the Garonne and a visit to the Christmas Market.
-) Closer to home we enjoyed the outdoor production of Les Paysanneries – Thézac Masquières area and a round of Fantasy Mini- Golf at Château le Stelsia – Saint-Sylvestre sur Lot.

Mini Breaks-----Sarah Pegg et Betty Lilly – May/June

8 members took part in the 4 day spring minibus trip to the Pyrenees. From their base in Mirepoix they took a guided tour of the local flowers and wildlife and visited places of interest in the Cathar area.