

CLUB INTERNATIONAL



2020

WINTER 2020/2021

2020 will forever be etched on our collective memories. There's undoubtedly been sadness, uncertainty, and loneliness but there's also been kindness, adaptability and ingenuity. And just imagine a life without telephones, the internet; no WhatsApp, FaceTime or Zoom? Of course, we miss the hugs but at least we can see and speak to family and friends who are far away. And being able to buy online is a real plus. So although it's been a bad, sad year, there have been some positives and a vaccine or three seem to be just around the corner.

2021 will be better!

Annual General Meeting for the year 2019

Firstly, a big thank you to all of you who were able to take part. We really appreciate the support we have received.

Briefly, in order to hold our AGM this year, we had to amend our constitution to allow us to call a virtual meeting. An EGA was therefore held on the 27 November to amend the club's statutes.

Extraordinary General Meeting 27th November 2020

108 members voted on the proposition to allow the amendment and this was unanimously approved.

The **Annual General Meeting for the year 2019** was then able to go ahead and took place on November 30th 2020. 104 members voted and all the reports and elections to committee were approved.

Full details and the minutes will be sent to you soon.

Your new look committee:

Officers : Colette Guichard – President
 Julia Jones – Vice-President
 Sylvie Pfefer – Treasurer (see feature on page 2)
 Sarah Pegg – Vice-Treasurer
 Lesley Townley – Secretary

Members : David Howat
 Shirley Sears-Black
 Victoria Sherman
 Jolanta Side

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Introducing:

SYLVIE PFEFER

Treasurer



I was born in Paris and lived in the Paris region.

My career has been long and diverse. For 10 years, I worked for the budget ministry to compensate people who'd lost their property after the independence of Algeria and Guinea. Then, with 3 associates, I created a wine and spirits store in Tours. I returned to Paris in 1988 and for 5 years worked as assistant to the sales director of a wallpaper and paint company.

I arrived in Lauzerte in 2011 and, having gained my diploma from the Ministry of National Education, I held the post of school financial manager until my retirement in 2018.

The confinement has slowed down, and in many cases stopped, Club activities, so consequently I have had no particular difficulties as treasurer. But I do miss the lack of contact with the members, especially on Saturdays.

Since my arrival in the region, I have sought out English speakers because I'd like to communicate more easily in English as my son lives in New Zealand. During this time, I've made a lot of English friends who are happy to be able to practice their French too.

ARMISTICE DAY 11th November

For many years Club members have laid a wreath at Montaigu's war memorial and Julia Jones was determined that, in spite of Covid, and no official French ceremony this year, 2020 would be no different even though it was impossible to make the usual collection.

So she and Phil set about creating this very professional-looking wreath from last year's poppies.

On the evening of the 10th November, Julia went alone to the memorial and, with just her own thoughts about the sacrifices of war, she placed the symbolic commemorative wreath.



Diary date Friday 18th December at 11 am

Welcome to our first Virtual Christmas reunion

From the comfort of your own home, just grab coffee or better still, champagne, settle down to join the Christmas activities with your friends

RSVP by clicking on the link



<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/club-international-reunion-de-noel-tickets-131768030727>

With all the restrictions this year, life's not been easy but at least the Club has been able to get the following off the ground:

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Well, these sports got the green light but stopped again in November:



Tennis -after the first lockdown, singles games were allowed, subject to onerous rules, then doubles matches were permitted.



Petite and Grande Randonnées - these popular and well attended monthly walks went ahead in September and October.

ZOOM IN

Despite some set-up frustrations, and even though communicating via Zoom may not be ideal, it's infinitely preferable to sitting at home wondering when you'd see another human being.

Masterminded by Lesley Townley, the Club and the animateurs are running the following Zoom activities:

French for beginners - Viki Sherman
victoria.sherman@clubintquercy.fr

French - Lower and Upper Intermediate
Veronique Touzac
veronique.touzac@clubintquercy.fr

Hatha Yoga - Lucille Sladen
Taught in easy-to-follow, soothing French
lucille.sladen@clubintquercy.fr

Book Club - Lesley Townley
Next book - *Douce France* by Karine Tuil.
Discussion - Monday 21st December - 4pm
lesley.townley@clubintquercy.fr

Cafe Philo
Contact: clubintquercy@gmail.co

To join any of these sessions, please contact the organiser.

The Garden of Owls

We bought a part ruined farmhouse in France and discovered a pair of Barn-owls nesting in the barn and a couple of Kestrels with a nest in a hole in the main-wall of the house. But once all was restored and we moved in permanently, sadly, the Kestrels and Barn-owls moved out.

We felt very guilty and wanted to provide them with some alternative so we installed a Barn-owl nest-box in the new barn and a kestrel nest-box against the side of the house.

Though Kestrels and Barn-owls still hunted around our house, it took several years before we heard sounds from the barn-owl nest-box and discovered 5 chicks inside.

We installed a fantastic invention in the nest box, an infra-red camera, and now follow the family on our TV screen. This private owl-peepshow every evening gives us much pleasure. We track them from mating, laying, feeding; also the dramas like the cannibalism and puberty. The young owls are not always kind to each other - the largest beak gets the most food.

For six years the birds have returned to breed. By researching the many pellets in and around the nest-box, we found that our Barn-owls main food is mice, shrews, voles and occasionally loirs or small birds. We still collect the pellets which are welcomed by schools for biology lessons.

In "good" mice-years, the owls have between five to eight young, but in "poor" mice-years, just two or three chicks. We do help them by trapping mice all winter, keeping them in the freezer, and when we notice poor feeding by the parents, we give the chicks surplus-food.



Scops Owl young

Many of our bird-loving friends (and their cats) help as well. The late Rosemary Latham's cat was the champion. Almost all birds of prey and owls start breeding on the first laid egg. Two days or more later, they lay a second egg and so on. For Barn-owls with perhaps 8 eggs, the difference between the first and last born chick might be 16 days or more. If there's insufficient food, the older chicks eat the younger. Survival of the fittest.

Until 2018, the kestrel-nest box remained empty. Then suddenly, the camera showed us Scops-owls (they normally nest in hollow trees or cliffs) with their four grasshopper-fed chicks. The following year, there were four more baby Scops-owls.

When we switched on the infra-red camera in 2020, the occupant looked to us like a huge Scops-owl. It was, in fact, a Tawny owl with two eggs and 6 weeks later, two young Tawny-owls flew the nest. On their menu: mice, loirs, a black rat and a very small rabbit.

When the Scops-owls returned from Africa, they found their nest-box occupied and although they stayed around all summer, they ignored the new nest box I'd made for them and they left without nesting. Lack of big grasshoppers perhaps?

It's December now and the Tawny-owls hunt every night around our house and sing their beautiful oehoeohoe. The Barn-owls are rather silent, they just give a raucous "siss" when they hunt.

They are all more than welcome, being our only visitors in this Corona-period.

by Rita and Ed van Weerd



7 young Barnowls

THE NEEDLEWORK GROUP'S ONLINE EXPO - STITCH 2020

Not only is this group skilled with needles, it's also tech savvy and produced its own online show. Do tea and biscuits improve creativity? It seems they do...



COMMITTEE

President
Vice President & Hospitality
Treasurer
Secretary
Deputy Treasurer & Voyages
Meals

Colette Guichard
Julia Jones
Sylvie Pfefer
Lesley Townley
Sarah Pegg
Shirley Sears Black

David Howat
Victoria Sherman
Jolanta Side

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