

Bibliothèque
Anglo-Française



Jan – Feb 2026
Vol. 4, Issue 1& 2

The Librarian

I was given, for Christmas, a collection of articles by Alan Coren “The Cricklewood Tapestry”, the articles having been written in the 1980s I think. All, if you remember Alan Coren, highly amusing and still pertinent today, but one article in particular struck home. This was a piece on the news that the astronaut John Glenn was going back into space to “conduct geriatric-related tests”, with a view to allowing senior citizens to venture into space, and the advice Alan Coren would like to give him. Advice on what to do should John be sent outside the spaceship to perform a task, and then as he got out of the door forgetting what the task was (retrace steps back inside and you will remember, but do not tell NASA), how to cope with having forgotten his glasses to do the said task (fumble around the spacesuit until you find the string with glasses attached - hopefully), and when and how to take the multitude of tablets without the rest of the crew noticing. And so on in a far more humorous manner than I can do.

Adaptability and subterfuge my friends seems to be the answer to all the little challenges that beset us - whatever our age! And, oh yes, humour is vital.

Happy New Year to One and All
Sue

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JUNGLE DRUMS

NEW YEAR, NEW SCAM ALERT

What a way to start the year but I have become aware of an e-mail scam currently circulating in France. You will receive a very authoritative looking letter from your CPAM advising you that your "Carte Vitale" needs to be renewed and you must act at once. THIS IS A LIE!! Your Carte Vitale never expires and this is a Phishing expedition to either confirm or collect personal information and bank details. Do not be taken in! This is a SCAM!! Just ignore it and dump the mail in your spam or waste bins on your chosen internet provider.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REPORT 30 Jan 2026

Les Fleurines, Villefranche

Attendance: approximately 21 persons.

The President Sue Reeve, welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. The minutes of last year's AGM which was published in the 2025 newsletter were passed without objection.

Sue summed up last year's events.

The quizzes were well attended, (thank you to the quiz masters).

The September Fête in Social Center La Ruche, took place in La Halle. The Hoop La was a big success as usual. Thank you to Heather, Terri, Pella, & Mike for organising this.

There were two successful coffee mornings in June & January.

Thank you to Terri, Cathy & Nigel for the organisation. Also to Kay & Adrian, their first time on library duty in January. They handled the membership dues.

The Photograph Group has disbanded.

However the Bridge group still meets regularly.

Sue expressed gratitude to the committee for their help during 2025.

Jackie resigned as President last year.

Harriet has left for the USA.

Pella has resigned after many years work since the start of the library in 2007. Her contributions to the start and the growth of the library was important in so many ways.

Sue thanked rest of the committee which remains the same.

David Sharrock for managing the finances and also membership (which has been temporarily taken over by Cathy).

Helen as secretary. Lesley Sharrock has been responsible for book orders and the quiz. Sue is organising the quiz while Lesley takes a break. Mike has taken on responsibility for the rota from Pella. Alan for the monthly newsletter. Terri and Nigel completes the team.

There will be two new signatures needed for the bank account. Sue Reeve, President and Helen Mc Loughlin, Secretary were proposed by Nigel Wild and seconded by David Wilcox and passed by a vote of the members present.

JUNGLE DRUMS 2

Sue thanked the contributors to the newsletter. Margaret for gardening articles, Elaine for book reviews and Nigel for interesting stories. Alan invited members to contribute stories or articles of interest for the newsletter, funny, serious or Galloping Gourmet for example. Volunteers for library duty should contact Mike.

FINANCES

Alan presented the financial report in David Sharrock's absence. The library is solvent. We have a surplus of 181€ which is bit down on last year. We spent 218€ on books. Membership income came to 570€. A copy of the financial report is attached to the newsletter for Members. The financial report was passed by the AGM, proposed by Coin Reeve and seconded by David Wilcox.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS — Membership Survey

Nigel presented the results of the questionnaire which was filled in during the last quiz. He gave a short resume on the responses. The full details are to be found following this section.

Kindle is not taking over. Most people read the newsletter. The opening days & hours are sufficient. Footfall is a bit less recently in the library. The committee will discuss the results of the questionnaire at the next meeting.

Cathy is organising the membership list. We have about 70 members. However we need more. There are less British coming to France in general but more from the US.

- Alan and Nigel will create a landing page for the web site and include an email.
- The local (Municipal) webpages have out of date library information. Nigel will look into updates.
- It was felt that the Facebook page should have more contact information for new arrivals.
- A suggestion was made that we leave flyers in surrounding Mairies.
- Nigel will see about an article in English for the local paper.

Sherie, a new member from the US, had found it difficult to get info on our library when she arrived. She thought a website would be useful for new members. It was suggested we leave flyers at market stalls, shops, estate agents, Fish & Chips, Le Césarée & in the Aveyron webpage.

Terri said there was a French person in the library recently looking for English conversation.

Barbara thought the library was not very welcoming but we can't do much to change that as it's a shared premises.

We should all keep a look out for new English speakers. And encourage attendance

Sue thanked everyone for coming and their input into the meeting. The next quiz is on 27 February.

Jackie Niasmith thanked Sue and the committee for the work done during 2025.

The meeting finished at 11.20h

Helen McLoughlin
Secretary

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ANALYSIS OF ANGLOPHONE LIBRARY SURVEY 2025

Introduction

The survey was conducted during the quiz on Friday 28 November 2025. Contestants were asked to complete the questionnaire during the evening and all responses were collected at the end of the quiz.

There were 43 responses, but two were discarded as both declined to give a name or an email address. The remaining 41 were 20 male, 21 female, giving an almost exact 50:50 split. One said he is an occasional visitor to the area, so must be a second home owner.

Of the 16 questions, the responses for 7 were split into male and female to ascertain whether there were any significant differences in choices and behaviours.

Q1. How much do you read?

	<i>A great deal</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>
Male	6	8	5
Female	9	8	1

Q2. How often do you visit the library?

	<i>Once per month</i>	<i>Once per quarter</i>	<i>Infrequently</i>
Male	2	2	12
Female	7	2	11

Comment

It was interesting that those claiming to be avid or moderate readers are infrequent visitors. Either they take out a lot of books at each visit, or they are obtaining them elsewhere.

Q3. Preferred reading medium

	<i>Book</i>	<i>Kindle/Ipad</i>
Male	17	2
Female	17	4

Comment

We wondered if we were losing out to electronic media, but that is not the case. One respondent ticked both boxes.

4. Preferred day to visit the library

	<i>M</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>Th</i>	<i>F</i>
Male	0	5	0	5	2
Female	0	7	0	5	3

Comment

Tuesdays and Thursdays seem to be the most suitable days, although a number reported parking problems on Tuesdays (See Q6.)

Q5. Do you visit the market?

	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
Male	3	14	0
Female	3	15	1

Comment

Market day does not seem to have any bearing on library visits.

Q6. Do you find parking a problem/

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Male	8	10
Female	11	8

Comment

Several mentioned Tuesdays as a problem.

Q7. Are you a member of the Bridge Group?

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
	3	

Comment

One is regular, the other two occasional.

Q8. Do you take part in quizzes?

	<i>Regular</i>	<i>Occasional</i>	<i>Never</i>
Male	13	5	0
Female	13	6	0

Q9. Which other events have you attended in the last two years?

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Photo Ex 2023	10	26
Art/Craft 2024	13	23
Tea Party 2025	6	30

Q10. Are there any other events you would like to see?

See Annex A to this analysis.

Q11. What else do you think could be done to encourage greater awareness and use of the Library?

See Annex A to this analysis.

Q12. Do you read the NL?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
28	8

Q13. Do you read the Library FB page?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
9	28

Q14. Would you like an email reminder of an upcoming event?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
24	13

Q15. Would you find a website helpful?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
25	11

Q16. Do you drive at night?

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
26	11

Comment

Only those who gave an unqualified 'yes' were counted as such. Where there was a qualifying remark such as 'rarely' or 'on occasion', these were counted as noes.

ANNEX A TO ANGLOPHONE LIBRARY SURVEY**Q10. Are there any other events you would like to see?**

Having a meal together or a cookery club

Afternoon tea, knit and natter, scrabble

A variety of events

Scrabble competition

Summer events

Q11. What else do you think could be done to encourage greater awareness and use of the Library?

Squidgy chairs in the library

Members send a brief info message to 5 friends who are non-members

Flyers at fish and chip night

Regular social media

Facebook

A good website

More/wider publicity



The Book Review By Elaine Morgan

Wild thing: a life of Paul Gauguin by Sue Prideaux.

There are many myths about Gauguin. This book overturns most of them as the author has benefitted from up to date research and discoveries.

Gauguin's grandmother was something of an early feminist who had left her husband when he suggested she earn her living on the streets. Gauguin's mother, Aline, and Paul's father Clovis left France to try to claim an inheritance from Aline's Peruvian relatives. Clovis died on the journey leaving Aline with her two children to carry on alone. Thus some of Paul's early life was spent in Peru which had a profound influence on him. He spoke Spanish, not French, and admired the early artifacts of the Moche people.

When no Peruvian inheritance materialised (the first of many injustices in his life) but a French one did Aline and her children returned to Orleans where Paul was unhappy. He hated school but did manage to get a good education and he went on to secure a position on the Bourse where he grew rich on insider trading and instinct.

He married a Danish woman called Mette and they settled down to a bourgeois lifestyle raising a family and spending freely.

When the stock market crashed Gauguin had no savings to fall back on. His passion for painting and collecting the work of his contemporaries was well-established by then but his various attempts to make a living were failures. Degas was an admirer and bought several paintings over the years which helped and encouraged Gauguin.

There followed disastrous spells in Panama and in Denmark with Mette's family where he hated their bourgeois values and he could not succeed.

His search for a primitive unspoilt society took him to Brittany where he admired the mix of paganism overlaid with Catholicism in the beliefs of the people. However the place was overrun with Americans in artistic communities and he became disillusioned.

The author covers his spell in Arles with Van Gogh sympathetically. It's clear that VG was very mad indeed and hard to live with. When he cut his ear off Gauguin was accused of attempted murder and this shook him badly. In spite of his fondness for VG he put as much distance as he could between them. Theo Van Gogh became his agent and worked hard to promote him. Later other agents would cheat and rob him.

When he left for Tahiti he still intended to bring Mette and the children with him once he was established. This never happened and he took a series of native "wives" over the time he lived in Polynesia. The final split with his wife happened when he refused to share with her an inheritance from his uncle. He argued that she had sold some of his paintings and collection: she argued that he had been a bad breadwinner and that she and the children needed money.

Gauguin was a prolific artist who was unlucky in many ways and profligate in others. He was often cheated and misrepresented and the French colonial regime in Polynesia hated him for supporting the native population against exploitation and corruption. He never really found the unspoilt wilderness of his imagination although he came close. In any event he was able to paint constantly almost to his death.

The author covers his art and career in detail, as one would expect. I would have liked a little more detail on Mette's perspective on their marriage. He was a proto-feminist in many ways but that did not stop him treating some women rather badly.

A GRAVE ERROR

I once worked for a petrochemical engineering company with various sites around the globe.

One of the British engineers in Kuwait died from a heart attack. His widow in UK was contacted and asked if she wished her husband to be buried locally in the Christian burial ground, or for his body to be repatriated. The lady revealed that they had been in the throes of divorce and accepted a fully-expensed trip to attend the local ceremony.

My pal Chris was the site personnel officer and made the necessary arrangements for a Friday, the Muslim sabbath.

At the duly appointed time, a huge American hearse with a huge American engine drew up outside Chris's office. Its pilot was a young Indian. Chris led the way to the hospital in his own car, but found the mortuary shut because it was Friday. They eventually found someone with the right key and Chris and the hearse driver loaded the coffin.

'Right,' said Chris, 'to the Christian burial ground.'

'No, the petrol station,' said the driver. 'I need to fill up.' Now it was Chris's turn to follow the hearse.

Tank replenished, Chris asked the driver if he knew the way to the burial ground.

'Yes,' said he, then promptly turned left instead of right. Chris had to chase the car at over 100mph before catching up. When they arrived at the cemetery, the mourners were all gathered outside. The gates were locked because it was Friday. One of the party climbed over and found the caretaker, who opened up and led them to the grave, which had two problems. It had been dug for a person of Arab stature and was too short, and a sandstorm had half-refilled it. Two stalwarts removed their jackets and with tools borrowed from the watchman, re-dug the whole thing.

Finally, the priest was intoning the prayer of interment and the coffin was being lowered. Chris heaved a sigh of relief. Just then, he felt a tug at his elbow.

'Can I go now, it's my day off?' enquired the hearse chauffeur.

'Sure,' replied Chris. Wrong!

Sonny Jim leapt into his chariot, engaged gear and floored it, covering coffin and cortege in a blinding pall of sand.

NW



GARDEN CORNER - FEBRUARY, AND SO WE START AGAIN!

This last week we have had some lovely mild sunny days so it is a real joy to be outside and there are definite signs of spring. Yves has been pruning fruit trees, a little every year is better than a major cut back.

On a mild day the roses can be pruned, then I like to give them a good mulch of rotted farm yard manure. The gooseberries, red currants and autumn fruiting raspberries have all been pruned and will now also get a mulch of manure.

Ideally I would weed and mulch all the beds with the shreds we have composted but we just never have enough so priority to the shrubs we planted last autumn.

February is the time to cut back deciduous grasses, the stipa I just tidy with a fork or a rake and the pennisetum I leave a bit longer as they are not quite so hardy. Beware of the new grass shoots, especially miscanthus, but most grasses can be cut back with a hedge cutter.

The flower beds are very weedy this year and lots of perennials look very messy, but I hesitate to cut them back as this messy top growth also gives protection. Most will have survived the -12C we had in early January, but I suspect we will probably have lost a few things, in particular Salvias. February can be cold so keep the fleece handy!

MG

GALLIVANTING GOURMETS

Estaminet, Villefranche de Rouergue.

We went for a family anniversary and had booked but given the size of the restaurant it is not usually necessary. It offers both "Plat de Jour" and "A La Carte". We chose the Plat with three choices of Starter, Main and Dessert. We enjoyed all that we chose and thought the price of € 23 quite reasonable. The Service was attentive and efficient and ambiance comfortable.

Would we go again? Yes we would, though next time we were invited to tell them in advance so they could prepare candles for the anniversary!

LeRepas, Millhars

The restaurant has changed hands since our last visit and whilst the current management does not have the panache of the former front of house we were made welcome and felt valued,

First plus is that they are open on a Monday! The second is that wine and coffee are included in the price and thirdly the price is only € 19 for two choices of Starter, Main and Dessert.

We started with soup, followed by Roast Beef and then Tarte Tatin. All nicely prepared and presented.

Altogether a pleasant experience and if you find yourself near Millhars when travelling to Cordes sur Ciel, Castres or Albi then well worth the break in your journey.

GG

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST

DATES TO NOTE IN FEBRUARY

- **Next Quiz Night, Friday 27th February, 18.00hrs, Les Fleurines, VdR**

Still a bit early for Vide Greniers but addicts should note the start of the roughly monthly ones in car park of Intermarche at Figeac (under cover) on 1st Feb. For those people who view Vide Greniers as an opportunity to explore villages they don't know, you may like to try the 'Broc Bar' in Felzins (not far from Figeac) on 22 Feb. The 'Broc Bar' takes over the abandoned Proxi super-market in the Village and hot drinks, an art exhibition and 'petit dej au tripes' are also on offer.

If buying old tat is a big part of your life and you are wondering what else to do on a wintry Sunday morning, here's an idea. A weekly 'Marche aux Truffes' runs every Sunday until 15th Feb in Capdenac Le Haut. It takes place at the 'Donjon' which you'll find as you enter the Village (car park opposite the hotel). The market is subject to truffle availability but my spy reports that when it is on it is not crowded and that you can also buy by the slice, which will hopefully allow you a bit left over to have a coffee at the hotel, or a bracing stroll through this pretty village to the (very good) creperie overlooking the Lot river.

VIDE GRENIERS—SUNDAYS (Normally)

Capdenac Gare, Rignac

Foissec, Montbazens

Villefranche de Rouergue, Figeac

FISH & CHIPS

13th Feb @ Cesaree, Gare, VdR

17th Feb @ Café Maison, Parisot, - Film Night —"Hamnet"



FEVRIER 2026		CAYLUS	PARISOT	VAREN
	Arco VF	Sam. 07/02 14h		
	Le chant des forêts VF	Sam. 07/02 16h		
	L'incroyable femme des neiges VF	Sam. 07/02 18h30		
	Elle entend pas la moto VF	Dim. 08/02 16h		
	Les échos du passé VOSTF	Dim. 08/02 18h30		
	Hamnet VOSTF		Mar. 17/02 17h	
	Une enfance allemande VOSTF		Mar. 17/02 20h30	
	La bonne étoile VF			Ven. 20/02 20h30
	Teresa VOSTF			Sam. 21/02 17h
	Le mage du Kremlin VF			Sam. 21/02 20h30
	Fuori VOSTF			Dim. 22/02 15h
	L'Affaire Bojarski VF			Dim. 22/02 18h

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The Writing Desk can swiftly turn your ideas into sharp, punchy script. As an author and experienced freelance journalist I have spent many years creating features for business and lifestyle magazines. For great words and a fast service, contact Nigel on: 05 65 65 81 53 nigelwild@hotmail.co.uk

DOMESTIC SERVICES

Gardener and/or cleaner available. Contact Ruth Patterson on 05 65 34 37 88 or 07 80 45 50 46

Experienced gardener specialising in natural organic design and maintenance. Affordable and flexible - References available. Contact: Kathryn: 05 65 65 78 01 or montagnac@hotmail.co.uk

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LETTINGS

Olive Tree Cottage, Bed and Breakfast:

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Holiday apartment to rent in La Herradura, Andalusia, Spain.

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For further details on both these Spanish properties contact: Lynne Harding 06 65 50 95 37 or lafage.harding@gmail.com

SOCIAL

FripAffaires, a charity shop based in Parisot (82) raises funds for Médecin sans Frontières and Restos du Cœur. Situated at the Pole Medical, next door to the pharmacy, open Tuesday & Wednesday 2-6pm and Friday & Saturday 10am to 12.30pm. Donations always gratefully received

If you would like us to include a small ad in any of these columns, please let us have the details by emailing us at the address below. If you have any questions or comments (complementary or otherwise) please don't hesitate to contact us on the same address.

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ABAV Accounts 2025
for the Year ended 30th September 2025

Income & Expenditure Account

	Current Year to 30 Sep 2025	Prior Year to 30 Sep 2024	Prior Year to 30 Sep 2023	Prior Year to 30 Sep 2022
Income				
Membership Fees	570	648	430	400
Book Sales				
Donation	20	30	20	15
	<u>590.00</u>	<u>678.00</u>	<u>450.00</u>	<u>415.00</u>
Expenses				
Admin/Misc	175.16	244.79	173.4	119.7
Publicity		20		30
Newsletter/Website				75.00
Events	15.30	-22.50	-37.80	
Book Purchases	218.89	144.11	217.01	164.68
	<u>409.35</u>	<u>386.40</u>	<u>352.61</u>	<u>409.38</u>
Surplus	<u>180.65</u>	<u>291.60</u>	<u>97.39</u>	<u>5.62</u>

Balance Sheet

	At: 30-Sep-25	At: 30-Sep-24	At: 30-Sep-23	At: 30-Sep-22
Assets				
Cash/Bank	2129.12	1992.47	1656.87	1559.48
Bookcases, etc	395.00	395.00	675.00	675.00
	<u>2524.12</u>	<u>2387.47</u>	<u>2331.87</u>	<u>2234.48</u>
Liabilities				
Association surplus income				
from prior year	2343.47	2331.87	2234.48	2228.86
Current year	180.65	291.60	97.39	5.62
Surplus carried forward	2524.12	2623.47	2331.87	2234.48
Asset writedown		-280.00		
	<u>2524.12</u>	<u>2343.47</u>	<u>2331.87</u>	<u>2234.48</u>

