Bibliotheque
Anglo-Francaise

February 2025
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The Librarian



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is my last letter as President of the library, as you will know by now ,we held our Annual General Meeting on

Friday, 31st and I resigned my post after more years than I can count.

Sue Reeve has taken on the role assisted by Terri Green,

together they will bring new energy and ideas to the library I am sure.

I have been proud and felt privileged to be the president, it has been at times hard work, fun , always interesting and a wonderful way to meet new people..

I am very grateful to all the committee members past and

present who have always been so supportive and positive. I wish the library, its members and future members, happy reading and interesting times.
Thank you all,

Jackie

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LIBRARY HOURS

Open Tuesdays & Thursdays

10.00—12,00

Large Variety of books to choose

Tea & Coffee Available

Drop in for a chat

JUNGLE DRUMS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual Subscriptions are due in every year following the AGM! Beware the lesser spotted David Sharrock!! He is after your annual subscriptions which are now due. Pay David directly or give them to the Library volunteer the next time you drop if for a coffee and a book.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM of the society was held in the Fleurines Hotel with a total attendance of 17 persons 11 of whom were the committee.
Where were you ? We missed you!!

The President thanked all for their attendance and noted that the drop in attendance mirrored the fall in "footfall" in the Library and the consequent need to increase our overall membership.

We have had an active year with 5 quiz nights, The Arts and Crafts Exhibition in November and the Annual participation in the Open day at the Social Centre in Villefranche.

We are required to elect the committee every three years and so the President advised the meeting that the current committee had offered themselves for election. No other candidates volunteered so the proposal to re-elect the committee was put to the meeting and passed.

Jackie then informed the meeting that she no longer wanted to continue as President of the Association and that at a meeting of the committee held last Tuesday the committee had persuaded Sue Reeve to take the position with Terri Green as her assistant. This proposal was put to the meeting and passed by acclamation.

David Sharrock, as Treasurer, circulated the accounts of the society and reported that we remain fully solvent having recovered from the detrimental effects of Covid. Total membership of the society stands at 65.

The meeting was then addressed by Geneviève from the USP who are keen to expand their offering by starting a French conversation group and was keen to ascertain the possible level of support for the idea. It is intended to match the level of conversation to the level of competence in the language of the participants. Please let the Editor know if you are interested.

Jackie then vacated the chair and invited Sue Reeve to take her place and continue the meeting. A vote of thanks was offered to Jackie by all present for her work over many years.

The meeting then discussed ideas for the expansion of the membership of the society and ideas for additional content in the Library newsletter.

There being no further business Sue thanked all for their presence and invited all to meet again at the quiz night on the 14th February at Les Fleurines. 18.00 prompt start.



IT IS MARMALADE SEASON!!

Oranges are at their juicy best at this time of the year, so what better way to cheer yourself up and make the whole house smell delicious with the tangey citrus aroma of marmalade.

I have tried and failed twice at buying the special "Seville Orange" locally. They were dry and tasteless!!

I use ordinary juicy oranges and substitute a grapefruit and two lemons within the starting weight of Oranges.

So choose your favourite marmalade recipe from that shelf of cook books that we all have in our kitchens — mine is a Delia Smith recipe - and get chopping!! Remember to add a knob of unsalted butter and stir well after you have turned off the heat as it really does get rid of the scum after the cooking process.

Personally I recommend the "Orange Van Man" who goes by the name of "Naturnar" on the Route de Montauban in Villefranche de Rouergue.

NL

SOCIETY CONTACTS

- CAMERA GROUP — *nigelnwild@hotmail.co.uk*
- BRIDGE GROUP — *lesley.sharrock@gmail.com or pellalean@gmail.com*



"THE LOTUS EATERS" TATJANI SOLI

Always on the look out for a good book I was pleased to be directed towards Nancy Pearl, an American librarian, author, critic and lecturer. Browsing her list I picked out two novels: "The cowboys and the Cossacks" by Clair Huffaker and "The lotus eaters" by Soli. The first is a very good western if you like that genre. It's not "Lonesome Dove" but it's a classic adventure story. It recounts the story of a group of American cowboys hired to drive a herd of longhorn cattle from a ship docking at Vladivostok to a region deep in Siberia. They are accompanied by a group of dissident Cossacks and face many dangers. There are few women in this tale.

In contrast "The lotus eaters" is a love story but also a war story.

Unusually this book doesn't try to fit in too many literary devices although there are some shifting timelines.

The book opens as the war in Vietnam is ending. Helen Adams and Linh, a Vietnamese interpreter who are both magazine photographers, are trying to get out on one of the last helicopters out of the Embassy compound. At this point, the relationship between Helen, an intrepid thirty-something American, and Linh is unclear.

Then the book goes back to 1965, when Helen, a fledgling photographer, has just arrived in Vietnam, trying to gain some sense of the war that killed her brother. Helen is desperate to prove herself and takes greater and greater risks attempting to establish the fact that she can stomach the violence as well as her male counterparts and capture a great photo.

She meets Sam Darrow who is a renowned war photographer. Sam is married but has had many affairs. Linh is his assistant, and later Helen's adviser and protector, who has served on both sides of the war and whose wife died during the conflict. These three characters are the core of the book so their love stories and the risks they take on assignments keep us in suspense. The author could, arguably have increased the suspense by not starting where she did, with the evacuation. In many ways Linh is the most sympathetic character as he is a Vietnamese whose family has suffered a great deal in the conflict and he is not so foolhardy as Darrow and Helen. We get a bit more insight into how the war was for the people of the country by looking through Linh's eyes.

The ending of the book is poor in that the author attempts to take it too far and introduces the conflict in Cambodia just as we are getting to feel we need to wind down and get a resolution to the relationships.

The scenery of Vietnam is well described and it's hard not to feel horror at the destruction wreaked by war, napalm etc.

Overall this is a good page turner and interesting if sad at times.

EM



"THE TIME OF THE CHILD" ~ BY NIALL WILLIAMS

Set in 1962 in the fictional village of Faha in the west of Ireland this is a story about an event in a place where very little happens.

Dr Jack Troy and his eldest daughter Veronica have lived together in a routine life of unspoken thoughts and emotions. After the death of his wife and an undeclared love for another woman who has died Troy has retreated into being a man of few words, dispensing medical care to the village. He loves his daughter but seems unable to express much of what he thinks and feels. In this he is not alone as many of the characters in the book are also emotionally mute.

Set against this are other elements: one is the endless rain which is almost a character in itself. Then there is the sort of Greek chorus of villagers, led by the postmistress, who are ready to seize and comment on anything that might occur. Proprieties must be observed and Mass attended regularly.

The first half of the book is slow. The Fair day before Christmas is the backdrop to the sad drama of Jude Quinlan who loves his alcoholic, gambling father but is powerless to stop the self-destruction of that man. We have a heavy feeling of doom which goes with the rain and grey skies as the two of them approach the Fair, late, with their animals and hoping against hope. Jude is so desperate he takes a detour to an old fort to beg for help from the fairies.

In fact, after dark, he finds a baby in the churchyard and brings it to the doctor's house. From then on the pace picks up. Troy can see that letting the news come out will bring down the malign powers of the Church and State to snatch the child into adoption. He can see that his daughter loves the baby so he starts to plot. The story becomes a duel and a race against the forces of gossip and convention where nothing must be known and bargains must be made. The interplay between Troy, the local priest and the curate is very well done and there is much humour and some bathos there.

The ending is perhaps a little sentimental but it is satisfying.

At times I found the prose overwritten and the imagery laboured. Is there some summer school Irish writers go to where their pursuit of the most arcane metaphors wins them accolades? (Williams was shortlisted for the Booker prize). Perhaps they think that prose is like poetry and you can get away with hints at meaning because the emotional pull is there. Perhaps they are in thrall to the great Irish writers of the past and feel they have to outdo them.

That said, there is also a lot of wonderful writing and thought-provoking ideas. I liked: "The purpose of ageing was to grow into your soul, the one you have been wearing all along."

EM

GARDEN CORNER - WINTER THOUGHTS

Finally some dry, warm weather, so we can get out into the garden. The ladybirds think it is time as well, as suddenly, they are all in the kitchen window, trying to get out. They managed to find their way in last autumn and hid themselves away, but I am having to give them a helping hand, or they run out of energy and we find them dead on the floor. I haven't yet seen any greenfly in the garden so I hope they find some food.

We haven't really had much frost at all so the garden is looking lovely, so many things in flower and suddenly a real urgency to prune, tidy up and move a few plants. The vegetable garden is still pretty wet, but generally our soil is so well drained I can get on to it right away, even after heavy rain. The weather forecast doesn't give any serious frost so I think we can get on prune most things now, even the salvias and penstemons.

The first seedlings are coming up in the greenhouse. This year I am using coir, (fibre de coco), mixed with some vermiculite for seed. Most gardens seem to be abandoned in the winter time and then we have a fine sunny day and the whole plot gets rotavated. 30 years ago we had an allotment on a very heavy clay soil so I used to have it rotavated, to expose the soil to frost, to make it more easy to cultivate. Times have changed, our soil is very light and we only dig it over in areas where I need to sow small seeds, such as carrots. We try at all times to keep the soil covered, adding farmyard manure, compost, different types of mulch and ground cover plants. I think our soil is pretty good and it is far less work. If your vegetable garden is very weedy, dig out perennial weeds, such docks, dandelions and couch grass and cover with cardboard, then cover with a mulch. Over the years, in different gardens we have used weed supressing membranes, but I find them very tricky to use, planting into, takes more time and you need to ensure the plant is at the right depth. There are new biodegradable membranes which are easier to use, but they are expensive. Given a choice I would go for cardboard and spend your money on composted wood chip. If you are lucky you might well find a pile of wood chip beside the road. It really needs composting, but we have found the pile was so big, it was composting very quicky, quite hot inside, should be ready to use this spring.

It is coming in milder, so I shall make a start on the garden, prune the fruit trees and bushes, prunes the roses and cut off the old leaves of the hellebores as they are just starting to show flowers. I hate walking on bare soil, but a good mulch makes it much more accessible and compacts the soil less.d sowing. It is lovely stuff to handle, but I am finding the watering a bit tricky. It certainly seems to be working better than the peat free compost. I will transplant into a mix of leaf mould, soil, perlite and a little bit of fertiliser. Hopefully, it will be successful.

MG

DO YOU KNOW.....?

LABELLING FOR CLOTHING

A new law has come into effect since the January 1 this year regarding the labelling of clothing items.
In future a label must to be attached to all clothing with the composition clearly visible and in French. The label must show the name and the percentage by weight of all textile fibres used in the manufacture of the item and in descending order.
The price including all tax (TTC) must be clearly visible on the label or on a nearby notice. If the clothing is reduced or in the sales, the label must show the old price crossed out plus the new reduced price.

Also a label must now include the geographical origin of the three main manufacturing stages.
In the case of clothing, this concerns:
the weaving,
the dyeing and printing,
the manufacturing.

In addition a warning mainly for synthetic textiles which release plastic microfibres during washing must be shown.
Most manufacturers and clothing outlets have been aware of these new rules and have been using these labels for some time.

DEFIBRILLATORS

Do you know that there are several defibrillators available in and around Villefranche?
They can be found in the following places:

- The Hotel de Ville,
- Cabinet Medical St. Jean,
- Cabinet Ophthalmologist (rue Mailhes),
- Lidl,
- Carrefour,
- GiFi,
- Maison des Solidarités (opposite Le Bistro),
- Collège Le Tricot,
- Groupe Unicor,
- Districenter,
- Socobomat.

H.M.

THE HOME STRAIGHT



This, our third visit to Toulouse in search of a cure for Cathy's neck problem, we hoped would be the last. The day was memorable not so much for the treatment, as the hoops we had to pass through to get it.

We arrived just after 12 for a 1pm appointment and as instructed, joined the queue at the main accueil. The receptionist thumbed through a sheaf of double-sided computer printouts containing appointment details.

'Are you sure it's today?'

Count slowly to ten, pass over appointment sheet. She found it on the last page.

'Your dossier is complete, go over to that reception and press the button for Scanner.' We were seen immediately, but neither of us ever understood exactly what took place during the next 20-25 minutes. It began with the usual carte vitale, mutuelle and piece of identity.

'Are you sure it's today?'

Count slowly to twenty, confirm it was today.

There were conversations over the divider with the receptionist next door, documents were exchanged, copied and scanned, the carte vitale, mutuelle and ID were returned, then later re-demanded, and my details taken as next-of-kin. At last, it was all done and we were directed to X-ray reception in the basement. By now it was 12.50.

The previous evening, Cathy had checked the documents given to her on the last visit and discovered a prescription for a blood test. I read the instructions, which said that if you are allergic to image enhancing fluid, have a blood test. Cathy isn't allergic, but as a precaution, took the results of a recent test with her.

'Where's your blood test results?'

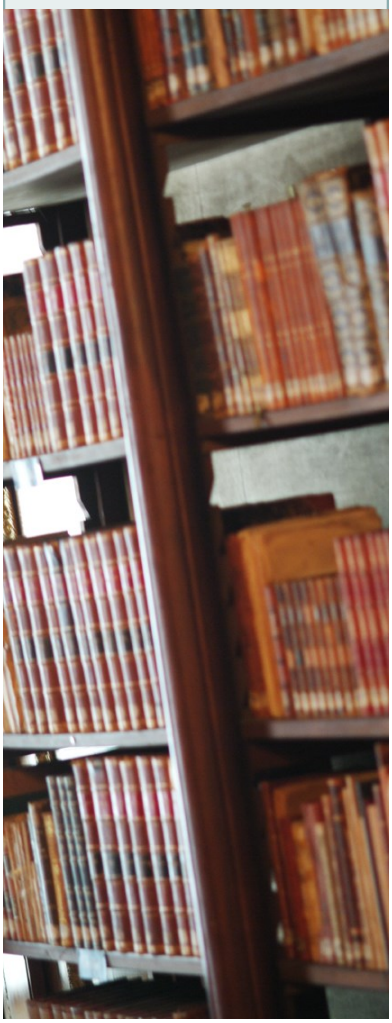
We explained, and showed the backup set of results, but were told the surgeon might not give the treatment. A quick phone call; he would.

The waiting room was pretty busy and we passed the time discussing whether three receptions were really necessary. The carte vitale being demanded we understood, as it had to be read in the terminal, but why the mutuelle and ID being copied yet again? Do the IT systems in the various departments talk to one another? Without knowing the ins and outs of the clinic's administration, it's hard to make a definitive judgement, but we can't help feeling that the whole process could be streamlined. Not only would this offer significant cost savings and faster throughout, but it would also lessen the angst felt by every patient before a procedure.

We sat and sat, and by 2.20, I needed sustenance, so hied off to the café. When I returned fifteen minutes later, a lady who had been sitting near us told me Cathy had been collected ten minutes ago. She emerged just after 3pm, a bit shell-shocked, and said the injection was uncomfortable and painful at times, but not such as to deter her from a second if necessary.

The surgeon's 2-3 days for the treatment to take effect was optimistic. It took some days, but there is a significant improvement. Perhaps there will be a second treatment in early 2025.

NW



NOTICE BOARD

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST / ADVERTISING

4 salles pour le cinéma

QUERCY NEMA

Caylus, Parisot, Saint-Antonin, Varen

FÉVRIER 2025	CAYLUS	VAREN	PARISOT	SAINT-ANTONIN
 Vaiana 2 5 ANS ET +		Sam. 01/02 17h		
 La Vallée des fous		Sam. 01/02 20h30		
 My sunshine VOSTFR		Dim. 02/02 20h30		
 Un ours dans le Jura	Sam. 08/02 18h			
 Planète B	Dim. 09/02 15h			
 En fanfare	Dim. 09/02 18h			
 Leurs enfants après eux		Ven. 14/02 20h30		
 La chambre d'à côté VOSTFR		Sam. 15/02 17h	Mar. 18/02 17h	Sam. 22/02 20h30
 Les feux sauvages VOSTFR		Sam. 15/02 20h30		
 Le royaume			Mar. 18/02 20h30	Ven. 21/02 20h30
 Flow, le chat qui n'avait plus peur de l'eau 8 ANS ET +			Mer. 19/02 17h	Ven. 21/02 14h
 Au boulot !				Sam. 22/02 14h
 Grand Tour VOSTFR				Sam. 22/02 17h
 L'affaire Nevenka VOSTFR				Dim. 23/02 17h
 Papa est en voyage d'affaire VOSTFR				Dim. 23/02 20h30

English Title~ The Room Next Door

With Tilde Swinton and Julianne Moore

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST

Markets / Vide Greniers

Sunday 16th. Villeneuve at the salles des Fêtes

Fish & Chips

Villefranche de Rouergue Valentine's Day 14th Fish & Chips @ Cesaree 6.00pm onwards. Book in advance

Parisot Message from Tony of Cod en Bleu

Our visit to Parisot from now on will coincide with Cinema night at the Salle des Fetes in Parisot. They usually show a VO film at 5:00 p.m. and a VOSTFR or VFR one at 8:30 p.m. On the third Tuesday of the month. (February 18th.) See Notice Board for details

Events

Villefranche de Rouergue

February 13th at Fleurines ~ Poésie du Soir. 20.00-21.30

February 14th Villefranche Théâtre. Matin Brun 20.45-22.30

February 18th. Writing workshop. Atelier d'écriture. 14.30-16.30 at Fleurines

CLASSIFIEDS

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Learn French in a friendly, fun atmosphere at So'Happy School in Villefranche. All levels/all ages. Qualified, motivated teacher with excellent OFSTED reports and 15 years experience. Small groups: 18 Euros/1h30 lessons; individual lessons: 22 euros/hour. Contact Sophie on 07963050236 or sohappyschool@gmail.com

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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 nigelnwild@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

We have Small bales of straw for larger animals. Contact Bridget Blunsdon on 0 6 40 46 48 87

LETTINGS

Olive Tree Cottage, Bed and Breakfast:
Self-contained Chambres d'Hôtes in Martiel, suitable for 2 adults, large pool and garden, ample parking. Booking via Airbnb or direct on 0565 29 44 96

Holiday apartment to rent in La Herradura, Andalusia, Spain.
A light and spacious 1 bedroom apartment (sleeps 4) with large terrace, sea and mountain views. Only a 7 minute walk to the beach & restaurants. Monthly winter lets available. Please visit https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089978104205

Holiday apartment to rent in beautiful Nerja, Andalusia, Spain
Apartment Aqua Marina is a modern 2 bedroom ground floor apartment with terrace and spectacular sea and Mountain views. Superb location only a 3 minute walk to the beach and a short walk to the restaurants and shops of the old town. Monthly winter lets available See: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090122020875

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. editor.elnbafvdr@orange.fr