Bibliotheque
Anglo-Francaise

March 2025
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The Librarian



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

I read that you should keep alert, and that you should challenge yourself, both of which are good for the brain. My current challenge is that of following in Jackie's footsteps, a challenge indeed as I'm sure you will all understand. She is a hard act to follow.

As for keeping alert ..... With apologies to some Radio 2 wit many years ago who instructed his listeners to "Keep a lert, Britain needs more lerts." I would say "Keep a lert, your library needs lerts."

Let's take it further to "Your library, your library, your library needs you!" which can be sung to the lovely Kylie's song about the disco needing you, and it might speed your steps towards the library (singing aloud and dancing, as you go through the town is at your discretion).

But seriously, we do need you all, library duty mornings can sometimes be a rather lonely affair, do come along and see us.

Sue

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Jungle Drums..... 2+3

Book Review.....4+5

Gardening Corner..... 6
Did you know...? 6

Plus ca change..... 7
Notice Board.....8
Whats On In Feb 9
Classifieds..... 10



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

STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS....STOP PRESS 28/02/2025

All patients and visitors to Villefranche Hospital are now required to wear a face mask when entering the building!!

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.



QUIZ NIGHT PRESENTATION

At the start of the Quiz night the Association President, Sue Reeve advised all those present of the change of leadership at the top of our association and expressed the thanks of the members to Jackie Naismith for her long and successful occupation of the Presidents chair and presented her , on be-half of the association, with some essential items for her retirement to the tranquil spaces of her garden.

FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP

Villefranche USP (Université des Savoirs Partagés) is considering a French conversation group for English speakers. Please contact me if you are interested. Don't hesitate to specify what you wish in term of frequency, time…

We will adapt the format according to your need and your French level of competence.

Here is my mail : demonet.ge@gmail.com

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Geneviève Démonet

SOCIETY CONTACTS

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

The Book Review By **Elaine Morgan**



"MARIA CALLAS—THE WOMAN BEHIND THE LEGEND" ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

Although this book was published in 2002 it seems a good time to look at it again since there is a new film out about Callas, starring Angelina Jolie. There are many recordings of Callas so in the film 95% of the singing is her voice. This makes sense as although Jolie claims to have worked for 7 months in order to give the appearance of an opera singer it took many years and much discipline for Callas to perfect her art.

Maria had a tough childhood. Her parents emigrated from Greece to the US and her father never again left. Maria's mother was determined to raise a star performer and pushed both her daughters to work. Maria's older sister was beautiful and preferred, putting in place an unhealthy dynamic of competition and desire for approval. The three females of the family returned to Greece and endured the Italian occupation. Although there were strict rules about public noise Maria defied them by singing by her window and won food and lenience from Italian soldiers.

Later in life her bitterness towards her mother over the work ethic and lack of a normal childhood was unrelenting. She never forgave her mother and viewed her as a PR disaster needing to be controlled.

The two of them created a sort of embattled mentality which often led to Maria feeling she was taking on the world in her need to overcome challenges and win. This did not help her later on when many opera houses were keen to work with her, not against her. Her husband did not help either as he loved the role he played in managing her career combatively. Eventually Maria conquered every stage and created a legend.

Meeting Onassis helped her to focus on something else she wanted out of life. For a while all went well and she retired to a great extent from singing. However Onassis would not marry her or let her have children so her life became more barren. Watching her pick her words when she is interviewed on this topic is almost comical. Nowadays she would have had a PR assistant to manage the interview and ease the way for her.

The book is strong on the Onassis relationship. The author did extensive research and had access to people and documents which helped her enormously. It's hard to like Onassis for what he did to Maria although his life became tragic too.

All the research can mean that the author did not do enough pruning. I got a bit tired of the detail of Maria's conflicts with various opera directors and houses and felt this could have been better pulled together so it was clearer. Some of the conflicts ran for years, not helping one's grasp of timelines.

Callas was professional and cancellations were often because of poor health. Her discipline in rehearsals was absolute and she required the same from co-singers. If she didn't get it she became unhappy thus adding to her reputation as a diva. Many myths grew up around her and the author tries to get to the truth behind these while always being positive about Maria.

We have recordings and some footage but in the end I suspect you had to be there to feel the full power of what Callas brought to the stage. She changed opera so that stars now have to bring the full package to bear in order to succeed as she did.



“KNIFE” ~ BY SALMAN RUSHDIE

I have never read any of Salman Rushdie's novels as his subject / topics had not attracted me. So it caught me unawares when I fell over an interview / promo piece on the radio on his latest offering at the time “KNIFE” , the story of the attack he suffered while attending a public seminar at a US College campus on the subject of threats to Authors, and its aftermath told by the victim in all its glaring truthfulness.

I was hooked by the calm and informative way in which the interview was evolving and genuinely disappointed when it ended. So hints were dropped in the direction of Father Christmas and / or the Birthday Fairies and sure enough a copy of the complete work came my way.

I was not disappointed, the book is generally written in chronological order but with diversions to past events where they are relevant to the narrative. The story is interesting / frightening but at the same time wonderfully uplifting in the evidence of the general Goodness that evolved from that attack , the skills and dedication of the medical and rehabilitation staff and the characterisations of the members of his family and the effects the stabbing had on them. The intended victim is not the only one to suffer.

Just like the Titanic, we all know how it ended so no cliff hangers here, but nevertheless it is the personal stories and insights that make this a most satisfying read. In particular, for me, the highlight was the imaginary interviews he holds with his attacker and dissects the thinking of a perpetrator of such an attack.

To see those two men in a US Court this last week was to see the change to the life of Salman Rushdie and to put a face on a previously unidentifiable attacker.

AM

GARDEN CORNER - WINTER THOUGHTS

I have been in the garden, enjoying the mild sunny weather. Spring seems very early this year, the birds are singing, the winter flowering honeysuckle is full of bees, the daffodils are all in bud and the weeds have started to grow. I suggest you make an early start on the garden.

I have clearly been quite lazy over the winter months as I am really quite tired after just a couple of hours in the garden. Yes I am getting older, but I need to gradually build up to a whole day of gardening, get my fitness back after an inactive winter. It is better to start now and just do a bit. Take the time to enjoy the sunshine.

Winter is not over yet, so keep the fleece handy to cover up any vulnerable plants. The broad beans are growing well and the purple sprouting broccoli should soon be ready for eating. I will keep an eye on the weather forecast and cover them, if there is likely to be a frost.

MG

DO YOU KNOW.....?

Experience Something new with Ann Algie!

Simple Write
I'm passionate about writing and inspiring others to express their thoughts and tell their stories. This March, I'm running day long "Write it Wild" workshops for both beginners and those with some writing experience.

I am looking for people willing to host a workshop in their home for up to six people in exchange for a free place. You may have friends who would like to attend. (The cost would normally be Euro 50, which includes tea, coffee and a simple lunch)

If you would like to find out more about hosting or to book a place on a workshop please e-mail me at ann.algie@gmail.com or call me on 0772286279. You can also visit my website www.annalgie.com for more information.

A Stay at Chateau Labro (Near Rodez Airport)

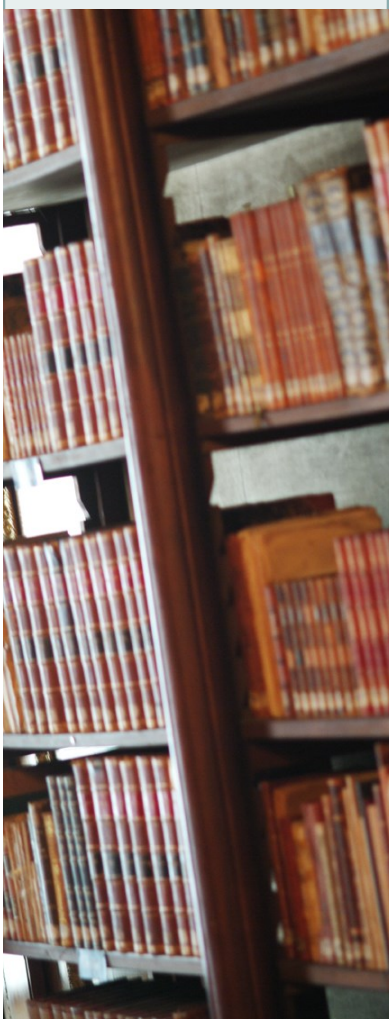
After five weeks in hospital, first in Bangkok and then in Rodez; it was a real treat to spend three luxurious nights at Chateau Labro, just outside Rodez. The Chateau comprises several buildings, courtyards, a stand alone restaurant and a wellness centre with massage, sauna and a hot tub. There is a generous and delicious breakfast buffet and a quite fancy dinner menu with lots of 'foams'.

The current owner has been in place for just a year. The orignal renovations took place between 2001 and 2006 and it took time to buy all the buildings from multiple owners. They were fully booked in November and December and over this new year. We have stayed in two different rooms both with free standing baths ~ a treat for me. The rooms are a good size and beautifully furnished and the wifi is good. The weather was rather wet and misty but inside was always warm. Most people have a car but we did not and were able to order a picnic lunch served in one of the cosy sitting rooms. All in all it was the perfect transition from a long hospital stay to going home to Mayrinhagues and Rufus the dog.

H J

PLUS CA CHANGE





The times they are a-changin' in and around Villefranche.

The town's "élus" have devised a programme to make the bastide more open, attractive and better adapted to the needs of the residents. Or, as they put it, 'to let more light into the town'. Already, some dilapidated buildings have been flattened to create light wells in the narrow streets.

Work has begun on demolishing the old CPAM offices in the allées Aristide Briand. Once the tiles have been taken off and the asbestos removed, the building – regarded by many as an eyesore - will be pulled down. The resulting large space will see aeration of the soil, the planting of trees and shrubs, the creation of a much-needed cycle park and 20 more car spaces. Key to the development is that it will allow market stalls that normally occupy the main road to be relocated, leaving the Aristide Briand open to traffic on market days. Drivers will be relieved, none more so than those on a Thursday school run.

Extensive works have also started on the place Fontanges. The huge area of tarmac acts as a heat soak in summer, creating very high temperatures. All of the existing surface will be removed to a depth of 80cm and replaced with a permeable substrate adapted to vegetation. The original 220 spaces will be reduced to 200 to allow plantings, 200 trees and grassed areas.

The municipality has acquired the Moulin de Collonges and the millpond. The latter is to be drained and thoroughly cleaned. As the ruisseau de Notre Dame which feeds it is a flood hazard, meanders will be constructed to slow the water flow.

A cycle path from Villefranche to Toulonjac is part of the scheme.

Already, the entire main section of the *place* is closed to traffic and parking, leaving just the overspill area by the stream. Alternative car parks have been signposted, but between now and October 2025, parking will be problematic, especially on market day. Access to businesses in the square will be maintained, and events which normally use the *place* will be resited locally.

Medical services in west Aveyron are being upgraded.

As in most developed countries, the ageing population is on the rise. Once there were 14 *cabinets medicaux*: these have dwindled to five or six. According to the authorities, the area is teetering on the brink of becoming a medical desert. Many of us know to our cost of the impossibility of finding a GP or a dentist.

In around four months, a new medical centre will open in La Fouillade. Once the approval of the Agence Régionale de Santé is given, two Spanish doctors are available to supplement the existing two GPs. Recruitment of a dentist is underway.

The Villeneuve medical centre, where two new young doctors have recently opened their doors, is to benefit from a €1.5m revamp and extension. This new facility is scheduled for completion in 2026.

NW

NOTICE BOARD

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST / ADVERTISING

4 salles pour le cinéma

QUERCY NEMA

Caylus, Parisot, Saint-Antonin, Varen

A Complete Unknown / Un Parfait Inconnu

Starring Timothy Chalamet

Parisot 18/03/2025 17.00 hrs

The Traveller / La Voyageuse

Staring Isabelle Huppert

Parisot 18/03/2025 20.30



WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST

Markets / Vide Greniers

Sunday 9th. Rignac, Villeneuve ~ vintage militiary
Sunday 23rd. Villefranche chemin de 13 pierres
Sunday 30th Villefranche @ La Madeleine

Fish & Chips

Villefranche de Rouergue 14th March 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. (March, Tuesday. 18th.) See Notice Board for details

Events

Sunday 2nd @ 3.00 pm. Carrefour VF Circus Rico Zavatta
Friday 7th. 8.00 pm Wine tasting ~ l'Atelier. Bar de la Plage. Najac
Saturday 8th @ 9.00am. Pilgrimage & Procession. Loop around Villefranche starting at Chapelle de 13 pierres.
Thursday 13th at 9.10pm France 2 is showing the film Olympe de Gouges with Julie Gayet ~ filmed in Villefranche
Sunday 16th @ 4.30 Rodez gospel concert Villeneuve Church
Sat/Sun 29/30th Chocolate & Wine salon @ Salle 13 pierres

Check out Monthly Programming – The Speakers. The Haut Parleur monthly agenda with speakers, music, the restaurant etc

CLASSIFIEDS

LOCAL TRADERS AND SERVICES

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Alan G. W. Mackay - Civil Funeral Célébrant, English Speaking. Dignified, personal, respectful, memories. Contact: 05 65 29 88 54 / 06 89 33 82 45 or anglocelebrant@orange.fr

Andrea May, for a stress free property journey. Buying or selling your home or know someone who is? Refer them to me and upon completion receive Euro 200 as a thank you.. Andrea May Enterprise Individuelle 06 48 69 72 20. Siret 987 513 157 RSAC RODEZ

Ben Naismith, Arborist. Tree and hedge cutting at competitive rates. Tree pruning, reductions, felling, trimming and logging. Contact ben-naismith@outlook.com or T: 0786807434

Creative design including web sites, logos, and graphics. Websites fully hosted and monitored including ecommerce, blogging, gîte/rental bookings integration & email. Contact will@outrighthosting.net

English - French translations of documents and interpreting during meetings. Help with French administration and/or with official French letters. Also one to one French lessons or French conversation, contact Jacynth Crozier, Tel. 06 30 31 13 00 contact@crozier-traductions.com http://www.crozier-traductions.com

Justin Fairley - Garden Maintenance & Small Projects
Contact: jvfairley@outlook.com or Mob 07 85 17 86 52

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

M & K Construction Professional English Builders & Renovators All types of building work : roofing, groundwork, carpentry, masonry, decorating 40 years of experience. Free estimates Tel +33 0673299095. mandkrenovation@gmail.com Facebook: M & K Construction

Nicholas Powell— D Origine, Architectural Salvage Yard
160 Rue de jonquekkes, 46260 Limogne en Quercy
Contact 06 20 55 10 40

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