Bibliotheque
Anglo-Francaise

April 2025
Vol. 3, Issue 12

The Librarian



A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the quiet of the library, the faint stirrings of discontent, perhaps anxiety, can be heard. It is the rustle of pages, cardboard scratching against cardboard. “Why isn’t anybody reading me?” “I’ve been here for ages waiting for someone to take me off this shelf.” “A different room would be so nice to see.” “I have such a wonderful story to tell, all about kings and their machinations - what characters!” “Ah yes, all based on true events isn’t it? My story is based on true events too, but it’s what happened to me - oh you wouldn’t believe it!”

“Oh, I’m pure fiction, a book to escape into. I’m soft and gentle, but my friend down here - well he’s all imagination, but much grittier and a bit frightening if I’m honest.”

“Well is that right now? Aw feck it, now how’s about a bit of humour eh? Yeah, my story’s a bit rough in parts, but we can laugh along the way!”

The trouble maker in all this could be the bottles of wine on the bottom shelf, third bookcase along, sometimes silent, but at other times twittering among themselves. Let’s make them change their twitters and release the joy of the wine and the joy of reading these amazing books, just come and choose one.

Sue

DISCLAIMER

THE ENGLISH LIBRARY TAKES NO LEGAL OR OTHER RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARTICLES, REVIEWS, FINANCIAL ADVICE OR ADVERTISEMENTS PUBLISHED IN THIS NEWSLETTER. THE VIEWS OF THE CONTRIBUTORS AND REVIEWERS ARE PERSONAL AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THOSE OF THE NEWSLETTER OR THE ASSOCIATION. READERS SHOULD VERIFY ALL ARTICLES FOR SALE, TRADES PERSONS ETC. BEFORE PARTING WITH MONEY. THE EDITORS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO ACCEPT, REJECT OR EDIT ANY ADVERTISEMENT, ARTICLE OR REVIEW SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION.

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

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.

TAXING TIMES ARE HERE AGAIN

Just a heads up, time to find a calculator, no major changes this year.

Tax bands are up by 1.8% but the exchange rate for the pound is better than last year and the high OAP pension increases last year probably mean a higher tax bill for most of us, so the monthly PAS tax prepayment will probably not be enough and a tax demand in September is possible/probable.

The online reporting system is due to open on the 10th April, but paper deadlines are not yet available.

Exchange rate average -(31 Dec 2023 + 31 Dec 2024)/2- and per Connexion is 1.178 Euro per GB Pound. But, as always, if you receive income directly into Euros via any banking system it may be worth using actual receipts or calculating a personal exchange rate as the average rate does not take transfer costs into account, and even the OAP direct transfer costs about 0.5%.

FREE FOOD ANYONE?

If you remember the Student Lunches at the St Joseph College pre Covid, this will ring a bell. The Chambre de Metiers in Rodez is running training courses in English for "Seasonal Restaurant Staff" finishing with an Immersion day at their teaching restaurant in Onet le Chateau. They are looking for 8—16 native English speakers to be the customers for a lunch service at their site near Rodez at a date to be chosen but probably in May. No charge for the meal but travel will be for your own account!

Contact the Editor or David Sharrock if you are interested

SOCIETY CONTACTS

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



The Book Review By

Elaine Morgan

"RESTLESS" BY WIILIAM BOYD & "THE STRANGLER VINE" BY MJ CARTER.

"Restless" is a recommended ready by H. M. Queen Camillia. No doubt its story of clandestine trysts and a potentially scandalous love affair rings a bell.

We have yet another split narrative: an older story about Eva Delectorskaya and her time as a spy for Britain and a modern account by her daughter Ruth. Eva (or Sally as she is now known) gives her daughter the written story of her life, piece by piece. As usual with these things the older story is the more exciting.

In 1939 Eva is recruited by Lucas Romer an enigmatic, attractive older man who had also recruited her brother. Her job is to plant misinformation so that the US is persuaded to join the war on the side of the Allies. Her job is a safe one until Lucas sends her on a courier mission to south America.

Her daughter, Ruth, is a less interesting character and there are a couple of pointless subplots (wisely left out of the TV adaptation with Charlotte Rampling as Eva). Much of the modern part of the book is padding and lacks pace. However it is a good readable story that would not strain the intellect too much.

"The strangler vine" is also a thriller but set in India in 1837. It tells the story of a young officer named in the East India Company who is tasked with finding a disgraced poet and spy. To do that he has to depart for the central region of India and Avery is not alone. Leading the expedition is Jeremiah Blake a taciturn and mysterious former member of the EI Company.

As with "Restless" all is not as it seems. Gradually Avery comes to realise that misinformation about the cult of Thugee is being put about. There is a whole system for its repression. Avery comes to see that the EI Company has many hidden agendas and puts its own interests first.

If you like skulduggery and a bit of Derring- do in your novels this one will be for you. I warmed to the characters in this book far more that to those in "Restless".

The author is an historian and although India is not her specialism, she brings it to life very vividly. This first book is one of a series but I gather the sequels are disappointing as Blake plays less of a role and he is the most interesting character.

GARDEN CORNER

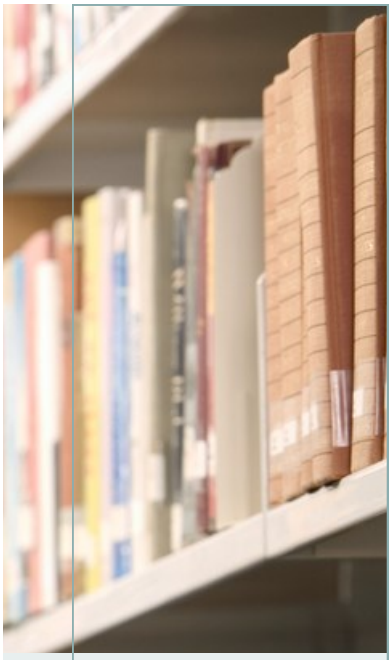
The “vent d’autan” has finally stopped, and the rain has arrived. The garden already looks better, so everything will grow, including the weeds! The next week looks quite unsettled, ideal for planting.

It is far too early to plant out tender, greenhouse produced plants, but some of our cuttings can now be planted out. Shrubs and trees get planted in the autumn, but in our garden we need to wait until the spring for Lavenders, Rosemary, Salvias, Penstemon and Clematis. Several lavenders are now looking pretty scruffy and need replacing, some of the salvias also. I prefer to plant something different, rather than replace a lavander with another lavander. Lavenders are tough plants growing in often difficult situations, so need to be replaced with equally tough plants, such as Santolina. Plants you buy are often very pot bound and dry, not ideal specimens for planting in difficult situations. Plant sooner rather than later, make sure they are truly hardened off and if they are pot bound and dry, cut off any roots which are winding around the base of the pot and soak the plant in water for half an hour. Too many plants that you buy are pot bound and dry, not an ideal start for a plant.

MG



FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH



A recent UK TV documentary, *'Swiped – the school that banned smartphones'*, prompted me to revisit a blog I wrote some years ago called 'Will IT destroy us?'.

Memory said I'd penned it four years ago; it was six. How time flies. In the blog, I posited just some of the downsides of our connected world, but highlighted two areas – Artificial Intelligence and teenage screen addiction. Now I'm re-examining them from the standpoint of their adverse effect on writing and literacy.

At that point, AI was still a nascent technology: now, it seems everything comes with built-in AI. Many of those uses are for the good of mankind; many aren't. AI is capable of writing text such that even experts can't distinguish fake from fact. While the dangers of war from bomb and bullet are obvious, far more insidious are the ceaseless wars of disinformation from hostile nations.

But what about writers? Publishers are driven to ask if any of the material in a manuscript is AI-generated. Taking matters to *reductio ad absurdum*, what is to stop an 'author' writing a novel entirely by AI, it being accepted by a publisher and becoming a bestseller? It could happen and if it does, what does that augur for writing as a creative art?

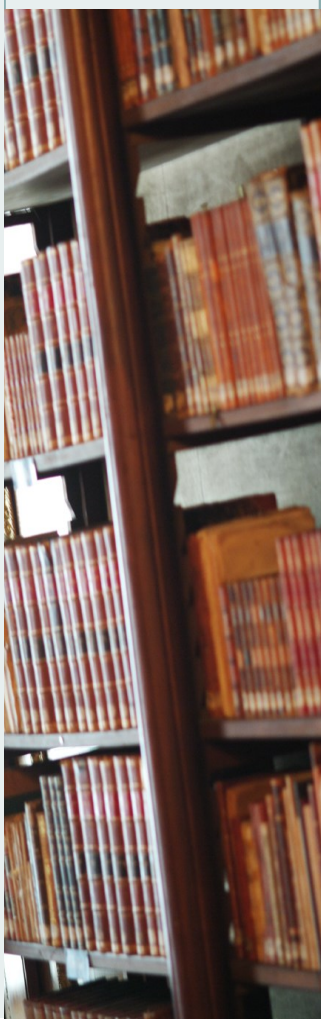
In 2018, some people and institutions were recognising the dangers of kids almost glued to their screens. French schools and one UK school banned smartphones. Governments have been slow to react, but suddenly, there is a growing movement to protect the young from themselves. Australia is debating banning social media for under-16s and others are likely to follow suit.

'Swiped – the school that banned smartphones' was created by celebrities Emma and Matt Willis, concerned that they were losing their three children to their phones.

A class of 12-13-year-olds, plus some of their teachers, agreed to lock away their smartphones for three weeks. Daily diaries were recorded on videocams and the children were monitored both physically and mentally by Cambridge University.

While usage varied, some of the class admitted to being phonebound for up 9 hours a day. In the beginning, several believed that life as they knew it would be destroyed.

One such was Harry. But by the end of the experiment, he said he was 'more interactive' and it had made him realise 'I've got to be careful what I'm looking at online'. Another was Scarlett. 'When I had no phone I was completely fine - I concentrated in lessons, I understood, I was more sociable, I was kind to people, I came downstairs and helped my family... we were playing board games every night.'



Head teacher John Player said: 'There was a 17% drop in anxiety symptoms in students. The impact was really quick'. 'They slept on average an extra hour a day, which is going to have a huge impact on mental health.

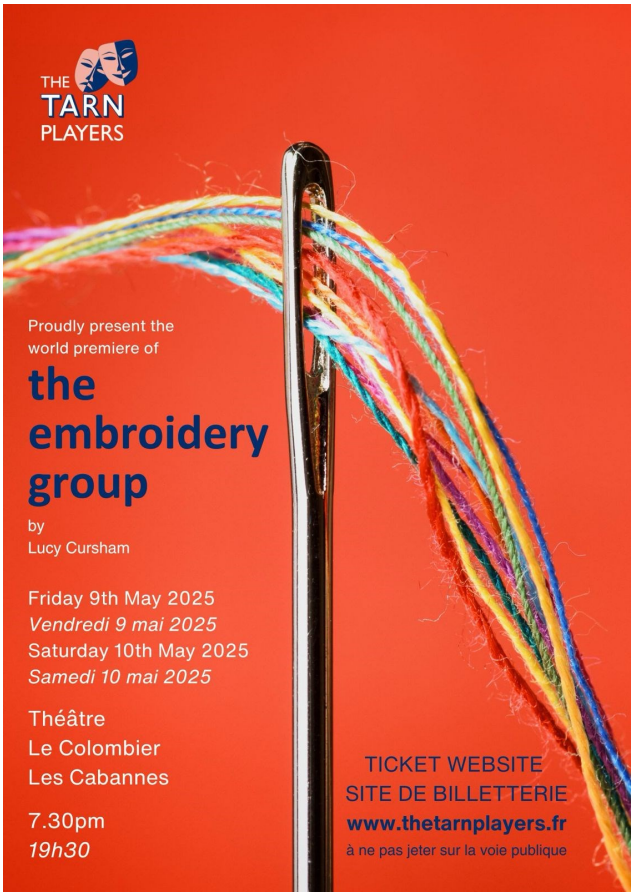
'There was an 18% reduction in symptoms relating to depression and a 3% improvement in working memory in just 21 days.'

These are both disturbing and encouraging figures, but I think there is an added and distinct bonus. Kids use textspeak, which has resulted in dreadful grammar and atrocious spelling. Screen addiction leaves no time to read. If we can restrict both phone and screen usage and encourage reading habits, perhaps we can rise from the illiteracy doldrum that has plagued us for decades.

NW

NOTICE BOARD

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST / ADVERTISING



USP French Conversation Group

Geneviève DEMONET of the USP has shared this recipe to encourage you to think "French"

Moelleux au chocolat

6 personnes	Serves 6
125 g de chocolat à pâtisser	125 g dark chocolate
125 g de beurre	125 g unsalted butter
3 œufs	3 eggs
100 g de sucre	100 g caster sugar
1 pincée de sel	Pinch salt
60 g de farine	60 g plain flour
70 g de noix concassées	70 g chopped walnut

Préchauffer le four à 180°C.

Faire fondre le chocolat avec le beurre dans une casserole à feu doux.

Ajouter les œufs entiers battus avec le sucre et une pincée de sel.

Ajouter la farine et les noix hachées.

Verser dans 6 ramequins beurrés et cuire 8 minutes.

Le temps de cuisson est à adapter en fonction de la puissance du four.

Le centre du moelleux doit rester coulant…

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F, gas mark 4).

Melt chocolate and butter in a saucepan at low temperature.

Add beaten eggs with sugar and pinch salt.

Add flour and chopped walnuts.

Spoon into 6 greased ramekins and bake for about 8 minutes.

The baking time is to be adapted accorded to your oven. The cake should be soft centered.

WHAT'S ON THIS MONTH

HOME OF LOCAL INTEREST

Markets / Vide Greniers

Sunday 13th. Villefranche de Rouergue at the Madeleine
Monday 21st. Laramiere
Sunday 27th Verfeil Flowers & Cars

Fish & Chips

Villefranche de Rouergue 11h April Fish & Chips @ Cesaree 6.00pm onwards. Book in advance

Parisot April, Tuesday. 15th.@ Café Maison Book in advance with Cod-en-bleu

Cinema

VO Films in Parisot, St Antonin, Caylus and Varen See www.quercynema.fr for details

(April schedule not available as we go to press)

VO films in Caussade See Accueil - Caussade - Cinema –Theatre

Concerts

Friday 4th Jazz Duo de Monde @ La Manufacture, VdR 20.30 hrs

Saturday 12th Jazz Fusion Concert "Tribute to Pat Metheny " VdR 21.00 hrs

Saturday 12th Piano Etudes with Daniel Isoir, Chateau de Bournazel 20.00 hrs

Events

Saturday 5th Plant & Seed Exchange & Villeneuve Main Square

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