

# The Connexion

FRANCE'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER

**Cx** connexionfrance.com

September 2017 Issue 179 €4.20

International  
Money Transfers  
to and from France

**HiFX**  
www.hifx.co.uk

B&Bs and  
campsites  
diversify to  
stand out



P26-27

Mum of five's joy  
at return of  
4-day  
week

COMMENT P15



No fines (yet)  
for British  
speedhogs

+ SUPER RADARS ON WAY - P8

## Positive results for French economy

Record tourist numbers and firms are hiring again

by JANE HANKS and OLIVER ROWLAND

THE outlook is positive for the French economy with tourist numbers at a record high and employment at its highest level for 37 years.

Economists put the improvement down to a mixture of global factors and policies of the European Central Bank – the euro zone in general is performing well – plus Hollande-era measures for businesses which have borne fruit and are helping to create jobs.

The national statistics body Insee predicts 1.6% economic growth in GDP in 2017 with some economists going further and predicting 1.8% based on current trends. This compares to 1.1% in 2016 and is a boost after recent years which saw in 2009 the worst

recession since the Second World War followed mostly by years of sluggish growth.

It also means France's economic growth is likely to outpace that of the UK this year, which global accounting firm PwC forecasts will be 1.5%, dropping to 1.4% in 2018. Meanwhile the euro continues to strengthen (compared to sterling at €1.08 [August 28, 2017] which is at its lowest since 2009).

Economist Hélène Timoshkin from the economic research centre Asterès said: "There was growth in France 2010-2011 but this was making up for the huge setbacks of 2008-2009. This time it is real."

"There has been a growth in exports for the first time in two years, more jobs have been

→ Turn to Page 2



Artisans at work P44  
**My passion for hats**

INSIDE

UK pensions: How  
to reclaim social  
charges if added

Page 3

Natural trend  
for white hair

Page 3



Canal cottages  
seek new ideas

Page 45



MEET THE  
WORLD'S  
FASTEST  
LONE  
SAILOR

INTERVIEW Page 13



International Money Transfers  
to and from France

**HiFX**

www.hifx.co.uk

Tel. +44 (0)1753 859 159

In 4 Easy Steps

1

Sign up at  
hifx.co.uk

2

Tell us  
what you need

3

Send  
Money

4

Track via  
email & SMS

Whether you just want cost effective simple, international payments or  
you're looking to plan a more complex strategy we're here to help.

HiFX Europe Limited is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority under the Payment Services Regulations 2009, registration 462444, for the provision of payment services.



## CONTENTS

<b>News</b>	<b>1-11</b>
Expats to lobby UK MPs	4
Charcoal baguette ups sales	7
Speed cameras ring up €920m	8
France hangs out tourist welcome	9

**Comment 12-17**

1900 Olympics in Paris	12-13
Simon Heffer / Opinion	14
Is language key to integration?	15
Readers' letters	16-17

**Practical / Money 18-24**

Compost classes for children / French regional accents  
We retired to Martinique / Mythbuster: French people must carry ID / Understanding 'the bac' exam

**CX 2** Languedoc wine  
Modern-day druids  
Author's real life rom-com  
Explore Heritage secrets  
Basque-flavoured pepper party  
Amazing nature photography

**Diversify your business 26-27**

<b>Directory</b> Find registered tradespeople near you	<b>28-38</b>
<b>PLUS:</b> Community news around France	<b>39</b>

**Family / Work / Property 42-47**

Mystery towers / Hat elegance / Canal tourist projects  
History of pigeonniers - the living larders of the past

<b>Back Page</b>	<b>48</b>
Mint museum looks at money in all its glory	

## Contact Us

Subscribe / resubscribe at:  
www.connexionfrance.com

Subscription queries:  
Nathalie: 06 40 55 71 63 (Rate set by your operator)  
From UK: 0844 256 9881 (4p per minute)

Adverts: sales@connexionfrance.com  
Editorial: news@connexionfrance.com

Write to: The Connexion, Patio Palace  
41 Avenue Hector Otto, 98000 Monaco

twitter @ConnexionFrance

facebook The Connexion

Partner of francobritish  
Leading the Franco-British Business Community in France

Contributors: Oliver Rowland, Ken Seaton, Simon Heffer, Justin Postlethwaite, Nick Inman, Samantha David, Emily Commander, Jane Hanks Design: Lynne Spaight

Directrice de la Publication  
(Managing Editor): Sarah Smith  
Rédacteur-en-Chief (Editor-in-Chief): Sarah Smith  
The Connexion is published by  
English Language Media Sarl  
Registered office: Patio Palace,  
41 Avenue Hector Otto, 98000 Monaco

Environmental policy  
The Connexion is printed on  
recycled newspaper.

Annual subscription prices:  
French address €49 (£45), UK address €65 (£59),  
rest of world €71 (£65) - Abonnement 1 an (12  
numéros) France: €49 (£45), Royaume Uni: €65  
(\$59), autres pays: €71 (£65)  
Encart abonnement sur une diffusion partielle.  
Encart HIFX sur une diffusion partielle.

Printed by Rotimpres, Impressions Rotatives,  
17181 Aiguaviva (Girona), Espagne  
All copyright is reserved to the publisher.  
Reproduction in whole or part of any text without  
permission is strictly prohibited.  
The Connexion cannot accept responsibility for  
claims of advertisers or their professionalism.  
Mensuel Dépôt légal - a parution.  
RCI 10 S 05218 ISSN: 1742 - 6421  
CPPAP: 0121185379

# Firms hiring in new climate of confidence

→ Continued from Page 1

created than lost for the first time in eight years and both industry and households are investing more. The economy is still fragile but with the right measures it is solid enough for growth to continue."

She thinks the election made a difference as the Front National lost while the construction industry has benefited from people putting money into bricks and mortar due to its perceived security. Hollande-era initiatives which have helped include tax and social charges reductions for firms taking on staff, as well as tax reductions linked to investing in the business, such as buying equipment.

Insee says France's employment rate – the percentage of working age people employed – is at its highest since 1980 at 65.3%. The boost concerns all age groups but especially those aged 50-64.

The second quarter of 2017 saw 92,000 new jobs in the private sector, up from 58,000 in the first quarter – the largest rise since figures began in 2010.

The biggest growth area is services, and temping also saw a boost with 106,000 more people employed in June compared to June 2016 taking the total over 700,000 for the first time.

Less positively, numbers of registered jobseekers rose 1% in July, however this may be a blip.

Tourism has shaken off a drop linked to terrorism to rise to a new high of 96.8million nights in hotels in the first half of 2017, up from 92.5m last year. In Paris, hotel stays were up 12.5% in the first quarter compared to 2016, making it the best first quarter for at least 10 years. Visitors from Japan and Russia were up 62% and 51% respectively.

Air travel is booming, with a record 10m people passing through Paris airports in July compared to 9.6m last year.

There was a 14% rise in new building sites from spring 2016 to 2017, compared to the previous year and 13% more planning permissions were granted. New car sales rose 3.8% in January to July compared to 2016.

Among firms feeling an upturn is Paris-based KAZoART which launched in 2015 selling contemporary art online. It has tripled turnover in the past year and hopes to up its workforce from



“It does us good to think that we can be creative and succeed”  
**Mathilde Le Roy**  
Founder of KAZoART

three to eight next year.

Founder Mathilde Le Roy senses new consumer confidence. "Art is one of the first areas to suffer in a recession and the fact we are expanding is a good indicator that the economy is improving," she said. "Since the beginning of the year we have seen an increase in the amount people are spending, with more sales over €1,000."

She feels buoyed by promises of Mr Macron to help start-ups.

"I agree we should pay social contributions as we have good health and education cover in France but we should not be treated the same as big companies as our costs are not the same and we should at least have help when we start taking people on."

She added: "The growth in the economy is small but it makes us feel more confident about life. It does us good to think that we can be creative and succeed."

Another firm, UV Germi, which was created seven years ago and has now launched on the stock market, has seen an annual increase of 20% in turnover.

Based in Corrèze, it specialises in ultra-violet water and air treatment and has a turnover of €5m of which 20% is in export, a figure it aims to double in the next

three years. It has 30 employees and hopes to take on 20 more by 2021.

Founder André Bordas says having a niche product has been key rather than state measures.

"We concentrate on products which fulfil a growing need to clean up the environment. We rely on our own capacities and intend to increase exports so we create our own success," he said.

"The government should do more to support small, innovative businesses but I cannot depend on the authorities and continue to build my business myself."

Even so, the general trend in his area is positive, says the Corrèze Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which produces regular studies based on interviews of 360 firms.

The author of the latest one from the end of the second quarter, Anne Mambrini, said: "In June, 53% said they are confident in the future of the French economy, whereas in March only 32% said the same thing, while 66% are confident of growth in their own business."

"The level of investment is always a good indicator and with the help of tax incentives which ended this April, there was a huge increase in the numbers who invested in comparison with 2016. Four out of ten said they would continue to invest, despite an end to the advantages."

"One in five companies now intends to recruit, whereas up to now more have been losing staff than gaining."

She added: "What companies hope for from the new government is simplification without too many changes as they have to spend time adapting to."

Ms Timoshkin added: "We need the reform of the Code du Travail Mr Macron is proposing so it will be easier to employ and sack workers. It is necessary because France is known for its expensive labour costs and an average quality of goods, unlike Spain where employment costs are low and Germany, which has a reputation for excellence."

"At the same time people fear their jobs could be taken over by robots and artificial intelligence so a secure social system with more training opportunities is needed to reassure them that if they lose their job they will still have a future to look forward to."

## Marseille tests way of saving items confiscated at airports

MARSEILLE Provence airport is testing a system whereby travellers can arrange for items confiscated at security – such as bottles of perfume or penknives – to be sent to the traveller's home or made available for collection on the return leg.

The system involves the item being placed by staff in a so-called 'Tripperty box'. They can later log onto a website to opt what to do with it. The cost of sending to a French address is €15.

## Operation to reattach both arms was first for France

A 30-YEAR-OLD woman has had both her arms reattached after an accident involving a train – a first for France. She was taken to the CHUGA hospital in Grenoble where two hours later two medical teams carried out a four-hour operation.

It was possible because of fast action by emergency teams who transported the arms in perfect condition. If there had been a longer delay the operation would not have been possible.

  
**SwissLife**  
Insurance



**We specialise in top-up health, home and car insurance as well as private banking.**

**Please call Peter and Lawrence on:**

**05 56 28 94 64**

**Web: [swisslife-health-insurance.fr](http://swisslife-health-insurance.fr)**

**[agence.bordeaux.theatre@swisslife.fr](mailto:agence.bordeaux.theatre@swisslife.fr)**



## News in brief

## Map shows if you have water restriction

WITH 85 departments facing water restrictions to some extent at the end of August, you can check what your local situation is on the environment ministry's Propluvia website.

It has a clickable map showing restrictions put in place by the prefects – but your mairie should also have a warning.

## Town of 2,000 is in top 10 for retirees

SAINT Chinian, a town of 2,000 in Hérault has been named in the 10 best places in the world to retire by a US website ahead of Lisbon, Budapest and Kuala Lumpur.

Live and Invest Overseas said it was 'truly French with everything you need for daily life' with quality food and health-care, good infrastructure, little to no traffic and a slower pace.

## Beach-goers chill out without Wifi

NO phones, no Kindles, no iPads... the only screens on the beach as Soustons, Landes are sunscreens as the mairie has made it a Wifi-free zone to encourage visitors to de-stress beside the Atlantic.

## You need do nothing to be a silver fox

IT SEEMS grey is the new black and a French fashion journalist has revealed how more people can join the trend... by doing nothing.

Sophie Fontanel started dyeing her hair at 27 after having had a white streak since she was 15 but has now let nature take over – and won praise from women all over France for daring to take the plunge.

She said she started to notice more and more women and men with silver hair and then, just after losing a job at *Elle*, saw a woman in Saint-Tropez turn heads with her 'alabaster' hair.

She asked her how she did it and was told 'It's very simple, do nothing.'

The die was cast and she was determined to do it for herself.

As she let the dyed hair grow out she documented the new 'me' on Instagram with regular photos, going from 'zebra' to what she now calls *blonde* (a combination of *blanche* for white and blonde) and found that silver hair was not 'dead, dull and difficult to maintain'.

She wrote about it in a book *Une Apparition* and it took off.

Limoges Connexion reader Lisa Bishop has a similar story – minus the big-money book deal – and said that she decided in summer last year to go *natur-*



Sophie Fontanel, left, and Lisa Bishop have become fully-fledged members of the silver fox club

*elle* and go grey gracefully despite friends telling her she was mad. 'I was only 55 and they said I would look old before my time. I was told I was bonkers. It did not sway me.'

'I binned the dye and vowed not to use the dreaded stuff again. I also decided to do a monthly blog on a Facebook page I was a member of, Ladies in France Together (LIFT), so

women all over France could follow my journey.'

'Each month I posted an updated picture of my hair colour growing out with a bit of text on how it was going.'

'I had over 250 women following my journey and many decided to also bin the dye and go grey gracefully, grey being the new black.'

Lisa says she is now a full

member of the 'silver fox club' and says her hair is 'fully resplendent' with the dyed colour grown out.

She added: 'I do not for a moment regret my decision and only wish I had done it earlier.'

And she did manage her own money deal as she put aside the cash she saved not buying boxes of dye and found that she had amassed €160!

## River ban after algae kills dogs

DOG-owners in seven departments have been warned not to let their pets swim or drink from rivers and some lakes after around a dozen dogs were killed by toxic cyanobacteria.

Maine-et-Loire is the department the most affected but alerts were also in place along the Loire from Loire-Atlantique to Cher in central France.

Prefects have banned certain water activities such as swimming or fishing and people have been advised to avoid objects that have been in the water.

Anyone who has been in contact with river water should watch for symptoms such as skin irritation, nose, throat or eye problems, stomach ache, diarrhoea, nausea or vomiting.

Eight dogs died near Angers and the prefecture said two types of algae, *oscillatoria* and *formidium*, that grew on river bottom pebbles had a particularly serious toxin that quickly paralysed respiratory muscles.

Bans have been put in place in other areas for similar reasons with fishing banned in two Lot lakes and swimming banned on lakes from Marne, to Rennes and to Gironde.

## Stand up for your rights on social levies

NO changes have been made to the rules concerning social charges and UK state pensions or UK rental income – so if these have been wrongly levied on this type of income you have until the end of 2019 to lodge a complaint.

That is the advice given to *The Connexion* by the central tax authority, the DGFIP, after we contacted it to report several instances of readers whose *avis d'impôt* for 2016 income shows social charges levied on incomes which are normally exempt.

It is thought that some problems are linked to the last-minute inclusion of a number of new boxes on this year's income tax forms causing confusion.

If you are affected it will be reflected in the *Montant de vos prélèvements sociaux* (amount of social charges) shown separately from *Montant de votre impôt* (amount of tax) on the front of the *avis*. However check that the charges are not related to other income, such as bank interest.

A DGFIP spokesman said: 'Residents who are not a burden on an obligatory French social security regime [ie. schemes for workers and the self-employed] are not subject to social charges on their UK pensions and do not have to pay CSG, CRDS or Casa.'

He added: 'UK property revenues give the right to a tax credit equal to the French tax corresponding to these incomes on condition that the French resident is subject to UK tax on the same income. 'French tax' covers income tax and social charges.'

Incomes which are of a kind that are tax-exempt in the UK do not benefit from this, but where personal tax allowances cancel any tax payable to the UK this does not deprive the French resident of the right to a tax credit in France.

You can contact the tax office via your personal space on [impots.gouv.fr](http://impots.gouv.fr) Under *Nous contacter*, click *Ma messagerie sécurisée*. Place the cursor over

*Ecrire à l'administration* and choose *Je signale une erreur sur le calcul de mon impôt*, click *Ma demande concerne l'impôt sur le revenu ou les prélèvements sociaux*.

If you wish, while your complaint is dealt with you may ask for a *sursis de paiement* – a deferment in paying the bill. However if the tax office finds no error was made, it may impose late payment penalties. If you have no response within six months, it may be considered a rejection.

Alternatively, you could send a *réclamation* by recorded delivery post with reception slip to your tax office, including a copy of your *avis* and supporting documents (eg. a copy of your S1, UK tax statement etc).

You can also make a complaint in person at the tax office and be given a *fiche de visite* slip.

*Income tax can be a complex area and we suggest you seek professional advice related to your individual situation.*

## Threshold doubled

EARNING levels for *auto-entrepreneurs* are to be doubled before they have to change from the simplified regime to become a full business.

The present thresholds – €33,100 for services and €82,800 for commerce – are to be doubled.

Only half of *auto-entrepreneurs* declare any turnover but 5% exceed the present thresholds.

## Bottle 'post' is slow

HOLIDAY campsite owners in Normandy have been in touch with a nine-year-old American schoolgirl to tell her that the message in a bottle she threw into the sea from Florida had arrived.

Summer Smyth and her nanny put messages in a bottle two years ago. It was found on a beach at Baubigny in Manche.



Currencies Direct

Fast,  
simple,  
secure  
transfers.  
Every time.

Whether you're purchasing a property, paying bills or sending money to relatives abroad, we'll transfer your currency at bank-beating exchange rates\* and we won't charge you any fees.



Let's talk currency.

+33 (0) 422 326 240

[connexion@currenciesdirect.com](mailto:connexion@currenciesdirect.com)

[currenciesdirect.com/theconnexion](http://currenciesdirect.com/theconnexion)

Transfer 24/7 on the move.  
Download our app today.



\*Fees and exchange rate data for banks taken from the International Money Transfer Index™ (IMTI™).

© Currencies Direct Ltd, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5AA, United Kingdom. Registered in England & Wales, No.: 03041197. Currencies Direct Ltd is authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority as an Electronic Money Institution under the Electronic Money Regulations 2011 and is regulated by the Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution (ACPR) in France. Our FCA Firm Reference number is 900669.



# Expats to lobby UK MPs

EXPAT rights coalition British in Europe (BiE) is calling on Britons to join a 'mass lobby' of parliament on September 13.

The event, organised with 'the3million' group for other EU citizens living in the UK, is aimed at asking MPs to fully protect the rights of expats to ensure everyone can stay where they have chosen to live after Brexit.

The idea is for as many people as possible to contact their UK MPs as well as lords to arrange to meet them at parliament on that day to raise concerns about rights and tell them how they are affected by Brexit. A rally, with speakers, will also be held.

Action is planned in person in London as well as over social media (for details see: [britishineurope.org/mass-lobby-13th-sept/](http://britishineurope.org/mass-lobby-13th-sept/)).

This is timed to take place between two rounds of official talks and before the European Council summit on October 19-20. The summit is when leaders will decide if enough progress has been made in the exit deal talks for a 'second phase' to open in parallel to discuss the 'future relationship' including trade. Many commentators consider such a decision by October to be doubtful at the current position.

This comes as the UK released new papers exploring issues such as cooperation between the UK and EU courts, customs and ways of resolving future disputes.

The UK government has said it will seek a 'transition period' of up to three years, during which it would like elements of the status quo to stay in place before a full 'future relationship' agreement comes into force.

The paper on customs matters says the UK wants trade to continue in as 'frictionless' a manner as possible, retaining a 'close association with the EU customs union for a time-limited interim period'. It is unclear, however, if the EU will agree to this and on what conditions and if the UK will be able to sign any new trade deals during such a period (it is reported to be scoping out possible new deals with 11 countries including the US, Australia and China).

Talks on 'transition arrangements' are expected to form part of the 'second phase', which the EU insists will not start unless leaders are satisfied with progress on the exit



Photo: Oliver Rowland

**A 'mass lobby' is planned at the UK parliament (image from the Unite for Europe event in March)**

agreement, notably expats' rights, the Northern Ireland border and the UK's 'bill' (it is likely however that any such arrangements would be detailed in the exit deal).

On going to press it was expected that these would be among the areas to be explored more fully in the third round of negotiations at the end of August, though the UK had yet to release a paper in response to the EU one about the bill that was published on May 29.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has spoken out on the 'bill' issue, saying it is about meeting obligations the UK entered into and it must not be portrayed as a 'fine'.

UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has now conceded that the UK will "meet our legal obligations as we understand them" because "we are law-abiding, bill-paying people". A previous remark that the EU could "go whistle" related only to claims that the bill might reach €100billion, he said.

EU chiefs have not insisted on a final figure being agreed at this stage but have said

that the UK must engage with their proposals on what items are covered by the bill.

On expat rights, talks in July resulted in agreement on some key areas but disagreement or uncertainty on others. BiE have since expressed concern at the failure of both sides to recognise that expats may have 'acquired rights which cannot be taken away'. It says this is an 'apparent U-turn' by the EU on allowing existing expats to retain lifetime rights of free movement in the EU, and the intention of both sides to retain a rule that 'permanent residence' rights are lost after two years away.

The group points out that the latter rule, which exists under EU law for EU citizens moving between EU states, is not a major concern for those with free movement rights, but could become one after Brexit if those rights no longer exist for Britons in the EU or EU citizens in the UK.

Many people may have good reasons to leave for more than two years, says BiE, such as study or looking after an elderly relative.

Other concerns flagged up included the EU's failure to concede voting rights in local elections and a failure to discuss 'ring-fencing' of any agreement on citizen's rights so that it could stand alone even if the parties do not agree on matters such as the bill.

The mass lobby event will follow a People's March for Europe – a protest against Brexit being organised on September 9 (<https://peoplesmarch4eu.org/>). On this day James Chapman, a PR executive and the former head of the office of Brexit Minister David Davis, has claimed he will launch a new anti-Brexit party called The Democrats. However his recent stream of controversial tweets on the topic had come to an abrupt halt on going to press.

Data from the UK's Office of National Statistics shows migration to the UK has dropped markedly since the Brexit vote. This is mostly down to a net reduction of immigration by EU citizens by 52,000, largely due to people from eastern European countries such as Poland leaving or arriving in lesser numbers than before. At the same time, some estate agents report a hike in sales to Britons seeking to move to France.

## €15m buys Provence gem



Photo: Sotheby's International Realty

**Château de la Barben is a home, B&B and tourist site**

WHAT is said to be the oldest chateau in Provence – the 11-century, 5,000m<sup>2</sup> Château de la Barben – is for sale for an asking price of €15million.

Prospective buyers have started visits through Sotheby's International Realty to view the 60 rooms with frescoes, hand-painted ceilings and antique silk wallpaper. The 10,000m<sup>2</sup> gardens were designed by André Le Nôtre and its tower

has views over the Vallon de Maurel and to the Provençal hills. The sale also includes 307hectares of grounds at the Bouches-du-Rhône site.

But, locally, there are fears that a private sale will damage businesses in nearby Salon-de-Provence because the chateau draws up to 30,000 visitors a year. Built as a fortress in 1064, it has since 1963 been at once a home, B&B and tourist site.

## Official role for Brigitte

BRIGITTE Macron has been given an official role as the wife of the president but not an official 'first lady' title.

It is the first time a president's spouse has been given an official role and came at Mr Macron's request but also after 316,000 people signed a petition rejecting any official role.

Mrs Macron will not receive a salary or budget – her costs are paid out of Mr Macron's

budget. She will be active on social issues and education, disabled people, health, women's issues and equality. She will have her own office, secretariat and two advisers.

Spelled out in a 'transparency charter' on the Elysée website, one of her key roles is to "represent France alongside her husband, notably at foreign meetings" while for palace receptions she will 'surpervise'.

## Beehive air helps asthma

A BEEKEEPER says asthmatics can find almost instant relief in Lot-et-Garonne if they sniff the air of his beehives.

Patrice Percie du Sert said *apithérapie* has been used since the early 1900s and users to his well-being centre in Clermont-Dessous reported feeling their symptoms ease immediately they started a session. The benefits lasted from days to several weeks.

He added that modern researchers had identified hormones released by bee larvae in the hive which inhibited the "overexpression of genes causing asthma, pulmonary fibrosis and migraine".

## Progress on Brexit court action

FRENCH avocat Julien Fouchet, who is taking court action over the Brexit referendum, says his case has passed a first hurdle – it was not thrown out after initial consideration by the General Court of the EU which happens if cases are deemed clearly unacceptable.

The Council of the EU has until mid-October to reply to his claim that the vote was illegal because long-term expats were excluded.

## New resolution on expat rights?

A NEW EU Parliament resolution, on expat rights, is likely to be debated during the session in Strasbourg from September 11 to 14.

This would further clarify MEPs' wishes on the subject, building on a general Brexit resolution they passed in April which included passages calling for expat rights to be prioritised and for the EU to seek to mitigate the loss of EU citizenship rights by Britons.

Get connected with Big Dish Satellite - anywhere and everywhere

SATELLITE BROADBAND IN NOUVELLE LANGUEDOC  
PRICES STARTS AT 10.95 € PER MONTH

No phone line required • British IP address by default • Purchase or Rent

For more information go to our website [www.bigdishsat.com](http://www.bigdishsat.com) or contact us directly 05 55 78 72 98



## News in brief

## Hunting of ortolans must end - minister

ECOLOGY Minister Nicolas Hulot says poaching of ortolans in the Landes must cease and the area's prefect should step up surveillance, checks and fines.

Despite it being illegal to hunt the songbirds (a protected, endangered species) around 30,000 are still caught every year in August and September.

They are fattened and sold for up to €150 each then drowned in Armagnac before being cooked. Fans of the clandestine meal eat them whole with a cloth over their head to trap the smells given off by the dish.

There must be "no tolerance", says Mr Hulot, whether towards poachers or intermediaries who trade in them.

## Contest launched to find best saucisson

A SAUSAGE lovers' club from Ardèche is launching a contest to find the world's best salami in June 2018 - as well as the wine and bread that go best with it.

Producers will compete for the Rabelais Medal, named after the 15th century writer who coined the word *saucisson*.

To nominate the maker of your favourite (whether a sole trader or large chain), email: [academie@mondialdu-saucisson-medailleurabelais.com](mailto:academie@mondialdu-saucisson-medailleurabelais.com)

## George Lucas buys vineyard in the Var

STAR Wars director George Lucas has bought a 115 hectare organic vineyard in the Var, Château Margüi.

The *domaine*, with its 18th century chateau, is in Châteauneuf, not far from Château de Miraval, bought by Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie in 2008. The only sign on its website, is a logo at the bottom of the homepage saying it is 'a member of Skywalker vineyards'.

## Miners strike (small amount of) gold

AN AUSTRALIAN company which has been searching for gold in the Mauges area east of Nantes reports finding 'a few encouraging samples' in an area known as Belleville.

The Mauges was known for gold mining historically.

## SNCF 'nudges' clients to behave better

THE SNCF is trialling ways to 'nudge' users towards better behaviour in stations.

This includes signage telling people they lose calories by using stairs (to minimise anger on days when escalators break down), putting up 'dead end' signs to stop people causing a squash by going the 'wrong' way down underground passages or ones saying a tree will be planted each time they validate their Navigo pass... "We're not lying," the SNCF's regional head insisted to RTL radio.

## Unique new '13th century' castle site marks 20th year

ONE of France's most unique attractions - the castle of Guédelon - is marking the 20th anniversary of the laying of the first stone.

There are 10-15 years to go before it is complete but the dream of building a medieval castle from scratch using authentic techniques, is well under way, with 300,000 visitors a year, including 50,000 schoolchildren.

Spokeswoman Sarah Preston said it would have been finished 10 years ago if they were working under the same conditions as 13th century builders, "but we spend at least half our time explaining the work we're doing".

She said Guédelon is "completely unique - there's nothing on this massive scale, using medieval technology". They are not, however, completely purist. "We might use a modern tool where the shape hasn't changed from medieval times. We have metal shovels, for example, whereas they would have had wooden ones with a metal rim. It's a question of time as much as anything - our three blacksmiths are kept busy making the quarries and stonemason's tools.

"We also make exceptions for safety - for example we have a ropemaker who uses flax and hemp, and while you can make strong rope with plants you can't calculate breaking strains, so lifting machines use modern rope.

"We're not here to test how many were killed or injured on a medieval building site."

Even so, the experiment is interesting to archaeologists. "We have conferences at



More photos online for subscribers

## No other site is comparable to Guédelon in its scale and authentic techniques

Lyon II university, feeding back the work, whether it's quarry production rates, properties of lime mortar or data on the time taken to build X amount of stone wall. It's all on a long-term scale - we're not making one kiln of roof tiles, for example, we need 80,000.

"And they can see a working building site and learn about the cooperation needed between trades - such as how carpenters and masons get together to plan the scaffolding."

The site employs 70 and has helped revive skills. "The wood turner had the time and space to set up his pole lathe and learn by making mistake after mistake and master the technique so as to then share it with visitors."

It is also a designated 'heritage skills' training

centre, whether for professional training, Bac students learning old building techniques or young people in the 'second chance school' for those who had dropped out. Some 600 members of the public a year also volunteer to help. "You need basic French, transport, and a willingness to get stuck in."

New this year is a workshop making medieval-style coins which are on sale on site and in the online shop. This month "visitors can expect to see progress on the gatehouse, where we've just fixed the first of the slotted stones which will one day serve to bring down the portcullis". "September is a great time to visit because the main rush is over and there's a beautiful light," Ms Preston said.

## Town urges return of precious saint's head

SAINT-YRIEIX-LA-PERCHE in Nouvelle-Aquitaine is demanding the return from New York of a precious medieval bust of the saint who evangelised the area.

The bust - made to hold part of the skull of Saint Aredius - is thought to have been sold off by the priest in 1905 and replaced by a copy, into which the relics were moved. It is brought out every seven years to be venerated.

However the council says it was already a listed historic monument and communal property.

New research suggests the 13th century piece in silver, gold and semi-precious stones (*below*) was sold to a Paris dealer who had a copy made. It was acquired by an American who gave it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the context of the 1905 church/state separation law, it is thought some priests were persuaded to sell treasures, rather than see them in state ownership.



## Energy firms not respecting bills law

THE energy mediator is warning that electricity and gas firms are sometimes not respecting the rules when it comes to billing for extra sums for periods more than 14 months ago.

It says people should not pay without checking their rights.

A 2016 law bans firms from sending *rattrapage* ('catch-up') bills for periods several years ago (due to readings not being taken, bills not being sent at the right time, incorrect calculations etc), which had seen some households billed thousands.

However, the Médiateur national de l'énergie said: "though it's been forbidden for more than a year, suppliers are not always respecting the ban".

The body states that when energy customers apply to it to resolve the problem, companies usually back down. "However a number of consumers continue to pay these catch-up sums without contesting because they do not know their rights". The *médiateur* has therefore called

on firms to ensure they put in place measures to correct this.

For the 14-month rule to apply customers should have allowed firms access to their metres or otherwise passed on their readings to them. However the letter of the law (art. L224-11 Code de la consommation) goes further, stating for it to be set aside the customer should also have ignored a request sent by recorded delivery post, or committed fraud.

The rule also does not relate to matters outside the companies' control, such as recent top-ups requested for 2014-2015 which followed a Conseil d'Etat ruling that regulated electricity tariffs had not been increased sufficiently for political reasons which had infringed the usual rules on how they are set.

If you were billed incorrectly and complaints to the firm have failed, details of how to apply to the *médiateur* (in French) may be found here: [www.energie-mediateur.fr/saisir\\_le\\_mediateur](http://www.energie-mediateur.fr/saisir_le_mediateur)

## Snow cannons to save glacier

SKI resort Les 2 Alpes is installing six snow cannons to transform molten water from its glacier back into dense snow to halt erosion.

Its glacier has been melting as a result of climate change, with a lake forming below. It has been losing 1-2m of ice a year because it is not retaining from one winter to the next sufficient snow cover to protect it from melting. Without this plan, which is a first for France, the glacier could cease to exist in 30 years' time.

For *anyone* who knows France or Spain



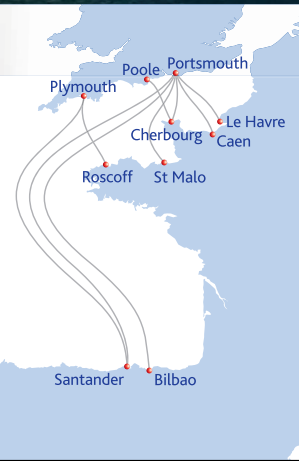
Save up to 30% on sailings

Wish you could sail in style to France or Spain for less? Then join our Travel Club.

You'll make big savings on our fares and enjoy lots of onboard extras too! And with our mile-saving routes, you'll also save on fuel, tolls and overnight stops.

visit [brittanyferries.com/clubvoyage](http://brittanyferries.com/clubvoyage) or call 0330 159 7070

clubvoyage Brittany Ferries





# summer SAVINGS

Samuel  
Sales Advisor



we deliver to France

HALF PRICE  
**£1495**  
SAVE £1500

The Sentosa  
large corner sofa  
after event £2995

You can also visit [dfs.co.uk](https://dfs.co.uk) to see our complete range. Speak to one of our personal shoppers for a delivery quote.  
Call us today on **0044 (0)1977 786150** or enter your details online and we will call you back.

dfs

Sentosa large corner sofa, two free accent scatter cushions and 1 free bolster cushion included. After event price applies from 30.08.17 - see in-store or online for details. Delivery charges to France may vary dependent upon order. Finance is available for residents of the UK, Ireland, Spain & the Netherlands only. DFS is a division of DFS Trading Ltd. Registered in England and Wales No 01735950. Redhouse Interchange, Doncaster, DN6 7NA.



## News in brief

## Clubs and festivals must cut the noise

CLUBS, music festivals and cinemas must cut the volume under new health laws aimed to prevent hearing loss.

The maximum level has been reduced from 105db to 102db and, if open to children under six, this falls further, to 94db (about the noise of a Métro).

## Dubious cannabis honour for French

YOUNG French people have Europe's highest cannabis use and are the youngest users.

Cannabis is the most-used illegal drug in Europe with 13.9% of 15-34 year-olds using it – but 22.1% in France. Drugs observatory EMCDDA said 31% of 15-16 year-olds were users against 18% in Europe.

## Meal plan to end bad eating and loneliness

ENDING both old people's loneliness and students' bad eating has led to a project for seniors to offer meals at home to students, at €4 a main course or three courses for €7. Called Paupiette, it started in Brittany and has now spread across the north-west, down to Bordeaux and Paris.

## A taste of Versailles as a court insider



A dish fit for a king in Versailles

by HANNAH THOMPSON

BRINGING the Palace of Versailles to the dinner table, a restaurant is turning a *diner à deux* into a *liaison dangereuse* with staff in court costume, dishes Sun King Louis XIV and Louis XV would recognise and Baroque music throughout.

Costumed actors perform sketches on court scandals – what really happened at Marie Antoinette's 'farm' – in breaks between courses at ReminiSens in Versailles, which has been dubbed a 'restaurant-théâtre'.

It is a novel approach to entice tourists and local residents and owner Caroline Masselin has recreated the 'mood' of the



ReminiSens offers a taste of dining at Versailles with dishes, decor and staff to match

Château de Versailles while keeping menus up-to-date.

Adapting period recipes, including a 1729 royal recipe book, chef Marie Bin tweaks them for modern tastes with lighter dishes using more vegetables and fewer heavy pâtés, and combining meat, fish and vegetables in a way never seen at a royal banquet.

This, she said, is because

today we eat in the 'Russian style', with separate courses, and not the 'French style' of serving everything – sweet and savoury – at the same time.

Apart from Marie Antoinette, sketches include anecdotes on royal scandals and a 'liaisons dangereuses' style skit on Louis XV and Madame Pompadour and they are part of what make ReminiSens different.

Ms Masselin said: "I am from Versailles, and visited the chateau all the time. It was a dream to imagine what it would be like to bump into courtiers in the corridors, to dive into the heart of a dinner at court, in rooms decorated so they could be the private apartments of the nobles... to enjoy 'a journey through history' with all the intrigue and secrets of the time."

## Water is still precious... even costing just €1 a year

THE cheapest water in France is to be found in the Provençal town of Roquevaire where a typical year's supply is just €1.

Despite the rate, residents treat it as a precious resource and there was no significant wastage on the hottest summer days or the worst of the drought.

Mayor Yvan Mesnard said: "We have had a municipal water company for 92 years. In 2011 we said water was not a commodity but a 'common good of humanity'; so we keep costs low.

"The water is free, it comes from our 6m source and our only cost is for chlorination. A typical annual usage is 30m³ so we give our 4,500 customers the first 30m³ for €1."

The 2011 decision won the town a Marianne d'Or official state award in 2015 and sparked a debate over the 'right to water'.

A more immediate problem for Mr Mesnard is that Métropole d'Aix-Marseille-Provence is due to take over water services in 2020. The mairie has a deal to continue with local management but there are fears for the future of their special benefits.

## Charcoal baguette chalks up the sales

THEY may not look very appetising but these black baguettes are selling well in a Normandy bakery and with the bonus of the taste of traditional bread.

Baker Benjamin Rose in Vernon, Eure, said it was a classic 250g *baguette de tradition* where by law no chemical additives are allowed and to which he added the vegetable carbon charcoal to make it stand out.

"We have a problem where supermarkets can make bread so cheaply but it loses taste and we needed to do something to catch the eye and taste good.

"Here our *Baguette au charbon végétal* tastes like our traditional baguette and we make about 300 a week and hope to double sales."

Mr Rose, of Boulangerie Rose, said a visit to Paris started his search and he went back to history to find a 'new' bread. He



Black baguette is striking against the golden restaurant

found black breads had been popular but mass production had cost character and flavour.

"Breads like *pain de seigle* (rye) no longer taste like they did 30 years ago and people are eating less bread... and more *boulangeries* are closing. So I decided to make a point.

"Most modern big-bakery baguettes contain about 14 additives and people want less

of these and tastier bread. This €1.40 baguette provides both.

"I've checked the regulations and adding the charcoal is not a problem although I do not make the fanciful health claims that some people do."

Activated carbon is said to help treat flatulence and bloating but such a claim would see his bread banned – and in Italy adding charcoal is forbidden.

## Residents' air plea

CLEAN-AIR groups in Marseille have demanded action over fumes from ferries and the increasing number of cruise liners using Marseille.

Tests showed port residents face fine particle air pollution 100 times that of rest of the city and, as ships use heavy oil, increased sulphur dioxide.

Air quality agency Airpaca said it has been preparing long-term tests to start later this year ahead of talks with councils and shipping firms.

## Fears over housing

MINISTERS have asked for views on changing the quota of social housing that must be provided in larger towns, sparking fears of a change to the current 25% when many communes have not reached the previous 'legal minimum' of 20%.

Rents in social housing (HLMs) are low for low-income tenants and it is feared fewer HLMs will be built and that councils will be allowed to include higher-rent properties to pad the quota.

Call now for a FREE consultation



## The Spectrum IFA Group

Independent Financial Advisers

Advice that counts, Wherever you are

**1 Independent Company**

**6 Countries**

**40 Advisers in Europe**

**19 Advisers in France**



**We have highly qualified, professional advisers within a couple of hours of your location. Call now to arrange a free consultation to review your current situation and secure your future financial wellbeing.**

[www.spectrum-ifa.com](http://www.spectrum-ifa.com) | +33 (0)4 93 00 01 13 | [connex@spectrum-ifa.com](mailto:connex@spectrum-ifa.com)

With Care, You Prosper

The Spectrum IFA Group is a founder member of the Federation of European Independent Financial Advisers. [www.feifa.eu](http://www.feifa.eu)

The Spectrum IFA Group - TSG Insurance Services S.A.R.L. Siège Social: 34 Bd des Italiens, 75009 Paris

Société de Courtage d'assurances - R.C.S. Paris B 447 609 108 (2003B04384) Numéro d'immatriculation 07 025 332 - [www.orias.fr](http://www.orias.fr)

Conseiller en investissements financiers, référencé sous le numéro E002440 par ANACOFI-CIF, association agréée par l'Autorité des Marchés Financiers



## Rural councils angry at funding cut

RURAL councils across the country have reacted angrily after the government cut their funding by €300million just days after President Macron promised he would not touch funds allocated to them.

Just three days later mayors discovered a decree that annulled €300m set aside for 2017 to boost investment and town improvement schemes in rural communes in a bid to cut the government deficit.

Ardèche MP Olivier Dussopt, president of Association des Petites Villes de France, called it "a betrayal" adding that government funding had already been cut and this final move was "too brutal".

He said it halted communes creating jobs as the funds were used to set up community gyms, schools or to improve roads. Nearly €50m was also aimed at improving local life and 80% of this was aimed at associations.

Just days earlier President Macron had said there would be no "brutal cut in grants and said that while it was 'logical' to do so in 2018 he would not do it.

Territorial Cohesion Minister Jacques Mézard said that the cuts impacted only projects that had not been started with prefects choosing where to impose cuts on an item by item basis so as not to 'penalise' projects that could make a real difference.

In a joint statement signed by five ministers from Interior Minister Gérard Collomb to Mr Mézard and Public Accounts Minister Gérard Darmanin, the government replied to criticism saying: "The cancelled funds had not yet been called into use by local authorities and matched, for the most part, those frozen by the previous government.

"No project that had been started had been cancelled and the previous govern-

ment had annulled a similar amount of funding in 2016."

The ministers added that these funds for local authorities had ballooned from €666m in 2012 to €1.962m in 2017. Even after the cut, which made up just 0.3% of state funding for councils, their investment grants were still at an unprecedented level.

Moselle senator François Grosdidier told *Le Figaro* that the cuts were particularly hard on small communes which, unlike larger ones, towns that did work year on year, would often only have one major project during a mayor's mandate or even just one in a decade.

However, work that could be affected are repairs for schools, support for local business and traders and these were seen as meeting both strong local needs and obligations set by the government.

## Speed cameras ring up €920m but no fines, yet, for UK drivers

FRENCH speed camera fines soared 18.5% in 2016 to bring in €920million for the state with a large part of the increase due to a rise in the number of cameras but also because of a 40% rise in fines issued to foreign vehicles.

A European road safety directive allows foreign drivers to be fined for offences in another EU country with notices sent to their home addresses. France sent 2.86m penalty notices to nine countries in 2016.

This year has already seen a sharp rise again in the number of fines – more Belgian drivers were fined in the first seven months of 2017 than in the whole of 2016, for example – and since May 7 British drivers may also be fined.

The UK, along with Ireland and Denmark, was given a two-year exemption to comply with the directive but while this has ended and UK-registered vehicles have been flashed no penalty notices have yet been sent.

The Antai fines centre in Rennes said that it was working with British authorities to start the exchange of information – and that could mean fines starting to be sent to up to 60,000



The new super radar will catch many more offences

drivers in the UK. Antai said 237,000 UK drivers were flashed between August 2016 and July 2017, meaning a possible 60,000 from May 7 to the end of August. It has a year to send penalty notices with fines of up to €640.

Some Britons have already received penalties after being flashed in hire cars, as the rental firm passes on their details.

Groups such as the RAC and AA advise drivers to pay fines as the penalty stays on their record and they face an increased fine if it is not paid.

The Sécurité Routière said police would make drivers pay any unpaid fines.

In all, about one in five vehicles flashed in France is foreign and this soars in summer to reach one in two near borders.

Belgian drivers get the most tickets: 446,161 in 2016, followed by Spanish drivers on 406,669, German on 386,287 and Italians on 287,299.

In all, speed cameras flashed a total of 25.6m times in 2016 – up 26% on 2015 – but checks by police officers at Antai cut this to 16m penalty notices sent out.

The Interior Ministry said cameras protecting roadworks sites, two-way cameras and car-mounted units had made a big difference and last year saw 181 new movable cameras being

installed, flashing 3.5m times. Similarly, two-way cameras also saw a rise, with 2.5m flashes.

A movable radar protecting roadworks near Montpellier on the A9 flashed 411,352 times but a fixed radar on the A9 between Nîmes and Béziers was the No1 'normal' camera, flashing 159,520 times.

France will next year fit new 'super radars', taller and slimmer than present units that will check 32 vehicles simultaneously across eight carriageways at up to 300kph and adapted for lorries, cars and two-wheelers.

Called Mesta Fusion, one is on test in the Paris area, and can pick up tailgating, drivers without seatbelts or using a phone.

Later this year France also aims to set up a 'virtual driving licence' scheme for visiting foreign drivers. It means repeat offenders could be identified and, if they lose all 12 points on the 'licence', could face being banned from French roads.

The UK has also changed its penalty system and anyone driving at 51mph or above in a 30mph zone could face a fine of 150% of their weekly income, six points or a 56-day ban.

## Shotgun blasts can end hornet menace

THIS month is when Asian hornets do the most damage by killing bees to feed young larvae and one beekeeper, who lost 30 of his 100 hives last year, is pioneering non-chemical alternatives to destroy nests.

Denis Jaffré is vice-president of the Association Action Anti Frelon Asiatique at Locmélar, Finistère and said we must realise the urgent need to get rid of the hornets in a cheaper and environmentally better way than using toxic insecticides.

"Last year I found a dead hedgehog, just metres from a destroyed nest as it had fed on the poisoned insects."

He advises calling in pest controllers to clear a nest but says they and communes need to learn new methods – the most dramatic being a shotgun.

"This works extremely well but, of course, can only be done in certain circumstances, well away from inhabited areas. Nest destruction should take place at night as hornets are diurnal.

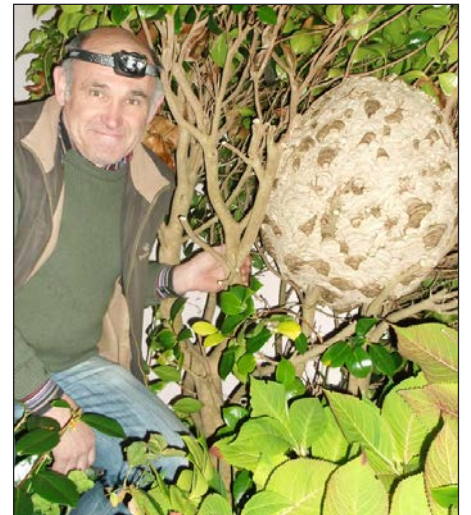
"A minimum of five marksmen are needed, using different gauge shot. I have tried it with 100% success and written a protocol to follow on our website."

Mr Jaffré gives talks on his

work and has tested steam, sulphur dioxide gas and a hot-air paint stripper but said the best is to spot the nest when small.

"In May or June, it is the size of a tennis ball; we can act at night then to cut it from its support with a knife and ease it into a jar, shut the lid and put in the freezer to kill the few hornets inside."

Another method is to trap the queen early in the year while



Denis Jaffré with a typical frelon nest

she feeds. Mr Jaffré aims to patent a trap for queens that avoids the problem with commercial and DIY traps which he says are "indiscriminate".

"I make a paste which doesn't drown insects. The queen will feed on it about six times a day so you have a chance to capture her in a jar and put it in the freezer. It is easy, the queen is docile while feeding."

## Monet garden Unesco bid

GIVERNY and the gardens that inspired impressionist artist Claude Monet are being proposed as a Unesco World Heritage site.

Monet lived in his house at Giverny for 43 years from 1883 and the gardens are seen by many as a work of art in their own right.

With around 700,000 visitors a year they are the second most popular tourist site in Normandy after the Mont-Saint-Michel and for the past six years they were cared for by British gardener James Priest who recently retired.

Just 70km from Paris, the Eure gardens are a homage to Monet and they were recreated by philanthropist Gérard Van der Kemp and head gardener Gilbert Vahé exactly as the artist would have known them with their weeping willows, waterlily pond and the wisteria-framed Japanese footbridge.

## Radio waves help broadband

RURAL mayors and the broadcast infrastructure company TDF have signed a deal to improve high-speed broadband availability and network speeds that could transform internet usage in city, town and remote areas.

The deal comes after an experiment in the rural Vosges commune of Les Voivres where about a dozen users were able to have very high broadband speeds of up to 60Mbps using radio technology called RttH (Radio to the Home).

TDF has a vast network of 11,000 TV and radio masts across France and aims to use its expertise to bring high speed fibre optic cabling (FttH) to remote areas that the giant telecoms companies have ignored.

Alain Komly, its community relations director, said: "We will partner communes to get better service, whether that is by improving 3G, 4G and

even 5G coverage, installing Fibre to the Home services, combining them to give new RttH access or even by using our historic experience in negotiating contracts over mast access etc.

"We have pylons all over France and these can carry FttH cabling and some will link with RttH transmitters to extend the signal – 5-10km – with high-speed for all users via a form of 4G.

"Households would have a 15x15cm aerial and this could offer speeds of 30-60Mbps and 10Mbps on upload – so enough for Facetime, Skype and other business usage.

"FttH services for all would be best but RttH offers a way to use existing masts until we can reach that. In addition, we are installing 1,000-2,000 new masts a year, mainly as Free Mobile expands, and this opens up poorer-served areas, and that can include spots in towns and cities."

## Jumbo boost for elephant haven

AFTER three years of battling bureaucracy, the Haute-Vienne Elephant Haven has got the go-ahead to accept elephants on its land and to begin building its first enclosure.

"We are so happy", says Tony Verhulst, who is planning to create Europe's first sanctuary for retired and sick circus and zoo elephants at Bussière Galant with his partner, Sophie Goetghebeur.

"It has been very very hard work but we feel very positive about the project now and we are getting more and more support from many different peo-

ple. Our two local mayors are behind the scheme.

"One has donated concrete pylons for a fence and the other has helped with paperwork.

"We have just had a team of volunteers to help out and companies are donating material.

"This month, we are awaiting the arrival of a donated digger from Holland, which will help with building work. We thank everybody for their support."

The couple arrived in France from Belgium in 2014 because of the availability of suitable land here. In 2016 they bought 29 hectares of land, big enough

for 10 elephants and now plan a €1million barn and enclosure for three elephants.

They already have some of the funding but will launch a crowdfunding site this month to help meet the shortfall.

Mr Verhulst feels people will be more prepared to give now the project has been approved – and there will be no shortage of elephants: "There is a growing list of European countries banning wild animals in circuses and we wish to offer the elephants who no longer have a home there a place for life, full of space and tranquillity."



## University rankings are flawed

THIS year's Shanghai Ranking league table for universities shows France lagging behind much of the rest of the world, with just three institutions in the top 100. However it is partly explained by the fact the system is different in France.

US universities dominate the table, with Harvard coming top, but head of the Conférence des Présidents d'Université, Gilles Roussel, told FranceInfo the judging focused on university research achievements but ignored the preference in France of splitting teaching universities and research groups.

Paris Pierre-et-Marie-Curie university was No40 and Paris-Sud university No41 followed by École Normale Supérieure in Paris at 69. However, Mr Roussel said research groups such as CNRS still attract some of the world's best doctoral and post-doctoral individuals, who "continue to reach the highest level in many subject areas".

In France, Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur rankings look at student pass rates, with Angers University top on 58.7%, although this is on figures based on the 2013 intake of students.

# France still hanging out tourist welcome

by JANE HANKS

ANTI-tourism protests have spread from Spain into the Pays Basque with posters in Biarritz saying *Parisien dégage t'as Paris plage* (Parisian, go away, you've got your own beach).

Barcelona, Saint-Sébastien in the Spanish Basque country just across the border from Biarritz, Venice and Croatia have all seen protests on mass tourism.

In Saint-Sébastien a thousand protestors took to the streets in August, saying mass tourism pushed property prices out of residents' reach and destroyed the 'feel' of places it took over.

Bayonne councillor Mathieu Bergé told Radio France the Pays Basque's attraction was its authenticity but Basque heritage was at risk in the rush to touristification – there needed to be a better balance.

France, which has so far seen record numbers of tourists this year, is keen for more but aims to spread them across the country, away from the main areas.

It has seen a rise of 10.2% in the first six months of 2017

compared to 2016 (which was affected by fears after the 2015 Paris attacks). Campsites have seen the biggest rise, up 18.7%.

Foreign tourists are returning and government figures project 88-89million for 2017; 5-6% up on 2016 with the government aiming for 100m by 2020.

Charente was top destination for French holidaymakers in 2016 and departmental tourism president Stéphane Villain, who is also president for departmental tourism across France, said Charente had space for more visitors, especially foreign, as 75% of visitors are French.

"In a study, we asked the local population whether they were happy welcoming visitors into their region and 90% said yes.

"We are developing green tourism away from the popular seaside resorts with its cycle paths and cultural monuments and so we have plenty of space.

"France is so vast and so rich in attractions tourists can be spread throughout the country."

At a meeting with Prime Minister Edouard Philippe in

July he found ministers keen to encourage more visitors.

"Tourist bosses, politicians and local people were happy to welcome them."

Tourism is also rising in Marseille, where President Macron had his summer holiday, but Rabiha Benaissa, of PACA region tourist committee, said it was 10 years behind Barcelona in attracting visitors.

So far there were no complaints, but it is only a matter of time. "People are very welcoming but there could be problems in the long term, with more and more huge cruise ships coming into port and smoke blowing into the highly residential nearby area, and there are concerns about sea pollution."

The French Tourism Development Agency says its policy is to attract more tourists and to spread them in France, unlike Spain which has tourist zones.

Working on 16 main areas including the Pays Basque, Provence, Bourgogne, Champagne and Paris, it also features lesser-known attractions so as not to swamp any one area.

## Land-locked liner becomes museum



LYING on the Grand Plage at Port-Barcarès for the past 50 years, the former cruise liner Lydia, one of the oldest in the world, is being steered away from its former life as a tourist attraction plus disco, casino and restaurant to be made into a museum.

Called the 'Eiffel Tower' of the Pyrénées-Orientales coastline, the liner has been restored and new decks opened to give visitors a taste of the high-life when it was a favourite of honeymooners in Australia.

Built in 1931 and called the Moonta, she sailed the southern seas and was sold after the war for Mediterranean cruises and renamed Lydia before being bought for the seaside resort as a new attraction.

Tugs took her from Marseille and beached her on bare sand where she had several lives being a 'must' for the jet-set and showbiz stars with a casino, disco and restaurant but also as a filming location.

Now called the *Paquebot des Sables* (Liner of the Sands) the restoration features her monumental staircase, the oak-lined salons and even her original teak deck, 8cm thick, with visitors able to see the officers' cabins in the museum of a bygone age.

## News in brief

### Football strip price drops if team is losing

THE price of the football strip for fans of the club Stade de Reims is dependent on where the club is in the league with a 10% discount if it is in 10th place. It is currently in second place so the €59.95 strip is on sale at just 2% discount.

### Drone delivers illegal parcel to prisoner

A DRONE has succeeded in dodging security at a prison in Valence in the Drôme to drop illegal goods to a prisoner.

Despite inmates being searched, no trace of a parcel was found. It happened in mid-afternoon when most prisoners were outside.

### Mosquito bites give women Chikungunya

TWO neighbours in a Var village have been diagnosed with Chikungunya viral disease, possibly after tiger mosquito bites. It is incurable.

The two, who live near Draguignan, are being treated for fever and joint pain.

### Endangered hamster joy at animal park

A PARK has succeeded in rearing 89 of the endangered *grand hamster d'Alsace*. NaturOparC, at Hunawihr, Haut-Rhin, will release them into the wild to join the 500 others known.

## Cigarettes to rise €1 a year to €10

CIGARETTE prices are set to rise €1 a packet next year and the same again in 2019 and 2020 until they hit €10.

It follows an increase in sales of 9.2% in the first half of the year despite the introduction of non-branded packs.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said "doing nothing is not an option."

Health Minister Agnès Buzyn plans a first rise next year in a bid to cut the 80,000 smoking-related deaths a year in France. She says she wants to act "quickly and strongly" with the aim of €10 packs in three years. Packs currently average €7.

The number of smokers has been falling across Europe since 2000 – to rest at 28% of the population – but is rising in France, where a third (34.5%) of 15-75-year-olds smoke. Many of those 16million, however, say they do not smoke regularly.

Figures show 25-34 year-olds are giving up and sales of nico-

tine patches and gum have risen 29% but the less well-off are still taking up the habit despite the price. Anti-smoking campaigners have welcomed the government's commitment to action but said the price rise had to be matched by extra support for people giving up, measures to ban smoking in more public areas and a plan to reduce tobacco trafficking.

Even at €10 a pack, the price will still be less than in the UK where it is the equivalent of €11.50 but many smokers buy cheaper in Germany or Belgium at €6, Italy at €5.20 or Spain at €5.

Although the launch of neutral packs seems to have been a flop, the government said it was intended to have a long-term effect and stop young people people smoking.

In addition, figures from 2016, before the neutral packs were launched, show that in the first six months of the year tobacco sales rose by 15%.

## Community police return

COMMUNITY police officers are to be reintroduced to the streets after being disbanded in 2003, as part of a campaign promise by President Macron for 10,000 more police to improve daily security.

The so-called *police de proximité* will be local 'ears on the ground' and will not be involved in full police work other than keeping tabs on criminal and possible radical activity.

It is part of a structural reform of the police and gendarme service that may see technical and scientific units combined and police freed from administrative tasks.

CA Britline  
is the only French bank that  
understands where you are  
coming from.



French Banking  
// British Thinking

To open an account  
in France go to

www.britline.com\*

0033 (0)2 31 55 67 89\*

### Terms and conditions:

\*Free access by Internet (excluding fees charged by your service provider). Local costs apply when phoning within France from a fixed line. Check with your service provider when calling from abroad.

CA Britline is a branch of the Caisse Régionale de Crédit Agricole Mutuel de Normandie - Head Office: 15, esplanade Brillaud-de-Laujardière - CS 25014 - 14050 CAEN CEDEX 4 - Cooperative company with variable capital, registered as a credit company - 478 834 930 RCS Caen - Insurance brokerage company registered under matricule Nr 07 022 868. CA Britline is a member of the Guaranteed Fund for deposits, the Guarantee of Investors warranties, and Guaranteed Fund for investors. CA Britline is controlled by L'Autorité de Contrôle Prudentiel et de Résolution: 61 rue Tailbout - 75436 Paris Cedex 09.

**BRITLINE**  
french banking, british thinking





The photo of the courgettes that was posted on Facebook

## Fruitful end to a sorry story of ugly courgettes

TWO ORGANIC farmers whose 'ugly' courgettes were rejected by several wholesalers have vowed to sell direct to the public from now on after an online appeal proved fruitful.

Caroline and Cyril Roux from Lafrançaise, Tarn-et-Garonne, were inundated with interest after posting on Facebook showing five tonnes of yellow courgettes they said would be wasted because greengrocers now only want perfectly-shaped, unblemished produce. This is thought to be because organic food has become more mainstream – for example being widely available in supermarkets – and is no longer only being bought by organic food fans who are used to their vegetables looking 'imperfect'.

Mr Roux said: "Some vegetables had green stains but were of very good quality. They refused about five tonnes, which is a loss of €5,000."

Their post was shared 12,000 times and led to the sale of a large part of the courgettes.

Some of the produce was sliced and sold to restaurants in the area.

Mr Roux said: "We will favour direct sales [from now on]. When customers are in front of us, it is easier to explain why our vegetables may be green or marked."

"And we will move towards processing vegetables to avoid losing such a quantity again."

"We received lots of messages. Consumers know that an 'ugly' vegetable is still fine to eat. It's reassuring."

## Cicadas pump up volume in hot sun

CICADAS in the south have been 'singing' especially loudly this year due to the high temperatures of the summer.

The insects make their well-known so-called 'cymbal' noise – which can reach 90db – when the temperature reaches 22C, and experts say the population is high this year due to soaring temperatures.

## Village labelled 'racist' by vandals

RESIDENTS of a village in Poitou-Charentes were surprised when their quiet area was targeted by vandals angry at its controversial name.

Anti-racist slogans were scrawled on signs obscuring plaques bearing the name Les Nègres. Locals said the name was part of their heritage.

## French farmers in snail trail call

FRENCH snail farmers are calling on consumers to eat local snails, and want snail origins to be printed on labels, as nearly all 'French snails' actually come from eastern Europe.

Escargots de Bourgogne originally came from Burgundy, but are now almost all imported from Hungary or Ukraine.

## 'Deradicalisation' centre closed

FRANCE'S only deradicalisation centre has closed after less than a year, months after senators labelled it 'a fiasco'.

The centre at Beaumont-en-Véron, Indre et Loire, opened in September 2016. But only nine people sought its services, none finished the course and it has been empty since February.

## Oldest person in France turns 114

FRANCE'S oldest person, who has turned 114, says it still takes her by surprise when her body will not let her do something.

Honorine Rondello who was

## Family sought to run farm and gîte on isolated island

A FAMILY is being sought to live on an island off Finistère and to work on a self-sufficient farm – the only permanently-inhabited property on the island.

The Conservatoire du Littoral coastal protection agency (conservatoire-du-littoral.fr) has owned 30-hectare Ile de Quéménès since 2003 and seeks residents to take over the small-holding, run the farm and manage the seasonal gîte. It is currently home to a couple and their two children, who leave in January.

The agency says it has had about a dozen inquiries, and will accept applications until September 28.

The farm sells potatoes and algae by mail order across Europe (see: boutique.iledequemenes.fr).

Photo: Julien Garnier



L'île de Quéménès

born into a Breton fishing family on July 28, 1903 has spent most of her life near the Riviera, after moving south for work aged 16. She retired at 72 and now lives in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume in Var.

## Digital fine hits Hertz just where it hurts

CAR rental company Hertz has been hit with a €40,000 fine after personal details of 36,000 customers were found online.

The fine is French first for such a data breach, after a law 'for a digital Republic' came into force in November 2016.

## How much? Back to school cost revealed

THE cost of this year's *rentrée* has dropped for primary schools but risen slightly for those at *lycées*. Figures from the *Confédération syndicale des familles* say the budget for a child entering the first year of school is €150 (down 2.8% on 2016), and €360 for a child

going into 6e (a drop of 2.3%). A student entering 2de générale (lycée) can expect to pay more than €420 (up 2.6%).

## EU-wide culture pass may be on cards

FRANCE wants to create a "European culture pass" based on a system currently in place for young people in Italy.

Young Italians can receive €500 in the year after they turn 18, as long as the money is spent on culture, such as books or trips to the cinema, a concert or the theatre.

## Unesco-bid mayor hits at McDonald's

'INTRUSIVE' and 'aggressive' adverts for McDonald's should be removed, the mayor of Autun, Saône-et-Loire, says as he called for giant photos of chips and burgers to be taken down. Autun was named a "town of art and history" and is seeking Unesco heritage listing as a Franco-Roman capital.

Photo: préfecture de police / Twitter



## Caught by the short and selfies

A CAMERA thief in Montmartre in Paris was caught in the act of making off with the apparatus – by his victims.

They were taking selfie photographs on their smartphones and snapped the brazen criminal in the act as he made off in the direction of the Sacré-Coeur.

The couple had been using their phones and had left their high-quality camera – worth about €5,000 – on the grass behind them as they took selfies with the Sacré-Coeur.

The hapless crook was identified by police from the images the tourists took and arrested shortly afterwards.

**LEGGETT**  
IMMOBILIER

## Thinking of buying or selling?



Leggett Immobilier is a family run business. We have 1000s of registered clients ready to buy and bilingual staff ready to help.



We have over 16000 properties for sale on our website

**LEGGETT**  
RECRUITMENT

OUR NEXT EVENT

## Join our winning sales team!

Come and talk to us at our forthcoming recruitment event

Friday 22nd Sept 10am - 12 noon

Hotel Mercure Sophia Antipolis  
rue Albert Caquot 06560 Valbonne

For more info or to book a place call 00800 2534 4388  
or email [recruitment@leggett.fr](mailto:recruitment@leggett.fr)

[www.leggettfrance.com](http://www.leggettfrance.com) [info@leggett.fr](mailto:info@leggett.fr)

+33 05 53 56 62 54 [recruitment@leggett.fr](mailto:recruitment@leggett.fr)



## The end is nigh for science's 'Grand K'

THE end of a scientific era is nigh after experts discovered a new way to measure weight (involving applying complex calculations to a measurement of light) that means they can do away with Le Grand K – the official standard by which all metric weights are measured.

Le Grand K is a cylinder of a platinum-iridium alloy stored in a vault in the western suburbs of Paris. It takes three keys held by senior officials (including a Briton) to open it.

## Nanny anger over plans for 'nappy tax'

NANNIES in the Haute-Garonne are outraged that a local authority has voted for a *taxe-couche-culotte* (nappy tax).

The Communauté de communes des Terres du Lauragais voted in July for a €92 annual tax to contribute to the cost of removing extra waste, specifically used nappies and yogurt pots. Carers warn it will have to be passed on to parents.

## Drug tests for drivers in Alpes-Maritimes

GENDARMES in Nice are using quick, reliable new saliva drug tests that no longer need to be backed up by a blood test. They have been equipped with 800 kits which can detect cannabis, cocaine, opiates, ecstasy and amphetamines.

## Site helps motorists find cheaper petrol

DRIVERS can use their smartphone to find the cheapest petrol in the area, thanks to a new government mobile site: [prix-carburants.gouv.fr/mobile](http://prix-carburants.gouv.fr/mobile)



## Two claim to be boy in war photo

TWO men have stepped forward believing they are the boy in a 1940s photo, which shows American soldier Fred Tilden smiling with an unknown happy blond child.

The family of Mr Tilden, who took part in the Normandy landings, launched an appeal on Reddit and then in newspaper *La Manche Libre*, to identify the child, who was photographed by a special US photo unit sent to capture the D-Day atmosphere.

Gérard Poincheval, 76, from Bessin, Calvados, has since stated that there is a copy in a family album, he had always been told it was of him and had wondered for years about the soldier's identity. He says comparison with other childhood photos shows the resemblance. "I'm sure it's me," he said.

However Marcel Castel, 77, from Normandy but living near Perpignan, says his 99-year-old father confirmed to him he was the child in the photo, which Mr Castel has in his living room. "He was always smiling and cheerful and I called him by his first name, Fred," he said, though he does not remember it himself. Investigations are continuing, but Mr Tilden's family have said they would like to meet both men.

## Donkey rubbish collectors are a hit



THE people of the Ile d'Oléron have found an innovative new way to collect rubbish

Compared to the labour donkeys endure in some places, it is easy work.

They accompany rubbish collectors who pick up waste from the ground with tongs, and it is their job to saddle a rubbish bin where the waste is deposited.

But the load is light. "Most of the time, on the beaches, we collect rubbish from fishing or oyster farming, which is brought back by the sea due to the high tides. Otherwise the typical waste on the beach is cigarette butts," Nicolas Séguier of 'Donkeys of Oléron' told France 3. Since 2012 donkeys have been used to clean up 100km of beaches on the island.

## Hotel bosses want compulsory tips

THE UMIH hospitality industry federation is calling for a review of tipping rules, to see if it should be made compulsory.

Service is technically included already in France with tips being at customers' discretion, for good service, but UMIH says tip values have dropped.

One waitress told *TF1* a quarter of her pay used to come from tips, but said "it's finished – it's too difficult".

## Litter lout driver hurt by her own cigarette

A WOMAN who threw a cigarette butt out of her car win-

dow on the A41 motorway was severely injured in an accident after the cigarette blew back into her car and started a fire in the back seat.

She pulled off the road into a rest area near Annecy but brake failure caused her to crash, leaving her with injuries to her face, back and chest.

## Robbery victims can reclaim stolen items

AFTER smashing a nationwide network of thieves, police have published a 200-page catalogue of stolen items such as watches and jewellery on the Police Nationale website. Owners can contact them via the site.

## French family relives 1970s in TV show

A FRENCH family has gone back to the 70s as part of a television show on M6 that redecorates their home and asks them to live as if they were really in the past.

'*La famille à remonter le temps: Destination 70*' saw Alain and Emmanuelle and their three children move into a rented house for four months while the production team prepared the family home.

## Car drives wrong way on motorway

GENDARMES in Puy-du-Dôme are investigating after a motorist drove in the wrong direction on the A75 motorway in Aubière, near Clermont-Ferrand.

The incident was captured on video, but the driver could not be identified. The video, taken from the dashboard of a police car shows it had to swerve violently to avoid a head-on smash.

## Wild boar enclosure busted by police

A SUSPICIOUS number of wild boars in a small area

prompted a police investigation – that ended with an illegal farm being shut down.

The enclosure of around 100 boars in Haute-Loire was run by a person who had a similar operation closed down in 2010. He was breeding the boars to sell to hunting parties.

## Fines soar for Airbnb rental landlords

FINES for illegally renting properties in Paris via sites such as Airbnb are growing.

A total €615,000 was collected from 31 properties between January to June 2017, in contrast to €45,000 for the same period in 2016. The fines were imposed on landlords who broke regulations by renting their properties for more than 120 days per year and who did not declare rental income.

## Woman receives €19,500 gas bill

GAS supplier Engie has sent a customer a bill for €19,500 – after her meter was misread for several years.

Before sending the bill, the company contacted the woman from Laon, Aisne, by phone to inform her that a private company employed to read meters in the area had consistently made a mistake with the readings for her supply since 2013.

## Pétain plaque to be removed from street

A PLAQUE honouring First World War hero but Second World War collaborator Philippe Pétain is to be removed from a New York street as part of a purge of 'hate symbols'.

It was originally installed on a pavement near Wall Street to commemorate his visit in 1931 when he received a tickertape parade in thanks for his role in the First World War as the 'victor of Verdun'.

# The Connexion

FRANCE'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER

# October

## Your practical Q&A

- I am 65 and will soon have an S1 form – can my wife still be my dependant for healthcare?
- How long does *une ordonnance* (medical prescription) remain valid for?
- Do we have to pay French tax on our UK old age pension?
- Are significant capital gains tax reductions available on long-held PEP investments?
- What taxes is the rental studio, which we own through an SCI, liable to?
- Our rural broadband speeds are terrible – what can we do?

## PLUS... Open wide – what you need to know about visiting a French dentist



## Best foot forward – our pick of where to go walking in France

- Bumper crop: harvest tips from our new gardening columnist
- + Autumn recipes from the Médoc
- + The fight to make tourist sites accessible to the disabled
- + Inside a self-sufficient home



## PLUS... Meades must

A sideways look at French life from the cultural commentator

These and many more practical tips and topics about life in France. Don't miss out on a copy:

# subscribe

Subscribe now to receive the October edition at your home. Only €49 to a French address

[www.connexionfrance.com](http://www.connexionfrance.com)

Call Nathalie on 06 40 55 71 63



# Paris held the 1900 Olympic Games but few people knew

MORE than 58,000 people took part, it lasted more than five months yet hardly anyone knew that Paris was staging the 1900 Olympic Games. It will be different next time round. With Paris set to host its third games in 2024, former BBC Radio athletics commentator **BOB PHILLIPS** looks back at those little-known first *Jeux Olympiques* and some of the British achievements there

PARIS is expected to be formally confirmed as the host of the 2024 Olympic Games on September 13.

It was announced at the end of July that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had made a deal with rival Los Angeles to host the 2028 Summer Olympics, leaving Paris as the sole bidder for the 2024 Games.

The official announcement will mark the start of the build up to what would be a centenary celebration of the 1924 games that have been enshrined in cinema history via *Chariots of Fire*.

The 1900 games have their own gold medalist of repute as Briton Charlotte Cooper became the first individual woman Olympics champion, in the tennis singles. It was the first year the games were open to women – and she also won the mixed doubles.

One record set in 1900 still stands to this day... for the number of competitors with 58,781 taking part in 477 events – although the IOC says many were there for Paris Universal Exhibition events as it was running at the same time. The 'official' IOC version is that 997 athletes took part from 24 nations in 90 events covering 19 sports.

Among the 477 events were live pigeon shooting (Belgian winner Léon de Lunden killed 21 pigeons to win 20,000 francs) along with angling, ballooning, cricket, croquet, motor-boating and motor-racing.

More conventional sports from 1900 included athletics, cycling, fencing, football, gymnastics, rowing and swimming, which have figured regularly or permanently in the Games ever since, and will do so in 2024.

Winning the 2024 games is a boost for Paris, which has had a disappointing record in previous attempts, failing in 1992, 2008 and 2012, losing out to Barcelona, Beijing and London.

One major criticism when Paris lost to London for 2012 was that few of its Games campaigners communicated in English – and English is the everyday language of Olympic committee-room negotiations.

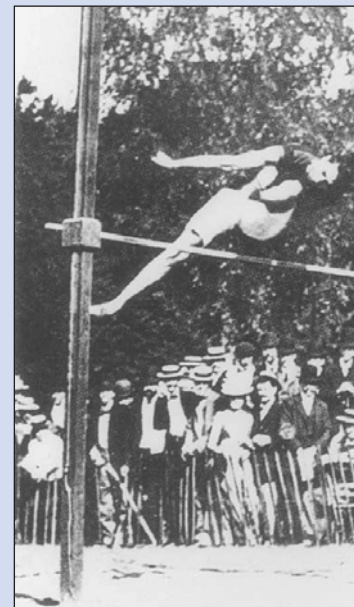
So, Paris made a smart move with its Games slogan 'Made for Sharing'. The English wording for a French event is not an electrifying message but a positive start to wooing the world.

Olympic champions such as judo gold medalist Teddy Riner are fronting its campaign and they will be helped by Olympic fencing champion and new sports minister Laura Flessel but organisers should perhaps take it further and add the best-known Englishwoman in Paris to its campaign. At 71, Charlotte Rampling may not be as nifty on her toes as Teddy Riner, but she does have a gold-medal heritage. Her father, Godfrey, was in the winning British 4x400 metres athletics relay team at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.



Charles Bennett thrusts out his chest at the line in the 1500m, with Frenchman Henri Deloge close behind

Charlotte Cooper became the first woman Olympic champion when she won her tennis singles and mixed doubles titles



High jump winner Irving Baxter uses the old-style scissors to win his Paris Olympic title

## Meet the unsung heroes...

AS FOR the 1900 games themselves, they were not the high-profile event they are now and teams and competitors could be a mixed bag.

The cricket title was won, as might be expected, by a team from England called the Devon and Somerset County Wanderers. Its members did not for the most part figure prominently in the cricketing bible, *Wisden*.

Only Alfred Bowerman and Montague Toller ever played first-class (both for Somerset) while their French opponents were enthusiastic but inexperienced English expatriates.

Toller goes down as Britain's most successful Olympic cricketer, having taken seven wickets for nine runs – all clean bowled – in one innings.

Football and water polo were other team sports which provided British wins, and none of the players were over-extended in their efforts.

The football was played at the same venue as the cricket, Vincennes velodrome, and the players were all from the Essex club Upton Park FC (no connection with West Ham). They beat Club Français, of Paris, 4-0 to be declared champions.

Only two matches were played. In the first Club Français outplayed a Belgian students' XI 6-2, so there is little justification for these being Olympic events.

Osborne water-polo club from Manchester had a bit more to do, winning the qualifying matches 12-0 and 10-1 and the final against the Brussels club 7-2. Great Britain went on to win the Olympic titles in 1908, 1912 and 1920.

At least these athletes have their niche in Olympic history – although for the cricketers it is only because one of them, John Symes, returned home with a scorecard.

The identities of the 20 or so victorious British yachtsmen are all but unknown and even those who are known may not actually have taken part. The IOC cites financier Cecil Quentin as winning the over 20-ton class off Le Havre, yet his yawl was actually 96tons and he must have had up to 20 crew to help (all un-named). There is doubt that he was there at all.

Similarly with the British winners of the "Half-ton to one ton class", sailed on the Seine. The winning trio are listed by the British Olympic Association as Lorne Currie, John Gretton and Linton Hope, but Hope, who designed the winning boat *Scotia*, was back home in England.

Currie owned the *Scotia* while Gretton (later Lord Gretton of Stapleford) would be the only serving member of parliament ever to have won an Olympic title if he was on board.

Only one crew-member can be identified as having been present, helmsman, Algernon Maudslay, who was discovered by the late British Olympic historian Ian Buchanan, in 1991.

Despite athletics being a core Olympic sport, 10 athletics winners were also ignored until French professor, André Drevon, wrote a history of the 1900 games 100 years later.

These forgotten champions took part in events for professionals – the social and competitive divide between professionals and amateurs was wide and lasted for another 80 years – and there is confusion as to whether the professional meeting was part of the Olympic Games at all.

It was held separately from the amateur meeting and Prof Drevon said many events held in and around Paris from spring to autumn – May 14 to October 28 – gave little or no indication they were of Olympic status with some clearly being exhibition sideshows.

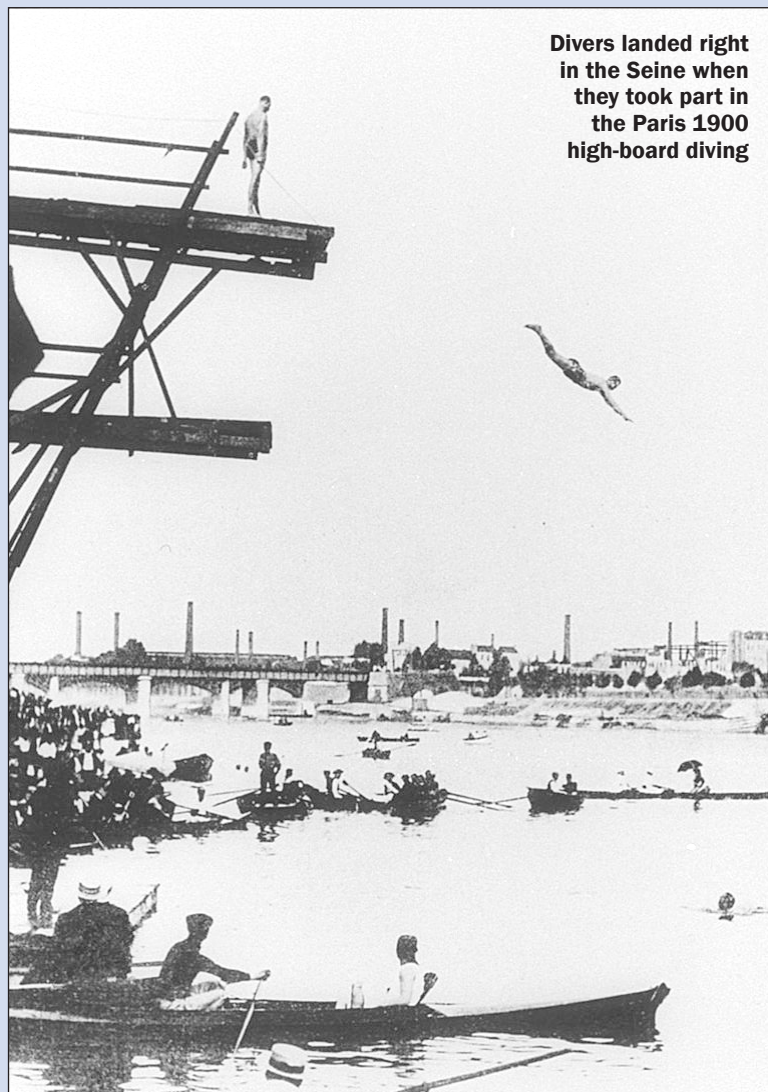
The outstanding professional athlete was a Briton, Edgar Bredin, who won the 100 metres, 400 metres and 1500 metres, and ought to be seen even alongside Lord Sebastian Coe and Sir Steve Redgrave as one of the foremost British Olympians. His opposition was meagre, but that was the case in many of these early Olympic contests until seriousness and nationalism started to set in during the 1920s.

British amateur Charles Bennett won 1500m and team 5000m races and was second in the 4000m. His win in the 1500m made him Britain's first



Olympic officials praised the "amazing backdrops" in Paris such as the Champ de Mars beach volleyball park

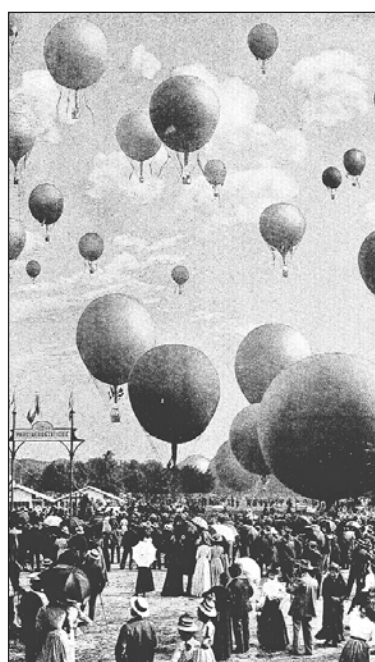




Divers landed right in the Seine when they took part in the Paris 1900 high-board diving



Léon de Lunden, above, has gone into history for winning the live pigeon shooting event but this archer, below, remains anonymous



Hot-air balloon racers took to the skies at Vincennes for the Paris 1900 Olympics... It was a one-off and never appeared again

track and field Olympic champion.

A railway driver based at Bourne-mouth Central Station, Bennett beat the French favourite Henri Deloge to win the 1500m in 4min 6.2sec, which was declared a world record.

In the team race, Bennett, Liverpool policeman Jack Rimmer, Northants carpenter Sidney Robinson and Lancaster farmhand Alfred Tysoe were short of a fifth man and, remarkably, neither officials nor French opposition complained when Australian sprinter Stanley Rowley, who had finished 3rd in both 100m and 200m, was recruited to make up numbers.

He ambled round for a few laps and was then allowed by the track judge to discretely step off the track but still counted in the winning team.

Another Briton who deserves remembrance as one of the country's great Olympians is the swimmer, John Jarvis, a member of the Leicester Swimming Club, who won the 1000 metres and 4000 metres freestyle events by huge margins.

Jarvis had developed his own form of side-crawl, and this proved so effective he was to win 108 international races during a career which lasted until he was 36.

He and his opponents swam downstream in the Seine to the bridge at Asnières (made famous in the 1883 painting by post-impressionist painter Georges Seurat) and he was more than a minute ahead of the nearest of his 46 rivals at the shorter distance and more than 10 minutes ahead of Hungarian world record-holder, Zoltán Halmay, at the longer.

Despite Seurat's painting showing young people swimming and rowing on the Seine, the idea of reviving the Olympics – the games had been held in ancient Greece at least from the year 776BC onwards – was promoted in the 1890s by educationist Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who was concerned at what he felt to be the poor level of fitness of French youth.

It was an associate of the baron who invented that acme of Olympic athletics events – the marathon.

Michel Bréal, who was an expert on Greek history, must have known full well that the inspiration for the event, held at the inaugural modern Olympic Games in 1896 over a 40km course from the village of Marathon (or Maroussian) to Athens, was in all probability a myth.

The first race was a success, largely because it was won by a Greek, but Mr Bréal would surely have been aggrieved by the way the Paris version four years later was conducted.

Certainly the three British participants were none too happy with the

chaotic circumstances in which the 40km race was run.

This was graphically depicted in a photograph which shows eventual winner, Michel Théato, nearing the finish, surrounded not only by a horde of accompanying cyclists but being led by another runner who would seem to be a gate-crasher as he is nowhere to be seen in photos from earlier in the race.

Britain's Frederick Randall, Ernest Ion Pool and William Saward were all members of renowned cross-country clubs (Finchley Harriers, South London Harriers and Essex Beagles), but road-racing was such a rarity in Britain in those days that they were chosen because they had been the first three to finish the twice-as-long London-to-Brighton run.

Despite their obvious powers of endurance, the trio survived no more than a few miles of their journey through the Parisian streets.

Pool later complained bitterly it had been "a dismal fiasco" – from the officials' lateness in getting race details out, to the lack of "convenience of contestants" and the "entire absence of precautions to ensure fair play", referring to the "non-sporting instincts of the French populace".

Théato himself only learned of his Olympic success in 1912 when it was decided the 1900 race merited Olympic standing. He was France's first Olympic athletics champion but had little time to enjoy his belated fame as he died in 1919 at the age of 41.

Research 90 years later revealed he was born in Luxembourg, so he was also the principality's first champion.

Bob Phillips is the author of several books on athletics and Olympic history and was for 17 years a member of the BBC Radio athletics commentary team. He and his wife live in Landes

## 'Even solo sailing is a team event these days'



Thomas Coville has set two solo sailing records within six months

### CONNEXION INTERVIEW Double world record holder Thomas Coville

FRENCH sailor Thomas Coville smashed the record for sailing single-handed across the North Atlantic in July, making the crossing in just four days, 11 hours and 10 minutes.

It was an incredible feat. The previous record, set by fellow Frenchman Francis Joyon just three days earlier, was 15 hours longer.

Even more impressively, it came six months after Coville hacked eight days off the record for sailing round the world single-handed. The Rennes-born sailor did it in 49 days – breaking yet another of Joyon's records to become the first to break the 50-day barrier.

These epic adventures are physically and mentally exhausting, isolating and dangerous. So why does he do it? Is it just for the fun of breaking a rival's records?

"I have the utmost respect for Joyon," Coville, 49, told *Connexion*. "He's a very different character from me, and of course we're rivals, so it's

“

Sometimes the hardest thing isn't staying awake, it's forcing yourself to go to sleep

natural to compete with him, but sailing is primarily a personal challenge."

He attributes his Transatlantic success to favourable weather conditions and technology which means even solo sailing is a collaborative activity.

"Nowadays, sailing is a team activity. Via internet, my navigators tell me where to find weather systems which will increase my speed, and sometimes I can even outrun one system in order to piggy-back the next wind.

"If you get a succession of winds like that, and you jump from one to the next, of course you can break records."

He was modest about the reasons for breaking two of the most important solo sailing records: "It was the culmination of years of work, amazing luck with weather, and technical advances.

"I feel so lucky to be part of this generation; using new technology and new designs, modern boats can sail

further and faster. We can outrace the weather, we use oceanography and meteorology, so we're not just sailing by the seat of our pants."

Sailing, he said, attracted him as child when he lived near the sea and he says it immediately seemed to be a reflection of his personality. "I was in my element. I recognised myself, my habitat. It was a place where I was in contact with nature and not judged, and I dreamed about leaving without knowing the destination."

He describes the sea as 'a provocation'. "It provokes excitement, energy, different emotions. It can be pleasure or revulsion, but it wakes my brain up.

"I am never alone when I'm at sea because it's a living thing, it's not a person or an animal, it's almost a spirit. A moving spirit. The sea links everything, lands as well as people."

Recovering from a solo journey is difficult. Once he has slept off his exhaustion it can still take months to come down: "It's like when you come out of a wave: all sailors know this emotion but you can't really share what happens at sea.

"It's exclusive, personal, psychological. It can take months to digest the experience and make adjustments.

"Then you start planning again. I experience unique, often sublime emotions sailing around the world alone. But you can never tell what it will be like. Every voyage is different.

"It's a metaphysical experience, a psychological exercise more than a physical one.

"You have to control your fear, your exhaustion, your stress. Sometimes the hardest thing isn't staying awake, it's forcing yourself to go to sleep."

But what of those he leaves behind on shore? "Of course, my wife is afraid, but I am not guilty. It is not my emotion and she sees that.

"We chose this, we chose each other. But we have two children who haven't chosen this, so we have conversations about freedom, and personal expression. There's always a price, but they too can choose freedom."

He is already planning his next adventure. "We are building a new boat for the Transat Jacques Vabre race between Le Havre and Salvador de Bahia. We leave on November 5, and it will be a double with my navigator Jean-Luc Nélis.

"We already have a close working relationship so it's going to be very exciting. The moment when you put a new boat in the water, is an incredible collective experience. I can't wait!"



## The Connexion

FRANCE'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER  
Established 2002

### Getting tourism just right

FRANCE is the world's most visited nation so it should be making more money out of tourism than any other country, right? That is what economists are muttering as they tally up after another successful summer season: France needs to get as much money out of tourists as it can. But surely this is the wrong approach...tourism is about more than money. It is a human, social activity with complicated ramifications and it can easily go sour. Make it too mercenary and there is a risk of provoking anti-tourist protests as is being seen in Spain.

The trick is to attract the tourists and get them to spend money but to make sure they care about where they are and behave with respect. Tourism goes wrong when tourists regard wherever they are as their personal playground for two weeks.

So far, France has got tourism broadly right and in that it shows the world the way, never mind the takings in the till. It concentrates on quality tourism more than formulaic holidays and, as far as possible, spreads the tourists out so the benefits don't just stay in the same few oversold places. It also manages to hide some secrets so not everywhere charming is turned into some bland 'tourist product'. There are still villages and towns that do not tout for tourists because they do not want to.

The money tourism brings to a country is important but only in as far as it creates local jobs rather than rewarding absentee financial investors who are indifferent to the communities that serve their interests.

### Ask a policeman

THE government has promised to re-introduce a '*police de proximité*', which is usually translated as 'community policing' but really means 'police who are nearby' ie police officers walking the beat as they once used to do. Who could object to such a sensible idea? People do: it is costly, they say, and an inefficient use of resources because there is no evidence that it achieves anything.

True, it is a difficult policy to justify to an accountant. How do you measure productivity when the aim is to prevent petty crime? No one can ever know the amount of offences not committed because a police officer was in the vicinity.

There is, however, a far more important issue. Marginalised communities increasingly see the police as agents of the state rather than public servants working for everyone. That means 'community' policing performs a vital outreach function. It counteracts the perception of every policeman or woman being armed, masked by a visor and wielding a riot stick or firearm.

Visible policing is just as important in intelligence gathering as covert surveillance. The only drawback is that it is long-term. It takes time for a community to get used to a local officer and to trust him or her. It's a step towards humanising a difficult job that will only pay off if successive politicians are committed to it.

### First Lady?

WHAT – if it is not a rude question – is Brigitte Macron? It must have been tempting for a victorious President Macron to reward his wife with an official status of First Lady but in the end he resisted and did the right thing.

In return for much hard work expected of her (greeting dignitaries, shaking hands with the public, answering hundreds of letters and being a well-dressed sidekick) she gets nothing: no job title, no official status and no salary. That is how it should be in a democracy: only those who win elections become paid employees of the state, not their family.

For the next five years she will live in the spotlight, admired, envied and criticised and always trying to strike a balance between discreet invisibility and political show-womanship. We must assume she knew what she was doing when her husband put his name forward to be head of state.



**SIMON HEFFER**, the renowned political commentator and historian, turns his gaze to French politics

**P**OLITICAL honeymoons are short, and Emmanuel Macron's was no exception. An August YouGov poll saw his approval rating slip from 66% at the election to 36%. What should have been his summer holiday was interrupted – a self-inflicted wound – by argument about the role his wife should have as *première dame*: most French seem to think it lacks true republican spirit for her to have any at all besides being the president's hostess. How that squares with the feminist ideal remains to be seen.

So M Macron faces the *rentrée* needing to bolster his standing and to impress upon the French – especially the millions who did not vote for him – that he is fit for purpose. His pose as some sort of heir of Louis XIV, enlisting Versailles as his backdrop, played badly. The French want their president and his office to have dignity and to project France well to the world, but not by aping a long-gone monarchy. M Macron is young – still not 40 – and clearly wants to project a proper sense of status. As even his most inept predecessor would tell him, that is best achieved by avoiding stunts.

Late August saw officials in meetings with representatives of the main trades unions, trying to pave the way to reforms of the labour market to give France's economy the thorough restructuring it needs. The aim is to bring down unacceptably high levels of unemployment and start to reduce the massive amounts – 57% of GDP compared with around 43% in the UK – the country spends in the public sector. Payroll takes a huge proportion of public spending: the state is overmanned by western standards – even the unlamented François Hollande admitted that, and started to reform it – but it has acted as an employer not least to avoid a political problem caused by lack of opportunities in the private sector.

Regulation designed to encourage the private sector to hire more people – notably the 35-hour week – has had the opposite effect, driving down profitability and restricting the need and necessary resources to expand employment in that sector. But the main reason why so many French cannot find jobs – the latest official, and almost certainly massaged, unemployment figure is 9.5%, or just over 2.7m – is that, once hired, it is almost impossible for them to be sacked, thanks to the weight of regulation on this and other employment conditions in the 3,000 page *Code du travail*.

Management in France, lacks the right to manage, causing reluctance to hire untried and untested young people – hence youth unemployment of nearly 25%.

When M Macron was finance minister he tackled some of the restrictive practices of the unreconstructed 1980s socialism that M Hollande so warmly embraced: but was heavily criticised for his pains, and some of his limited reforms went through the Assemblée Nationale purely thanks

# Honeymoon is over but the seduction must continue

to clause 49:3 of the French constitution, which allows a government to get its way.

With M Macron commanding a majority in the Assemblée, such anti-democratic measures will not be needed for further reforms: but legislative approval is not the problem.

Organised labour, and its spokespeople, retain a disproportionate influence in France of a type not seen in Britain since the 1970s. The Assemblée can pass whatever reforms it likes, but getting the unions to accept them, especially if they include making it easier to dismiss staff, is quite another matter. The CGT has already set a day of protest for September 12.

**N**ICOLAS Sarkozy's 2008 reforms, designed by the former socialist minister Jacques Attali, collapsed almost immediately because of industrial action, and set the tone of failure for M Sarkozy's administration.

M Macron will be alert to this precedent, and may have to tread a delicate line between loosening up the labour market as he would wish, to deliver on his promises to help business, and stopping France grinding to a halt.

He has already discovered that it is easier to campaign than to govern. There will be

a delay to the tax cuts he promised; the great exodus back to France from the dealing rooms of the City of London is so far imperceptible; his partner, the MoDem leader François Bayrou, has left government in disgrace; various of his parliamentary troops have turned out to be inept. His prime minister, Edouard Philippe, is a sensible technocrat, playing the steadying role that François Fillon performed for M Sarkozy, and many of M Macron's instincts are entirely right.

But the task of winning over organised labour has barely started, and the public – most of whom did not vote for M Macron or his new party – are disillusioned. Senatorial elections on September 24 will be an interesting barometer of M Macron's clout, and of whether his fragmented opposition is reviving.

At least as M Macron embarks on reform and deregulation he does so with the support of most of his EU partners, and especially Angela Merkel, whose patience with M Hollande was quickly exhausted.

M Macron has difficulties with Poland, which objects to the plan he is putting to the EU to limit "posted workers" from Eastern Europe undercutting the local workforce. That is a sop to France's unions, but also sounds much like one of the main complaints of the victorious Brexiteers.

It is a reminder of the Euroscepticism with which M Macron must also deal when pushing for more eurozone integration and a eurozone budget.

In his domestic economic reforms, especially tackling the *Code du travail*, he has sense on his side: a mark of his statesmanship will be to see how far he and his colleagues, whom he has ordered into the media to promote his policies, can convince his opponents, and the country.

*Simon Heffer is also a columnist for the Daily and Sunday Telegraphs*

**The Connexion**  
FRANCE'S ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER  
NEW! 4 pages on making a will in France  
HORS SERIE / Special publication from RHP

**Taxation**  
Wills  
What to consider when buying property  
Providing for stepchildren  
Lifetime gifts  
The usufruct

**French Inheritance law**  
2017-2018  
Be informed so you make the right choice  
+ Why Brexit should not affect wills  
+ Formalities to complete after a death

€9.90

BUYING FRANKS  
INTERNATIONAL DISCOUNT

## OUT SOON! French inheritance law helpguide

**INCLUDES: 4 pages on how to make a will in France PLUS a chapter on retirement homes**

Order before midnight September 18 and pay the special price of only €8.50 (plus P&P for a printed copy).

From September 19 the guide will cost €9.90 (plus P&P for a printed copy). Copies will be posted early October

**To order and see all our helpguides visit the helpguide section at [connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)**

Available  
in both print and  
download  
options



# Speaking French is good but integration is not just a word

**Dr Tim Blakemore**, a former senior law lecturer at the University of Northampton who now lives in France, asks if integration means language, mixing or a mix

RECEIVED opinion is that a good knowledge of the French language is essential for integration into French society. Indeed, in his presidential election manifesto, Emmanuel Macron said unequivocally “we will make mastering the French language the principal criterion for obtaining French nationality”, adding “what better proof is there of someone’s willingness to integrate and become French?”

He might be convincing on the issue of nationality, but how true is his second assertion?

It is a classic source of irritation for the nationals of any country when foreigners do not integrate, and their inability to speak the language of their adopted country makes their separateness stand out even more so.

But even the citizenship process concludes with questions on French culture, history and society, which indicates an ability to speak the language is only one requirement.

If speaking the language is not the only ingredient in integration, is it nevertheless essential? Nearly every piece of advice on moving to France will say something about the necessity for learning the language, and I suspect that everyone who moves here tries to follow that advice.

It is then that reality kicks in. As many of us are of retirement age and last tried to learn a foreign language sometime in the Middle Ages, we face the twin ogres of naivety and inability.

Naivety, in that we have no idea how

difficult it is to communicate with a native speaker of a language.

Lack of ability, because it is much more difficult to learn a language the older one is, especially with no real intellectual background in learning foreign languages.

So the earnest advice “learn to speak French” is fine, and of course life will be much richer and easier if you can chat to the locals. But I suspect the advice tends to come from those who have that ability, or have learned a language themselves when they were young enough to cope.

Nick Inman’s article (*Connexion* May) argued that speaking French can be easier if it is approached as a matter of communication rather than grammar and vocabulary.

He has certainly inspired some readers, as the June newspaper letters page showed. But if integration is the target, then his most relevant comment is that it is all about “attitudes to sharing yourself with another person”.

**In an area where none** of the native French speak English except the doctor (fortunately), my own ‘survey’ of about 20 Brits suggests that barely a quarter speak passable French.

Yet they all support their commune’s events, use the market, know the regular traders and employ local tradesmen. Belong to clubs, even run events, play tennis and pétanque with locals. Have French friends, are invited for *apéros* and dinners, and even to weddings and parties. Some go on coach trips and short holidays organised by their communes, mixing happily with a party of French who speak hardly a word of English between them.

All that, Mr Macron, surely means “integration”.

Of course, an inability to speak the language will exclude the possibility of taking French nationality, as it is one

of the requirements to pass an oral exam at European standard B1 (although over-60s are allowed to do it as part of the final interview with questions on French culture).

The important point is that one size does not fit all. There are plenty of Brits out there, probably even a majority, who work hard in their local community and feel part of French society despite their inability to master the language.

Their voice is seldom heard in these discussions as it is unfashionable and even heretical to acknowledge their existence, let alone accept their situation. One of the letters in that June *Connexion* spoke of the “burden of guilt” caused by a failure to be fluent after many years living in France. I suspect there are many who feel the same way about their language skills.

I do not advocate that people should simply give up, as a few words should not be beyond even the least able.

It is only polite to be able to ask someone how they are, or to reply to a similar inquiry, even if that is the end of the conversation.

After all, with only a slight change in tone and emphasis, “*ça va*” can cover both question and response. An effort at proper pronunciation also helps.

Yet there is one final point – is it right to take up residence in a country and take advantage of everything on offer if you are not going to be able to speak the language of your hosts?

It seems impolite at the very least, and, yet, are we to say that people who realistically are not going to be able to learn a new language are to be debarred from moving abroad?

If they contribute to French society as well as benefiting from it, perhaps that is good enough evidence of their integration and that President Macron, despite winning the election, is wrong on that point.

# Hooray for return of the 4-day week!

by GILLIAN HARVEY

AS I AM a mother of five, you might expect me to be punching the air at the prospect of the *rentrée* – and it will be nice to have time for a cup of tea before it is cold, and work without a child climbing the back of my chair.

At the same time, a part of me feels a little flat when the kids traipse off to *l’école*, sporting shiny shoes and new backpacks. They might drive me up the wall at times, but in term time when they virtually disappear into their world of lessons, homework and earlier nights, life is the duller for it.

That’s one of the reasons I’m delighted the Macron government has given communes the chance to reinstate the four-day week for children, doing away with the pesky Wednesday morning hours that started in 2014.

And my motivation isn’t simply emotional. I believe a four-day week is better, both educationally and physically for children.

For starters, getting up and out early five days per week can take its toll on little ones – and school is more tiring than many of us give kids credit for.

When I taught in the UK I would see primary age children looking more and more exhausted as the weeks clocked up; and eight-year olds with dark circles under their eyes to rival those five times their age.

As well as providing midweek respite, having Wednesdays free again would give children the chance to invest in their personal preferences too – whether dance classes, nature or simply time out with a book.

Yes, the old system had Wednesday afternoons free – but in my rural neck of the woods having our time reduced to a half-day scaled back options that involved any travel.

Some services, too, were altered when the school timetable changed: swimming lessons at the local pool (20 minutes away) moved from very

practical Wednesday mornings to an impossible Monday evening slot; not the ideal time for 4-6 year olds to hit the pool.

Importantly, I also believe the four-day week is better for learning. As well as the reduction in pupil tiredness and stress – both of which are known to impede learning – having a full day *sans enfants* would give teachers a precious midweek chance to deal with marking, planning and professional development – essential in ensuring that teaching standards remain as high as possible.

The adage ‘quality rather than quantity’ applies well: a better organised week with proper respite should mean more receptive pupils and more effective teaching.

As for inconvenience to those who are not self-employed or cannot adjust hours to free up their Wednesdays for childcare, no doubt communes will provide support, as they do currently in the afternoons, for children to attend and take part in activities in a less formal environment.

I’ve always been impressed with the local ‘after school’ service, and can only imagine that with a whole day at their disposal, they will develop more in-depth and stimulating activities.

Giving children a four-day school week better reflects the French attitude towards *l’art de vivre*.

French culture places a great deal of importance on family time: allowing children to recharge batteries, participate in sports or pursue something after their own heart fits well with the philosophy that life is for living well.

So, this September, rather than viewing Wednesdays as a waste, with two school runs within three hours obliterating the morning and little time to do anything meaningful with the children in the afternoon, I can look forward to a day of family fun, education or, importantly, a good rest in readiness for the next school day.

## Politicians lose their family benefits as Macron gives his wife a job

### Tour de presse

**Editorialistes** (opinion writers) hold a major role in the French press. Here French journalist **Paul de Villepin** examines recent ‘hot topics’ which have featured in columns across the country

AUGUST is always a quiet month for news: parliament is closed, the government is on a two-week break and Emmanuel and Brigitte Macron were enjoying the charms of the balmy south in Marseille... yet the news cycle does not stop and the country is never completely asleep.

The *rentrée* and its fuss is approaching fast, fast enough to keep the *editorialistes* busy, and, after all, French people complain all the time. Even Napoleon said: “The French complain of everything, and always.”

Prior to the holidays, one of Mr Macron’s key pledges – a law to clean up political life – was passed in parliament after heated debate. It followed the scandal that mired presidential candidate François Fillon in ‘fictitious jobs’ allegations involving his Welsh wife, Penelope, and two of his children and, more generally corruption, and conflicts of interests scandals over the years that

have dented trust in French politicians. The law prevents both MPs and ministers from employing family members as parliamentary assistants and saw mainly positive reactions in the press.

Yann Marec, in *Midi Libre*, said: “This new law does not intend to change MPs or senators but simply to draw lines that should not be crossed: mission accomplished for the government!” In *Libération*, editor-in-chief Laurent Joffrin said: “En Marche in essence delivered on its promises, this measure has to be praised” but regretted “that the government is pulling its punches in the fight against lobbying”. François Ernenwein, of the Catholic daily *La Croix*, remained sceptical saying debates “raised more questions than answers” adding “MPs keep the monopoly on the range of sanctions for fiscal wrongdoing”.

The law banning the employing of family members came just as Brigitte Macron was given an official role in the presidency, although not the title of first lady. A transparency charter defining her duties focusing on disabled people, education, children, women’s issues, health and gender equality was published by the Elysée.

The move for the most part left *editorialistes* perplexed. In the daily *L’Opinion*, Nicolas Beytout complained that Mme Macron was only allowed “a charter not a status; financial means not a budget; councillors not a cabinet, the government thus chose nuances”. Slightly more aggrieved, the boisterous Christophe Barbier in

the weekly *L’Express*, complained that the government had shown “a clear lack of boldness”. Barbier – who is also a regular *editorialiste* on the news channel BFM TV – believes “Brigitte could have definitely proved useful in the sphere of education” having been a French teacher for 30 years. In a nutshell, Barbier feels the charter “kicks down an open door”.

One voice that was silent was Marine Le Pen, whose Front National is mired in internal disputes. An enlightening piece in the online magazine *Slate*, said the French alt-right had failed.

Political analyst Gaël Brustier said the alt-right embodied by Béziers mayor and former journalist Robert Ménard, essayist Eric Zemmour and political advisor and historian Patrick Buisson, had been marginalised to the point where they were “merely reduced to writing pamphlets”.

**The fires that savaged** the Côte d’Azur and forced mass evacuations also sparked strong reaction from the regional press.

In the southwest, Jean-Marcel Bouguereau of *La République des Pyrénées* pushed governments to react: “Each year we have the feeling the fires are worse and worse, which is wrong as figures show that fires have become less destructive. Therefore, we must build European cooperation as these catastrophes do not have borders.”

Along the same lines, but in *L’Alsace*, Laurent Bodin said: “With global warming increasing the

likelihood of fires, it has now become vital to build up fire barriers – already in place in the Landes forests, for instance, but still way too rare in the Bouches-du-Rhône.”

Similarly, *L’Est Républicain*’s Philippe Marcacci considers the fires are proof that global warming “is real with the groundwater levels at their lowest and the ground as dry and hard as rock.”

Hervé Chabaud in Ardennes paper *L’Union* said firefighters needed the means to fight fires, which meant modernising the water tanker fleet and, in the digital age, using software to manage firefighting resources. “It should be a new priority for the government despite the budget restrictions given that the safety of the population is now at stake.”

The government’s next target is the *Code du travail* and moves to create more flexibility in the job market. Political commentator Alain Duhamel, on RTL, saw the reform as a way for Mr Macron to restore his presidential authority and formalise social liberalism.

On the other side of the spectrum, communist daily *L’Humanité*, through the voice of Michel Guilloix vowed to fight alongside the unions.

With this and fiscal reforms including the reduction in the CSG social charge, the partial suppression of the *Taxe d’habitation* coming up as well as a plan to reform university entry the Elysée is expecting an interesting *rentrée*... Will the commentators be able to keep pace?



## They said it...

### Front National members can often appear misunderstood or tacky

**Florian Philippot**

The FN Vice-President looks at ways of attracting more members

### In this era of emptiness, footballers are taking the place of heroes

**Robert Redeker**

Philosopher talking to Le Figaro about Neymar's recent transfer to PSG for €200 million



Photo: Agencia de Noticias Andes

### When the man who finds a cure for AIDS earns damn all in comparison to that we have to put things into context

**Patrick Montel**

France2 sports journalist tries to compute the vast sums involved in football

### Emmanuel's only mistake is being younger than me

**Brigitte Macron**

The President's wife rues her husband's close brush with perfection.



Photo: Présidence de la République

### There have been at least 50 articles about my hair, earrings and nails

**Marlène Schiappa**

Marlène Schiappa, Secretary of State for equality between men and women, rues the shallow press coverage of her cabinet role

### I unplugged my phone and turned off Facebook. It was poison.

**Laure Manadou**

The former swimmer and one of France's most famous sportswomen wants to keep her children's lives private... she told *Paris Match*.

### Being unreasonable is the essence of passion

**Olivia Ruiz**

The singer reveals what floats her proverbial boat in *L'Express*



Photo: Georges Bland

### Between 20% and 30% of the French population does not know how to use the internet

**Mounir Mahjoubi**

France's Digital Minister says more people need help getting online

### One is not born a President – you become one

**Daniel Cohn-Bendit**

The philosopher waxes lyrical about Macron's journey to the Presidency



Photo: Marie Le Nguyen

## Currency manipulation

FOR many of your readers the *Avis d'Impôt sur les Revenus* 2016 will have arrived recently.

Whilst the majority, myself included, will have noticed a drop in income following the referendum, especially if transferred direct from the UK to a French bank account, perhaps on the printed version the reduction in income will be more noticeable. And it looks like continuing.

In my own case – a Civil Service Pension, administered by a third party – the exchange rate never seems to tally with the updated daily rates.

Previously it would arrive in my account on the first of the month but following a change in the company's methods, I noticed the transfer could be between two and five days.

I have never received a satisfactory answer as to the delay and what happens to the funds in the meantime. The state pension is always transferred on time and the exchange rate

more realistic. After the referendum and the drop in the value of the pound against the euro, we see examples on a daily basis how these individuals use this excuse or another to play with a currency.

This manipulation must make them a considerable amount of money over a period simply by pressing buttons. As individuals, we stand no chance when currency is being manipulated like this especially, following the referendum result. I have yet to read a satisfactory explanation for the sudden drop.

The same could be said regarding our future status. What has the government offered to reassure us? If it were not for some EU officials demanding the UK put forward arrangements for their citizens living in the UK and linking this to our own future status living in member states, we would be left high and dry.

**Christopher EATOUGH, Nièvre**

## Europe? Better out than in...

JO French (Letters, August) has completely lost the plot. Britain is a democracy with a first past the post system.

If in an election, a Labour candidate gets 10,001 votes and in the same constituency a Tory gets 10,000 and all the other candidates get 5,000 votes it means those voting against Labour cast 15,000 but Labour still wins with 10,001 votes.

Socialism does not work well. Look at, North Korea, Zimbabwe, China, Russia, Cuba and now Venezuela. Only China is a success financially, they all have terrible human rights problems. Can anyone name six long-term successful socialist countries?

The EU is a socialist state. The richer countries pay in more, the poorer countries less per head. The EU takes about 5-10% off the top to pay for its rental buildings, to pay its salaries and its pensions etc. It then hands out more per head to the poorer countries and less per head to its richer countries. In my view, in the long term Britain will be better off out. Oh yes, I love France but hate its socialist bureaucracy.

**Tony GOVER, Vaucluse**

## Slow road to Brexit

I HAVE just become a great-great-uncle and so welcome to the planet, baby Josephine! The birth was signalled by relatives in England as '7 lbs, 5 oz.'

We should remind ourselves that Her Majesty's government embarked well over 40 years ago upon a programme of metrication and subsequently allowed the process to run aground along the way.

Clarity of planning and maintenance of objective are, it seems, lacking within the UK administration.

Whether or not British passports change colour again, to become blue instead of red, this whole thing is simply not going to be wrapped-up in a few months. They made, after all, a fairly sorry mess of metrication, they still haven't got it done, and it's been drifting along for four decades. What chance is there for Brexit, a more complicated matter?

**Gareth JONES, Maine-et-Loire**

## Sober and civilised

IN reply to your online article about the [alcohol-free] *L'Arbre qui marche* festival in St.Martin du Bois (49): I live on the road that leads to the festival car park and the numbers of very polite young people who walked past whilst I was in the garden, all with a polite *bonjour* or *bonsoir*, was a delight. There were no problems and not a single Gendarme to be seen.

**Owen COWLES, by email**

## The 2017 French Revolution

WHILE the world is in a bit of turmoil as it was in 1789, the French have stepped up to the plate to lead the way again with Emmanuel Macron's astonishing victory in the presidential election, cemented in the Assembly elections.

Though the 1789 Revolution was key to introducing the concept of democracy, it has not delivered its slogan, *Liberté Égalité Fraternité*. Many would say today it is just words and not actions. There is now some hope things might change.

In addition to the revamp of the political system, the old slogan also needs a revamp – to drop the word *Fraternité*, which is just for men today, as was the intent in 1789.

A more suitable slogan to reflect the mixed society that is France today would be Liberty, Equality, Humanity (*Liberté Égalité Humanité*), with the hope that President Macron will walk this slogan's talk where past presidents have not walked the original.

**Jim SHORT, by email**

## It's nice (and wet) up north

IN the May edition you reported predictions of a heat-wave.

Well, maybe you did get one by the Mediterranean but up here in Brittany we've had about a score of days this year when it has been just about warm enough to sit outside.

If I can see the other side of the bay (of Morlaix), it means it's going to rain: if I can't, it means it's already raining.

You've got the choice in France: wall-to-wall sunshine but all the vegetation burnt to a frazzle, or a climate where it's forever raining but a lovely green landscape. There's no doubt which I prefer: Now, where did I put my umbrella?

**Stephen D. MORGAN, Finistère**

## BRUNO SELLIER INSURANCE

Your English speaking agency

Property, Motor, Health, Travel  
Business, Pet and Life  
Insurances

[www.sellier-insurance.fr](http://www.sellier-insurance.fr)



05 45 82 03 20

Assurance responsabilité civile et garantie financière conformes aux articles L. 530, 1 et L. 530.2 du Code des Assurances No ORIAS 07 020 532

**FREE-2 AIR NEW DIGI BOXES**  
**Freesat HD & TNT, SKY+HD TV**  
**SUBSCRIPTIONS and INSTALLATIONS**  
**FREE ADVICE AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

► Office: +33 (0)5 63 59 85 16  
Mobile: +33 (0)6 71 64 18 19  
Fax: +33 (0)5 63 70 91 02  
Skype: skytvfrance

**www.skyinfrance.co.uk**

**freosat**  
**TNT**  
**sky 3D**  
**coming soon!**

SIRET 48003796900015



The Connexion letters pages are  
**sponsored by**

The Blevins Franks Autumn Seminars

See page 23 for topics, venues and booking information

BLEVINS  FRANKS

## Internet woe

I READ with great interest the article "Mobile and Internet promise" in the August issue.

My situation is very much the same – I live in a small hilltop village, and we do not have any signal except to receive or send the occasional text.

A company called Selectra, in my opinion, misdirected me into having the "SFR Cloud 10 Go" service which is for telephone and internet at a total monthly cost of €25.

It has only worked for approximately a third of the time, and calls made to a French mobile are expensive. I have considered cancelling the SFR contract and trying to get connected back with Orange but have been advised that it will cost me over €200.

When the SFR internet is working I have recorded a maximum download speed of just 0.68 Mb/s.

David N TALBOYS, Aude

## Airport angst

AS regular travellers to Bordeaux and both requiring Special Assistance (aged 81 and 87), we have come to know the airport regrettably well. They obviously wanted to separate 'low-cost' customers from the 'posher' end of the market.

Special Assistance provided is first class, but the admin side needs to take some lessons from Luton Airport – they need a dedicated area where we can check in and wait.

You have to wait, sometimes up to an hour, to go through security. There do not appear to be any toilets in the check-in area and my husband, who has Parkinsons and bladder problems, has to walk to the main building. Are there any plans to do something about this?

Anne COLEMAN,  
Lot-et-Garonne

Connexion has contacted the airport and we await a response

## Being chic is a low priority here

I WAS surprised to read your article on Helena Frith-Powell headlined *Lip gloss in Languedoc* (August edition).

I've lived in Limoux in the Languedoc for 14 years and French classic chic is certainly not present in any of the small towns and villages in this area.

This region is one of the poorest in France, where young people move to the cities to work, and the ones who would have worked in factories (now closed down) are unemployed.

Some market stalls sell small items that would not even be seen in an English charity shop, and there are stalls with masses of old clothes, mostly grey.

The vineyards are similar to your photo, without the weeds, producing some of the best wines in France, with small tractors used by the owners, or vines pruned and grapes col-

lected by hand.... this is Occitanie. There is no French chic amongst the vineyards, or in the villages, but food is another matter – whether collecting snails or picking rosemary bushes to make a *tisane*.

Hunting for wild boar is a popular sport, and the Fête du Porc is a big event at the local supermarket, with freshly killed pigs in the chillers. People in this area eat every part of the animal, and one of the favourites is cooking the pig's head, placing it in the centre of the table with a sauce, and everyone happily stripping off their favourite parts of the animal.

The French in the Languedoc countryside have no money to be chic, Helena should take a good look around her before writing novels on 'staying chic in rural France'.

Susan THOMAS, Aude

## Letter of the month

SUSAN THOMAS wins the *Connexion* letter of the month and a copy of the *Connexion* Puzzle Book.

Please include your name and address in any correspondence; we can withhold it on request.

The Editor's decision is final.

Write to: The Connexion, Patio Palace, 41 avenue Hector Otto, 98000 Monaco or email [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

## Hearing aid repair savings

I HAVE information for those who wear hearing aids.

One of mine decided that it was too tired to work. I tried to manage without it for a while but took it back to 'my hearing aid shop'. While it was sent to be fixed for an estimated €400, I was lent a replacement.

Within four days back came the response: as it is over five years old we cannot repair it!

I found *The Connexion* and inside an advert for repairing hearing aids. This company

([www.hars.co.uk](http://www.hars.co.uk)) mends them for profoundly deaf children in the UK. I sent off my faulty aid and it was mended in just over a week for less than £100.

To replace my aids would have cost up to €2,000.

I am hoping that this reaches others who are deaf or hard of hearing as to replace the tiny gadgets which we put in our ears is extremely expensive, and will come as an enormous surprise!

Thérèse KIRK, Lot

## Can I greet in English?

I HAVE read your feature on greeters (August edition, Community pages) and their need for English speakers. However, I have visited their site and they say that you have to speak French.

My French is not too good as yet, so does this prevent me from registering as a greeter?

Tony STAMP, by email

*The Connexion has been in touch with the Greeters Association and we received the following response from the chairman, Christian Ragil: "I should not be prohibitive but it does sometimes depend on the individual Greeters organisation." He said he would organise for the Burgundy branch of the Greeters to make contact with Mr Stamp soon.*

## Feel ignored?

IS it just me or do others find the level of customer service in France is diabolical? Whilst I'm sure many people have had many great experiences I find it really difficult to get French companies to reply to emails. I, perhaps wrongly, assume that if a company has a Contact us page on their website they will respond but apparently not.

I'm trying to insure my classic cars. I've filled in the appropriate forms and even followed it up with an email but received nothing. Chaser contacts and mails seem to be ignored.

I do speak French but I lack confidence on the phone and feel an email gives me, and them, time to understand properly.

Even when trying to spend €2,000 with a company I had to chase and chase for a quote/reply. I struggle to understand how France survives.

Neil GOODALL, Drôme

## Querying climate change

I WRITE further to your news article in the July edition whimsically entitled "Astronaut told to watch speed".

In it, Thomas Pesquet is said to have issued a warning to the President of the United States. He advised President Trump to take a trip on the International Space Station to see global warming for himself. However, there is nothing from space which would show any such thing. Implausible nonsense.

If Pesquet were to have simply looked at NASA's own global mean temperature satellite data for the past 18 years he would have seen a slight cooling in this period. It seems that he did not want facts to obscure the 'Carbon Tax' agenda supported by NASA's small climate unit and the International Panel on Climate Change, a political body.

"The success of the Paris envi-

ronmental treaty was vital to the world" is code for "The imposition of the 2016 Paris environmental treaty was vital to the trans-national fiscal control essential to a world government run by the UN". 2% of each country's GDP is to be exacted and climate targets imposed, backed up by international courts to impose fines on those not complying with the new totalitarian order. The poor will die in their millions for lack of access to cheap energy.

I suggest that the astronaut was being used to continue the constant drip of Carbon Tax lobby propaganda. It would be nice to hear a balancing contrary factual view occasionally before it is too late and the UN achieve their stated aim of governing the world by means of carbon taxation revenue.

Richard STEVENS, Landes

## EDF website problems

IS anyone else having problems with the EDF France website? I have been using this for 15 years, no problems, it helps me budget, control what I use, etc. Also I download and print statements as needed for extra ID when requested – but no longer.

For a couple of months I haven't been able to log in. Thankfully I pay by *prélèvement*, otherwise I'd be snookered. I get '*momentanément indisponible*' then I can't ask for a new password because it says their search function is not available, please try later.

I have emailed, rung and eventually written. The English phoneline was helpful, but it still didn't work. I also had an online conversation in French. I can manage French pretty well anyway.

Nothing, no response to my letter. Does anyone else have this experience of not being able to log in. It's all I want to do. But I'm at screaming point about it.

Gina JOLLIFFE, Creuse

## Reasons to love France

YOU recently asked what people like most about France – so here's my list:

1. The space in the countryside where I live and on the roads.
2. The courtesy given to cyclists by motorists, in Brittany at least.
3. The way that everyone greets

you in the local café / bar with a handshake or *la bise*, never too much trouble.

4. The excellent health service.

Mark BENNETT,  
Ille-et-Vilaine

Readers can send their ideas to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

## You said it...

You can debate and comment on articles on our website [www.connexionfrance.com](http://www.connexionfrance.com)

or via our facebook page: [www.facebook.com/TheConnexion](https://www.facebook.com/TheConnexion) Here is a selection of recent popular subjects and readers' comments...

### A crowing cock is in the news for waking neighbours at 6am every day.

#### Do you have similar distractions?

"We've noisy owls and a woodpecker has started hammering on the tree by our bedroom." B.S.

"Unfortunately we have a cockerel nearby who seems to think that dawn is 4:30am and then we have the hunting dogs that like to make a noise at about the same time." D.A.

"I like the cockerels, can't stand the tractors working all night." E.H.

"Strimmers are a necessity to keep the forest at bay but Quad bikes/motorcycles are not." V.C.

"When our neighbours have the family for their holidays, the noise pollution levels go up." G.P.

"Townies don't know the ways of the country!" A.B.

### Unions want to make tipping compulsory

"It is not a tip if it is compulsory. We much prefer the French system where service is included in the price; staff should be paid a fair wage and prices should be raised if necessary." J.S.

"I never tip if service charge is included. Otherwise only when the service has been particularly good. Around 10%" T.H.

"Shoddy service = no tip." S.E.

"Stupid idea. Tips should only be linked to good service which leads to better service." P.S.

"Why do some jobs get tips and others don't? Just do your job and get paid the agreed wage, like the rest of us." K.L.

"If it became obligatory it would really be an increased 'service compris'" S.H.

### A plaque honouring Pétain will be removed from a New York street as part of purge of 'hate symbols'. Do you agree with this?

"Pétain, should go. He was a French traitor who would have been hung if he wasn't so old and senile." P.K.

"We must learn from history, access to it shouldn't be hidden away in museums. Leave the plaque there, but with a note to explain to all why he was once celebrated, and now is condemned." G.P.

"No it should not. He was the Hero of Verdun in WW1 as well as a capitulator in WW2. It should stand a lesson for how the mighty can fall and a warning to future generations." S.H.

"You can't erase history. Know the facts and learn from them to not repeat the negative stuff." K.A.

### Should circuses be banned?

"Sadly, yes. Usually a child's first introduction to animals but they belong in their own habitat. Get rid of all the trophy hunters and those who hunt for any commercial gain." I.S.

"I remember when I first arrived in France, seeing a circus drive through town advertising, with a bear chained on a trailer. Awful." L.H.

"There should be no place for animals in a circus. It is shameful that this is tolerated at all but for a country like France it is disgusting." T.B.

"Makes perfect sense." J.M.

"Animal circus yes, people no, they are capable of entertaining without animals." C.R.

"Yes! The animal part anyway, just so cruel. It's not just the French it's a European thing." A.L.



## Q&amp;A

## Readers' questions answered



Send your queries about life here to **Oliver Rowland** by email to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

## What is a 'living will'?

**I WOULD like to know how a 'Living Will' is dealt with in France. What does one have to do, who do I contact and does a professional, such as a GP, have to sign it? My children are aware that I do not want to be resuscitated but so far nothing is in writing. U.C.**

FRENCH law allows for people to make a 'living will' in order to clarify their wishes should they find themselves terminally ill and unable to express themselves.

This may concern such matters as limiting or stopping treatment if you are in a vegetative state, whether or not you would want to be transferred to intensive care to try to keep you alive at all costs, whether to use artificial respiration or undertake surgeries, or instead to have palliative care which may reduce suffering even if it has the effect of causing you to die sooner than otherwise.

Doctors will respect your wishes within certain exceptions, such as if doctors agree that they are manifestly inappropriate to the medical situation.

A living will is called *directives anticipées* and the document must be signed and dated, including your date and place of birth and full name (a procedure involving two witnesses is possible if you cannot write). A template with suggestions for how to complete it can be found at [goo.gl/cbiQDh](http://goo.gl/cbiQDh). It is in two versions, the first for someone who is seriously ill and probably close to death, the second for people who are in good general health. If in doubt about the contents you might also like to discuss it with your GP.

Your living will may be lodged with him or her, or with your retirement home or the hospital if you are hospitalised. It can be changed at any time.

## New concert venue near Paris will be the largest in Europe



U Arena, near La Défense, will be the largest music arena in Europe

## WHEN will the U Arena in Nanterre be complete? H.S.

THE U Arena is set to open in October this year, with the Rolling Stones playing there on October 19, 22 and 25. Next up

are the *Supercross de Paris* motorbike show and *Stars 80*, with a large line-up of singing stars who made their names in the 1980s.

This new arena venue, pronounced 'you' as in English (the name also refers to its shape), is

set to be the largest in Europe with the ability to accommodate 40,000 concert-goers.

Describing itself as 'Europe's biggest stage', it will also have one of the world's largest screens (1,400m<sup>2</sup>).

## Dog barks all day and night

**WE HAVE a neighbour who lets his dog bark all night and most of the day. He has been written to by the mayor, myself and a conciliation officer. I confronted him after he had been away all weekend leaving the dog unattended but he suggested I go back to the UK.**

**I have contacted an avocat and paid him to prepare a letter which to date I have not sent since it would appear that I have little chance of success.**

**Once the case starts the potential costs would not be in our control. The avocat said there was little chance without visual and audio documentation. If the other neighbours supported me it would be better but he would need them to become clients which they can not afford to do.**

**I also want to find an English-speaking avocat for a second opinion. This is all affecting my health. T.P.**

THE *CODE de la santé publique* says (R1334-31): "No particular noise must, by its duration, repetition or intensity, harm the peace of the neighbourhood or people's health, in a public or private place, whether a person themselves is making the noise or whether it is caused by another person, thing or animal under their responsibility".

If one of the three main factors is present the problem may be considered a *trouble de voisinage*. The noise must be 'abnormal', and the fact of it taking place during the night is often found to be an aggravating factor.

Anyone is entitled to take legal action over this, and in a *copro-*

*priété* of flats, the *syndic* can also do so (generally speaking it is always worth speaking to them about a noise problem).

Possible outcomes could include fines, injunctions (an order that the nuisance must stop), or confiscation of the dog.

The best way to provide 'proof' would be to pay to have a *huissier de justice* (bailiff) visit to note the problem formally, however one *huissier* from Ile-de-France said this can cost around €200+vat, depending on how long the visit takes.

Another effective measure is each time there is a severe episode, call in at the police station (*police nationale*) or gendarmerie to lodge a statement about the incident, known as a *main courante*. They will note it in their records and you can ask for a copy (if they think the incident amounts to breaking the law they may also decide to investigate and have powers to give on-the-spot fines). If enough accumulate, your lawyer should have no trouble convincing the court to issue an injunction, said hon avocat Gerard Barron from Boulogne-sur-Mer.

To look for an English-speaking avocat search 'English' as the language option at [avocat.fr](http://avocat.fr) (choose one specialising in *droit pénal*). Click *Consulter un avocat* and *Annuaire des avocats*. You could also ask the local *ordre des avocats* (bar).

Mr Barron said it is advisable to check your household insurance to see if you are covered for *défense/recours*; depending on the terms of the policy it may help with your fees. "Considering the severity of the behaviour you are likely to recover expenses such as the *huissier*'s fee and a contribution towards *avocat*'s fees, though you will have to pay upfront (unless your insurer helps). The more neighbours involved the better and the *avocat* can spread his or her fees across the number of clients involved."

Préfecture told me permanent *carte de séjour* does not exist

**IN RECENT issues there has been a lot of queries about *Cartes de Séjour* which I have been interested in as I have been a resident in France as a retired Englishman for nine years. I visited my préfecture in Cahors to request one with the word 'permanent' as you suggested and was told no such card exists and they can only give a 10-year card. Is there a website where I can find out more so I am prepared next time? P.P.**

TECHNICALLY it is the 'stay' (or 'residency') in France that is permanent and not the card itself but it certainly exists.

It is called a *Carte de séjour 'Citoyen UE'*

*EEE/Suisse - Séjour permanent* (Residence card 'EU/EEA/Switzerland - Permanent residency'). For more about this card see here: [service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F22116](http://service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F22116)

The card does have a renewal date on it in 10 years but renewal should involve only minimal paperwork - it is only so as to check you have not left France for two consecutive years, which can lead to a loss of 'permanent residence' status under EU rules. These 'permanent' cards are for EU citizens who have been in legal residence in France for at least five years. As Britons in France are still EU citizens it is not appropriate for UK citizens to be issued one of the

many various other cards available which are for 'third country' citizens ie non EU citizens (some of which are also renewable after 10 years).

The latter include the *carte de résident de longue durée - UE* and the *carte de résident de 10 ans*. There is also a card called *carte de résident permanent* - permanent resident's card - which some non-EU foreign residents in France are eligible for if they have previously held a 10-year card. This type of card has no expiry date and shows permanent, unconditional residence.

A card for a Briton in France should show *Citoyen UE* and not just *UE*.

## May we contest plans to build houses alongside our garden?

**WE BOUGHT the land that our house is on from a farmer 11 years ago. Now he wants to sell plots beside our garden, with houses that will take away our view and privacy. Do we have rights? A.C.**

YES but you must act quickly once a planning permission notice goes up on the site. As with the query about noise, left, you may wish to consult an *avocat*, in this case specialising in *droit de l'urbanisme* - planning law, a branch of *droit public*.

You may contest planning permission if you live near the site and can show that your enjoyment of your home will be directly affected by the loss of sunlight and view etc. The time limit to do so is two months from the notice going up.

You may make a *recours gracieux* to the mayor: a letter sent recorded delivery with reception slip, keeping a copy for your records, asking for permission to be withdrawn. Suggested wording can be found here: [service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R46120](http://service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/R46120)

Within 15 days you should notify the farmer that you have taken this action, also by recorded delivery, including a copy of your letter to the mayor.

The mayor has two months to respond, but if you have no response after this it should be considered a refusal. In such a case you may apply to a court for the planning permission to

be cancelled, called *un recours contentieux*, in the *tribunal administratif* (find details at [tinyurl.com/admin-court](http://tinyurl.com/admin-court)).

Alternatively you may do this instead of the *recours contentieux*, which is advisable if there is urgency such as building starting. The time period is also two months from the notice going up, but this can be suspended while waiting for a decision on a *recours gracieux*.

If building goes on despite your lodging complaints it is possible to file a *référé suspension* with the court and obtain an order halting work awaiting a decision to be made.

It is theoretically possible to undertake these procedures on your own, but using an *avocat* would give a greater chance of success. They may offer an initial consultation free of charge. They may also be able to identify technical legal problems with the planning application.

If you are unable to prevent work going ahead, it is useful to have a *huissier* take note, including photos, of the view and light before the buildings go up. It may be possible to obtain damages by taking action in the *tribunal d'instance* (up to €10,000 of damages) or *grande instance*.

It may also be appropriate to apply to the *tribunal de grande instance* for a demolition order in the case where you were able to have planning permission cancelled but building had already begun.

**FUTURE QUESTIONS  
- SEND IN YOURS...**

**Do cyclists have the legal right to cycle on the pavement in certain situations?**

**How long does *une ordonnance* (medical prescription) remain valid for?**

**I am 65 and will soon have an S1 form - can my wife still be my dependent for healthcare?**

**A neighbour is attracting stray cats to the area by feeding them - is there a law on this?**

**To receive the next issue at home... subscribe at [www.connexionfrance.com](http://www.connexionfrance.com) by September 12**



# Make sense of *Le baccalauréat*



Created in 1808, the 'Bac', is the French school leaving exam and a pass - at least 10/20 overall - grants students the right to go to university. There are plans for reforms of the exam by 2021

IT MAY have been started under Napoleon but the name *baccalauréat* has much older roots.

In fact its origins are the same as for the English word 'bachelor' (used in the UK for first-level university degrees) and in the Middle Ages it referred to a trainee knight. A person who has passed *le Bac* is called *un bachelier* or *une bachelière*.

In 1880 only 1% of a generation took the exam. This was still only 3% in 1945 but had risen to 77% by 2015.

The Bac has a specific vocabulary to understand how it works (see end of the article).

Firstly, there are three main types (*filiales*) for students to choose from: general, technological and professional ('pro').

Pupils need to plan ahead starting in *troisième* (generally age 14-15), discussing plans with teachers and parents as the choice of *filiale* may affect the lycée they transfer to in *seconde*.

Studies for the vocational *Bac pro* start straight away in *seconde* while for those who will take a general or technological Bac, *seconde* is a year of broad-based studies, with a final choice of the type of Bac to be studied being made at the end of that year.

There are plans to reform the Bac in time for 2021's exams.

This may include halving the final exams to just four, focussed on the candidate's main interests studied in greater depth, plus the use of continuous assessment.

Roughly half of those taking the Bac do a general one which is aimed at going on to higher education and they all continue with core subjects such as French, PE and modern languages and all take philosophy in *terminale*. Since 1993 there has been a choice of three types or *séries* of the general Bac: *littéraire* (L), *scientifique* (S), *économique et social* (ES).

The *Bac L* focusses on languages and literature, history, geography and arts. Students may also choose a 'speciality' such as a third modern language, law or even maths, taken on top of the core elements. The latter include science in *première* but its '*coefficient*' (weighting) is low, meaning marks obtained in it do not count strongly in the calculation of the Bac's final mark.



**Our main image was drawn for Connexion by artist Perry Taylor. For more of his work see [www.perrytaylor.fr](http://www.perrytaylor.fr)**

*Bac S* focusses on scientific theory and practice, including experiments, while *Bac ES* centres on economics, sociology and current affairs as well as history, geography and maths.

Students may also take up to two 'options', which may boost the final mark or make up for a weak subject (all the '*super-*

## Vocab of the Bac

**Filière ('pathway')** - *général, technologique or professionnel*

**Série (series)** - sub-types within a *filiale*, such as Bac L for the general Bac, or STL (*sciences et technologies de laboratoire*) for the technological one

**Spécialité** - a subject within a Bac course picked by the student from several possible choices (where a choice must be made)

**Option** - an extra subject freely chosen out of interest and/or in hope of a better overall mark

*bacheliers* that we hear about in the press when the marks come out - obtaining more than 20 out of 20 overall - have done options. These often include Latin or Greek (which are awarded a particularly high weighting). Other ones available vary around the country and include such subjects as hunting (at a lycée in Aude), surfing (in Tahiti and Biarritz) or chess, plus minority regional languages such as Breton or Basque.

If a student's favourite option is not taught in their lycée it is possible to register as a *candidat/e libre* and prepare on their own.

Some lycées offer the *Option internationale du baccalauréat* (OIB), a bilingual/bicultural Bac course studied partly in French and partly in another language. It should not be confused with the International Baccalauréat, which is not a French exam.

Certain schools also offer one of several 'binational' Bacs, such as a Franco-American one.

In addition to general academic studies, those doing a *Bac technologique* focus on a technical or applied science field, such as lab work, renewable energy or music and dance, with a view to higher vocational studies. There are eight '*séries*' to choose from and within some of these there is a choice of '*spécialités*'. For example within the management series students may choose to focus in *terminale* on finance, marketing, HR or IT.

The *Bac pro*, aimed at going straight into work, combines general study (French, maths, languages...) with study and placements in one of around 80 '*spécialités*' as diverse as forestry, cooking or dental prosthetics.

The general and technological Bacs are tested by traditional exams: *épreuves anticipées* (early tests) at the end of *première* and *épreuves terminales* (final tests) at the end of *terminale* when the exams are more numerous and also usually count for more in the final weighting.

Pupils with eight overall may try to raise their mark by taking *oraux de rattrapage*. The candidate chooses two of their subjects and undergoes an oral questions session. If their mark is better than the one from the written exam it takes its place.

There are nine or 10 obligatory exams (some written and some oral, or both) plus the options.

The '*spécialité*' of the *Bac pro* is tested mainly by continuous assessment and its requirements (written exercises or practical tasks) vary; candidates also take formal exams in the common academic subjects.

Candidates with high marks obtain merit awards (known as *mentions*). These are *assez bien* (quite good) for 12/13, *bien* for 14/15 and *très bien* for 16 or more.



## Talking Point

Bob Elliott from telephone and broadband provider, UK Telecom, answers your queries

**uktelecom**  
First for Expat in France

**Q: Can you explain about the latest changes in roaming charges for mobiles? F.M.**

A: Making calls or accessing data with your mobile phone when you are in another European Union country has become much cheaper this summer.

Free roaming rules now allow those with a UK mobile to have their calls and data costs charged at the same rate whether they are in the UK or France (or elsewhere in the EU). The same applies when using a French mobile in the UK. If you exceed your limits then charges will still apply of course but are now capped.

Most contracts specify a monthly data allowance so always connect to any available wifi service when travelling to help avoid exceeding this.

Some prepaid mobile SIMs have been offering this type of common tariff throughout the EU for a long time, so one could ask why it has needed politicians to get involved before customers could benefit.

Operators, however, must watch

for abuses where people use out-of-country phones for more than four months of the year.

The change is of particular help to those in the process of purchasing a property in France.

Up until now technicians managing the connection of utilities have been instructed not to call international mobiles resulting in many people entering into a new French mobile contract.

At UK Telecom we have already seen that the telecom engineers are now prepared to call our customers directly, although there is always a possibility that one will not be helpful. The gas, electricity and water teams will most likely be allowed the same new ability to call UK mobiles.

The downside is that this arrangement may end in March 2019 when the UK leaves the EU. It is hoped that the UK and the EU agree a new arrangement that enables the benefits to continue. There are estimated to be almost three times as many people from EC countries in the UK for each UK person in the rest of the EU so it appears likely.

See [uktelecom.net](http://uktelecom.net) for more information on services in France.

T: UK +44 1483 477 100 • T: from France 0805 631 632

## Euro Sense

Pippa Maile from Currencies Direct, answers a reader question on currency exchange



**Q: My husband and I live in France but need to move money back to the UK on a regular basis to pay for our son's university tuition fees and living costs. What are the options? K.S.**

A: Those making frequent transfers to the UK will have seen how Brexit has affected the value of their transfers. While the EUR/GBP exchange rate initially strengthened considerably, the pairing has experienced significant fluctuations ever since. This exchange rate movement can make planning your transfers a pain and with complex negotiations unfolding over the next couple of years this is likely to remain the case for your son's university stay.

When it comes to transferring money overseas, if you opt to move your money through your bank you may find that what should be a quick, simple task can end up taking considerably more time than it should. For a simpler, speedier alternative, consider using a leading currency broker. Whether you need to make regular, smaller currency transfers or have a large lump sum to move, currency specialists can help you save time and money.

One advantage is that some do not charge transfer fees (unlike many banks) ensuring the money you are sending to the UK is not reduced by unnecessary costs. Transfer fees can quickly add up if you make frequent transfers, so you could save hundreds a year.

Using a currency specialist also takes the hassle out of the transfer process as you can set up payments 24/7 from home, and ensure they are made automatically on pre-specified dates.

You can also make instant or 'spot' transfers whenever you need to, should your son need some emergency funds.

On top of this, by using a currency expert, you can ensure you are getting a competitive exchange rate. You can also mitigate some of the uncertainty of currency volatility by taking advantage of specialist services like forward contracts, which give you the ability to fix an exchange rate for up to two years in advance.

■ Email your currency queries to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

For more information about making international money transfers with Currencies Direct visit the website [www.currenciesdirect.com/france](http://www.currenciesdirect.com/france) or call +33 (0)4 22 32 62 40



# Compost classes let children enjoy food in a new way

by JANE HANKS

THIS *rentrée* will see some pupils adding a green topic to the timetable as part of projects to make schools more environmentally friendly.

Across France 2,200 primary schools, *collèges* and *lycées* have joined a global Eco-Schools programme involving 16million children in 64 countries, the world's largest environmental schools programme.

It was launched in 1994 in response to the 1992 UN Rio Earth Summit and is organised by the Foundation for Environmental Education, better known for running the Blue Flag scheme certifying beaches with clean bathing water and good facilities.

Schools signing up are helped to go greener, which can be in small ways like turning off lights but also in dealing with waste and using less water.

If they are successful they may be

officially labelled an Eco-Ecole.

Raguidelles primary school in the Paris suburb of Suresnes, Essonne, was proud to win the label for having 12 gardens and using vegetables grown by pupils in them for the school canteen. It has 16 classes and 420 pupils and aims to continue its work this year by making 'food' its theme for the *rentrée*.

It has had the gardens for 10 years and teacher Caroline Rouzé said a waste project – where they turned food waste into compost – was “fantastic as an educational tool”.

Mrs Rouzé said the children quickly learnt they could do a great deal more: “We chose waste as our theme and introduced a recycling scheme in all the classrooms. Children weighed the different amounts of rubbish collected every week and marked it up on the blackboard and the statistics were kept and analysed.

Photo: www.eco-ecole.org



Children celebrate Raguidelles school winning its Eco-Ecole label by showing some of the projects they created

“In the canteen, delegates were chosen to collect all the food waste and turn it into compost.”

They were amazed at the big piles of compost they began to collect.

“There was so much that we simply made up piles on hard ground we couldn't dig and after it had rotted down, we planted directly into the compost. The children were able to see the decomposition of the matter in front of their eyes and they then saw the difference in the quality of the vegetables we were then able to grow.

She said the children were very enthusiastic. “When I told them we didn't sort rubbish when we were at school they were horrified and made sure that we, the adults, make up for it now by doing it properly.

“It has been a wonderful experience because it takes the pupils out of the usual classroom context and puts all children on the same level, whether they get good marks academically or not. I was really surprised how the children responded.

“They were dynamic, well organised and even invented songs about what they were doing.

“The school is full of exhibitions created by the children on the subject of the environment.”

Working on the waste project in the canteen led the children to decide they could take action so as to eat bet-

ter and throw away less, hence this *rentrée*'s 'food' theme.

Mrs Rouzé added: “I hope lots of other schools will join us to become Eco-Schools. The children are our future and we need them to preserve our beautiful planet.”

There are seven steps to becoming an Eco-Ecole with teachers, pupils, other school staff, parents, and local councillors first forming an eco committee to get started.

They carry out a review to look at the environmental issues in their establishment and pick a theme for the year from seven key topics: biodiversity and nature, energy, water, waste, solidarity, health and food.

The efforts made, which could be, for example, reducing energy bills by making sure everyone turns off the light when it is not needed and installing energy saving bulbs, are measured and evaluated.

Teachers include the theme in their lesson plans and the project tries to involve as many people as possible within the school and to work in the community as well.

At the end of the year the programme is reviewed and the school can apply for the label.

The person in charge of the programme for France, Stéphanie Beney, said: “We would like to see a lot more schools, *collèges* and *lycées* joining

the scheme as it is not just good for the environment but also for the pupils themselves.

“A study looking at 300 schools found the pupils benefit from working with children from other classes and from working on a project.

“They learn new skills and are proud of their achievements, particularly when they lead to articles in the local newspaper.

“It is also very, very important to inform young citizens about the environment so they can carry on good practices in later life.

“A school is a good place to start because it is a small eco-system where people eat, use heating, lighting, water, create waste and have an outside space they are responsible for.

“Hopefully it means the children will become active citizens, responsible for the world they live in when they are older.”

Projects the schools undertake are often practical and have included creating a garden, introducing a recycling scheme, changing food suppliers in the canteen so they are local, and measuring the amount of water flushed in a toilet – and putting a bottle in the cistern to use less.

Parents and teachers can find out more about it at [eco-ecole.org](http://eco-ecole.org) and any school, *lycée* or *collège* can take part in the scheme.



Teacher Caroline Rouzé at the Eco-Ecole Raguidelles, Essonne, shows children how ordinary canteen waste can be turned into compost

## Using trusts is complicated but there is an alternative

### Money Matters

Robert Kent of Kentingtons explains.  
[www.kentingtons.com](http://www.kentingtons.com)



WHEN it comes to financial planning in the UK, a trust is a standard tool, most commonly used for inheritance tax.

In France, however, there is no such concept as a trust (however there is arguably a version of one, but I will return to that later...).

In 1987 work began on a French piece of draft legislation to define what trusts are and how they should be dealt with under French law. Two decades later it was still draft law and it looked as though it would never get anywhere, but by 2007 (a whole two decades later) legislation started to form. What was clear from the law is that the French fiscal authorities were deeply suspicious of trusts.

As from July 2011, French residents placing capital into trusts are viewed as gifting to a non-relative and will be taxed at 60% of the value given. Those not declaring a trust will be

subject to a penalty, which is the higher of up to €20,000 or 12.5% of the trust value.

This hostility toward trusts means that, overall, we would recommend avoiding any kind of trust as a financial planning tool for anyone who is a resident of France.

But what if you are reading this and you are the beneficiary of a trust or are a trustee of one or the settlor of one and you live in France?

Should you panic? The answer is “not necessarily”. Much depends on what the trust is, how it is set up and, importantly, when it was set up.

If you have set up a trust while living in France, this is not good news, as for every €100,000 you added to it the French government will want €60,000 of it.

We often come across people who are one of many beneficiaries of family trusts that were set up many years ago, well before even moving to France. These tend not to be a significant problem, where they are properly declared, which is usually on a form 2181.

Often, there is not even any income coming from these, so they are fairly straightforward. Naturally, these family trusts are difficult to disband, but one person being written out of the

trust is usually not a problem.

The point for us is that planning is difficult where trusts are concerned. The law is not sophisticated enough to fully understand complex scenarios, so it is often down to the local tax office to decide exactly how a trust will be treated. So, if good financial planning means dealing with certainty as far as possible, then keep well away from trusts.

This leads to a question – if trusts are how people plan in the UK, what do the French do to plan around inheritance? Well, earlier I promised that I would cover the fact that there is arguably a version of a trust in France.

Here I define some of the main characteristics of a trust:

- It is outside of the estate
  - The content no longer legally belongs to the settlor (until they want it back at least)
  - Beneficiaries may be directly named so the proceeds can be paid outside the estate
  - There are tax advantages for the beneficiary
- ...and here are some of the characteristics of a French *assurance vie*:

- 1) It is outside of the estate
- 2) The content no longer legally belongs to the

policyholder (the policy owns the assets and the policy holder owns the policy)

3) Beneficiaries may be directly named so the proceeds can be paid outside the estate

4) There are tax advantages for the beneficiary

Did you notice similarities?

You can also have a beneficiary clause managed by a notaire, separately from the estate.

This means that, like a trust, you can leave a complex set of instructions: for example your children, nephews, nieces or other beneficiaries inherit but if they die, then their children or nephews or other beneficiaries inherit instead.

There are many sophisticated clauses that may be used within a French *assurance vie* and full understanding of these is vital.

The crucial point to consider is that it must be a French-compliant *assurance vie* or it simply will not work like this. A UK / offshore life assurance bond does not usually have a beneficiary clause, will not generally have French fiscal representation for inheritance and is not able to use clauses under French law.

French tax planning is complex and requires serious thought and ideally expert guidance from a suitably French-qualified professional.





# AUTUMN SALE

DELIVERY THROUGHOUT FRANCE

## DON'T MISS OUT!

Which room are you  
looking to update?

**BIG  
AUTUMN  
SALE**

UP TO

**50%  
off**



We cover it all: Bedroom, Dining, Sofas, Nursery, Occasional...

**SHOWROOM:** Calle St Maria, 29670, San Pedro de Alcantara, Marbella,  
Malaga (next to Maxi Dia Supermarket and above GM Cash & Carry)

Tel: 951 979 221 | [sales@oaklandfurniturespain.com](mailto:sales@oaklandfurniturespain.com)

**OPENING HOURS:** Mon-Fri 10am-7pm  
& Saturday 10am-5pm



**OAK LAND FURNITURE**

Order online at our website:

Delivery across France ☒

[www.oaklandfurniturespain.com](http://www.oaklandfurniturespain.com)



# Name of the rose varies from region to region

REGIONAL differences are all part of the fun of learning French and you should not be surprised if the way certain words are said in your area is different to what you learnt at school.

Differences like hearing letters sounded at the end of words that are usually silent are among those you may have come across.

Reader Mary Douche, for example, told us that one of her south-west friends says *moins* as *moinZ*, even though in most of France the last consonant is not pronounced. At the opposite end of the country, in the north-east, they pronounce the T on *vingt*.

Lots of readers from the south notice the change that occurs in some of the nasal vowels there, such as Scheenagh Harrington, who said she loves the way people in Castres say 'peng' for *pain* and 'demeng' for *demain*.

According to Chris Sears, at the station in Bergerac they announce "the arrival of the tron", while Nathan Phillips said he has picked up a Ch'ti accent – "I say *shud* instead of *sud*, because I live in the north".

Reader Jane Dimba told us the northern expression 'y drache' for *il pleut*, while Lesley Kirton said she is amused at how her husband, who spoke little French before coming to France, now has the accent of their mountain village in Ariège – "I am constantly correcting him, only to hear him talk with locals and they say exactly what he says – the last letters of many words sounded, especially the S, and lots of other differences."

“

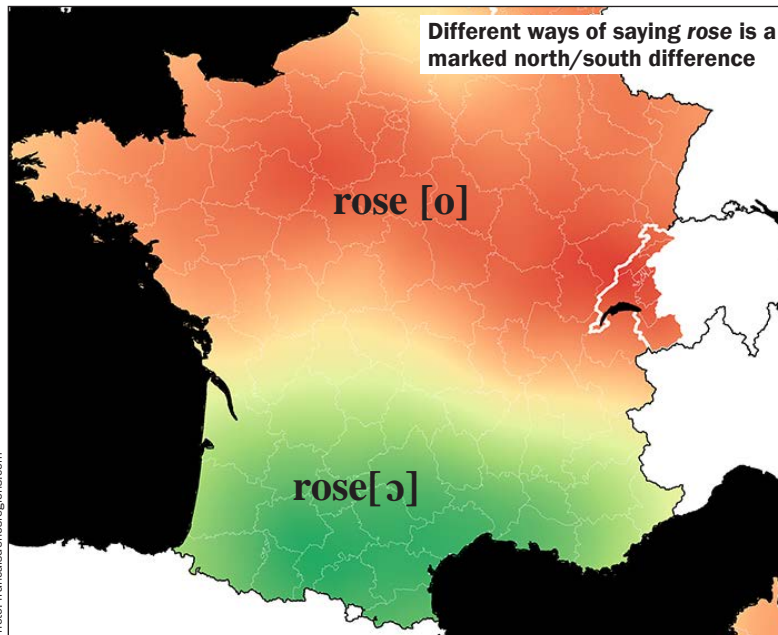
Tradition has it that the 'purest' French comes from the area of Tours due to the fact the royal court used to be based in the area

In a bid to chart such variations, linguist Mathieu Avanzi from the Catholic University of Louvain, in Belgium, has created the website [francaisdenosregions.com](http://francaisdenosregions.com) where he blogs about regional differences in language and posts maps deriving from surveys he carries out among thousands of visitors.

He said regional French should be distinguished from a dialect. Similar to languages like Spanish or Italian, dialects developed separately from Latin while conventional French took a different course.

"Regional French is French from Ile-de-France, but which has gained a regional colour depending on the local dialects and history.

"If you hear someone speaking a dialect like Walloon or Picard, you won't understand them, but with regional French, you usually can. There might be certain words that you don't under-



stand, but the general grammar and the syntax and sounds are more or less the same."

Another difference is that dialects can have very restricted areas – down to a single village – but regional French may be similar across a large area. He said the most noticeable regional kinds are the 'Ch'ti' accent from the far north, the typical southern accent found from Marseille to Toulouse, and eastern accents which sound Germanic due to the influence of the Alsatian dialect.

"Before doing the survey I didn't know, for example that in Ile-de-France [and a large central part of the northern half of France] they say *persi* for *persil* [parsley], whereas I always said *persil*."

"Sometimes it's hard to understand the logic and you really need a map per word. For example in the *moinS* area [south-west] they also pronounce the S on *encens* [incense], so we can deduce that in the south-west they say the S's at the end of words; that seems to make sense. But in the north of France they say *persi* but they pronounce the L on the end of *sourcil* [eyebrow], whereas it's the opposite in Belgian French.

He added: "I also never knew that in

the south-east people say *peuneu* instead of *pneu*. It comes from the fact that in the south they have tendency to add 'eu' sounds and they don't like having a consonant followed by another one. They will also say *un-eu petit-eu fill-eu* instead of *une petite fille*."

Other typically southern features include adding a *ng* sound to the end of words ending in N or M. There is also a north-south split in the sound of the O in *rose*, which is an 'open' O (as in English *pot*) in the south, or closed (with very rounded lips, quite close to the English pronunciation) in the north.

Tradition has it that the 'best' or 'purest' French comes from the area of Tours, to the south-west of the capital, which, Mr Avanzi said, is due to the fact the royal court used to be based in the area. He said it is not appropriate to say it is 'better' than other versions, but it is true that French there is probably of the most standardised kind, with the fewest regional quirks – and such as you will usually find marked in dictionaries or used by most announcers on national radio.

However he said more and more specifically regional words are being included now, along with a note about the area of France they are from.

## How dictionary publishers work out which words go in – and which come out

by MARK HAYES

EVERY year we read how new words have been added to French dictionaries – this year, for example, these include *uberization*, *hipster* and *burkini* – making them a recognised part of the language.

But have you ever wondered what happens to the old words presumably bumped out to make space?

Well, that is not quite how it happens. As lovers of words, dictionary publishers try not to condemn them to death.

"From one year to the next, from one version of the dictionary to another, we don't take away a word," Carine Girac-Marinier, the director of Larousse's French language department, said. "We add about 150 per year, as the French language becomes more and more rich."

"We might remove a few words during the big redesigns of the dictionary, which take place every 15 years or so. But it is relatively very few, because, for example, in 2012, of the 62,000 words contained in the *Petit Larousse*, only 200 words or meanings were removed."

However they try to move them into other more specialised dictionaries,

“

The 'latest' edition of the Académie's dictionary was finished in 1935 and work on the next one has reached 'R'

she said. "They are generally anglicisms that have gone out of fashion or which have been replaced by French words." A good example is *computer*, which has been replaced by *ordinateur*.

"Of course, we keep all the words and meanings that are in use, and all the words and meanings that can be found in the great texts of the past by writers like Corneille, Molière or Victor Hugo, but sometimes we keep the source of the word but not necessarily the whole family around the word," she said.

"For example, during the 2012 redesign we kept 'VCR' even if the object no longer exists, because we can find it by reading a book from the 1980s and a teenager might wonder what it is. But we have not kept *magnétoscope* [very rare word meaning to video record]."

"We refuse to remove words from our dictionary," Marie-Hélène Drivaud, editor of the *Robert* dictionary, recently told [telerama.fr](http://telerama.fr). "The words leave a trace: obsolete and modern must co-exist. We annotate with *vieilli* [old-fashioned] those that can be said by 80-year-old people and *vieux* [old] ones that are no longer said at all."

"To ensure this, we simply do surveys among people we know or young people. My daughter is the first one to tell me when I use an unfamiliar word."



Carine Girac-Marinier

"It was only in 1993, when we did a big redesign of the *Petit Robert*, that we took out a few words," she said. "They were mostly very obvious words such as *essuie-plume* [fountain pen wiper] or *cache-corset* [corset-cover]."

Ms Drivaud added that keeping old words is also justified by the fact that sometimes they come back into usage.

"Some words disappear and return, like *thune*, which originally meant alms and then became a word for the five-franc coin in the nineteenth century, before being forgotten."

"It was resurrected in the late 20th century in a different sense, as a slang term for money."

Deciding what words come in or go is not easy. Meetings between lexicographers and linguists at publishing houses may get heated.

"We are passionate about words but the criteria are rational and we are aware of having responsibilities towards readers," said Ms Girac-Marinier.

"There are bound to be tensions because some find certain words fundamental, others consider them unnecessary and it can be frustrating."



The cover of the Académie Française's sixth edition published in 1835. The current edition was published in 1935

Unlike the commercial dictionaries, updated frequently to describe the current language, the Académie Française's one, aims to include only 'good', recommended French.

As such it has an almost glacial approach to updates, to ensure words have stood the test of time (they should usually have appeared multiple times in reputable published work over a number of years). The 'latest' edition was finished in 1935 and work on the next one has reached 'R'.



# The Blevins Franks Autumn Seminars

## Seminars

Brexit, Macron, Healthcare,  
Pensions, Inheritance Planning,  
Timing, Tax, Markets...

**What to consider in moving to,  
staying in or leaving France.**

**Book your seat now**

**0 805 112 163** (N° Vert)  
[france@blevinsfranks.com](mailto:france@blevinsfranks.com)

**Online booking is also  
available from our website**  
[www.blevinsfranks.com](http://www.blevinsfranks.com)

Mon 11 Sep	CAP D'AIL
Tue 12 Sep	OPIO
Wed 13 Sep	LES ARCS
Thur 14 Sep	SALON DE PROVENCE
Mon 2 Oct	PLAISANCE-DU-TOUCH ( <i>Toulouse</i> )
Tue 3 Oct	CANET-EN-ROUSSILLON ( <i>Perpignan</i> )
Wed 4 Oct	BÉZIERS
Thur 5 Oct	CASTELNAU-LE-LEZ ( <i>Montpellier</i> )
Fri 6 Oct	VERS-PONT-DU-GARD
Tue 17 Oct	ANGOULÊME
Wed 18 Oct	BERGERAC
Thur 19 Oct	CAHORS
Tue 24 Oct	PONTIVY
Wed 25 Oct	VOUILLÉ
Thur 26 Oct	NIORT

BLEVINS  FRANKS

TAX ADVICE • INVESTMENTS • ESTATE PLANNING • PENSIONS

Blevins Franks Group is represented in France by the following companies: Blevins Franks Financial Management Limited (BFFM) and Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF). BFFM is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK, reference number 179731. Where advice is provided overseas, via the Insurance Mediation Directive from Malta, the regulatory system differs in some respects from that of the UK. Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF), is registered with ORIAS, registered number 07 027 475, and authorised as "Conseil en Investissements Financiers" and "Courtiers d'Assurance" Category B (register can be consulted on [www.orias.fr](http://www.orias.fr)). Member of ANACOFI-CIF. BFF's registered office: Parc Innolin, 3 Rue du Golf, CS 60073, 33701 Mérignac – RCS BX 498 800 465 APE 6622Z. Garantie Financière et Assurance de Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle conformes aux articles L 541-3 du Code Monétaire et Financier and L512-6 and 512-7 du Code des Assurances (assureur MMA).



# We retired to France – to Martinique

Thousands of newcomers to France choose the Dordogne or Normandy – fewer consider the tropical overseas departments, which are also fully part of the EU. Oliver Rowland spoke to a British retiree who moved to Martinique – and loves it

IN MOST respects the 'system' is exactly the same for people living in Martinique, in the French Caribbean, as in mainland France, says British retiree Trevor Darlington-Stables.

Mr Darlington-Stables, 60, moved with husband Dick, 57, in 2014 after previously farming alpacas in the Charente where they moved to in 2010.

"We loved the Charente but in February 2012, when the weather was minus 20 for a fortnight, we saw a report on the news from Martinique and we thought 'is it part of France and the EU?'"

"We'd never thought part of the EU could be in the Caribbean before – but we looked it up and it is! The climate is nice here all year round, between 26 and 32 degrees during the day. Joints don't ache in the winter and we have all the advantages of France."

There is however a 'rainier' part of the year and September and October can be very wet. "When it rains it really rains – tropical downpour time!"

The couple opted to come across the Atlantic, from Brittany to Guadeloupe, by cargo ship. It took eight days, followed by an overnight sailing to Martinique. "It was €1,500 for two plus our two cocker spaniels, and we had a nice cabin and food was included. It gives crossing the ocean a different perception of space – on a nine-hour flight you don't see anything. It was comfortable, there were six passengers and we ate in the same dining room as the officers."

"Coming out here they bring food and cars and furniture, and they go back with bananas, pineapples and limes for the supermarkets. I recommend it. It was CMA CGM – a French line, via [cruisepeople.co.uk](http://cruisepeople.co.uk)."

“

It's a multi-ethnic society here, which is very tolerant, open and nice

The couple rented a house after they arrived in Martinique, while having a new one built. "The procedures were very similar to the Charente because French law is the same. You have a construction contract with a *notice descriptive* and provided you have everything you need detailed in that, it goes well."

"We were more impressed with the company here than in the Charente, and they built our house in eight months. Ten per cent of the value, up to €40,000, is tax deductible over five years, plus we pay less income tax here, to encourage investment in the Antilles."

However prices are higher than the Charente: €350,000 for a typical villa or €2,000/month to rent a house with a pool long-term (€1,500/week as a holiday let).

He said Martinique is "basically an exotic France". "For



Trevor (left) and Dick Darlington-Stables love the year-round sunshine in their island home

example the banks are the French ones – like Crédit Mutuel or Caisse d'Épargne. La Poste is the same, the *carte vitale* works the same...

"It's green because of the good rainfall, there are lots of walks and beautiful beaches, snorkelling and diving."

Mr Darlington-Stables said the French spoken has some different words and pronunciations. "For example *demain* sounds like 'demen'. They sometimes call Metropolitan visitors *les oreilles* because they are always saying 'pardon?', because they're not used to it."

He added: "Some people in mainland France, before we came, told us the *Martiniquais* were racist to outsiders, but we've found the opposite."

"They are very pro-visitors and extremely polite. But they do expect good manners. If you're walking down the street people speak to each other and say 'bonjour' or if you go into a shop or doctor's surgery or bank."

"Occasionally some people – maybe a Parisian – doesn't and I think they take a bit of umbrage. Their children are also very well-behaved. They've kept the old-fashioned politeness of bygone years, not dissimilar to France, but more pronounced."

He said relatively dense population figures belie the fact that large parts are forested. "Yes, the towns have flats and some are high rise, and you have traffic jams at peak hours in the capital, but apart from that it's green and lush and there's a feeling of open space."

He said they also particularly enjoy the snorkelling. "There is a whole underwater world to see. And it's lovely to be able to go to the beach all year round."

You can also visit other islands, he said, but going to the English-speaking ones is "not an option". Apart from a few that are still British colonies, and the French and Dutch Caribbean, the rest of the Caribbean has retained homophobic attitudes and laws from the days of the British empire, he said. "We've never encountered any problem whatsoever in Martinique."

Mr Darlington-Stables said there are very few Britons. "We only know half a dozen and if you want to learn French – albeit with a slightly different accent – it's a nice place to do it, because hardly anyone speaks English, so you 'immerse'. But we frequently find that many locals have relatives working in the UK, which creates a link. It's a multi-ethnic society here, which is very tolerant, open and nice."

## Factfile - Martinique

WITH a surface area of 1,128km<sup>2</sup> Martinique is one of the smaller departments of France but it has a medium-sized population of around 400,000

People still call France's overseas lands the 'Dom-Toms', from *départements d'outre-mer* and *territoires d'outre mer*, but this is officially out of date since 2003: there are now the five *départements et régions d'outre-mer* (Drom) plus *collectivités d'outre-mer* (Com). The latter includes places such as Tahiti or Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon and are not fully part of the EU.

Martinique has been French since the 17th century. Its capital is Fort-de-France and its economic activity includes bananas, pineapples, rum and tourism

The local version of French Creole includes phrases such as *Pa ni pwoblem* (*pas de problème*)

Its time zone is six hours behind the mainland. Landline calls to it from the mainland are at local rate and need no separate code. Numbers start with 0596

People who came from mainland France are known as *Métros* (they make up about 10% of the population). There are also about 5,000 *Békés* – a prosperous group of white people from old colonial families

The rest of the population are mostly *métis* and black people, whose ancestors include African slaves and Indians who were brought over to work on the island

The cuisine is a mixture of European, Creole and Indian, with chicken, kid or seafood curries – called *colombo* – being one of the specialities

Income tax is cut by 30% compared to the mainland (capped at €5,100) and a specific tax reduction (the *Loi Girardin*) is available towards costs of buying a new-build home if you stay for more than five years

## Updates

### Carte grise online

CERTAIN administrative procedures involving a *carte grise* (vehicle registration document) can now be done at [ants.gouv.fr](http://ants.gouv.fr) – and will have to be done on this website from November.

This includes: changing the owner's name at the time of sale of a second hand vehicle, declaring sale or other disposal of a vehicle, or moving house and changing your address.

A request for a new document because of theft or loss must also now be done via this site. You need to be able to scan or photograph documents so as to provide them in digital form.

### Check fire alarms

FIREFIGHTERS report being called out to an increasing number of false alerts due to old batteries in fire alarms, which cause them to beep.

People are being advised to change batteries in alarms every year to avoid problems, and also to test them regularly to see they are working, and clean and dust them occasionally.

Estimated fire deaths have dropped to around 500 a year from 800 since detectors became a requirement in 2015.

### Product warnings

THE GOVERNMENT has published lists of pesticides and herbicides containing substances thought to be 'endocrine disruptors' – chemicals which are said to have potential health impacts including effects on sexual health, growth, development and behaviour, as well as potential harm to wild animals.

They have not so far been banned but the lists were put out in an aim of transparency. See: <https://goo.gl/kaRurc> and <https://goo.gl/gkS5Q1>

### Heal your plants

A FREE service in French can help identify and treat plant illnesses, nutrient deficiencies and insect infestations.

[cliniquesdesplantes.fr](http://cliniquesdesplantes.fr) was compiled by expert 'plant doctors' and is run by the 'Union protection jardins et espaces publics', the professional body for parks and gardens.

In 40% of cases problems are simply due to too much or too little watering, the site says.

## MYTHBUSTER

# French people must carry an identity card at all times...

UNLIKE the UK where there is no national identity card, it is often assumed that one is obligatory in France.

Officially, however, this is not the case and people hold one by choice not obligation, although for some administrative procedures such a card can be the simplest way of proving your identity.

Most French people in fact choose to have a card and there is not the same reticence about them as in the UK where identity cards are often linked to state interference in individuals' rights.

A *carte d'identité nationale* is only available to French citizens and may be issued free of charge to any French per-

## FACT OR FAKE?

In this regular column we look at the 'truths' everyone 'knows' about France

son, of any age. You apply at the *mairie*, or in Paris in an *antenne de police*.

A similar document called *titre d'identité républicain* may be issued to children who were born in France to non-French parents and who have not yet

obtained French nationality. A person may be asked to prove their identity, for example, to sit an exam, sign on at Pôle Emploi, join the electoral register or withdraw money from a bank teller.

An identity card is also sufficient to travel across the EU and EEA and in certain other countries with which France has travel agreements.

There is no situation where a French passport cannot do the same job, one difference being that passports cost €96 and only last 10 years before renewal. An identity card lasts 15 years and is more compact to carry around as it is a credit-card sized laminated card.

### Can you be stopped and checked in the street?

Yes, it is possible to be stopped and have your identity checked at any time and it is not necessary for there to be evidence of wrongdoing: for example the police may be justified in doing so simply because they believe it may in some way help to maintain public order and the safety of people and goods. It is therefore simplest to comply and hand over an identity document if requested.

Note that traffic police may also stop drivers without justification but they do not ask for ID, merely documents proving you are driving legally.

Official 'identity documents' include an identity card, passport, or a driving licence. Also allowable for police ID checks are a birth certificate, a *livret militaire* (showing the holder has completed French military service), an elector's card, a *carte vitale*, or even a witness statement. Non-French people must prove they are legal residents, such as by showing a passport for EU/EEA/Swiss citizens or a valid *carte de séjour*.

If police are not satisfied with the documents provided – which should preferably show your photo – they are allowed to detain people for up to four hours while evidence is sought.



People | places | culture | lifestyle

Natural life through a lens  
 Get the big picture at the Montier photo fest P16

Some like it hot!  
 Mexican waves at Espelette's pepper festival P12

THE NOSE WHO KNOWS  
 Secrets of the parfumeur - P4

Photo: Quentin Barroux

INSIDE

Your new favourite wine?  
 Your next must-visit corner of Languedoc has a growing reputation for its wine  
 P2-3

Living in a bubble  
 The story of Pierre Cardin's extraordinary home on the Riviera – yours for €350m  
 P9

A Provençal affair  
 Author Kristin Espinasse's love affair with France would make a great novel plot...  
 P8-9

September events  
 Find your perfect day trip or night out with our round-up of the season's events  
 P10

There is no place like home

Whether it's the sights, the sounds, or catching up with loved ones, home holds a special place in everyone's heart. So come back for a visit soon.

Book your flight + hotel or flight + car together to save time and money, leaving more to spend on the things you love.

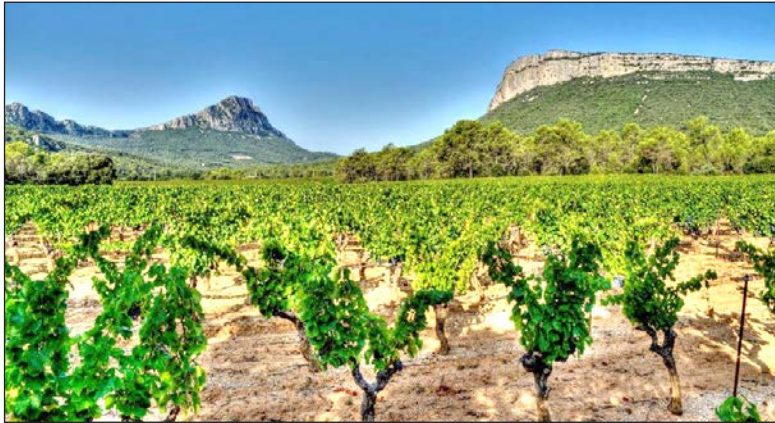
Whatever you are missing, visit [ba.com/holidays](https://ba.com/holidays)

Terms and conditions apply





The picture postcard Pic Saint-Loup region in Hérault, Occitanie



THE sprawling Languedoc wine region hides some fabulous wine treasures – but perhaps none so bountiful as the wines of Pic Saint-Loup.

Lying in the foothills of the Cévennes, 20 kilometres north of Montpellier, the area takes its name from a 658m limestone escarpment, a navigation point for ancient mariners in the Mediterranean. The mountain – shaped like a slumbering lion – is said to have given its name to the Golfe du Lion on the Med coast.

It faces the equally impressive Montagne de l'Hortus, a 514m plateau in Valflaunès, with the two forming a moon-shaped pass.

Local folklore has it that the two mountains were once a single entity, broken by a giant's footprint to allow two young lovers to escape the pursuits of a rich, unwanted courtier. Sadly for romantics, the geological evidence that they have always been separate is rather stronger.

At ground level, the area is strikingly unspoilt and beautiful, the topography a patchwork of vineyards nestling among the indigenous dense and varied vegetation of fragrant, wild garrigue plants and pine trees.

The diversity of the landscape is said to contribute significantly to the elevated aroma characteristics of the wines, with floral and herbal notes that accompany the fruit from the grapes.

Conscious of the need to preserve the beauty of the environment, in June 2015 the winegrowers and local councils signed up to the Charte de Fontevraud, an international label that commits the signatories to excellence in sustainable development and pres-

ervation of the natural environment. Many of the producers have also achieved organic certification, or are in the process of conversion to organic farming.

Talk to any of the winemakers and they will tell you the secret of their wines comes from with the appellation sitting between mountain and sea and benefiting from contrasting weather patterns.

As Fabrice Bonmarchand at Mas de l'Oncle states: "The winds and rain from the north irrigate the vines and keep them healthy, and warm air and sunshine from the south ripen the grapes. In autumn, hot days and cool nights ensure the grapes ripen with freshness, intensity of flavour and the warmth of fruit."

This also happens to be the wettest part of Languedoc – so the vines tend not to suffer as much from water stress.

However, the confluence of Continental and Mediterranean climates also brings the potential for dramatic weather events, such as occurred on the afternoon of August 17, 2016, when – on the cusp of the

harvest – dramatic hailstorms stripped many vines of their grape bunches and leaves.

Many winegrowers were affected, with some losing most of their crop, including such emblematic names such as Château de Cazeneuve, Clos Marie and Mas de l'Oncle, all based in the village of Lauret. The impact of the storm will be felt for several years, as the vines struggle to produce new growth.

# In a giant's footprint making region you've



harvest – dramatic hailstorms stripped many vines of their grape bunches and leaves.

Many winegrowers were affected, with some losing most of their crop, including such emblematic names such as Château de Cazeneuve, Clos Marie and Mas de l'Oncle, all based in the village of Lauret. The impact of the storm will be felt for several years, as the vines struggle to produce new growth.

## The Appellation

In a year of triumphs and disasters, last September, after a 16-year wait, the area was finally granted its own AOP status, having previously been a suffix to the generic regional appellation AOP Languedoc.

The denomination now covers 1,000 hectares of vineyards, in 17 villages. Four of the villages lie outside of the administrative area of the appellation, an inclusion that was one of the reasons why the classification has taken so long to obtain, as it was resisted by several winegrowers.

In total some 52 independent producers make up two-thirds of the production, and a further 60 producers are in one of three co-operatives in the area.

Only the red and rosé wines have been granted AOP status, with the whites remaining part of the regional appellation.

The new status will now provide them with opportunity to establish greater identity and potentially improve prices, although as the name is not one that is familiar to most wine drinkers it may be difficult to establish in the market. Most wine drinkers will be familiar with



A post-lunch scene from the annual Les Vignes Buissonnières gourmet trail

Languedoc, but Pic-Saint Loup?

Paul Strang, a wine writer in Languedoc, considers that the quality of the wines is not merely an accident of geography, and that the winemakers themselves must be given most of the credit: "As elsewhere in the Languedoc, many new and often quite young growers have launched themselves, sometimes because they have decided to leave one or other of the cooperatives, sometimes because, with a sound professional training behind them, they have persuaded their forebears to let them have a go and see what they can do with the family inheritance."

The most significant thing the winemakers brought about to change the pupa into a butterfly began in the 1980s to plant new grape varieties, when the then omnipresent high-yielding Carignan grape was gradually replaced by the Holy Trinity red blend of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvèdre.

That mix became sanctified with the new AOP status, which stipulates the wines must have at least two of the

main varieties, in which Syrah must be not less than 50% of each wine, and to which 10% Carignan or Cinsault can also be added.

White wine is also made, but accounts for only a tiny percentage of the total production – a pity because they are extremely good. A range of grape varieties is used, mostly blended, including the exotic Roussanne, Marsanne, Vermentino and Viognier varieties, all of which offer scents and flavours that are far more exciting than Sauvignon or Chardonnay.

## Which wines to buy and drink?

The appellation is often referred to as the *cru* of the wine areas of Languedoc, but as there is no formal hierarchy or classification of vineyards or estates in the region, each producer must rely on their reputation.

The ranking is made more difficult by the varied wine styles in the appellation, the result of differing *terroir* characteristics (soil, altitude, orientation), vinification practices and the commercial strategy adopted by each producer. Thankfully, choosing an



Barrels in storage at Domaine Haut Lirou in Saint-Jean de Cuculles



# – is this the best wine never heard of?



Local legend says a giant created this valley to help young lovers escape unwanted attention. Science disagrees.

“

The winds and rain from the north irrigate the vines and keep them healthy, and warm air and sunshine from the south ripen the grapes

enjoyable wine to drink is not difficult, as the majority are made to a high standard, a process greatly helped by the fact the appellation has benefited from a succession of great vintages over the past six years. The most recent 2016 vintage is considered one of the best in a generation.

Most producers offer a fresher, lighter, non-AOP red wine for early drinking, with prices starting from around €6 a bottle, moving up to entry level AOP reds starting at around €10. Expect to pay €20 and more for greater elegance, concentration and structure, for wines requiring at least several years of maturation.

Most of the producers make wines at varying price points, but some of the best examples of relatively inexpensive wines that are ready for early drinking are those from Mas Thélème, Château de Valflaunès, Chemin des Rêves, Domaine de la Salade, Saint-Daumary, Château Fontanès, Mas Peyrolle, Pech Tort, Domaine Clavel and Bergerie du Capucin.

At the top end of *grands vins* are Château de Cazeneuve, Mas

Bruguère, Clos des Augustins, Clos Marie, Ermitage du Pic Saint-Loup and Domaine de l'Hortus.

In between, are charming estates such as Château de Lancyre, Mas de l'Oncle, Domaine Morties and Château l'Euzière.

## Visiting the producers

To date, the area is relatively undiscovered, so presents a charm and authenticity that is frequently missing in more developed wine regions.

While villages to the south of the area have become a backcountry to the Montpellier metropolis, there remains a wildness about the land and villages to the north, where most of the vineyards are located.

The centre of the appellation is the village of Valflaunès, off the D17 spine road that runs through the area from Montpellier in the south. Either side lie the villages of Lauret, Claret and Saint-Mathieu. Between them they host most of the producers, with the village of Valflaunès alone containing no less than 12 independent growers.

Although slightly off the main wine routes, the road between Saint-Mathieu and Saint-Martin de Londres is worth a detour.

Most of the wineries welcome visitors and offer a complementary tasting, although your tasting is likely to be made more enjoyable and plentiful if you ring for an appointment.

No visit to the appellation would be complete without calling in at Domaine de l'Hortus. There is no more iconic figure in the appellation than the totem figure of Jean Orliac, a former university lecturer who, in 1978, purchased land set magnificent-

ly between the twin peaks of the Pic and Hortus and with his family now runs one of the best wineries in the area. [www.domaine-hortus.fr](http://www.domaine-hortus.fr)

Among the most prominent of producers offering a substantial wine experience are former notary Mireille Rambier and her brother Henri-Pierre, of Domaine Haut Lirou in the village of Saint-Jean de Cuculles. Tutored wine tastings, a trip around the 95-hectare vineyards in a 4x4, bistro-style lunch and dinner in the courtyard and four lodges set among the vineyards to sleep it all off. [shop.famillierambier.com/fr](http://shop.famillierambier.com/fr)

Fabrice Bonmarchand at Mas de l'Oncle also have similar offerings in their new architect designed winery. In addition to tastings with food and wine tours, they offer bed and breakfast, a range of talks on wine growing and production, and horse riding among the vineyards. [www.masdeloncle.fr](http://www.masdeloncle.fr)

Although offering less in terms of the total wine activity experience, another wine producer providing on-site guest accommodation is Mas Foulaquier in the village of Claret. It has a 75m<sup>2</sup> gîte and swimming pool in a lovely location. [boutique.masfoulaquier.fr](http://boutique.masfoulaquier.fr)

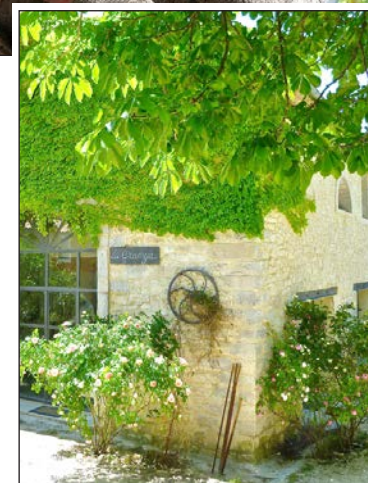
Also in the village of Claret is Domaine Zumbaum Tomasi, who have three gîtes to choose from, with breakfast and dinner as optional extras. Wine tastings of both current and older vintages, *déjeuner sur l'herbe* and horse riding through the vineyards. [www.domaine-zumbaum-tomasi.com/en](http://www.domaine-zumbaum-tomasi.com/en)

Other producers offering on-site accommodation are Domaine Mas de Figuer in Vacquières (



Jean Orliac (above) tests his tippie at Domaine de l'Hortus; Accommodation at Mas des Violettes (right)

[figuier.fr](http://figuier.fr)) and Domaine de Cazeneuve in Lauret ([www.chateaucazeneuve.com](http://www.chateaucazeneuve.com)). Although not a winery there is also good gîte and bed and breakfast accommodation at Mas des Violettes in Valflaunès ([masdesviolettes.com](http://masdesviolettes.com)), while the very knowledgeable English oenophile Sharon Nagel, at Domaine de Cantafaroune in Lauret, offers a gîte. Email: [nagel.sharon@gmail.com](mailto:nagel.sharon@gmail.com)



## Wine events

Though the tourist infrastructure is limited ([www.tourisme-picsaintloup.fr/en](http://www.tourisme-picsaintloup.fr/en)), there is plenty to see and do. In 2001, the winegrowers pioneered a gigantic gourmet experience in the vineyards, when over a leisurely six-kilometre walk, participants can experience a fabulous selection of dishes and around 70 wines at points along the route. The event attracts over 3,000 people each June and is invariably completely sold out within hours of the tickets going on sale. To book, visit [www.pic-saint-loup.com/les-vignes-buissonnieres](http://www.pic-saint-loup.com/les-vignes-buissonnieres)

Each October there is also the Festa della Vendemia, a week-long post-harvest cultural festival in Valflaunès which attracts around 4,000 visitors. As well as wine tastings, there are a range of exhibitions and workshops featuring the area's cultural heritage, street theatre, music and food.

## Where to Eat

Dining in the area is perhaps best enjoyed at lunchtime on the superb

terrace at L'Auberge du Cèdre, a rambling and isolated manor house outside of Lauret, which offers a range of both simple and more creative dishes, and an extensive wine list. [www.auberge-du-cedre.com](http://www.auberge-du-cedre.com)

In the village of Prades-le-Lez you will find the equally friendly and authentic Bistrot Vinaigrette. Dine next to the fireplace in winter, or on the terrace in summer. Copious plates of food in relaxed surroundings with a good range of local wines at reasonable prices.

At La Belle Vigne in Valflaunès, in a former stone walled wine cellar, you can also enjoy an extensive wine list, accompanied by a range of hot and cold tapas dishes. Special sushi evenings each Sunday and Monday. Lovely atmosphere. [labellevigne.com](http://labellevigne.com)

Other good wine merchants are in Saint-Mathieu-de-Trévières ([www.ville-saint-mathieu-de-treviers.fr](http://www.ville-saint-mathieu-de-treviers.fr)) and Les Vins du Pic adjacent to Montpellier in the village of Mauguio (28 rue Cabernets, no website). In all cases, ring before you turn up as opening times vary.



The Rambier family – driving forces behind Domaine Haut Lirou



# 'It can take 10 years to create a new perfume'

FRANCE has long been the hub of the world's perfume industry, where countless iconic scents have been created. Who hasn't heard of Coco's creation, Chanel No 5?

Many of the largest companies are in France, but to those in the industry, their spiritual home is Grasse, in the Alpes-Maritimes. A place known as the capital of flowers, it is where techniques to extract scents via distillation were developed.

The same developments were also made in Cologne, Germany, where *eau de Cologne* was invented, but parfumeurs in Grasse, with its mild climate, have always had more access to a big variety of blooms. Popular ones include rose, lavender and

by SAMANTHA DAVID

jasmine, citrus fruits, vanilla, resins including myrrh and incense, grasses and roots like verbena and vetiver as well as spices like cinnamon.

Today, most perfume ingredients are chemical in origin rather than natural, but Grasse remains the spiritual home of parfumeurs worldwide.

Jean-Claude Ellena, one of the world's best known parfumeurs, was born in the town. He is a second-generation parfumeur, and says of his father. "He didn't talk about it much at home with the family but I didn't enjoy school anyway, so left as soon as I could to join the family business."

Photos: Quentin Bertoux



Jean-Claude Ellena at work crafting a scent. *Terre d'Hermès*, below, is one of his creations

He says as he discovered the techniques used to make a perfume, he became fascinated, and perfume rapidly became his major passion in life. "Different scents have different personalities, as does every single smell."

"But making perfume is all about composition. It can take

up to 10 years to balance and construct perfume."

Unlike the popular picture of someone fiddling about with mysterious test tubes in a laboratory, mixing ingredients together to see if they smell nice, Mr Ellena says it's an intellectual occupation.

"It's like writing a book. You dream up the story, invent the characters, put the structure in place, edit a bit here or there, change the plot around, you do all this before you start typing a word. It's the same with perfume. You write the recipe in your head."

Between conceiving a perfume and being able to produce a bottle of it, there can be hundreds of rewrites and edits. "Sometimes it takes just a few months and sometimes 10 years. And instead of words, I use ingredients."

He doesn't have to smell an ingredient to know what it smells like, he can remember thousands of different scents. "You don't need a good sense of smell, just a good memory for smells."

The training takes between six and eight years, just to memorise key ingredients.

"But then it takes experience, maybe 20 years of experience, to master all the skills. It's a rare thing, a rare passion."

"Very few young people want to put the effort in. But it's the same in all the arts, to become a great pianist takes decades, a great dancer, or sculptor or poet, a great chef."

“

You don't need a good sense of smell, just a good memory

**Parfumeur Jean-Claude Ellena**

Constructing perfumes is an art not a science, he explains. It involves science but it's an art. "Like in cooking, you use physics and chemistry, but the results are art."

"There are only around 300 of us in the world, and 80 of them are in France."

Jean-Claude Ellena is so passionate about his art that he even published a series of books on the subject, including: *The Diary of a Nose* and *Perfume: The Alchemy of Scent*, both of which have been translated into English.

"Lots of people think we just mix up perfumes by trial and error, but you just make rubbish that way. People talk nonsense about natural perfumes, so I wanted to set out the reality – even if it shocks. I defend chemistry; the use of chemical ingredients in perfume."

"I tell you categorically, there are no natural perfumes any



more. All of them, every single one, contains chemicals. When I say that, it's shocking. The chemicals aren't there to stabilise a perfume, that's a detail.

"We use around 10,000 chemically-based scents, which have been specially developed to make perfume. So I write books to make people understand the fascination and art of making perfume."

Asked to choose a favourite among the many perfumes that he has created he says it is an impossible task. Not because they are so numerous – he has created perfumes for all the big perfume houses – but because to him they are all his children.

He says it is not about a particular perfume, it's about a creator's *oeuvre* – the perfumes created over a whole career.

Although he is now retired, Jean-Claude Ellena has another book coming out this autumn, *Ecrivain d'Odeurs* (French only for now) and has no plans to stop writing.



**Cancer Support France**

Free, confidential support for English-speaking people, throughout France, touched in any way by cancer.

Our highly-trained volunteers offer emotional, linguistic and practical help, depending on your needs and wishes.

*Who Cares, CSF Cares*



*You need never face cancer alone*

We are a network of Associations covering much of France. For support or advice or to find the nearest Association to you:

**Helpline 0800 240 200**

**helpline@cancersupportfrance.org**

**www.cancersupportfrance.org**

Why not join us? Volunteers are needed in all areas.

Contact your nearest Association for information.

## MAKING SCENTS: How "noses" came out of the shadows

IN THE perfume industry, parfumeurs are affectionately called "noses". In the past, noses tended to be shadowy, anonymous figures, valued by cosmetics companies for their skills but not really known by the public.

Today they are increasingly known for their work, in the same way as creative talents like composers, artists and chefs.

The Perfume Society says that a skilled nose has the ability to whisk people through space and time, bringing back memories of people and places, making us feel powerful, beautiful and creative.

To become a nose today, you would need a degree in cosmetic science or chemistry plus specialised additional training at a large fragrance house.



## SCHEME SET FOR ANOTHER RECORD YEAR

GARDENS are open on September 3, 6 and 24 in the *Jardins Ouverts / Open Gardens* scheme, which encourages garden owners of all nationalities to open up their gardens, big and small to the public, to raise funds for charity.

This is the association's fifth season and 170 gardens are involved in 28 departments, with hopes to have 200 gardens in 33 departments signed up by the end of 2017. The scheme started in 2013, when four British gardeners in the Creuse decided to open their gardens to raise money for charity, and the idea caught on.

Now, visitors can buy a €10 membership card which gives them access to any of the gardens for a year or pay €5 for a one-off visit. You can also buy an Anniversary card for €50 which gives access to the private gardens as well as seven prestigious French gardens, nearly all labelled *Jardin Remarquable*, which usually charge an entrance fee, but are offering Garden members with the new style card, free entrance.

Last year Open Gardens raised a record €23,000, with €12,000 going to *A Chacun son Everest*, which runs courses in the Alps to help children and women who are in remission from cancer but need help restoring their confidence after treatment.

President Mick Moat believes this will be another record year, as by halfway through the season they had already raised €20,000.

An amateur photography competition with the theme The Seasonal Garden is open for entries until September 15. The prize is a copy of your photo on canvas and two annual membership tickets for Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts 2018. The rules are on [www.opengardens.eu](http://www.opengardens.eu)

## Our pick of gardens to visit in September

### 16 Valaize, Saint-Pardoux-les-Cardes, Creuse

Open: Sunday, September 3, 10am-5.30pm  
Owner: Sue Lambert



SUE Lambert's garden is in what was a field for cows and horses on the edge of the hamlet. She says she is interested in gardening in an ecological way. Visitors will be able to see a full potager and cutting garden plus dahlias, chrysanthemums,

sedums and echinaceas and asters. There is also a 3km circular walk on the local lanes and a neighbour, who sculpts in limestone, wood and cellular concrete, has agreed to open her workshop and garden on the same day.

### Le Jardin Champêtre, Caunes-Minervois, Aude

Sunday, September 24, 2pm-5pm  
Owner: Imogen Checketts and Kate Dumbleton



YOU can visit this display garden from Imogen Checketts and Kate Dumbleton's adjoining nursery which specialises in flowering perennials, ornamental grasses, shrubs, ground-cover/lawn replacements, herbs, sensory plants and drought

tolerant plants. In early autumn there will be drifts of colour from the blue and purple perennials such as salvias, perovskia, elsholtzia and echinops, asters, catananche, tulbaghia and yellow coreopsis, helianthus maximilliani and foeniculum.

### Le Verger, Prondessagne, Saint-Avit-de-Tardes, Creuse

Open: Sunday, September 3, 10am-4pm  
Owner: Lynn Hutchinson



DAHLIAS, eryngiums, rudbeckias, day lilies, sedums, roses and fruiting pepper bushes will put on a colourful display in September in this half-acre plot with mature hardwood trees on two sides, several fruit trees, a vegetable plot and a

dry bank garden. Lynn Hutchinson says there are unusual plants dating back to the time when she studied horticulture and her tutor sold plants for 50p each. She managed to bring many of those she bought then to France by taking cuttings.

### Le Jardin de la Petite Pépinière, Caunes-Minervois, Aude

Sunday, September 24 10am-1pm, 2pm-6pm  
Owner: Gill Pound



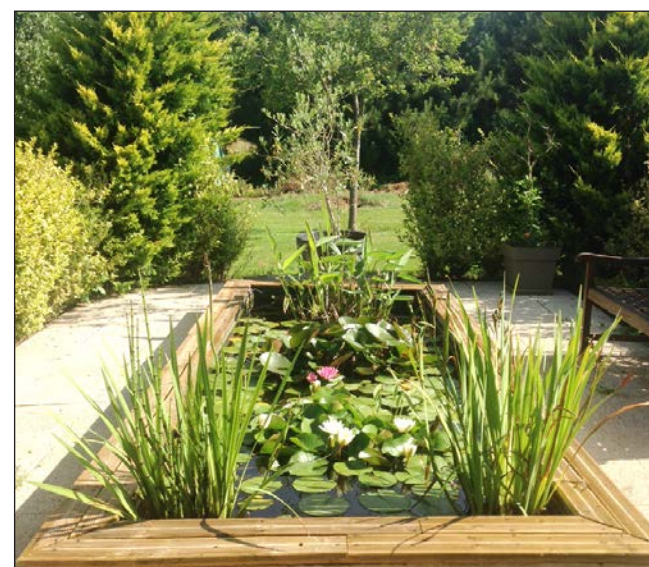
THIS is a Mediterranean-style garden of about one hectare which was started about 20 years ago on agricultural land. There is an enormous collection of shrubs and perennials, with tough plants that can survive dry summers, cold winters and

wind. A border of Mexican sages will be in flower as well as erigonum and asters and a big border of grasses. Some areas are only mown once a year, allowing wild flowers to flourish – including autumn lady's tresses, which flowers in September.

## 13-year garden odyssey began with purchase of two broken-down buildings

### Les Tachats, Hautefort, Dordogne

Sunday, September 3, 10am-5.30pm  
Owner: Kevin and Sheila Weedon



KEVIN and Sheila Weedon moved to France 13 years ago because they are keen gardeners and wanted to buy a property with a large area of land which they knew they would not be able to afford in the UK.

They bought two dilapidated buildings in a 7,000m<sup>2</sup> field, in a picturesque valley, overlooked by Hautefort Château.

Now they have a home, gîtes and a large, established garden with several different themed areas, including an English cottage garden, an Italian gravel garden, a white parterre-style garden, a formal lily pond, wild flower borders, an ornamental potager, a long rose arbour, two English long borders, and trees, shrubs and perennials.

Being in a valley means the land is sheltered, but the position did prove a problem



to start with as the soil is clay based and the ground became boggy in winter.

"We spent hours digging drains to get rid of the excess water", says Mr Weedon.

"There were no trees, so we planted several, and they take up the water. Now the sit-

uation is controlled and the advantage is that there is still always some moisture in the underlying clay, so that it never completely dries out in long, dry summers."

Their biggest challenge is facing up to a climate which can be very cold in the winter and very hot in the summer, and as all gardeners know, unpredictable: "The late frosts in April ruined our fig and apple harvests as it came at the wrong time.

"The cold winters mean we have to dig up all our dahlias and overwinter them. But gardening is never easy and there's not much we can do about the weather."

They are creating a rhododendron and azalea feature in the form of a ying-yang raised bed with a "sun-hive", natural bee hive.



## Attract more wildlife to your garden

Supporters of Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts [www.vivara.fr/english](http://www.vivara.fr/english)





# How modern-day druids rediscovered the 'lost secrets' of an ancient religion

FIFTEEN centuries ago, the mysterious religion of the Druids that had long pervaded the life of Iron-Age France, was driven to extinction by the advance of Christianity as it systematically wiped out all forms of paganism.

Surprisingly little is known for certain today about this lost religion.

The Druids passed their wisdom down by word of mouth, both to keep their mysteries in select hands and to train the memory of their initiates.

The Celts, in general, kept no written records about their civilisation and all we know about their religion is what Greek and Roman writers, notably Julius Caesar, chose to tell us.

These early historians were not only outsiders but often hostile to native culture. They reported what they wanted to report.

Piecing the evidence together, we know that the Druids dominated tribal society in Britain, Ireland and Gaul from at least the 4th century BC.

It has been suggested that the origins of their beliefs and practices are much older.

Although it is mistaken to think of megalithic monuments and Druids as contemporaneous, there may have been a continual mystical tradition in France from the painting of the prehistoric caves of the Dordogne and Pyrenees to the arrival of the first Christian missionaries.

The Druids formed a priesthood but they were more than merely intermediaries between the people and the gods.

They were a professional elite that advised and steered their societies. Druids seem also to have performed the functions of judges, soothsayers, teachers

To avoid being wiped out by the advance of Christianity, Druidry was forced underground for more than a millennium – but it has still managed to percolate into modern culture. Here, **Nick Inman** explains how it survived

and natural philosophers. They had knowledge of plant lore and of healing.

Details about their practices are scarce and not necessarily reliable.

We only know the name of one individual Druid, Diviciacus of the Aedui, who Roman writer Cicero knew personally.

The only description of a Druidic ceremony comes from writer Pliny the Elder, who explains that on the sixth day of a new moon, a druid in white robes would climb an oak tree to cut the sacred mistletoe plant down with a golden sickle.

The mistletoe was caught below the tree in a white cloak and two white bulls would be slaughtered. It is possible, but not certain, that they carried out human sacrifice on some occasions.

Druidism was tolerated under the Roman occupation of Gaul as long as the Druids did not present themselves as a rival power to the emperor.

As the Empire disintegrated in the first half of the first millennium, however, Christianity spread through Gaul displacing the panoply of pagan gods with one.

The new religion often incorporated elements of its predecessors by converting pantheistic deities into saints and building churches on sites of Druidic worship. The old ways became obsolete and the Druidic priesthood disappeared.

## New interest

In the 17th and 18th centuries, there was a reawakened interest in pre-Christian Europe. New groups of druids began to appear, first in Britain and later in France. They were reacting to the age of Enlightenment that tried to place man at the centre of the universe and in control of it.

Today there are thought to be around a dozen Druid organisations in France.

The longest-established of them is the Gorsedd of Brittany, an offshoot of the Gorsedd of Wales that was founded in Cardiff in 1899, under the auspices of the Archdruid of Wales. It is now led by Peri Vari Kerloc'h, the Sixth Grand Druid of Brittany.

The largest international druid organisation is the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids (OBOD) which currently has 19,000 members in 50 countries, including many members in France.

The head of the order is Philip Carr-Gomm who sees education as the main objective of OBOD: he oversees distance learning for people who want to learn more about druidry.

Adepts of Druidry divide into three roles or specialisations that were first described by the ancient Greek writer Strabo: bards, ovates and druids.

Bards were the storytellers or songwriters of the tribe and the guardians of the collective memory.

Today this category (distinguished by blue robes) suits people who work in the media or the law. Ovates, who wear green robes, were the healers and seers of old, who also engaged in study of the mysteries of life and death.

Today people whose work is the transformation of matter in the widest sense (craftspeople, scientists, farmers) become ovates. Druids, meanwhile, in their white robes, are teachers, philosophers and sages.

Druidry is, in essence, a philosophy that sees humans as



part of nature, not apart from it. It emphasises the need for rituals – alone or in groups – to reconnect individuals with the rhythms of natural life.

Beyond that, contemporary druids have their own beliefs. Some believe in reincarnation – the Celts saw death as part of life – but it can be interpreted symbolically, as in the death and rebirth inherent in the changing of the seasons.

## Spiritual, not religious

All druids are keen to separate themselves from the word 'religion' because of its connotations of structure, hierarchies and a fixed system of faith.

It is more accurate to describe Druidry as falling under the heading of 'SBNR' – 'spiritual but not religious'. "We prefer not to see it as a religion," explains Peri Vari Kerloc'h. "It is up to the individual. We don't talk about gods. We stand in silence and each person says what they want inside."

It may be argued modern practitioners are making much of the scant information available from classical times and that there is no connection between druids ancient and modern, but Philip Carr-Gomm says the truth is more complicated.

"Some people say all this is invented because the druids were wiped out around the 6th century... but Druidry went underground, and for a thousand years it percolated into our culture.

"Besides, from a mystical perspective, a spiritual tradition

“

Druidry answers people's need for a spirituality that reveres nature and has some historical context and roots

**Philip Carr-Gomm**  
Druid and author

doesn't operate in linear time; it comes from another level. Druidry answers people's need for a spirituality that reveres nature and has some historical context and roots."

Among OBOD's French members is Dany Seignabou who discovered Druidry in 2007 and has been studying it ever since.

She now lives in Brittany, near Mont St Michel, and is restoring a house as a gîte for guests who want to enjoy the

peace and beauty of the place, especially if they want to learn about or practice Druidry.

She plans to name it after that most well-known of Druids, Merlin, who is associated with Brittany.

"The one quality that I most like about Druidry," she said, "is that there is no dogma."

"You can do it alone or as part of a group. It is based on nature – water in its different forms, the forest, the mineral and animal realms and the ever



Mistletoe is important to Druid ceremonies

## DRUID FESTIVALS

DRUIDS conceive the year as cyclical – a wheel – rather than linear and they begin in the autumn after the harvest, rather than January. They celebrate eight main festivals connected to the changing seasons and how they affect human life.

### Samhain – October 31

The end of summer is a celebration of death and of letting go. **Alban Arthan (winter solstice) – around December 21** The rebirth of the sun when daylight hours start to increase again. It is a festival of hope at the dark-

est point of the year because life is about to spring up again from beneath the soil.

### Imbolc (Emwalc'h) – February 1

Although it is still winter the first signs of spring are appearing. It is a festival that celebrates inspiration for the coming year. **Alban Eilir (spring equinox) around March 21** This festival celebrates the renewal of life that happens in spring. The equal hours of light and dark make this a time of equilibrium from which to launch into the lengthening days of the summer to come.



# Freemasonry in France opens its doors to mark 300th year

FREEMASONRY celebrated its 300th anniversary this summer, with lodges throughout France opening their doors to the public.

The special open days in June, aimed at removing the mystery and suspicion often associated with freemasonry, included talks, visits of masonic premises, lodge rooms and museums, and 'open meetings' for family and close friends of members, in many cases followed by a meal.

There are over twenty masonic bodies in France. The usual term known to English-speakers is "Grand Lodges", but on the continent of Europe other appellations are used, the best known of which is "Orients".

In Cognac, there was a public conference in the town centre, given by two Grand Masters from one of the several Grand Lodges in France. A good sprinkling of British were said to have been present among the 200 visitors.

"The anniversary has resulted in a large influx of requests to join the Cognac English-speaking lodge," a spokesman told Connexion. Feedback suggests that Brexit is a factor in people wishing to take the plunge and join the French Lodges, who welcome the prospect of receiving them and point out the possibility of enabling English-speakers to set up English-speaking lodges."

France is very active in masonic terms and numbers are growing, with both sexes free to join, but while there are some mixed lodges, on the whole they tend to be men-only or women-only. Recent mem-



An 18th century Masonic temple at the Château de Mongenan, Gironde

bership figures show an approximate total of 175,000.

Meetings usually take place once or twice a month with conviviality a key aspect, and friendships develop involving whole families.

"Other benefits for new members in France include improving your language skills – freemasons do tend to talk a lot, so if your French is shaky, it will soon improve!" said the spokesman.

Joining a lodge is no more difficult than joining any other well-known club, as long as a candidate can prove himself or herself to be an honest person.

"There are a few English-speaking lodges in various parts of France and others can always be formed to meet the needs in any given town or region. A non-mason can apply to join, as well, of course, as masons

from other countries."

The June open days took place to mark 300 years since the founding of the first "Grand Lodge" of freemasons on June 24, 1717.

Known as the "Grand Lodge of London and Westminster," or the "Premier Grand Lodge", it was first mentioned in writing by a Scottish Presbyterian, Dr James Anderson, when he wrote the second edition of his Book of Constitutions in 1738.

Lodges existed before 1717, but no such thing as a Grand Lodge, or central authority, existed. The lodges and many other "clubs" met in taverns – there was nowhere else to go except coffee-houses and chocolate-houses.

The ethos of masonry dictates that distinction of any kind based on religion or politics is banned, all religious beliefs and democratic political ideas are tolerated, and all professions and hierarchies are represented, without distinction or prejudice.

Subscription costs are kept as low as possible, the largest expense for most lodges being the rent of premises, and most lodges make discrete (non-ostentation is seen as part of the ethos) donations to charity.

Readers seeking information about freemasonry in France and how to join a lodge can contact: etienne.casaldt@gmail.com



Above and below, modern druids taking part in a ceremony



present connection to the ancestors – and you work with the elements using your own experience and intuition.

"There is something vibrantly alive about it."

## Further Information

For more information on the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids (OBOD) see [www.druidry.org](http://www.druidry.org)

Philp Carr-Gomm's latest novel, *The Prophecies* (The Oak Tree Press) is set in France.

For information about the Gorsedd of Brittany see [www.gorsedd.bzh](http://www.gorsedd.bzh)

To find out about Dany Seignabou's druid-orientated Gîte du Druide Merlin: write to her at [kokliko5@hotmail.com](mailto:kokliko5@hotmail.com)

## #trending

Our montly look at a new aspect of the French zeitgeist. This month: Raw food

by JANE HANKS

EATING raw is a new food trend, joining other alternative ways of dining, such as non-gluten, non-lactose, vegan and vegetarian. There are restaurants, books, courses and even products on the market such as raw cabbage and kale chips and frawmage, which is "cheese" without dairy products or cooking, made from, for example, a base of cashew nuts and sunflower seeds.

In French it is called *la crudine* or *manger cru* – eating raw. The idea is that by not cooking food you preserve nutritional content because proponents of the diet say that above 42C enzymes, vitamins and minerals are weakened and fibres are softened.

Followers of the diet are often vegetarian or vegan and eat organic food which means their diet is made up of raw fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and sprouted grains. Some also eat non-pasteurised dairy foods, raw eggs, meat and fish.

Often health is the reason for a person changing their diet and fans say raw food helps get rid of long standing aches and pains and makes them feel much more energetic.

One young couple, Camille Lorente and Thomas Riem, spent a year touring France, visiting raw food families and they recorded their experiences in a web series and on YouTube. Before turning to raw food, Camille had been a journalist in Paris and Thomas a baker: "We used to eat junk food; pizzas, hamburgers, chips etc and until the age of 25 I don't think I ever ate vegetables or fruit", says Camille. "Then I decided to eat like this and I found that it gave me much more energy, a *joie de vivre*. I suffered from back ache which disappeared and I had no more painful periods."

The couple stayed with hosts around France and discovered new recipes and ways of eating raw. Two years later they have adapted their diet to a *Raw'tilFour* version allows them to eat cooked food in the evening. They have their own website [www.lafrancecru.fr](http://www.lafrancecru.fr) with lots of recipes and ideas.

In Brest, Brittany, a raw food chef has recently opened Ô-shun, where she offers lessons in raw food, and though she does not have a permanent restaurant, she will prepare meals to order in her recently renovated loft.

Four years ago, Arkami Shima was looking for ways to improve the health of her husband who suffered from severe back pain



Raw food chef Arkami Shima in her kitchen

and constant fatigue. She saw a video about manger cru and decided to give it a try: "We started gradually but eventually found that it suited us and my husband saw a radical improvement in his health", says Mrs Shima. "Day to day, we eat very simply. Fruit in the morning, or often no breakfast, a lot of fruit at lunchtime and an emphasis on vegetables in the evening with big salads and we eat grains and nuts for protein. If we go out then we will adapt and eat cooked food, but only vegetarian meals.

"However, there is a gourmet side to eating raw and you can create delicious meals and as I am also an artist, I love the decorative and attractive side to this way of preparing food. More and more people are interested and even if they aren't going to go 100% raw, my courses are also popular because people want to discover something different."

Eating raw is not to be taken lightly. Not all nutritionists agree on its health benefits and many warn that it could be more difficult to digest leaving you feeling boated and perhaps giving you diarrhoea.

However the gourmet world has given this type of meal the thumbs up with Raw, a restaurant in Paris getting a mention in the *Michelin Guide 2017* with this appreciation: "Willian Pradeleix has invested in a new concept, 'Raw', in a bid to preserve the vitamins and nutritional value of non-transformed ingredients. The experience is not only intellectual; the taste buds are also wooed. An example, cockles, citrus butter and pickled rhubarb. Healthy and tasty!"

**Beltaine – May 1** Spring is fully under way and this festival celebrates relationships, love and sex – the gateway to all life that is considered sacred.

**Alban Hefin (summer solstice) – around June 21** Druids celebrate the abundance and sweetness of life and the sun's creative power; but because daylight decreases from this point on they acknowledge that they shouldn't take the abundance for granted.

**Lughnasadh August 1** The festival of the Corn/Wheat Harvest; a time to give thanks

but it is also used as a time for the individual to review his/her life and separate the wheat from the chaff. There is 'death in life and life in death' say druids: for the seed grows into a harvest which is cut down but the seeds saved to create new life.

**Alban Elfed (autumn equinox) – around September 21** Fruits and nuts ripen on the trees and gardens are full of vegetables making this a time of gathering and celebrating bounty in preparation for the journey into the darker, colder months to come.



# Author's real-life rom-com comes with a Provençal happily ever after

From the spur-of-the-moment decision that led to a love-at-first-sight meeting with a mysterious Prince Charming, the inevitable break-up and longed-for reunion, **KRISTIN ESPINASSE** tells **Jessica Knipe** the true story of her move to France – a tale which has all the hallmarks of a novel

THE story of how Kristin Espinasse came to spend her life in France reads like a perfect Hollywood rom-com, complete with classic chance encounter that leads to love at first sight, shocking plot twist that could have ended the romance and wandering off happily ever after into the Provençal sunset.

Kristin tells the tale in her book, *Words in a French Life*, an account of her life in France that, despite being completely based on her real experience, would make a good novel: young Kristin grew up in Arizona, and had studied French for two years at university when, in 1990, her teacher told her about an exchange programme in Lille.

"It was a complete culture shock," says Kristin. "And it only lasted two months, which really isn't enough time once you have come all of this way." Luckily, one of Kristin's classmates had plans to stay on and travel south to Aix-en-Provence. "She was much more adventurous than me," says Kristin. "But she had already paved the way and figured it all out, so I followed her! We signed up to a language school, they helped us get student housing, and off we went."

Making the most of every opportunity to learn French, Kristin took in the sights and sounds of Aix, including its nightclubs.

Enter the tall, dark stranger – Jean-Marc Espinasse. They danced, they flirted, and Kristin went home with a business card

with the words 'Roy d'Espagne' on it. Unsure in her beginner's French about whether she had just bagged herself a royal husband, she got back in touch with her new Prince Charming.

Jean-Marc turned out to be an accountant, not the King of Spain – Roy d'Espagne was just the name of his building. But the spark had been lit. "It was very lucky," says Kristin with a twinkle in her eye. "If this friend in Lille hadn't scoped out her own future... I owe her a thank-you to this day."

After a whirlwind week of romance, Kristin had to go home to finish her studies. Meanwhile, Prince Charming sent postcards almost daily, telling her about all the places he was going that would have been better in her company. Rose-tinted glasses firmly soldered to her face, Kristin got back on the plane to fulfil her romantic destiny.

## Reality bites

By this time, Kristin's studies were finished and Jean-Marc had found her a job at the Chamber of Commerce, teaching English. "I was the worst teacher in the world," she says. "You should have seen the look on their faces. I'm so up in the clouds..."

After 10 months of living in France, reality was starting to set in. "I wasn't really fitting in," says Kristin. "I was resistant to the French lifestyle." What once seemed so romantic suddenly became just a boring daily rou-

tine. The American in her started missing some home comforts: "There's a canicule, but there's no air-conditioning... Then you're bagging your own groceries at the store, waiting at the bus stop to go home while the mistral wind is flying all around you... It started to really get on my nerves."

Kristin's homesickness generated friction with her relationship, and after months of listening to her complain, Jean-Marc bought her a one-way ticket home.

With a mix of sadness and resignation, Kristin left her French adventure behind.

That was that. Or, it would have been if not for love getting in the way – slowly they started writing to each other from across the Atlantic again. "He would write me this nice long letter and it seemed like we were getting back together," says Kristin. "Then I'd turn it over and he would be saying 'but it was for the best! That was torture.'"

In the end, Kristin's dad pushed her back into France's arms. "My dad had come to visit me in the flat I was sharing with my sister in Arizona, and he just said 'no, you don't seem happy here'. He told me to give France another try, even though he would really have preferred me to get a good paying job and settle down."

She was not returning for love, as that door was seemingly closed, but Kristin still told Jean-Marc about her plans. "I thought I should let him know that I was going to be around, just in case I bumped into him on the street and gave him a heart attack!" says Kristin.

The couple soon took up where they had left off. They thanked their good fortune that their story was not over. The authorities, on the other hand, weren't too pleased with Kristin's return. "I set off a red flag when I flew back in, because I hadn't let them know that I had left in the first place... They thought I was some kind of fugitive!" When Kristin called to extend her *carte de séjour*, the answer she received was that she had 30 days to leave the country. After overcoming all of the obstacles in the way of their romance, it looked like administration would kill their chances as a couple...

Soon they were speaking to a lawyer, whose advice was to get married. "We looked at each other, and thought 'Yeah!'

Photos: Jessica Knipe



Inspiring views from the terrace – and wine from the vineyard

We knew we wanted a future together, so we went for it. He's the perfect husband for me. It's been really enjoyable for me to write the story of our life for 15 years."

## Write what you know

Kristin's writing started in the form of a blog. After teaching, Kristin worked at a vineyard for a few years, but she felt unsatisfied. "They were squeezing me like an orange," she says. "I could feel inside of me that this wasn't really, what's that word in French...? *valorisant*. You're doing all of this work, but it really doesn't amount to anything."

In her frustration, Kristin turned to something she had been doing her whole life – writing a diary. Except this time, she joined a writing group and started her own website to publish her thoughts. "I didn't realise that what I was really doing was blogging," she says.

Looking for something that

would bring readers back every day, Kristin noticed that her Francophile readers in the US and UK were hungry for details about her French life – she decided to call her blog French Word-a-Day.

Each day, seven days a week, Kristin would take one French word and explain it by applying it to her everyday experience in France. People started reacting to her posts and soon she had over 25,000 readers to send a newsletter to.

The feedback she was getting from her group, BIC-HOK-TAM ("Butt In Chair, Hands On Keyboard, Typing Away Madly" explains Kristin with a grin) helped encourage her to collate her posts and print her own book. "I never looked back," she says proudly. "The books just got better and better, and I still couldn't believe the people reading my blog were buying them."

Word of mouth and book sales grew the blog's popularity even more, and one day, Kristin



received that email. "The subject line said From an editor at Schuster. That's a big company!" Her excitement is still palpable.

"A young lady based in Beijing, Ann Mah [who went on to write *Mastering the art of French Eating*], was looking for information about France when she stumbled on my blog."

"She sent it to a friend in the US, who thought it was charming. They culled what they liked and published it!"

It was a dream come true. For one Kristin hasn't wanted to repeat. "I really believe in self-publishing," she says. "I already have a readership and although I'm grateful for the recognition and especially the chance a professional publisher gave me, I'd rather send my book out into the world myself." The important thing was that now, thanks to this validation from a big-time publisher, Kristin was officially a writer.



The family home hidden away in the Provence countryside





After 15 years in France, Kristin says she cannot imagine living anywhere else – even as a new chapter in the life of the family looks set to begin

“

It was very lucky. If this friend in Lille hadn't scoped out her own future... I owe her a thank-you to this day

#### Call of the wild

The main adventure Kristin has documented in her books is the couple's foray into the wine industry. When Kristin came back that fateful second time, the couple settled in Marseille, where Jean-Marc started his career as an accountant. "He quickly realised that being in an office in a three-piece suit crunching numbers all day was not his thing," says Kristin. "He was more of a nature kind of guy." They answered the yearning for the outdoors by helping out Jean-Marc's uncle, a winemaker in Châteauneuf. "We went together, and I was miserable because of the amount of work," recalls Kristin. "Little

did I know that it would be our future!" Jean-Marc had caught the wine bug.

Because Jean-Marc had a business degree, his beginnings in the wine industry were in the offices. "He worked his way down to being a farmer!" jokes Kristin.

In 2007, the Espinasse family took their life among the vines one step further, and Jean-Marc started his own vineyard. Kristin presents me with a bottle of deep blbrunsushing rosé. The label reads Mas des Brun. "This is Jean-Marc's first wine," she says proudly. "Once you plant the vines, it takes three years for the grapes to be ready for rosé, 10 for red." The plan had been to wait the 10 years,



The organic garden is not to everyone's taste

but life took a different turn last year when Jean-Marc suffered severe depression.

Documenting it in her writing, Kristin watched as her husband's dream to expand his vineyard by digging into the overgrown terraces on his land was crushed by extension permits and red tape. "His heart just dropped," remembers Kristin.

Jean-Marc was already exhausted from years of farming, depending on the weather and so many other variables, and this administrative setback was the straw that broke the winemaker's back. "I had watched him wring himself out with work," says Kristin. "I often wondered how he could continue, but this just stopped him in his tracks."

After a year of introspection, the couple decided it was time to sell the property and start a new chapter. The timing seems right, anyway, now that their two children have moved out to pursue their studies in nearby Montpellier and Aix.

Enter 19-year-old Jackie, who walks in to the kitchen all trendy top-bun and off-the-shoulder top. She smiles and says, in an extremely cute little half-accent, "are you English?" I tell her my story, that I'm like her – half and half. "Oh cool," she says, "more English or more French?" For her part, Jackie feels more French, having being born and bred in the south of France. The same applies to her 21-year-old brother, Max.

From the wooden farmhouse table at which we are chatting, I look past the window seat and onto the abandoned vines beyond the lavender and sunflowers.

Next door, in the tiny but impeccable kitchen, a bell jar covers trimmings and tea bags ready to feed Kristin's permaculture garden. As she stirs honey into her tea, she talks about the lifestyle she herself has built: "I am totally into the self-sustainable movement. I find it endlessly fascinating. Not everyone understands it... I saw the look on a friend's face once as she saw the garden. I explained that it's organic, and has no pesticides. She said, 'I would rather eat chemicals than have this mess in my garden.' It's a choice."

In the beautiful organised mess of the garden, where fava beans, artichokes and prickly pears grow together in harmony, lies a metaphor for the Espinasse story. But now that the winds are changing, perhaps this could be an opportunity to start a new chapter in America?

"Jean-Marc and the kids thought this would be a good time to go back to the States," says Kristin. "But I'm really drenched in the French lifestyle. I don't think I'd want to leave now."

*Next edition: we interview the author Jonathan Meades at his Marseille home*



The whimsically futuristic Palais Bulles near Cannes could be yours, if you have €350m to spare

## Bubble house with big price-tag

by EMILY COMMANDER

IN A series first, this building with a secret history could be yours... for the princely sum of €350million.

The hefty price tag of Le Palais Bulles is less surprising when you take into account its location (overlooking the Mediterranean at Théoule-sur-Mer, south of Cannes), its size (1,200m<sup>2</sup> of habitable space) and its current owner (96-year-old designer, Pierre Cardin).

The Bubble Palace is a labyrinthine, futuristic house designed by Hungarian architect Antti Lovag for the Lyonnais industrialist Pierre Bernard in the 1970s.

It comprises multiple, interlocking, bubble-shaped pods, which have been layered into the hillside, and are interspersed with heated swimming pools, Jacuzzis, patios, sand-covered miniature beaches, and gardens.

There are 10 bedroom suites and even a 500-seater, open-air amphitheatre.

The Palais Bulles was the third building in the bubble style designed by Lovag, who styled himself as a "habituologist" rather than an architect.

His idea was to engineer a return to the primitive cave and grotto homes of human ancestors.

The pods of the house are all painted a warm ochre, which makes them look as if they have been moulded from the red earth of the coast.

They are punctuated by round apertures, designed to look like natural openings rather than manmade windows and doors, and which give the exterior a lunar appearance.

Its current owner has described the form as "feminine": "it's the body of a woman" he has been known to say in response to any comment about the lack of corners.

## The secret history of French buildings

No 7. Le Palais Bulles, Côte d'Azur



Even the furniture inside the property, which is owned by fashion designer Pierre Cardin, has been specially designed

#### Floating

If the bubbles of the Palais Bulles appear to float above the landscape this is because, in practical terms, they do.

They are constructed using a lightweight metal frame, which bears its own weight, and have no foundations. This frame is covered with a layer of concrete, and finished with plaster on the inside, and a further layer of reinforced concrete on the outside.

The spherical theme is continued throughout the interior, with custom-designed furniture that is often round. Each of the house's suites has been individually decorated by a different designer: Jérôme Tisserand and Daniel You are among those who have left their stamp on the building's eclectic interior.

#### Whimsical

Pierre Bernard did not live to see the completion of his whimsical home. When he died in 1991, seven years after work had first begun on the

site, only the first part of the project was finished. It was left to Pierre Cardin to complete work after he bought the building in 1992.

It was under his supervision that the amphitheatre was added, as was a panoramic reception room, which has subsequently been used to host celebrity parties, fashion shows, and exhibitions of Cardin's work.

While the building and its inhabitants might seem anything but mundane, the Palais Bulles has been subject to some very run-of-the-mill constraints during its lifetime.

Under Cardin, work on the second phase of the project began before permission had been granted for the plans, which were to more than double the size of the original mansion.

The law courts intervened, fined Cardin, and demanded that the site be returned to its original condition. All work had to be halted while a solution was found.



# Explore secret spots on heritage days

## Deauville American Film Festival, September 1-10

Hollywood A-listers head to Normandy in September, when the annual homage to US cinema turns the Calvados port film-mad. This year's jury head is Michel Hazanavicius, Oscar-winning director of *The Artist*. [www.festival-deauville.com](http://www.festival-deauville.com)

## Nuits de Sologne, Loire-et-Cher, September 2

The Petit-Neuteau site in Saint-Viâtre is the location for one of France's most astonishing firework and music shows. From 17.00 around 9,000 spectators take their place and this year's main event is *The Jungle Book*, which begins at 21.30. [www.nuitsdesologne.com](http://www.nuitsdesologne.com)

## Photojournalism festival, Perpignan, September 2-17

View the greatest photojournalist work from around the world in exhibitions across the city. Snapping fans can meet the foremost photo agencies and manufacturers of photographic related equipment. [www.visapourlimage.com](http://www.visapourlimage.com)

## Fête des Confitures, Ille et Vilaine, September 8-16

Brittany residents can treat their taste buds to some of the best jams around as local makers and sellers descend upon the village of La Chapelle-des-Fougereux, near Rennes. [www.tourisme-rennes.com](http://www.tourisme-rennes.com)

## Festival du pastel, Saint-Agne, Dordogne September 9-24

Demonstrations of the pastel user's art will take place on September 16 and 17, with workshops running from September 21-24. Guest of honour this year is successful pastel artist Annie Cassez. [www.festivaldupastel-desbastides.fr](http://www.festivaldupastel-desbastides.fr)



## European Heritage Days, September 16-17

The 34th edition of this annual celebration of French nationhood and cultural heritage will see some 17,000 French monuments and cultural sites open to the public. Some places that normally offer limited or no access open exclusively to the public for tours. Check website as the weekend approaches for listings. [journeesdupatrimoine.culturecommunication.gouv.fr](http://journeesdupatrimoine.culturecommunication.gouv.fr)

Among the countless unique places to explore on European Heritage Days is Paris's Cour de Cassation, France's highest court

## Bol d'Or, Circuit Paul Ricard, Var, September 15-17

The newly renovated Paul Ricard race track, also known as Circuit du Castellet, will host the return of the French F1 Grand Prix in 2018. First, it hosts this popular 24-hour motorcycle endurance race... [www.boldor.com](http://www.boldor.com)

## Médoc Marathon, Gironde, September 9

This must rank as one of the more unusual places to watch athletes in action: Médoc marathon runners run over 40kms to complete a course that takes in vineyard trails in prestigious appellations such as Pauillac, Saint-Julien, Saint-Estèphe, Médoc et Haut-Médoc. The

difference is, it's also fancy dress with plenty of wine tastings en route! [www.marathondumedoc.com](http://www.marathondumedoc.com)

## Colours and Gold, Moulins until September 17

While the National Museum of The Middle Ages in Paris is undergoing renovation, the Anne de Beaujeu Museum in Allier will be hosting some key paintings, sculptures, manuscripts, tapestries, furniture and goldsmithery. The world of medieval colour, created through dyes and pigments, is the theme. [www.mab.allier.fr](http://www.mab.allier.fr)

## Tous au Restaurant, September 18-October 1

Encouraging people to enjoy French restaurants is the main aim of this national culinary event, which in 2016 saw 600,000 paying punters dine out in 1,200 participating eateries. It is a great offer – buy a meal and your co-diner eats for free (the event's slogan is "Your guest is our guest"). [www.tousaurestaurant.com](http://www.tousaurestaurant.com)

## Festival de la Chanson Française, Aix-en-Provence September 24–October 9

Improve your French language skills and enjoy some great music at the same time – the Festival of French Song is a major advocate of the beautiful written word put to music. Young songwriters especially

## Cesta Punts Pro Tour, Biarritz September 1-10

Enjoy some high-speed, high-octane, ball-slinging Basque sport as the top level Cesta Punta tour comes to Biarritz. The tour features top players of this modern version of *pelota* from French sides Biarritz, Mauléon, Pau and Saint-Jean-de-Luz plus Spanish teams from Gernika, Bilbao and Plentzia. [www.cestapunta-protour.com](http://www.cestapunta-protour.com)



are given a stage from which to grow their fanbase. [www.festival-chanson-francaise.com](http://www.festival-chanson-francaise.com)

## Samourai, Musée Départemental des Arts Asiatiques, Nice, Until January 7 2018

Located close to Nice airport, this exhibition of 250 pieces from private collections or public institutions looks at the history of formidable Japanese

warriors who devoted their lives to strict code of *Bushido*. In quieter times they also enjoyed calligraphy, poetry and tea ceremonies. [www.arts-asiatiques.com](http://www.arts-asiatiques.com)

*The Connexion* works with local tourist offices for the information on this page. Due to possible last-minute changes to programmes and event timing we recommend that you always check with individual organisers before making a trip.



Get inspiration for your French home with pop-ups and openings during Paris Design Week

## Paris Design Week, September 8-16

From Les Halles and Bastille to Saint-Germain des Prés, Marais and Concorde, opening and installations will pop up across the capital. Now in its 7th year, Paris Design Week coincides with the Maison et Objet interiors show, which

provides home-sy inspiration to the public.

The event brings together the talents and forces of retailers, galleries, showrooms, hotels and restaurants to share their experience in design and creativity with the public. [www.maison-objet.com/fr/paris-design-week](http://www.maison-objet.com/fr/paris-design-week)



## Did you know?



Photo: Wiki/Basil

The vineyards at Montmartre are the capital's oldest

## How a Paris brain drain ban boosted Oxford Uni

A BAN on British scholars going to study in Paris helped shape the history of Oxford University.

During the Middle Ages, many of the best students from Britain went to study at the University of Paris, until Henry II instigated the ban in 1167.

"It would be an exaggeration to say that Oxford took off because of this incident, but it was certainly a stimulus," said Hannah Skoda, a fellow and tutor in medieval history at St John's College, Oxford. "The English students had all wanted to go to Paris."

However, she added: "We know very little about this early period in the history of the university, and there is some dispute over this story because the evidence is marginal."

In Laurence Brockliss' renowned book *The University of Oxford*, he claims that student numbers at Oxford grew only after 1193, when the 'uninterrupted 11-year war with France stopped English clerics from travelling to Paris as they had originally done.'

However, the number of scholars in Oxford at that time was still very small by today's standards, and it was not yet officially even a university.

"When Oxford and Cambridge were in full swing there were not more than a hundred incumbents residing in the two universities," wrote Henry Salter in 1929, although another book by Dr Hastings Rashdall had claimed there were 'hundreds of masters and scholars' from England studying in Paris.

Even while the ban was in place, Ms Skoda said, lines were not cut off with Paris. "The communication did not stop. There was a time when students could not go to Paris, but later on that changed again."

"What was significant about Oxford from the start was that it enabled people from provincial backgrounds to engage in a wider European culture." Clearly, over 800 years before the birth of the Erasmus scheme, the cultural exchange between European scholars was already well underway – despite the temporary hiatus.



Photo: Base Mamey/Wikimedia



Henri II of France and the Chapel at the Sorbonne

**Beaux Villages**

Beaux Villages Immobilier have opportunities for Independent Property Consultants in Languedoc-Roussillon and the Tarn

Free training given to motivated, bilingual individuals

Contact us: [info@beauxvillages.com](mailto:info@beauxvillages.com)  
Tel: 08 05 69 23 23  
[www.beauxvillages.com](http://www.beauxvillages.com)



## Let there be light (+ shade)

AFTER a childhood in Africa, Agnès Clairand spent 15 years working as a bookseller in Paris before moving to Poitiers in 2005 and beginning a new career as a paper lampshade maker.

Working exclusively with Japanese paper called chiyogami (meaning '1,000 years old'), she opened her first workshop-boutique in 2009 near the city's cathedral and is today a member of the Regional Mission of the Crafts of Art of Poitou-Charentes.

Among the ranges she has created are the Liberty (pictured, above), Zen and Azul. The designs are screen printed onto the delicate paper and the lamps are just as lovely when not illuminated. Available from the Poitiers shop or online.

[www.agnesclairand.com](http://www.agnesclairand.com)

## Watts what

FRENCH wireless speaker maker Devialet is emerging as a pioneer not only of exceptional sound quality but also aesthetic appeal. Its Phantom speaker, which comes in a very slick carry case, is a multi-room sound hub packing 4,500watts of power – the new Gold version is said to match the noise level of a small aircraft at top volume. With prices from €1,690 it is for serious audiophiles and tech lovers.

[store.deviale.com](http://store.deviale.com)



## The write stuff

DO NOT be fooled by the Italian surname – Frédéric Faggionato's hand-crafted lacquer, acetate and acrylic fountain pens are resolutely French.

Former wood turner Fred is based in Saint Maximin la Sainte Baume in Provence, where each pen is created as a one-off. Despite only being a pen maker for six years, Fred is already listed on the official Métiers d'Art list, and bespoke commissions are available by contacting him via his website (prices vary).

[www.faggionato.fr](http://www.faggionato.fr)

## Time is ticking in style

UPON first glance, this stylish watch from French watch company Klokers (the mechanics are Swiss-made) looks more like a complex navigational tool than a timepiece.

However, it is easy to tell the time once you know how – the hours, minutes and seconds are displayed in concentric rings that rotate at different speeds. So simply look through the slightly magnified central section at the top middle and read down.

The Klokers watch can be worn with a variety of interchangeable strap colours. Available in stores in France (see website) and online from €399.

[www.klokers.com](http://www.klokers.com)



## Some like it hot in autumn

BILLED as the last independent, family-run mustard mill in Burgundy, the Fallot factory in Beaune is a must-see when in town. Despite keeping up production traditions, the company is always innovating, creating

new flavours to meet the needs of the modern mustard user.

So why not try some of their warming accompaniments this autumn, such as mustard with Madras curry. €3.70 for 100g.

[www.edelices.com](http://www.edelices.com)



# Quoi de neuf?

New trends, products, designs, info and ideas across France

## Harvest your crop in style

PROUDLY boasting the 'Made in France' label that shines a light on the country's best home-grown designs, this stylish Panier Kajo is perfect for gathering the latest crop from your potager.

Instead of being made of old wicker, this one comes in a selection of colours and sizes... and is made entirely in recycled

plastic. The cunning flourish comes when you want to place the basket on the floor – underneath the basket, two pop-down legs appear.

If you have more than one basket, they slot inside each other for storage when not in use. Price €43 for a basket measuring 48x29x20cm.

[www.poussvert.com](http://www.poussvert.com)





# Basque-flavoured pepper party in homage to a

AFTER safely gathering the harvest of their protected spicy treasure, piment d'Espelette farmers and producers in the far southwest of France will celebrate their livelihoods at a two-day festival.

The event first took place in the 1960s, to mark the end of harvest, and now takes place every year in the final week of October. This year's *Fête du Piment* takes place on October 28 and 29 in Espelette. Entry is free, and details are available on the Espelette Tourist Office website: [www.espelette.fr](http://www.espelette.fr).

The event is organised by the *Confrérie du Piment et du Axoa de Veau d'Espelette*. Secretary Romain Casemajor explained: "A *confrérie* is an association which promotes local products. The members can be producers but also people who live in the area. Each *confrérie* has its own costume and sends its members to other festivals in other regions all over the country. Representatives from 90 different *confréries* come to the *Fête du Piment*."

"On the Sunday of our festival they all process in their different costumes after a mass to bless the *piment* and we then have a ceremony where we swear in new members who might be honorary, such as chefs and Basque sportsmen and women or local people."

Last year, a record 30,000 visitors came to the festival, which featured 200 stands with piment d'Espelette, other regional products and artisanal goods for sale. It is lively and colourful with plenty of Basque music from the *Bandas* who perform in the streets, houses decorated with strings of chillies, a traditional basque dance show called the *Makilari* and a *Pelote* game.

Mr Casemajor says piment d'Espelette is now very well known: "The TV food programmes which became popular around 2000 did us a great service, as many of the chefs used piment d'Espelette in their cooking. The fact that

## SPICE IN FIGURES

- 1 – Piment d'Espelette is the only spice to be awarded the AOC and AOP labels
- 4 – The pepper is not hot. It scores just 4 on the Scoville scale that measures a pepper's heat
- 8 – 8kg of fresh chillies are required to make 1kg of powder
- 10 – Its production is limited to 10 villages
- 20 – The minimum number of chillies needed to make a piment d'Espelette string
- 35 – The average weight, in grams, of a single fresh chilli
- 500 – The plant is an annual. One plant will produce on average 500g of fresh chillies

people are more and more interested in authentic products has also meant increased sales. Now we export worldwide, to Brazil, Switzerland and Asia."

But what does he think are its virtues? "People think that because it is a chilli it will be spicy hot but in fact it isn't and that means that it flavours cooking without taking away the taste of the principal ingredient but adds to the character of the dish. It is versatile."

"As well as savoury dishes it is also really delicious in chocolate and also in purées."

"Local producers make apple, cherry and kiwi jams flavoured with piment d'Espelette which are much appreciated."

The piment d'Espelette is the only French spice with the French AOC (*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*) and the European AOP (*Appellation d'Origine Protégée*) labels. It is grown in a small area covering 10 communes in the heart of the Basque country – with the



Members of the Confrérie du Piment et du Axoa de Veau d'Espelette in their finery

“

People think that because it is a chilli it will be spicy hot but in fact it isn't

**Romain Casemajor**  
Secretary of the *Confrérie du Piment et du Axoa de Veau d'Espelette*

town of Espelette at its centre.

This species of chilli was brought to the area from Mexico in the 16th century and flourished in this region in the foothills of the Pyrénées, which has a similar climate to its origins with gentle temperatures in summer, sufficient rainfall and warm southerly breezes.

It is not certain who first brought the chilli pepper to France though it could have been Gonzalo de Percarteguy, a Basque sailor who introduced maize to the Nive Valley in 1523. At any rate by 1650 most

of the farmers (or their wives) in the region were growing the chilli in and around Espelette and using it as a condiment and to preserve meat and ham.

The chilli was traditionally dried on the facades of the houses and the piment d'Espelette is now recognised as the emblem of the Basque Country.

Over the course of the generations, farmers selected the best seeds, and the resulting variety of chilli is the rustic Gorria, the Basque word for red, though it is better known as the piment d'Espelette.

It is a local variety of *Capsicum annum*. The difference between a chilli and a pepper is chillies secrete capsaicin, the substance that gives chillies their "bite".

The number of producers has grown in recent years from around 30 in 1997 to 190 producers and 14 production centres today. The number of producers goes up every year. Each producer has around a hectare of land and together they produced 160 tonnes of chilli powder in 2016.

If a producer fails to meet rigorous quality criteria three times in one year, he loses his right to apply for the AOC label that year. A tasting panel composed of producers, tasting experts and knowledgeable amateurs scrutinise batches by eye, nose and by taste and there are strict guidelines:

**In the mouth:** it must taste sweet with a hint of bitterness. There must be a sensation of heat and spiciness must develop in the mouth and the fla-

avour should linger.

**The nose:** There should be an aroma of dried hay, ripe tomatoes, red peppers and hints of roasting and the intensity of the aromas should be medium.

**The eye:** The powder can be orange, orange/red, red or russet and the grain size should be 5mm.

## FIND OUT MORE

A new visitors centre, *Etxea*, (Basque for house) opened this year in Espelette, where you can learn about every aspect of the chilli, its history, its composition, the way it grows, its nutritional and gastronomic virtues. In summer, activities are organised for children and there are cooking demonstrations. Entry is free.

Open: July-September,  
Monday to Friday  
10am-6.30pm, Saturday  
10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm.  
October – November and  
March-June, Monday to Friday,  
10am-1pm and 2pm-5pm.

## IN PRAISE OF PRODUCERS: Lurretik, Pyrénées-Atlantiques

WHEN the wives of local farmers in Espelette began growing piments and sold them to supplement their incomes, each autumn the peppers were threaded onto long strings and hung across the facades of the houses to dry in the sun, along with similar garlands of lemons.

The half-timbered traditional houses in Espelette, in common with the rest of the Basque country, are painted white with either bright red or green shutters.

Maritxu Garacotche-Lecuona took over her family's business Lurretik ([www.lurretik.com](http://www.lurretik.com)) in 1992 and, with other piment producers in the area, was instrumental in gaining the piment d'Espelette AOC (*Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*) in 2000.

"It was important as it gives us the right to challenge building permits and protect agricultural land in the area, which is in limited supply as we are sandwiched

between the sea and the mountains," she told *Connexion*.

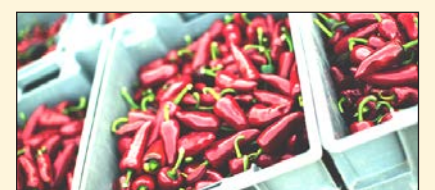
"Since we obtained the AOC for piment d'Espelette, local farmers have also obtained the label for the distinctive locally-made Jambon Kintoa and Ossau-Iraty cheese, which is made with milk from three different breeds of sheep.

"It means we're also protecting these heritage breeds as well."

Piment d'Espelette is not as hot as a chilli. "It is possible to measure the amount of capsaicin in a plant and grade it accordingly. So on a scale where the sweet pepper is 0 and the hottest chillis are 10, the piment d'Espelette scores 4, which is about the same as black pepper."

The taste is slow to develop in the mouth, she says, allowing it to be used with meat, fish and even chocolate.

The Lurretik farm is open to visitors on



Wednesday and Friday mornings at 11am.

"I enjoy showing people round and explaining how we produce everything," said Ms Garacotche-Lecuona. Visits are free and end with a visit to the boutique.

Their shop in the town centre of Espelette sells all their own products, as well as a selection of other regional specialities from small scale producers in the area.

Choose from a selection of charcuterie, including local paté, and preserves like sweet red peppers stuffed with fish, hand-made jams, biscuits (sweet and savoury) and local chocolates.



A tasting panel member keeps piment d'Espelette standards up



# Mexican spice

## ESPELETTE IN THE KITCHEN

ESPELETTE pepper can be sold fresh in strings, or as a powder in jars.

When bought in strings it can be used fresh or dry in fine shreds in sauces, omelettes, soups, stews or stock.

One tip is to add it to cooking oil as you would onion or garlic. To keep a string as long as possible you should hang it in a ventilated area, away from the sun. When your piment has dried for about two months you can reduce it to a powder.

In powder form it can be used to flavour meat, vegetables, fish and seafood and the advice is to use it at the end of the cooking time rather than at the start, to preserve its aromas. It can also be used at the table in the same way as salt or pepper. Piment d'Espelette can also be added to desserts, fresh or puréed fruits and chocolate. To prolong the flavour, the powder should be kept dry in a closed jar, away from heat and light.



**RECIPE: Savoury cake with fresh goat's cheese piment d'Espelette and chives**

*Courtesy of Chef Gérard Fouché, L'Atelier des Sens, Paris, and the Syndicat de l'AOC piment d'Espelette Serves six people.*

**Preparation time: 20mins.**

**Ingredients:** three fresh goat's cheeses, one small jar of sweet red peppers, chives, juice of two lemons, six tablespoons of olive oil, two courgettes, one pinch of salt, one large aubergine, basil, garlic, piment d'Espelette.

Wash the courgettes and cut into fine slices. Blanch for 1-2 minutes in boiling salted water, drain, then run under cold water.

Cut the aubergines into small cubes. Place in a pan with two tablespoons olive oil

and salt. Cover and cook for eight minutes, then purée the aubergines and add a pinch of piment d'Espelette.

Put the goat's cheese, juice from one lemon, chopped chives, two tablespoons olive oil, pinch of piment d'Espelette and salt in a processor and purée.

Cut the red peppers into small cubes and fold into the cheese mixture.

Line a suitable dish with courgette slices. Layer the cheese purée to 1/3 full in the dish, add the aubergine purée then add the remaining cheese purée. In the processor, mix garlic, juice from one lemon, remaining olive oil, salt and pinch of piment d'Espelette to make a vinaigrette.

Turn out the goat's cheese cake onto a plate and drizzle it with the vinaigrette.



Choosing the ideal day on which to harvest grapes can be a testing time for winemakers, with heat and rain the decisive factors

## Harvest weather watching

IN THE run up to harvest, *vignerons* throughout France wait with bated breath and crossed fingers for their grapes to ripen perfectly.

When we talk of a great vintage, it often comes down to the weather before and during harvest. First of all, we do not want hail, which can strip the grapes off the bunches and damage whatever is left.

Rain is a mixed blessing. In 2016, France saw drought conditions in many wine regions which prevented the grapes from swelling to their proper size as well as preventing the vines from transpiring.

When plants lack water, they close their stomata to prevent transpiration. This slows down their rate of photosynthesis and respiration, which means that they don't ripen their fruit as quickly. So a hot, dry year can lead to unripe fruit.

On the other hand, too much rain can cause the grapes to swell too quickly, diluting flavours and even splitting the skins, which, combined with the increased risk of *botrytis*, will lead to the bunches rotting on the vine.

Temperatures are important, too, as they determine the rate



**A year in the vineyard**  
with Jonathan Hesford of Domaine Treloar  
**The Terroirist**

of ripening. Too cold and the fruit will produce tough green tannins and high acidity. Too warm and the acidity will fall too quickly, producing flabby wines with no freshness.

Most *vignerons* measure the sugar content of their grapes to determine harvest date. Every AOP and region has an upper and lower limit for potential alcohol, the percentage of alcohol the sugar will produce during ferment. Equipped with a refractometer, we can measure the specific density of the grape juice which is directly related to the sugar content.

To get a more precise picture of ripening, more exacting estates will measure the acidity of the juice using a pH meter and/or titrating with sodium hydroxide and phenolphthalein (for those who remember their school chemistry) until the

juice changes colour. As acidity falls and sugar rises, growers try to predict the perfect picking date, when the juice will make the best wine.

But every grape, every bunch and every vine is different. No vineyard is homogeneous and we want to pick the whole thing in one go. So the smart *vigneron* will devise a way to collect a representative sample of the whole vineyard.

I do this by walking the rows in a fixed pattern, picking five grapes from a random bunch every 20m. I take two grapes from the top of the bunch, two from the middle and one from the bottom. When I have about 100 berries, I squeeze the juice out and take my measurements. I do this in every vineyard every three days. That takes a lot of time but I believe that a vineyard only has a

three-day window where it can produce its most balanced fruit and I want to get it right.

To decide the perfect picking day, I look at the weather forecast to make sure there is no rain coming. Rain will increase water content, diluting juice and changing the acidity and sugar levels. I also do not want to pick in the rain because all that extra water on the grapes will dilute the juice too.

So after much gnashing of teeth and poring over charts and weather forecasts, I choose the day and phone my pickers.

We start at dawn. That way the ferment will not start too quickly or be at too high a temperature. It also means the workers will not suffer in the full heat of the afternoon sun and that we can have all the grapes safely in the winery before it's time for a cold beer and the traditional *vigneron's* lunch of a baguette and cheese, before we go out testing again to decide the next picking date and which vineyard to pick.

Jonathan Hesford  
www.domainetreloar.com  
If you have questions on this wine column, email me at info@domainetreloar.com



Maritxu Garacotche-Lecuona and some of her co-workers in front of a piment-laden property at harvest time in Espelette

## Seasonal artisanal cheeses to try, and wines to match

### 1: Brillat-Savarin

Named after a gourmet and politician, this triple-cream cow's milk cheese, produced in Normandy and Burgundy, is sweet on the palate and eaten young and very fresh.

With a minimum of 30% fat content on the finished product, it is a soft cheese with a white crust. A flat disk about 13 cm in diameter and 3.5 cm thick, it has an average weight of 500 grams.

Its optimum tasting period is from April to October after a 12-day ripening, but it is also excellent March to December.



### Wine-matching

Brillat-Savarin goes nicely with reds such as Pommard from Burgundy and Château-neuf-du-Pape from the Rhône Valley, or cider. But the best accompaniment is Champagne.

### 2: Abondance

Mountain cheese Abondance is made solely from unpasteurised milk produced by the Abondance breed of cattle in Chablais, Haute-Savoie in the French Alps.

It is semi-hard and fragrant and among its characteristics on the palate are notes of fruit, butter and hazelnut. The crust should not be eaten.

The refining period of the hand-crafted, wheel-shaped rounds is at least three months. The cheese was granted an *Appellation d'origine contrôlée* or AOC in 1990.



### Wine-matching

Abondance pairs well with light red wines, such as those made in the Savoie region.

■ **These cheeses can be delivered by post.**  
See [laboitiedufromager.com](http://laboitiedufromager.com)



**Big Pig, Little Pig**, Jacqueline Yallop, Penguin, £14.99 ISBN: 978-0-241-26141-5

THIS bright pink book will sweep you off your feet, much like Jacqueline Yallop's pigs did for her. The deft writing – detailed and descriptive and endlessly subtle – is a breath of fresh air in a book scene where fluffy sketches of odd neighbours pass for an insight into French life. There is somewhat of a feel of a literature class about it, but that cannot detract from a voyage into country life where the living is as poor as only a forgotten land can be. This is Aveyron, and Jacqueline and Ed have a small-holding powered both by their land-clearing efforts and by freelance writing jobs back home in England. Their only exposure to the 'good



life' was Tom and Barbara on TV but they discover nature is not as seen on TV or in the supermarket. Food is planted, grown and reaped; meat is reared, butchered, rendered, turned into sausages and eaten... and therein lies the rub. The family have grown fond of the pigs. They have been guests at a barbecue, snuffling happily and keeping the conversation going – how can they kill them? Weary and worn down by family illness, choir practice and their need to make a decision, they decide. And then it rains. It should be snowy, frosty, like in the classic David Teniers the Younger painting. It should be anything but like what happens...

**Get Well Soon**, Marie-Sabine Roger, Pushkin Press, £8.99 ISBN: 978-1-78227-216-8 IF YOU'RE feeling sad and lonely, pop this in your shopping basket... it is the perfect pick-me-up. Not just funny, it has that indefinable something that makes it perfect for 'anytime' reading: the chapters are short, sharp and to the point. Which in a hospital – after being rescued from the Seine after 'falling' from a bridge – could mean anything from syringes to catheters. Hospital staff call Jean-Pierre Fabre the 'guy fished out of the Seine' and little by little he wriggles into their lives, despite being a grumpy old man. The daily indignities of hospital life come and go but, infuriatingly, so do the unwelcome regular visitors. The young girl who wants to use his laptop, the policeman investigating his case, the man who pulled him from the water... They are niggling to dig deeper into his past life. Why was he unhappy? Was he unhappy? And if he was so unhappy and grumpy why would people not leave him alone?



## The 20-minute book review

Connexion journalists read the latest French releases. In the interests of fairness, each gets 20 minutes' reading time

**Vernon Subutex 1**, Virginie Despentes, MacLehose, £12.99 ISBN: 978-0-85705-541-5

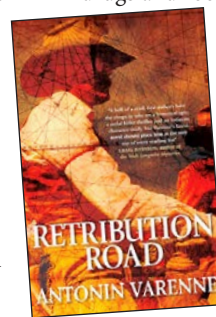
WELCOME to the world of punk, French punk, as nearly 50-something Vernon hits rock bottom – he has been there for a while, but did not notice – as his unemployment benefit is stopped. He used to own an infamous music shop in Bastille but that, like vinyl, has long vanished under the weight of downloads and music streaming. However, like vinyl, the urban legend may be about to bounce back – although that is several shipwrecks in the future. For the moment, he "reeks like socks worn too long" and his friends are wasting away and dying before his eyes. Finally, only Alexandre is left – the man known as rock star Alex Bleach



had been bankrolling Vernon 'forever'. He believed Vernon had given him the magic of music, opened the doors. With the money gone, Vernon is kicked out of the door of his flat and, happily, remembers to take the video-cassettes he had recorded with the star on his last visit. That sparks mayhem when he lets it slip and sets record producers, a biographer, fans and even porn stars on his trail... and Vernon is blissfully unaware of it all. This is what nearly-50s do as they try to relive their 20s. A life in the fast lane but being dragged along in the slipstream as he blags friends' couches and lifestyles for the night and discovers ways of life (and the anger of the women he betrays) beyond the norm of sex, drugs and rock'n'roll.

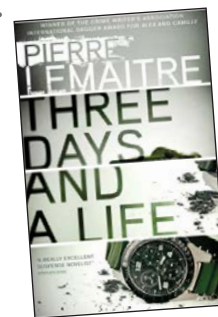
**Retribution Road**, Antonin Varenne, MacLehose, £18.99 ISBN: 978-0-85705-374-9

A STOMACH-churning journey from England to Burma in the late 19th century and back to London and then America, as Arthur Bowman faces life's horrors and then must face them again to track down a killer. It is a surprise that a non-British writer could come up with such effortlessly detailed writing on the East India Company, its Burmese operations and the aftermath of the company's actions. Bowman must track down a serial killer who is slaughtering the few who survived a secret mission that Bowman led and where they were captured and tortured.



**Miss Harriet and Other Selected Short Stories**, Guy de Maupassant, Editions Aris, €8.50 ISBN: 978-1535402422

THE FIRST tale would bring a tear to a glass eye, but this curious little collection of short stories is a step back in time and a nod to a different era. De Maupassant is a master storyteller and it would be difficult not to be rapt in his studies of everyday life and love but this translation is a bit stilted. Not enough to spoil the tale, but enough to jar. Avoiding De Maupassant's adventures on the Côte d'Azur and Paris, it concentrates on the Seine and Normandy and it is a real treat to re-read these glimpses of real life.



**Three Days and a Life**, Pierre Lemaitre, MacLehose, £14.99 ISBN: 978-0-85705-662-7

WHAT to expect from a writer who has won the Crime Writers' Association International Dagger three times but also France's top literary award, the Prix Goncourt... nothing but the best, obviously. He sees thrillers in a different way to many people: he aims to get the reader to forget being a reader and, almost, become the participant. Seeing the crime from their eyes, with their understanding, feeling it as they feel it; and then it all changes. Lemaitre's skill is to keep suspense building even when there no longer seems to be any suspense. We know who has killed Antoine's friend Rémi and we know it has left the killer wracked with guilt. What we do not know is how the killer will be caught. But we are inside their head and we know the terror they feel as they try to outrun their village and their crime. Until the day the police make an arrest.



## Language notes



### Surprise, surprise: my arms are falling off

WHILE the cliché dictates that all French people react to news, be it mundane or shocking, with the same casual Gallic shrug, in fact the opposite is true – and there are many ways to express surprise in French. Here are some you may hear. *Les bras m'en tombent*, which is best translated as 'you could have knocked me down with a feather', literally means 'my arms are falling off in shock'. Similar to this, but less polite, is *ça m'a troué le cul*, which literally means 'it perforated my bum'. Equally racy is *j'en suis tombé(e) sur le cul*, meaning 'I'm gobsmacked', or literally 'I fell on my backside'. Among the most popular uncensored expressions of surprise or horror in France are *Mon Dieu!* ('Oh My God') and *putain!*, which is the most commonly-used swear-word, and can cover an impressive range of reactions from surprise, shock and disappointment to awe and joy. It is not suitable for polite company. In text speak it can be abbreviated to 'put1' or 'pt1'. It literally means 'prostitute'. *Zut!* is the shortened version of *zut alors*, meaning 'damn', while *ça m'étonne* means 'I'm astonished'. *Incroyable!* means 'Unbelievable' and yes, people actually do still say *Oh là là!* *Tiens!* is a gentle expression meaning something like 'well how about that!' (other polite expressions include *flute!* and *mince!*, which roughly mean 'crumbs!' and 'drat it!')

Disbelief can be expressed with *c'est pas possible!* (It's impossible!) and *c'est pas vrai!* (It can't be true!). And one not to use... *sacré bleu!* This expression became known through the Tintin comics and Agatha Christie's *Poirot*, and was picked up by the British media. However, no-one actually uses it in France any more. It literally means 'sacred blue', with the word blue being used to replace *dieu* (God) in an effort to avoid blasphemy. It was once considered offensive, but its modern English equivalent would be something like 'Oh my goodness' or 'golly gosh'.

## French films

Our pick of the latest ciné releases



**The Death of Louis XIV**

Dir: Albert Serra; 115 mins (New Wave Films)

WITH his frazzled, untethered shock of grey hair, legendary French actor Jean-Pierre Léaud channels a be-wigged Phil Spector for this regal death-bed drama set in 1715.

As the French monarch of 72 years prepares to meet his maker after contracting gangrene, aides and relatives visit his candlelit chamber – with each frame of this low-key drama masterfully created by the Spanish director.

Doctors scramble about in hushed tones seeking suitable treatment, while Louis passes on wisdom to the great-grandson who will succeed him (Louis XV, 'The Beloved'). The role marks perhaps the last great chapter in the film career of Léaud, who shot to fame in 1959 playing the lead in Truffaut's *400 Blows*. One iconic and statesmanlike French figure honouring the dignified end of days of another.

**Also out:** *Le Redoutable* Homage to Jean-Luc Godard in 1967, played by Louis Garrel. Director: *The Artist's* Michel Hazanavicius.



**BRITISH INSURANCE BROKERS OF AQUITAINE B.I.B.A.**

For all your insurance needs  
In English or French  
Household - motor - health - etc.  
Please contact  
your insurance brokers

BP 19 - 6 rue Roger-Bissière  
47210 Villerséal  
Tel: 05 53 01 13 84 - Fax: 05 53 36 62 17  
Email: bibasarl@wanadoo.fr

NEVER MISS A COPY!

SUBSCRIBE NOW



SEE PAGE 11



# French Quiz

## Test your French knowledge in our *Connexion* quiz with a twist

- 1 What item of pastry closely associated with France, was introduced there by August Zang in the late 1830s from Vienna, where it had been known as the 'Kipferl'?
- 2 What English word for a type of deadline comes from the French 'couvre-feu', the equivalent of lights out!?
- 3 What French port is represented by a rugby team known familiarly as 'RCT', who won a hat-trick of European titles between 2013-15?
- 4 Which royal physician and astrologer is supposed to have accurately prophesied on July 1, 1566, to his secretary that "you will not find me alive at sunrise"?
- 5 Jean van de Velde (1999), Thomas Levet (2004) and Victor Dubuisson (2014) are the only Frenchmen to have taken part in what sporting tournament?
- 6 Which significant figure in British history, had a French mother called Marie de Guise, or Mary of Guise?
- 7 In the sport of fencing, what two-word French term is used internationally to warn an opponent to take up a defensive position?
- 8 Which 'C' an 11-letter word, is an edible mushroom that has a fruity smell reminiscent of apricots?
- 9 What three-letter French abbreviation is seen on the back of any lorry which is subject to a 1975 convention, aimed at standardising the international transport of goods?
- 10 Kiki Dee's first hit single in 1973 was an English-language reworking of a popular French song by Véronique Sanson, which retained what 'loving' one-word title?
- 11 Médoc, Saint-Émilion and Sauternes are three of the 54 appellations within which larger wine-producing region of France?
- 12 If you ordered *huîtres* in a French restaurant what would you receive?
- 13 Which composer's orchestral tone poem *Danse Macabre* is based on old French folk superstitions about Halloween?
- 14 Since 2009, 11 of the 577 deputies in France's *Assemblée Nationale*, have represented what category of voter?
- 15 In a French-language Bible, what is name of the fourth book of the Old Testament?
- 16 What is the English name for the expanse of water that the French call the 'Golfe de Gascogne', the 'Gulf of Gascony'?
- 17 In which country would you find the cities of Pondichéry, Yanaon, Karikal and Mahé, which were French possessions from the 18th century until the 1950s?
- 18 What was the musical day job of Micheline Ostermeyer, who won Olympic gold medals for France in 1948 in shot and discus, as well as a bronze in the high jump?
- 19 What French term for a type of water-based paint, more substantial than ordinary watercolour, derives from an Italian word for 'mud'?
- 20 What strategically vital part of Germany did France occupy for more than two years from January 1923, because the Weimar regime had defaulted on war reparations?

**Find the anagram!** Take the first letter from the answers to the questions above and rearrange the letters to spell out the surname of an acting great. Questions 3, 4, 7, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20

## Like Puzzles?

Then you will love the *Connexion* puzzle book, full of quirky facts, puzzles and wordsearches all about France. Have fun and learn!

Order at the helpguide section of [www.connexionfrance.com](http://www.connexionfrance.com) Just €7.50 (plus P&P)

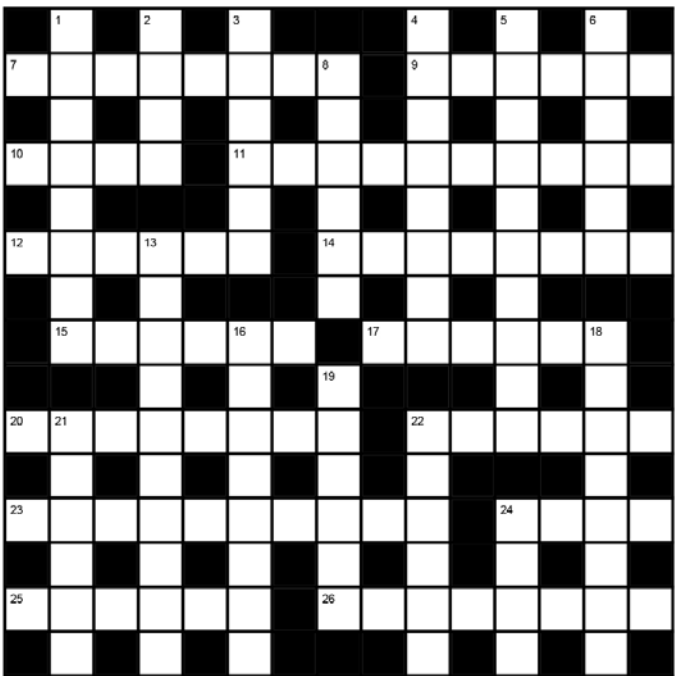


## Bilingual cryptic crossword

by Parolles

Answers are in French and English  
**ACROSS**

- 7 A lot of French gold hidden by Italian writer in bar is sent back (8)
  - 9 Give authority to leaderless soldiers to go to island retreat (6)
  - 10 Reportedly important meeting with Rex yesterday in Nantes (4)
  - 11 Each British miner surprisingly works well in Lens (4,6)
  - 12 German emperor at the outset begging for Katrine's initial French kiss (6)
  - 14 Largely detesting torture by a puller of teeth in Lille (8)
  - 15 Record on favourites coming from behind is plain (6)
  - 17 Extremely distressing painting withdrawn by German in charge (6)
  - 20 Cash machine with krona initially found by you I hear somewhere in Nepal (8)
  - 22 Financial institution in Marseille getting letters from Yoruban queen (6)
  - 23 Cheer Brue's opening song arranged by an Austrian composer (10)
  - 24 Being nothing more than something specified by Agathe's mother (4)
  - 25 Plasson's against making changes to concert without leading contralto (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 Exams in Chemistry originally set by people from Guadalajara (8)
  - 2 Laure's leather bikini eventually eaten by dog (4)
  - 3 Fall for René until meeting doctor leads to hesitation (6)



- 4 Aimee's to finish the edges of titfer in white fur? Just the opposite (8)
- 5 Behaving in an overemotional way when having an affair (8,2)
- 6 Unfortunately to Dahl it's tediously familiar (3-3)
- 8 Implores the French lawyer to come back into Palestinian Territories (6)
- 13 Modelling beats most leading arts and crafts (10)
- 16 Article on the church goes into writers getting punishments for wrongdoing (8)
- 18 That's right after King Charles receives our letters in Calais (8)
- 19 Native American game brought back by a French author (6)
- 21 Conservative loves to be surrounded by every rum constituent in Paris (6)
- 22 British Airways pledge to find Cecile's luggage (6)
- 24 Spoil one's French husband (4)

**CRYPTIC CROSSWORD SOLUTION:**  
Across: 7 Beauvau, 9 Enable, 10 Hier, 11 Bien marché, 12 Baiser, 14 Dentiste, 15 Steppe, 17 Tragie, 20 Katmandu, 22 Banque, 23 Schoenberg, 24 Mère, 26 Regardeur.  
Down: 1 Mexicans, 2 Cuir, 3 Tomber, 4 Terminer, 5 Carrying on, 6 Old-hat, 8 Plead, 13 Steamboats, 16 Penances, 18 Courrier, 19 Auteur, 21 Alcool, 22 Bagage, 24 Mar.

## French-themed crossword

by John Foley

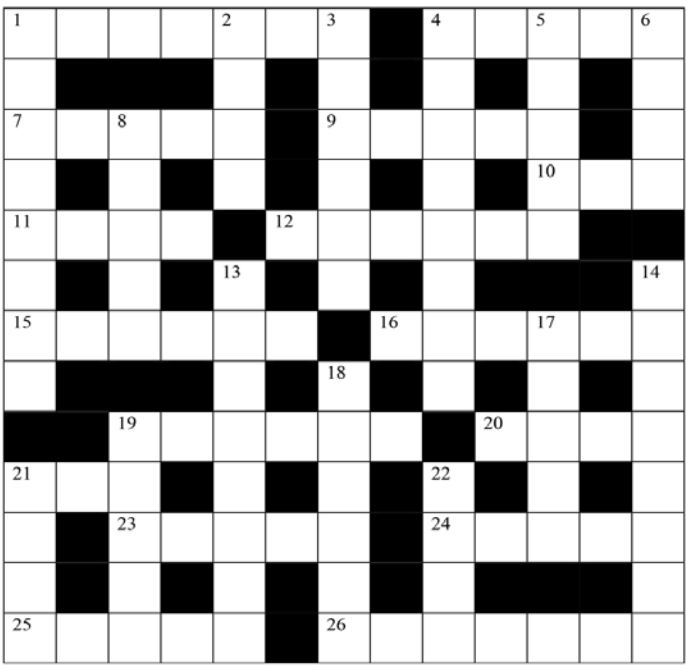
Note: all answers are words or names associated with France

**ACROSS**

1. Berthe \_\_\_\_\_, one of the 'trois grandes dames' of Impressionism (7)
4. *Etablissement public* – for collections of objects artistic, historic, scientific, etc. (5)
7. Modernist housing design principle developed by Le Corbusier and first built in Marseille in 1952: \_\_\_\_\_ d'Habitation (5)
9. Low wall (5)
10. Oiseau for foie gras (3)
11. A heap or pile (4)
12. Novelist Marcel \_\_\_\_\_, known for his *A la recherche du temps perdu* (6)
15. *Jeune homme gauche* – a clot (6)
16. Meat from a young mouton (6)
19. First name (6)
20. Game of chance with big rewards (4)
21. Ethereal creature with magical powers (3)
23. Molière play, *L'\_\_\_\_\_*, involving a penny-pinching curmudgeon (5)
24. *Gardien de la paix* (5)
25. Lukewarm – or *indifférent* (5)
26. Haute-Pyrénées town made famous by a peasant girl's apparitions in 1858 (7)

**DOWN**

1. Condiment commonly associated with Dijon (8)
2. To sweat (4)
3. Character or quality of a musical sound (6)
4. Road or lane markings – \_\_\_\_\_



5. *au sol* (8)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ dit, \_\_\_\_\_ fait – and that's fast! (5)
6. A perfect companion for lui (4)
8. Type of goat antelope or chamois living in the Pyrenees (5)
13. In some restaurants this type of water can be highly priced (8)
14. Trousers covering women from the waist to the knees (8)
17. *Etablissement d'enseignement pour les enfants* (5)
18. *'Le seul menteur du Midi, s'il y en a un, c'est le \_\_\_\_\_'*. *Tout ce qu'il touche, il l'exagère* – Alphonse Daudet (6)
19. Place to pay on the motorway (5)
21. Strong, or gifted (4)
22. Acronym for the ambulance and emergency service (4)

## French quiz and French themed crossword answers

**FRENCH QUIZ ANSWERS:** 1 Croissant, 2 Currew, 3 Toulon, 4 Nostadamus, 5 Ryder Cup, 6 Mary, Queen of Scots, 7 En garde, 8 Chantrelle, 9 TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers), 10 Amoureuse, 11 Bordeaux, 12 Oysters, 13 Camille Saint-Saëns, 14 Overseas residents, 15 Nomres (Numbers), 16: Bay of Biscay, 17, India, 18. Concert pianist, 19. Gouache (guazzo), 20. Ruhr Valley  
**ANAGRAM:** (Simone) SIGNORET  
**FRENCH-THEMED CROSSWORD SOLUTION:**  
Across: 1 Montfort, 4 musée, 7 unité, 9 muret, 10 oie, 11 amas, 12 Proust, 15 dadaïste, 16 agneau, 19 prénom, 20 Loto, 21 fée, 23 avare, 24 agent, 25 tiède, 26 Lourdes  
Down: 1 moutarde, 2 suer, 3 timbre, 4 marquaage, 5 sitôt, 6 elle, 8 isard, 13 minérale, 14 culotties, 17 école, 18 soleil, 19 péage, 21 fort, 22 SAMU



# Sharp-shooters flock to Champagne to showcase nature in all its untouched glory

by **SAMANTHA DAVID**

MONTIER-EN-DER, in Haute-Marne, is hosting its annual animal photography festival from October 16-19.

The Festival Photo Montier, 21 years old this year, attracts entries from all over the world, but is not solely a competition for photographers. As well as exhibitions of the photos, the festival runs conferences, and round-tables as well as events for children and concerts.

The festival, which attracts nearly 45,000 visitors a year, aims to encourage a healthy respect for our planet, as well as bring photographers together, to exchange experiences and views about subjects ranging from climate change to photographic techniques.

The festival is attended by at least 4,000 schoolchildren, with the idea of fostering interest in nature. The exhibition includes around 2,000 photos, of animals and their habitats, as well as scenes of the natural world.

The scope in terms of subject is wide, but the organisers require photos to be untouched; as they say, it is a photography festival not a Photoshop display.

The festival will also host a

mini-festival, *NightScapades*; images of the night sky and landscapes at night. The organisers hope this will be the first of many, and are making astronomy one of the major themes of this year's festival, along with macrophotography.

"We are all stardust," said astrophysics expert Hubert Reeves. "We are linked to our universe, each cell of our bodies is part of it. One of the questions explored at Montier, is whether or not we should protect the planet we live on before setting off to colonise more of them?"

Reeves' son Benoît, who makes documentaries is also a musician who conducts the choir at the Sorbonne. They will perform on October 19 at the Montier-en-Der Abbey.

**NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!**

**CONNEXION** readers are a creative bunch, and we' would love to see your untouched photos of French flora and fauna. Send them to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com) with your name, phone number and one sentence describing where and when the photo was taken, and we will publish a selection on our Facebook page. No prizes, just an enviable dose of kudos!



**This purple heron shot  
was taken at La Dombes  
in the Ain department,  
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes;  
Below: exhibition images  
from previous years**



**Pélican**  
*consulting*

Place du Château  
84220 **GORGES** • France  
+33 (0)4 90 72 33 52  
06560 **VALBONNE**  
13001 **MARSEILLE**  
75008 **PARIS**  
**PALL MALL LONDON**

**www.pelican-consulting.fr**

**Consultants** in wealth management,  
financial investments.

# Innovation *in Wealth Management*

## international taxation

and independent assurance brokers

**Independent Investment, Financial Planning and International Tax-Strategic Consultants** Pélcon Consulting s.a.r.l. • Siège : Oise de l'Isle A - avenue des Quatre Océans - 84300 L'Isle-sur-le-Vert, France • Capital : 8 000 euros • RCS : 451 43 12 45 • SIREN : 451 43 12 45 • ORIAS : www.orias.fr • 07 70 03 46 56 Garantie multirisque et assurance de responsabilité civile et professionnelle conformes aux articles L.5126-6 et L.5127-2 du Code des Assurances ANA-ACHOF • [www.anaachof.fr](http://www.anaachof.fr) • [www.pelcon.fr](http://www.pelcon.fr) • Assurance de responsabilité civile professionnelle conforme à l'article L.5121-3 du Code de Commerce • Assurance de Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle • Hertz, Bp.



by SAMANTHA DAVID

TRADITIONALLY, wine producers made wine and sold it. What stock was not bought in bulk by retailers they sold via their own boutiques, occasionally holding tastings to encourage people to buy a case or two.

Now that has all changed and winemakers are branching out to offer a range of other imaginative activities and attractions.

Visitors can go on guided walks among the vines, discuss philosophy, practise yoga, watch movies ... and learn about the entire process of winemaking. This rising popularity of 'wine tourism' is reflected in gleaming new centres such as the huge purpose-built Cité du Vin in Bordeaux. Here we look at six vineyard activities to try.

**1 Barrel sleeper**  
Visitors to the Domaine le Rocher des Dames, near Beaumes-de-Venise (84), can sleep in an outsized wooden barrel (pictured below). "We built it to offer visitors a fun place to stay," said Corinne Bernard, who owns the vineyard with husband Jean-Luc. "It's a barrel, but it's also a bit like a gypsy caravan or boat. We came up with the idea as a way of raising our profile, because we also offer other accommodation here at the vineyard."

She says people like spending time with them because it is an authentic working vineyard where they can either escape and relax in the tranquility of the countryside or learn about making wine.

"People often come in the autumn so they can be here for the grape harvest, which is obviously a very special time of the year for all winemakers."

**2 Yogic drinking**  
Other vineyards are taking the leisure trend even further. The Château Gassier, near Puylobier in Provence (13), has embraced the concept of 'œnotourisme', offering outdoor cinema and yoga classes, and selling picnics to visitors wanting to dine among the vines.

An hour of outdoor yoga is followed by an organic wine-tasting session; the cinema screenings also feature a



You can spend the night in an oversized 'wine barrel' with a view at Domaine du Rocher des Dames near Beaumes-de-Venise

# Six activities to try at vineyards that don't only involve wine tasting



Instead of raising a glass, you can salute the sun with outdoor yoga classes at Château Gassier, near Puylobier in Provence. Wine-tastings follow the classes

local food truck and include a free glass of wine; and the picnics all include a bottle of wine from the chateau.

Visitors can also follow signposted walks through the vines, and it is possible to book the venue for large events.

**3 'Welcome to wine world'**  
In Beaujolais country, not far from Dijon (71), visitors can take in 'Europe's only wine theme park' - Le Hameau Duboeuf, which spreads over nearly eight acres. The park includes a cinema, puppet theatre and a 3D virtual experience, allowing you to 'fly' over the area and see all the chateaux and vineyards.

There is also a museum, an adventure golf course leading through the vineyards and a restaurant and shop.

The venue is designed to appeal to all ages with educational and fun activities exploring the world of wine and wine-making.

The tasting room is highly decorated, making it a visual treat before you even start learning about the wines.

"The idea was born years ago," said Anne Duboeuf. "When my father-in-law, Georges Duboeuf, was about 16 he came up with the idea of setting up a wine-making



Take in a virtual flight over the vineyards at Hameau Duboeuf

museum so throughout his life, working here at the family vineyards, he collected memorabilia. Some items he bought, some were given to him."

The result is an extraordinary collection of wine-related posters and graphics that are on display in the museum which he opened when he was 60. "I would say it was the beginning of 'œnotourisme', because he was the first," said Mme Duboeuf.

The Hameau uses actors and interactive experiences as well as exhibits to immerse visitors into the world of wine.

"Of course, technical information is available for those who are interested but we concentrate on the human story so as to make the information accessible. We aim to make this a fun visit - even for people with no interest in wine."

The Hameau Duboeuf has an old station, which contains a railway carriage that belonged to Napoleon III and was used by Queen Victoria in Calais.

The restaurant dining room is a beautifully decorated treat. "We serve locally-sourced

foods and dishes from the region, and the restaurant is open 7/7, from 10am to 6pm."

Another nice detail is that you can take a Corail train from either Lyon or Dijon direct to Romanèche-Thorins, on the doorstep of Hameau Duboeuf, meaning you do not have to drive there.

"You arrive via the original station hall, which is restored to its original beauty and even features the traditional fresco, so you enter the winemaking world as soon as you arrive," said Mme Duboeuf.

**4 Run a marathon**  
Really. Every September, the Marathon du Médoc wends its 42km way through some 59 Bordeaux vineyards.

Like most serious long-distance races it features regular refreshment stations but, unlike serious marathons, anyone taking part is treated to a feast of oysters, cheese, steak and foie gras, washed down with up to 23 glasses of wine. Entrants are also entertained

by a series of bands. Every year up to 10,000 runners in compulsory fancy dress line up at the start of the most laidback and typically French of 'races', which starts and finishes at Pauillac.

Beware the pre-race parties, which ensure many of those taking part do not even make it to the start line in good shape.

This year's race on September 9 is full but anyone who fancies taking part in the future should check out [www.marathondumedoc.com](http://www.marathondumedoc.com) when entries reopen in February 2018.

**5 On horseback or on foot**  
In the west of France, in the heart of Bordeaux wine country, you can tour the vineyards of Saint-Emilion on horseback with 'A Terre à Cheval' ([aterreacheval.fr](http://aterreacheval.fr)).

The tours are suitable for beginners as well as experienced riders and include explanations about wine-making. Some also include wine-tasting and one includes lunch at a vineyard as well as a tasting.

Alternatively, at Entre-Deux-Mers the Caves de Rauzan run an Récréation Gourmande every June: a 6km walk through the vineyards, stopping at seven chateaux on the way for wine tastings and the seven courses of a gargantuan meal. Each stage offers music, dancing and games making it something of a marathon.

Back at the 'caves' there is more music, more tastings and of course the opportunity to re-stock your own wine cellar. The event is popular so advance booking is required. [www.cavederauzan.com](http://www.cavederauzan.com)

**6 Live the Life**  
The best way to experience wine making remains joining the harvest (*le vendange*). In areas like Champagne the picking is still done by hand

and across the country more than 100,000 temporary workers are needed for *les vendanges* which last around three weeks.

Vignerons usually provide board and lodging and, for experienced pickers with good references, pay. But they also rely on volunteers. Apply by asking around locally if you live in a wine growing area, or by sending application letters to vineyards producing your favourite wines.

Otherwise, the Pôle-Emploi website has offers in Bourgogne, Rhône-Alpes, Champagne-Ardenne, Aquitaine, Languedoc-Roussillon, and Alsace. Some regions even have dedicated sites for grape harvesting vacancies. Try [www.anefa.org](http://www.anefa.org) (Association Nationale pour

“

It was the beginning of œnotourisme, because he was the first

**Anne Duboeuf**

l'Emploi et la Formation en Agriculture).

If doing an entire harvest sounds like too much work (and it is not for the faint-hearted) you can be a *vigneron* for a day. For details on [www.vigneron-independant.com](http://www.vigneron-independant.com) follow the links *accueil - actualités - idée week-end*.

Bruno Hertz in Eguisheim, Alsace, offers visitors the chance to visit the vineyards in a 2CV and pick grapes for either a few hours in the morning or the afternoon for the bargain price of €30. If you go in the morning and stay for lunch it costs €45 per person.

Whichever option you chose, a wine-tasting is included!



# We diversified our holiday businesses so

**DID** you cross the Channel with a clear idea of how you would earn a living?

For many of the estimated 300,000 or so Britons living in France, the opportunity to buy extensive land and property in France suggested an obvious option of running a holiday business.

However, the reality of running a successful business here is very different from the happy notion of "let's just run a gîte" and, often, the only route to stability is to change.

Besides the abundant paperwork and plentiful competition, tourism-related busi-

In an ever-changing tourism market, how can a holiday business survive in France? One answer is to diversify, as **Annaliza Davis** found when she asked five businesses how they have developed and what advice they had for others

nesses must withstand events such as transport strikes, capricious weather and fluctuating exchange rates.

Over the last decade alone, they have contended with the 2008 financial crisis, pressure from new firms like Airbnb (which now boasts more than 150 million users), plus

last-minute bookings, and guests demanding discounts.

Not to mention uncertainty after the Brexit referendum, terrorist attacks, and, more recently, the French and UK elections. Every event destabilises bookings and therefore your income, so how do you respond?

“ Trust in yourself, and always remember to have fun

CORINNE and I met on university exchanges in Australia and within six months of careers in Paris realised that corporate life wasn't for us so we left to tour the world. Our travels gave us the idea for The Frogs' House.

We always wanted to run themed holidays and activities, but recognised that being the hosts as well would be even better, so we bought an eight-bed hotel in the village where I'd spent my childhood. For us, the accommodation was to facilitate the activities rather than the other way around.

We were a couple when we began 12 years ago, but separated in 2013 but we are still work partners and friends.

Regular activities include coastal tours, visits to a small farm producing goats' cheese, or learning French cookery in small groups, plus outdoor sports like white-water rafting, abseiling or rock-climbing.

Some guests come for the hotel, others for activities and many for the whole package. At one point, financial pressures made us feel we had to focus on boosting occupancy,



which I think was a mistake as pure accommodation was never our goal. After more than 10 years' experience, we want to return to our original concept of activity packages.

Listen to your feelings, and keep the fun in what you're doing... that's probably easier said than done!

Continue to ask, 'What do I really want? What's most important?'. Stay as open as possible and trust your instincts; be guided by what moves and inspires you."

**Business:**  
The Frogs' House  
**Owners:**  
Corinne and Benoît Couvreur  
**Location:**  
Saint-Jeannet, near Nice  
**Website:**  
thefrogshouse.fr/en

“ Brexit result caused us to rethink

**Business:**  
Manoir de Kerlédan  
**Owners:**  
Penny and Peter Dinwiddie  
**Location:**  
Brittany  
**Website:**  
kerledan.com



WHEN the 2008 financial crisis hit, it didn't affect us too much, as our business was still in its early years, although we did look after other properties to make ends meet.

It helped being part of networks like Sawday's Special Places and Bienvenue au Chateau, but these only bring good results if their customer profile matches your business. We continued to grow, adding a fourth B&B room, developing the gardens and evening meals.

Brexit certainly hit us: we fell from 33% British bookings to 21%; income fell 20%, not helped by exchange rate chang-

es. We had to look ahead.

In 2013, we'd turned two of our outbuildings into a large barn space, requiring a bank loan but improving the experience for guests and creating new opportunities for functions. An artist friend suggested running workshops, too, which appealed as a way to supplement our income and as a new, creative venture.

It required investment, renewing our website, practicalities like toilets and taps, plus licences for meetings and courses.

Above all, you have to consider how diversifying could

affect your existing business status. A B&B micro-entreprise has simple accounting, but if your turnover goes above €82,800 you're expected to swap to a far more complex system needing an accountant."

Thankfully, our plans are helped by contacts with established, well-known artists. Annie Sloane is holding a course here this October, then Julie Arkell, Liz Clay and Jane Callender are booked for next year, so we'll be hosting everything from paper mâché to felt couture and indigo shibori. A lot of organisation and planning but exciting, too!"

“ Location matters, so does passion

**Business:**  
Bastide Avellanne  
**Owner:**  
Linn Vislie  
**Location:**  
Besse-sur-Issole, Var, Provence  
**Website:**  
bastideavellanne.eu



**Love what you do, says hotelier Linn Vislie**

fect to share with like-minded people seeking to reconnect, recharge and travel.

Now, we hold classes every morning – and nine international yoga teachers are bring-

ing students this summer to enjoy our space and tranquillity.

An artist is hosting a creative week, and we also work with two masseuses who provide a variety of treatments.

Partnering with other professionals means we can offer a complete service without over-investment upfront.

Statistically, we currently have around 35% of this year's business coming from retreat weeks, 8% from conferences and the remainder from pure accommodation.

For 2018, we're aiming for 60% from retreats.

Choosing activities to suit your location is a good start, but it makes a big difference if you are personally interested in the service you're offering. That passion communicates automatically.

“ Wise to invest steadily as the business

**Business:**  
Praana Wellness  
**Owner:**  
Amanda Graham  
**Location:**  
near Jonzac, Charente-Maritime  
**Website:**  
praanawellness.com



**Amanda Graham found relationships with local businesses developed organically as Praana Wellness developed**

WE HAD travelled extensively as a family before 2012, falling in love with this beautiful, neglected property surrounded by miles of Cognac vineyards.

From the start, I planned guest accommodation plus retreats in yoga therapy, counselling, massage and reflexology, using my 30 years in clinical psychology and yoga-teaching experience.

My initial goal was boosted by people contacting me offering creative writing retreats, fitness groups and even singing workshops.

One of the greatest difficul-

ties in expanding is the practical challenge of finding the right tradespeople, particularly those you can call on if a problem arises, but our relationships with people and busi-

nesses developed organically through living and working here.

Really, you need to invest steadily as you develop. For us this required other work

I AM originally from Sweden and a hotelier, and I bought this property in 2016. It's full of character and everything was in place to simply continue as a bed and breakfast.

However, there's a growing interest in holidays as a health and life experience, and Bastide Avellanne is in such a calm, natural setting it felt per-



# as to survive – and thrive

## “ Caravan sales boosted campsite

**Business:**  
Pors Peron Leisure Homes  
**Owners:**  
Colin and Adèle Abel  
**Location:**  
Beuzec-cap-Sizun,  
Brittany  
**Website:**  
[porsperon-leisure-homes-brittany.co.uk](http://porsperon-leisure-homes-brittany.co.uk)

THE 2008 crisis was the best thing to happen as it forced us to diversify our mobile-home rental business five years in.

Being bilingual meant we could also attract French families, so we started advertising more aggressively in France and thankfully the strategy worked, creating a new, mixed customer base.

Around the same time, we decided to try selling mobile homes, too.

At first, we tested the water by purchasing a show home, knowing we could always rent it out, but we were amazed by the demand.

It's a fabulous part of France, we're right by the beach, and the buying process is far simpler than for houses so it's hardly a tough sell!



Adèle and Colin Abel say 2008 financial crisis was a boon

Through trial and error, we identified the most effective forms of advertising and have built up great working relationships with our UK suppliers.

There's no doubt that if we hadn't moved beyond our original model of rental-only and English-Irish customers, the last nine years would have

been difficult. Mobile-home sales have helped by providing a parallel yearly income, and diversifying has helped to fund further developments such as our covered pool, which in turn attracts more customers.

You have to develop if you want your business to survive.



Fairy village is a distinctive addition to the Trézulien site

## “ We diversified without losing sight of values

**Business**  
Camping de Trézulien  
**Owner:**  
Françoise Guenneau  
**Location:**  
Douarnenez, Brittany  
**Website:**  
[camping-trezulien.com/en](http://camping-trezulien.com/en)

MY PARENTS created this campsite in 1971, beginning with 80 pitches and expanding to 200, based on family values and a lot of green space.

Camping had evolved so when I took over in 2000, we introduced mobile homes, then in 2009 we installed a pool near the entrance and relocated our reception next to this.

We now have 30 holiday rentals, from mobiles and chalets to a gîte, keeping 142 camping pitches. Last year, 73% of our bookings were for

pitches, 27% rental, corresponding to the proportions here so the balance seems right.

For 2017, we finally turned one corner of the campsite into a 'fairy village' with adorable, quirky cottages for all budgets.

It offers another option for customers and is exclusive to this area. It really suits the setting and means we've been able to diversify without losing sight of our business values or customer base.



Louisa Mesnard



Maïde Guettouche

## Incubator women who are changing face of business

"IT'S just a start." That is how Roxanne Varza, the director of Paris's massive start-up incubator Station F, describes the news that 40% of new businesses now operating within its walls are run by women.

Station F was inaugurated in June by founder Xavier Niel, the internet tycoon who created Free, in the presence of friend President Emmanuel Macron. It is said to be the largest business 'incubator' in the world.

It aims to attract the brightest young entrepreneurs to the 'campus', where they can rent cheap desk space (around €200 a month) and get support to help them develop their ideas.

Places are open to anyone from anywhere in the world, and their 'Fighters Program' is aimed at people from difficult and under-privileged backgrounds. Bosses say they are also aiming at gender parity. Here we speak to two of the first women selected for the 'Founders Program'.

Louisa Mesnard, along with two colleagues, has developed a chatbot called *Citron*, which makes personalised recommendations for bars and restaurants via chat on Facebook messenger.

"It feels just like asking a friend for a suggestion, you can ask for names of rooftop bars and *Citron* knows what you're looking for," she said.

"We've just expanded to include London and we're opening up the whole world soon which will be exciting and fun."

Eventually, *Citron* will also offer booking, delivery and payments and receive commission for driving traffic to sites offering these services.

Franco/Irish, Ms Mesnard was part of the HEC Paris business school incubator, which moved to Station F when it opened.

"Being here is really exciting; you learn things every day, you meet fascinating people and you never know how the day is going to end. All the facilities you need are on campus: post office, catering, everything."

"I feel I'm making business contacts that I'll keep throughout my career. Station F has done a great a job on getting

women into the 'campus', and Roxanne is also the founder of Women in Tech so she understands the importance of female solidarity and knows that diversity yields results."

Maïde Guettouche and Saliha Chekroun are the co-founders of *copelican.fr*, a platform for people to arrange to transport items for each other.

The idea is that if you have left your keys behind, or want to send a jar of honey to a friend, you use *copelican* to find someone who is already making the trip by car, coach, train or ferry. Anyone who wants to offset the cost of travel can use the site to see if anyone wants anything transporting. "We came up with the idea because as students we were always travelling and either leaving things behind or wanting to send things home," said Ms Guettouche.

Both founders are French but have family in Algeria, meaning there is a constant to-and-fro of treats and gifts. "So we thought of this way of transporting fragile things like a guitar or a pot of honey, without breaking the bank."

"It's greener because it doesn't require a special journey to deliver something, it's cheaper to send things, and allows people to offset the cost of travel, so everyone wins," said Ms Guettouche.

"We read about Station F in the press and entered the selection process; winning a place for a year. The venue is wonderful. There are hundreds of other entrepreneurs here so it's easy to meet people which helps you see your own business more clearly."

She says it is very positive that there are lots of women at Station F. "We need more women entrepreneurs but it doesn't change our individual business, and we can't compare this to anywhere else."

"That's just how it is here, although it's true that normally you don't often meet other women running tech startups."

**Connexion spoke to Station F's director Roxanne Varza in January. Subscribers can read the interview on our website**



## is developing

alongside Praana Wellness.

It's easy to underestimate that investment, not only for structural and administrative work, but also for marketing: even if you create something truly wonderful, nobody will know if you don't manage to get the word out.

Now, I'd say around 80% of our business comes through our retreat packages.

Most of our guests want the whole experience, including counselling, yoga, massage and reflexology, which we're more than happy to provide.

We're also developing therapeutic retreats for teenagers, business coaching and even informal weddings under wide, blue skies.

My first advice to others is to network, network, network: build up those contacts and keep at it! Secondly, don't panic if it doesn't work immediately.

I see lots of different people changing their business ideas too frequently – but you should stick to what you truly want your brand to be about, and focus on excelling."



# DIRECTORY



Use these pages to find English-speaking tradespeople and firms across France.  
For your security, we check that all French businesses listed in this section are registered.  
The listings are arranged geographically by the 5 landline telephone zones of France.

<b>P29</b> All of France All Tel Codes	<b>P31</b> North France Tel Codes 01 - 03	<b>P32</b> South East France Tel Code 04	<b>P33</b> South West France Tel Code 05	<b>P33</b> Classifieds	<b>P36</b> Property
-------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------	------------------------	---------------------

## Advertise with us

Directory adverts are available in 3 sizes, colour or black and white and a choice of standard or rounded frames.

*Standard*

*Rounded*

To book a space email:  
[sales@connexionfrance.com](mailto:sales@connexionfrance.com)

(include a daytime phone number and we will call you back)

or call

**(00 44) 203 002 0669**

## These rates are for the whole year!

**Single**  
50mm x 24mm  
(1 - 15 words)

B&W €165<sup>HT</sup>  
Colour €231<sup>HT</sup>

**Double**  
50mm x 48mm  
(16 - 30 words)

B&W €285<sup>HT</sup>  
Colour €399<sup>HT</sup>

**Treble**  
50mm x 72mm  
(31 - 45 words)

B&W €396<sup>HT</sup>  
Colour €555<sup>HT</sup>

Choose from nine colours

Dark Blue

Light Blue

Dark Green

Light Green

Dark Purple

Light Purple

Red

Orange

Yellow

## English TV in your French Home

Installations throughout Brittany, Basse Normandie & Pays de la Loire. Mail-order service throughout France



- English TV & Radio without subscription
- French TNT via satellite or aerial
- Digiboxes, dishes & accessories
- Recording & High Definition digiboxes
- All new equipment, fully guaranteed
- Sky viewing cards
- Catch-up / On-Demand TV
- Free, friendly advice given
- Installer since 1987

**TV Brittany**

**freesat**  
**sky**

**TNT HD**



Ask about our VPN Routers

### Our promise to you.....

We will always answer the phone or return your call,  
we will always answer your emails,  
we always turn up as arranged.  
We won't let you down!

**Keeping You in the Picture!**

Call Trevor  
**02.97.27.58.50**  
[www.tvbrittany.com](http://www.tvbrittany.com)



## REMOVALS & STORAGE REFLEX MOODYS LTD

SALISBURY - ESTABLISHED 1986



**REGULAR  
SERVICE  
TO AND FROM  
FRANCE**

[www.reflexmoodys.com](http://www.reflexmoodys.com)

e-mail: [info@reflexmoodys.com](mailto:info@reflexmoodys.com)

**+44 (0) 1722 414 350**

Full and part loads with up to 4 weeks' free storage





COMMERCIAL FEATURE

## Choose the right heating system for your home

Installing a wood fired heating system can reduce your annual fuel bills considerably says Michael Swan of **Enershop** which specialises in bespoke renewable energy heating systems

DUE TO the ever-increasing costs of fossil fuels, people are now looking for more energy-efficient and cost-effective methods of heating their homes. A wood-fired system is the obvious choice, either as a stand-alone system or in combination with other heat sources.

There are many different types of wood-fired systems available and Enershop discusses each client's needs to ensure they have made the right choice for their property and lifestyle. Whether a log or

pellet-fired boiler, there is a model to suit every property. Boiler stoves are aesthetically pleasing and are usually located in the main living area.

Whether a traditional or contemporary style, all the boiler stoves supplied by Enershop incorporate the latest stove technology. Log gasification and pellet boilers must be housed in an outbuilding or uninhabited, well-ventilated room.

Michael said: "Gasification boilers produce large amounts of heat at high efficiencies, which is stored in an accumulation tank. They have a burn cycle of between four to six hours depending upon the wood, so are easily managed."

"Pellet boilers are programmable and are easy to use and control with automatic fuel feeding and ignition."

Enershop also has a range of combination boilers which can use both logs and pellets – offering the best of both worlds.

Wood-fired systems can source domestic hot water, central and underfloor heating and can also heat a swimming pool.

Michael said: "We have a demonstration system at our property comprising of a log gasification boiler with solar thermal panels linked to an accumulation tank. Both the gasification boiler and solar thermal panels work effectively at different times of the year, so complement each other perfectly."

Enershop holds the QualiBois and QualiSol accreditation so its systems are eligible for credit d'impôts.

For more information, contact Enershop or visit the website, where there is a link to the company's Facebook page which is updated regularly.

05 53 57 30 01  
info@enershop.eu  
www.enershop.eu



The eVolution 26 wood boiler stove is an impressive feature as well as providing heating and domestic hot water.

**All of France**

**ANIMALS • PETS**

**ARCHITECTS • SURVEYORS • ENGINEERS**

**Cedric Mitchell ARCHITECTE**  
Bilingual French registered architect offers full or partial architectural service, Permis de Construire applications undertaken.  
Tel: 00377 93 25 42 68 France  
Tel: 0044(0) 1243 773166 UK  
Mobile: 07703 525050  
cedricm@about-architects.com  
www.about-architects.com  
R.I.B.A. / ORDRE DES ARCHITECTES  
(Provence - Alpes - Cote d'Azur)

**BUSINESS • WEBSITES**

**Start a Business**  
StartBusinessInFrance.com  
Est. 2008

A totally professional website for your gite business for only £395

**GITEWISE**  
gitewise.com

**COUNSELLING**

**Quantum Coaching:**  
'Clean-space' facilitator, Neurolinguistic Practitioner, Emotional Educator  
Skype, telephone, face to face, airbnb.  
lynnette\_curtis@yahoo.co.uk  
Tel +0033 2430 87796  
/ +0033 (0)7506 60169

**anxious? stressed? feeling down?**  
call us up!   
01 46 21 46 46  
3 to 11pm daily  
Confidential & Non-Profit  
soshelp  
soshelpline.org

**BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK**  
Are you grieving for a loved one and needing to talk?  
We support the bereaved and terminally ill, face to face in the Var, and by telephone elsewhere in France.  
**www.bsnvar.org**  
info@bsnvar.org  
04 94 84 64 89  
between 07:00 and 23:00  
06 32 35 31 24

**LIFE-TRANSITION COUNSELING**  
– Strengths-based Coaching –  
Face-to-face (near Paris and Versailles) and International Skype Coaching  
**Dr. Antonia Löschner**  
Socio-Cultural Anthropologist & certified Mediator  
**www.al-lifecoaching.com**  
phone: 0782402216  
contact@al-lifecoaching.com  
Registered in France: siret 82405114800016

Christine Haworth-Staines  
BSc(Hons), MSc,PPDip  
UK Chartered Psychologist  
**PSYCHOLOGY & COUNSELLING SERVICE**  
From private practice, or via Skype  
Tel: 05 62 67 09 17  
Email: psych32@gmail.com  
Siret:50362193000018 ADELI: 329301C

**COUNSELLING IN FRANCE**  
Therapy and coaching in English  
Face-to-face, webcam, online, telephone, workshops, self-help, courses, residential retreats.  
All are qualified, work with a professional code of ethics and assure confidentiality.  
**www.counsellinginfrance.com**

**EDUCATION • LANGUAGE**

Enjoy a day learning to cook French Cuisine & Private Dinners in Your Home  
Residents/Tourists  
++44 7941056920  
Spence@normandycookingdays.co.uk  
www.normandycookingdays.co.uk

**Introduction to France and French Language**  
5 day course by registered tutor in Beautiful Brittany  
email ray@yourtutorinfrance.com

**QUALIFIED ENGLISH - FRENCH TRANSLATOR**  
Chartered Institute of Linguists Associate  
Friendly, experienced, reliable - Competitive rates  
+33 645 587 956 | nc-languages@orange.fr  
**www.nc-languages.com**  
Siret:8093832600018

**Sworn Translations & Help with the French System**  
Paperwork, Phone calls  
Translation, Interpreting  
Please contact Hilary Decaumont  
00 33 (0) 2 33 59 17 07  
Email: info@leapfrogservices.net  
**www.leapfrogservices.net**

**FRENCH WITHOUT FEAR LANGUAGE IN Languedoc**  
One-to-one tuition, professional teacher, Oxford degree, self-catering accommodation  
campbellclaire53@yahoo.fr  
**www.cours-a-cucugnan.com**  
Tel: 06 78 15 19 29

**Sworn Court translations as required by**  
CAF, Préfecture, Court, RSI, Notaires  
(Birth, marriage certificates – diplomas – divorce – inheritance etc)  
Contact: 06 88 59 91 90  
elisabeth.clavier474@orange.fr

**MASTER FRENCH IN TWO WEEKS**  
Friendly Sorbonne Teacher, specialised beginners  
Fun caring efficient - Mediterranean village  
myfrenchschool@gmail.com  
**www.myfrenchschool.net**  
Tel: 06 85 14 04 65

**ESTATE AGENT**

**BEAUX VILLAGES IMMOBILIER**  
If you are selling your French home our knowledgeable local team would be delighted to meet you as soon as possible.  
We offer:  
■ A current valuation  
■ A dedicated contact  
■ Worldwide marketing  
■ Access to thousands of registered buyers  
**Freephone from France: 08 05 69 23 23**  
enquiries@beauxvillages.com  
**www.beauxvillages.com**

**Connexion's 2017 Local Taxes in France helpguide is now on sale**  
See the helpguide section at **connexionfrance.com** or call Nathalie on 00 33 (0)6 40 55 71 63

**HOUSES ON INTERNET**  
Sell your property to a worldwide audience using our global network. Our fees are the lowest in France, our results are the best.  
**WWW.HOUSESONINTERNET.COM**  
Tel: +31 (0)6 41 20 73 69

**ARBFRENCHPROPERTY.COM**  
The new way to buy & sell property in France  
Join Us Today  
Free floor plan included  
**www.arbfrenchproperty.com**  
info@arbfrenchproperty.com  
TEL: 0044 (0) 1803 469367

**GOLDENWAY INTERNATIONAL PETS & LIVE ANIMALS**  
*World Wide Pet Relocator*  
Ministry approved  
No. 61195004 – 61195001  
Offices CDG Airport Paris  
Offices and Kennels Normandy  
Tel: 01 48 62 87 25 CDG Paris  
Tel: 02 33 38 41 32 Normandy  
**www.goldenwaypets.com**  
Siret: 397549551

**For Daily updates see**  
**connexionfrance.com**

**YEW TREE HORSE TRANSPORT**  
International pet Animal transport  
Tel: +44 (0)1952 460607  
Mobile: +44 (0)7802 355795  
www.horsetransport.uk.net  
Deliveries all France



## HARS celebrates 15 years of repairing hearing aids

2017 is a very special year for the **Hearing Aid Repair Shop** as we're celebrating 15 years of fast and efficient hearing aid repairs.

SINCE 2002, we've repaired thousands of hearing aids of all makes and models. And from this time we've grown into the thriving business we are today, with customers not just in the UK but across Europe and as far afield as Bali, Thailand, the USA and Australia.

We're a joint venture company, which is owned by Mary Hare School for deaf children and a large multi-national hearing aid company. 50% of our profits go to Mary Hare School, so by having your hearing aid repaired with us you're actively supporting the education of hundreds of deaf children and young people.

Our highly trained technicians have many years of experience in repairing all brands of hearing aids including: Widex, Phonak, Starkey, Oticon, Unitron and Siemens.

We offer a clear pricing structure with no hidden extras. So if a repair is going to cost more than our standard charge we won't proceed until you've given us the go ahead. Our standard repair comes with a 6 month warranty against component failure, excluding amplifiers and RIC units. You can also send us your hearing aid for a free, no obligation quote. And if you decide not to go ahead with the repair, we'll return it to you at no extra cost.

We understand how important it is for you to receive your hearing aid back quickly and working to its full potential. We use original parts, unless they're discontinued due to the age of the hearing aid, and the turnaround time for most repairs is 2 - 3 working days.

If your hearing aid isn't working don't replace it – repair it. But don't just take our word for it. Here's what our customers say:

*"The hearing aid arrived today! One week turn round from France - amazing! Fantastic price and excellent service! Thank you so much for your excellent, helpful and inexpensive service, I will recommend you everyone I know. You have saved my sanity and the last of my savings!"*

*"Wonderful service - quick, comprehensive and very cost effective - I would recommend them to any hearing aid user!"*

*"Amazing turnaround 48hrs. Great service from HARS. Friendly and helpful correspondence and I would highly recommend them. The only place I go to fix my hearing aids."*

Find us at [www.hars.co.uk](http://www.hars.co.uk)  
email [info@hars.co.uk](mailto:info@hars.co.uk)  
or call us on 00 44 1635 48724.



## French Properties Direct

Buy or sell a French property privately.  
No estate agency fees to pay.....

[www.frenchpropertiesdirect.com](http://www.frenchpropertiesdirect.com)  
[info@frenchpropertiesdirect.com](mailto:info@frenchpropertiesdirect.com)

## ASTRAL sa INSURANCE BROKERS

### Regulated & Independent Insurance Broker

- Dedicated English speaking Advisors & Claims Handling
- Quotes sourced from variety of major insurers
- Review of all your Insurance requirements

Health (Top up & Private), House, Car, Business / Commercial, Marine, Pensions & Investments

Email: [nchubb@asttral.com](mailto:nchubb@asttral.com)

Tel: 04 68 32 41 20

Web: [www.asttral.com](http://www.asttral.com)

Siret No: 411 673 106 00018

## INDEPENDENT BROKERS

Working with selected insurers to find the best policy for your needs at competitive rates

MOTOR, HOUSE, MEDICAL  
TRAVEL, BUSINESS

For information and quotes in English contact Penny at G.S.A.R. 05 53 40 15 71  
[pennym.gsar@wanadoo.fr](mailto:pennym.gsar@wanadoo.fr)



## TOP PRICE FOR VINYL RECORDS

Tel: 05 63 94 08 91

Mobile: 06 83 32 65 15

or [sue.davage@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sue.davage@wanadoo.fr)

82120 Marsac

Cars, motorhomes and vans wanted  
Both LHD and RHD.

Also part-exchange. Collection in the UK or France. Polite service. Please email, text or telephone and we will call you back.

[sunnyskycars@gmail.com](mailto:sunnyskycars@gmail.com)  
or Tel +33 (0) 6 88 07 20 36  
+44 (0) 7473 293494

## PROBLEM SOLVING

Advice on all aspects of living in France, buying/selling, French administration, residency, etc...

Competent, experienced.

Contact me now for your free consultation.  
Rachel THOMAS-BONNET LLB Hons  
+33 (0)6 62 78 39 77  
[perfidealbion@bbox.fr](mailto:perfidealbion@bbox.fr)  
Visit me at  
[www.perfidealbion.com](http://www.perfidealbion.com)

## GARY AUTOMOBILES

Specialists in supplying quality New and Pre-owned French registered vehicles  
We buy LHD/RHD vehicles  
Part-exchanges welcome

Unlike UK LHD specialists we handle all the paperwork and re-register the vehicle in your name at our premises!

French registered, English owned company

Tel **0033 (0)4 74 43 89 51**

or **0033 (0)6 84 85 04 61**

[gary.automobiles@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gary.automobiles@wanadoo.fr)

[www.gary-automobiles.com](http://www.gary-automobiles.com)

## SwissLife Insurance

British staff only  
Since 1898, we have specialised in top-up health, home, car insurance and private banking.

Please call Peter and Lawrence  
On: 05 56 28 94 64  
Web: [swisslife-health-insurance.fr](http://swisslife-health-insurance.fr)  
agence.bordeaux.theatre@swisslife.fr

## AXA INSURANCE

Jean-Marie LECOMTE

ST HILAIRE DU HARCQUET - 50600

HOME - CAR - HEALTH

We insure UK registered cars for up to 12 months

ENGLISH SPOKEN

(call Angeline) - 02 33 49 12 34

[agence.lecomte@axa.fr](mailto:agence.lecomte@axa.fr)

## NLE

Accountants and Tax Advisors

Paris & London offices  
Services offered in France and UK

Tax Returns ■ Accounts ■ Business setup  
■ Payroll ■ VAT

Paris Tel: +33 142931842

London Tel: +44 845 680 1638

Email: [info@nle-accounting.com](mailto:info@nle-accounting.com)



GARDENS • POOLS

## STOP CLEANING YOUR POOL YOURSELF

PoolGobbler Pro automatically removes all flies, wasps and leaves from your pool surface.  
[www.pure-piscines.com](http://www.pure-piscines.com)  
or call 0565 319623

## GRASS CUTTING SERVICE

Reliable, Property Maintenance  
Based in SAINT JAMES  
Areas covered 35/50, Flexible.  
Tel: 02 99 17 51 53

## Heslop & Platt Solicitors & French Law specialists

Providing quality, professional and efficient French legal advice in English

Tel: +44 (0)113 393 1930

[contact@heslop-platt.co.uk](mailto:contact@heslop-platt.co.uk)

[www.heslop-platt.co.uk](http://www.heslop-platt.co.uk)

## AXA Agence International

Dedicated English speaking agency staffed by native English speakers

- Insurance
- Health insurance
- Pensions & Investments
- Life assurance
- Banking & lending
- Business insurance

Tel: 05 61 07 16 84

[agence.international@axa.fr](mailto:agence.international@axa.fr)

[www.axa-in-france.fr](http://www.axa-in-france.fr)

## Exclusive Healthcare

Your Helping Hand to the French Health System

+33 (0) 4 94 40 31 45

[www.exclusivehealthcare.com](http://www.exclusivehealthcare.com)

## SSAFA FRANCE

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association

## Help available

for ex-servicemen and their families living in France

Email: [France@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:France@ssafa.org.uk)

France-wide answer service

Tel: 05 53 24 92 38

The national charity helping serving and ex-Service men, women and their families, in need

Registered Charity No. 210760. Est 1885



MOTURING

Hundreds of practical questions are answered in Connexion helpguides

Order print / downloads at [connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)

## PROPERTY SERVICES

### SKYINFRANCE

Latest Sky & Freesat decoders supplied & installed  
Sky subscriptions available without UK address.

Office: 05 63 59 85 16

[www.skyinfrance.com](http://www.skyinfrance.com)

Siret - 48003796900015

## www.enershop.eu

Bespoke renewable energy heating systems including solar, wood-fired, ASHP, UFH ...  
More information on our website.

Tel : 05 53 57 30 01  
[info@enershop.eu](mailto:info@enershop.eu)



## Why using a bilingual insurance broker in France gives peace of mind and saves money

From car and house insurance to health insurance top-ups, from school insurance to business, finding the right insurance cover is a vital part your expat life in France – and key to your peace of mind.

ASTTRAL'S bilingual team has been helping expats with their insurance needs and concerns for nearly 15 years. Its staff understand the concerns that expats may have and are ready to help – with everything from advising on the best policies to handling claims.

They can help you with all types of insurance and work with many different companies to find you the best deals with the best cover, service and price.

We asked the company's Nick Chubb about some of the key areas that might affect expats looking for insurance cover and how Asttral can help.

### How does a broker work for you and add value?

A broker is your single point of contact for all potential insurance policies, to save you going to different individual companies.

By sourcing quotes from a panel of insurers, and fully understanding the client's particular requirements, the broker can find the best quality and best price.

### What are the benefits of using a bilingual broker?

Our team speaks French, which gives access to the best deals, and can help you to get the forms right when you need to make a claim.

### Which insurers do you work with?

We work with a considerable panel of major French insurers and some from overseas. Because of the close working relationships we

have with insurers, we know their pros and cons in certain areas of insurance. We get the best deals and can process claims smoothly and quickly through our personal contacts.

### Does a broker usually recommend just one insurance company for all types of cover?

No, we work with many different companies so we can get the right package for everyone.

The key to using a broker such as Asttral is that we can provide bespoke cover for a range of needs, allowing us to cherry pick on your behalf the most suitable insurer for each type of cover.

Conversely, should all of your insurance needs be perfectly met by a single insurer, Asttral would also recommend this to you.

### What happens when I need to claim?



When you need to make a claim, Asttral take the pressure and stress away by handling the negotiation with the insurer on your behalf.

Our dedicated claims handler will deal with any claims you make, so you have peace of mind that everything is being

done correctly and you don't have to worry about any of the complicated paperwork.

Trusting a company when you first buy insurance is one thing, but the real interaction between client and insurer is at claim time.

### So the broker helps with the forms and translating documents?

A broker can add value and really help in putting together the correct documentation to present to the insurer. France has different processes and obligations on claims processing and it is important that the correct

procedure is followed.

For instance, in the case of car insurance, the correct completion of the Constat Amiable at the time of an accident by both parties is essential for the right outcome of a claim. The appropriate boxes on the Constat must be ticked to accurately reflect responsibility and therefore where blame should be attributed. If not done correctly, the wrong responsibility could be applied to the detriment of the client.

### Can you guide me through a claim?

Yes, this is where the advice and direction of the broker or agent comes to the fore. We can advise you fully on the whole process to make sure your claim is successful.

Asttral is fully ORIAS-registered. It operates throughout France and has offices in Marseille and the Minervois. For further information, please contact Nick.

04 68 32 41 20

nchubb@asttral.com; www.asttral.com

### Just Kitchens

A complete service from planning to installation.

Suppliers of German kitchens by **Hacker**

And English kitchens and furniture by **Neptune**

Plus a range of work surfaces and appliances.

Visit our website:  
www.justkitchens.fr

Or call for a chat: 05.62.58.03.64

We cover all of France.

### MILEN Light Haulage Ltd. UK-France-UK

- Man with a van service
- Reliable, ex-police
- Fully insured, competitive rates

For further information please call Mick or Helen on

Tel: UK 0333 022 0359  
Fr: 07 68 64 22 54  
www.milenlighthaulage.co.uk  
info@milenlighthaulage.co.uk

### MOVING TO OR FROM FRANCE?

Weekly services to & from France

Full or part loads,  
4 wks free storage,  
35 Years experience

Bar Member

Contact:

Anglo French Removals  
Tel: +44 (0) 1622 690 653  
Email: info@anglofrenchmail.com  
www.anglofrenchremovals.co.uk

### REFLEX MOODYS LTD SALISBURY REMOVALS UK - FRANCE - UK

- Weekly Service
- Full & Part Loads
- Container Storage
- BAR Members
- On-line Quotation
- Internet Shopping Deliveries

00 44 1722 414350  
info@reflexmoodys.com  
www.reflexmoodys.com  
Company Regn No: UK 5186435  
TVA / VAT No: UK 864 7217 04

**George White European Transport**  
Special rates to S/W France  
13.6m/45ft trailer - Full/Part loads Removals/  
materials/vehicles  
Owner driver. RHA member  
Tel: +44 (0)7768 867 360  
Fax: +44 (0)1773 570 090  
Fr Mobile: +33 (0)6 23 03 85 59  
www.georgewhiteeuropean.co.uk

### SELF STORAGE DOVER

Convenient, Flexible, Secure  
Working with your Movers  
24/7 Access

Tel: +44 (0) 1304 822 844  
doverinfo@aandselfstorage.co.uk  
www.doverstorage.co.uk  
All France

### TO ADVERTISE HERE EMAIL

sales@connexionfrance.com  
OR CALL  
+44 (0)203 002 0669  
OR SEE  
connexionfrance.com



### RETAIL • COMMERCE

### Greetings Cards

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Special Occasion,  
Christmas, Hand-made and Open - From €1.00  
Free P&P available  
Tel: 02 97 60 27 21  
enquiries@englishcardsinfrance.net  
www.englishcardsinfrance.net  
Siret: 538 583 60000019

### Love French Interiors

French Reproduction Furniture.  
Hand crafted from Mahogany.  
Wide choice of finish options.  
Full customisation possible.  
Bespoke Design service available.  
Delivery throughout France.

www.lovefrenchinteriors.com  
0044 (0) 20 3474 0092

### For dailynews see connexionfrance.com

### WOODBURNERS Ash Grove Stoves Supplier of Hunter - Parkway

- Clean Burn - Fire Visible  
- Boiler versions available  
- Deliveries all over France  
- Prices on our website  
Lowest Prices Guaranteed  
Tel: 00 44 (0) 1392 861579  
www.ashgrovestoves.com  
sales@ashgrovestoves.com

### Furniture for France

A wide range of quality  
indoor furniture and sofas  
supplied and delivered direct to  
your French property saving you  
time and money.

Full installation of all furniture  
Delivery from just £99

Tel 06 46 49 73 45  
info@furnitureforfrance.co.uk  
www.furnitureforfrance.co.uk



### ANIMALS • PETS

### Chenil Les Mille Calins English Run

- 5 Star accommodation for Dogs/Cats
- Underfloor heated kennels
  - Qualified staff
  - Top Quality food and exercise
  - Only 45 minutes south of Caen
  - Convenient Ferry Access

www.goldenwaypets.com  
Telephone 02 33 37 49 19  
Emergency 02 33 38 41 32  
Fax 02 33 38 44 16



### BUILDERS • RENOVATION

### Renovation Building Services Vendee

All building works.  
Project management. Maintenance,  
Repairs. Pools, Gite management  
07 61 92 94 02  
pape85210@gmail.com  
www.rbsv.fr

Siret:45328780700037 Regions Covered: 85, 17, 79

Quatre Saisons Plastering & Rendering  
Qualified & Registered.  
Venetian Polished Plastering  
& Specialist Paint Effects  
Tel: 02 31 59 47 24 / 06 41 93 21 66  
davidpate1@hotmail.co.uk  
www.quatresaisonsplasteringandrendering.fr

### Underfloor Heating

Electric, Ideal for Extensions/Renovations  
and New Builds. Supplied in full kits ready for  
installation

Tiles, Stone or Wood/Laminate Floors  
Insulation Boards

Full Quotations Chaleurosol SARL

Tel: 06 27 66 33 74

Email: info@chaleurosol.fr

Web: www.chaleurosol.fr

Regions: All France - Siret: 502962772



### REMOVALS • TRANSPORT

### CRANBURY'S Movers - Shippers - Storers

Full and Part Loads  
throughout Europe

Tel +44 (0)23 8065 2630  
Email moving@cranburys.co.uk  
www.cranburys.co.uk

**FRANCE & UK COLLECTION**  
DELIVERY AND REMOVALS  
FULL OR PART LOADS  
**REALISTIC PRICES**  
Call Steve: 05 49 97 11 25  
stephen.short@wanadoo.fr  
Siret: 50323244900010A

### REMOVALS - STORAGE - GENERAL TRANSPORT - EXPRESS SERVICE

SPAIN - UK - FRANCE SERVICE  
1 CUBIC METRE TO FULL TRAILER LOADS  
DEDICATED EXPRESS LOADS  
WAREHOUSE DROP OFF SERVICE  
SINGLE BOX / PART LOAD SPECIALIST  
PROFESSIONAL EXPORT PACKING  
SERVICE

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT :  
MURRAY HARPER EUROPEAN  
0034 952793422

EMAIL  
INFO@MURRAYHARPER.COM  
WWW.MURRAYHARPER.COM



## Complete solution to fosse septique problems

There's little worse than a smelly or blocked fosse septique, but there is a simple, ecological and cost-effective treatment, say **Eco-tabs Europe** founders Shelly and Tim Burns-O'Regan

WITH costly emptying charges and the potential to smell or get blocked, fosse septiques can be a homeowner's nightmare.

But an innovative product now exists which not only takes away the need to empty your fosse, but also removes odours and reduces blockages.

Eco-tabs are purely bacterial-based, not a combination of enzymes like many competitive products. They help to increase overall system efficiency, reduce costly maintenance and eliminate the need for

toxic chemicals and special handling procedures.

The tablets work by oxygenating the water in the fosse, removing hydrogen sulfide odours, preventing corrosion, and initiating aerobic biological breakdown of organic sludge, including oils and grease.

Store bought products that are enzyme based liquify the solids for them to reform later. So you will still need to pump out your tank. Eco-tabs degrade the solids and remove those pesky odours.

Company founders Shelly and Tim Burns-O'Regan say: "Our company is founded on the core belief that eco-friendly, non-toxic waste treatment products have become a necessity in today's environmentally sensitive and fragile ecosystem. We also provide excellent customer service and follow up as fed back from our customers."

An eco-tabs Clean out Pack starts at 66€ (exc TVA, p+p) for a standard 3000 litre

tank compared to the cost of a pump out truck ranging from 125€ up to 400€, this is a no-brainer.

"Simply flush a tablet down the toilet each month to maintain a healthy fosse septique. Or, as an alternative to pumping out, use two tabs and one bag of our Shock powder and watch the magic."

"Not only do the tabs oxygenate the water, which removes the odours, the sludge is eaten away by the bacteria. The result: a clean fosse which does not need to be pumped out... all that remains is water."

Eco-tabs are compatible for old septic tanks right through to the new microstation systems.

To ensure that you are only buying the products necessary for your tank, we offer a Personalised Treatment Plan which will recommend the ideal products for you. Visit: [www.eco-tabs.biz](http://www.eco-tabs.biz) and click on the link for a Personalised Treatment Plan.



**Eco-tabs are 100% ecological and mean you don't need to pump out your fosse**

For more information, visit the website or contact Shelly on +33 (0) 635954593  
[www.eco-tabs.biz](http://www.eco-tabs.biz)  
[info@eco-tabs.biz](mailto:info@eco-tabs.biz)

### Mesnil Renovation

Areas 14/50/61

Full / Part Renovations, carpentry, masonry, plastering, tiling, kitchens, replacement windows and doors.

[www.mesnilrenovation.com](http://www.mesnilrenovation.com)

Tel. 02 31 09 26 54

Siret 48423125300010



COMPUTERS • TV • PHONE • INTERNET

### English TV in your French Home

Professional installations in Brittany & Normandy

Mail-order throughout France

Free, friendly, helpful advice

TVBrittany

02 97 27 58 50

[www.tvbrittany.com](http://www.tvbrittany.com)



ELECTRICIANS

### Rod Reeves Electrician

Over 40yrs Experience - No Job Too Small

Quotations on request.

Tel: 02 31 09 13 17

Mobile: 06 26 95 68 21

Siret: 48101774700025



FINANCE • INSURANCE

### bmlangloagence.com

English registered cars  
House insurance - Health cover  
1800 British clients trust us  
02 96 87 21 21  
[contact@angloagence.com](mailto:contact@angloagence.com)  
Dinan, Brittany



GARDENS • POOLS

### Le Jardinier SARL Anglais.com

Professional Tree Surgeons  
Qualified-Equipped-Insured

Based near Rennes, covering

Josselin 56 to Gorrion 53

Dinan 22 to Redon 35

Visit our website or Facebook.

02 99 68 43 46 - 07 86 53 67 26



### S.W.P.S

Grass Topping, Bramble Clearance  
with Tractor / Ride On.

Based In Gathemo (50)

Call Mark on 0233906493

Mob 0672666151

Email [mark.roberts@orange.fr](mailto:mark.roberts@orange.fr)



PROPERTY SERVICES

### Sure Sweeps

Formally HETAS, & NACS registered  
Fully Insured - No Mess

Competitive Rates

02 14 15 58 52

[suresweeps@legrandcamelia.com](mailto:suresweeps@legrandcamelia.com)



RETAIL • COMMERCE

### WOOD STOVE STUDIO

Wood burning stoves and Cuisinieres from  
Charnwood Cleanburn Esse  
Hunter Parkray Stovax  
on display at our dept 61 showroom

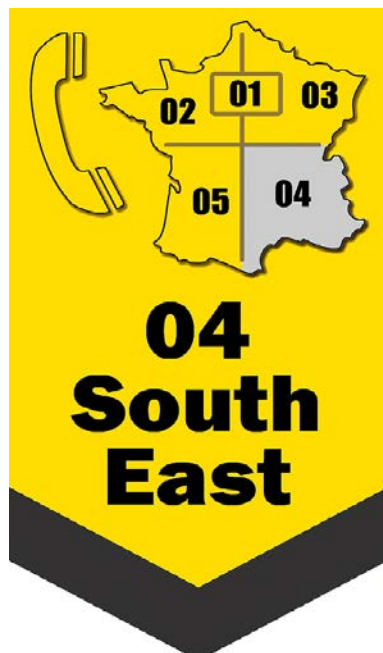
Selkirk chimney  
and flexible liner  
Full installation service

[www.woodstovestudio.com](http://www.woodstovestudio.com)

[info@woodstovestudio.com](mailto:info@woodstovestudio.com)

Tel 02 33 12 57 26

Siret 498 597 632 00013



04  
South  
East



BUILDERS • RENOVATION



### PETE'S ROOFING

Covering the Gard  
ALL TYPES OF ROOFS RENEWED / REPAIRED  
VELUX ROOF WINDOWS - GUTTERING

04 66 72 75 84

[peter.w.bober@gmail.com](mailto:peter.w.bober@gmail.com)

Siret No: 50066265500017



### MULTI-SERVICE - BUILDERS

Everything from repairs and maintenance to  
complete A-Z renovation and decoration.

REFERENCES - PROFESSIONAL - RELIABLE

Karl - 06 04 45 63 57 / Paul - 06 34 95 19 71

[longden888@lycos.com](mailto:longden888@lycos.com)

[www.roofingbuildingservices.com](http://www.roofingbuildingservices.com)



### AUDE BUILDERS

Pools & surrounds, roof terraces  
& conversions, kitchens  
& bathrooms

Assurance Decennale  
10 year guarantee

06 52 22 12 23

[paul@audebuilders.com](mailto:paul@audebuilders.com)

[www.audebuilders.com](http://www.audebuilders.com)



### BULLEN PROPERTY SERVICES

Property renovations  
Kitchens, bathrooms, tiling, wood flooring, etc  
Air conditioning - F-Gas registered

Tel: 06 33 61 21 45

[robert.bullen@sfr.fr](mailto:robert.bullen@sfr.fr)

Siret: 81264662800014

### AUDE & HERAULT

Need someone to help with  
property maintenance problems,  
home improvements, renovations,  
Exteriors, Gardens & Pools.

Contact Anthony Main 0033 (0)4 30 34 17 90

email: [anthonymain.fr@gmail.com](mailto:anthonymain.fr@gmail.com)

[www.midibuilder.com](http://www.midibuilder.com) Siret 4846 8735 500012



EDUCATION • LANGUAGE

EPIM, Private International  
Bilingual Primary Schools in  
Marseille and Aix-en-Provence  
open to 2-11 year olds.

Tel: +33.491.530.000 / +33.442.600.300  
[www.epim-mis.com](http://www.epim-mis.com)



ELECTRICIANS

### LANGUEDOC ELECTRICIAN

Graham Fox - Fully Qualified

25+ Years Experience

Friendly, Informative Reliable

High Professional Standard

E-mail: [graham.fox515@gmail.com](mailto:graham.fox515@gmail.com)

Tel/Fax: 04 68 45 46 28 - Mob: 06 67 55 30 29

Depts: 11, 34 - Siret: 49443828600010

### ELECTRICIAN

(NIC EIC reg 1986-2008)

All electrical work - dpt 34

Contact Terry Smith

Tel: +33 (0) 7 82 66 10 57

Or [smith\\_terence@orange.fr](mailto:smith_terence@orange.fr)

Siret 51223773600024



### Aude / Herault Gary Alderson Electrician

Friendly, Experienced, UK Qualified,

French Registered

Rewires, Installation, Fault Finding

Tel 07 83 05 29 43

Email [alderson.gary@orange.fr](mailto:alderson.gary@orange.fr)

Siret 81115002800017



GARDENS • POOLS

### SWIMMING POOL LEAK DETECTION AND REPAIR

[www.fuitedetection.fr](http://www.fuitedetection.fr)

04 68 26 61 22



PROPERTY SERVICES

### PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

For all of your property needs

Uzès Gard (30)

BUTTERWORTH & SON

Tel 06 68 14 71 02

[mark.butterworth@wanadoo.fr](mailto:mark.butterworth@wanadoo.fr)

[butterworth.canalblog.com](http://butterworth.canalblog.com)

Siret 47809079800024

## SKY IN FRANCE Sky, Freesat & French TV

Supplied & Fully Installed

Office: 05 63 59 85 16

[www.skyinfrance.co.uk](http://www.skyinfrance.co.uk)

Please see our main  
advert in the Connexion



05  
South  
West

Hundreds of practical questions  
are answered in Connexion  
helpguides.

Order print / downloads at  
[connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)



## AXA Insurance in France from a dedicated English speaking agency - Don't get lost in translation

Agence AXA International is a dedicated English speaking AXA agency in France. The agency is staffed with a multi-skilled, native English speaking team, with years of experience in French, British and Irish insurance and banking between them

AS NATIVE English speakers we are able to make sure our clients understand the differences between foreign and French insurance. Our claims are handled in-house at the agency and we are there at the end of the phone if our clients need to make a claim.

We offer a wide range of insurance from

traditional domestic insurances like house insurance, including second/holiday home, chambre d'hôtes, gîtes, mobile home, car insurance (including temporary cover for cars with foreign registration), classic cars, motorbikes, camping cars and touring caravans.

If you need health insurance cover then we have a very comprehensive range of solutions for you starting with a simple hospital cover, EHIC top up insurance, right up to the award winning AXA PPP International Health care policy. This is a fantastic solution that provides worldwide cover and is especially interesting if you are not entitled to any refund from the French social security system.

Once we've protected your belongings, we haven't forgotten about protecting you! Our range extends to funeral plans, long term care plan, life assurance, pensions, assurance

vie/investments and income protection. Whatever your need is, we can personalise a solution for you.

If you are a business client then we can offer tailor-made solutions to protect not only your business, but to protect you and your future.

With over 30 years' experience in banking, our team is happy to offer help and advice on AXA Banque products including our free bank account (conditions apply, please ask), and the fantastic Oligo account which offers many benefits which includes a cashback on your AXA insurance premiums paid through the account, interest paid on credit balances plus much, much more. If you are looking to buy a French property we can help you to finance the purchase.

Our aim is to help you understand your insurance, in a language you understand, so that nothing is lost in translation.



Contact us on 00 33 (0)5 61 07 16 84

agence.international@axa.fr or visit our website [www.axa-in-france.fr](http://www.axa-in-france.fr)



### ANIMALS • PETS

#### The Cats Inn

Luxury Cattery - Cales near Lalinde - Very Spacious - Lots of Love and Attention  
Tel: Paula 05 53 24 14 42  
[www.thecatsinnecattery.com](http://www.thecatsinnecattery.com)  
paulaL24150@aol.com  
Siret No. 520 980 269 00010

#### THE DORDOGNE CATTERY

PENSION POUR CHATS NEAR SARTAT, OPEN-AIR, INSULATED AND HEATED  
CONTACT ANNA MASLEN  
05 53 31 95 88 / 06 86 94 85 78  
p.maslen@wanadoo.fr  
[www.dordogneecattery.com](http://www.dordogneecattery.com)

#### KENNEL

LA PETITE PENSION DANS LA PRAIRIE  
In Monguilhem (Gers)  
Comfortable - Premium Food  
Experienced - Open daily  
Tel: 06 33 44 65 85  
Siret: 79255005500018



### ARCHITECTS • SURVEYORS • ENGINEERS

#### design : parkes architecture SARL

Architects & Designers  
Dossiers for Permis de Construire  
Déclarations Préalables  
Interior & Landscape Design  
Ordre des Architectes No. 1867  
Tel: 05 53 09 33 45  
Fax : 05 53 09 36 12

E: [mail@parkesarchitecture.com](mailto:mail@parkesarchitecture.com)  
W: [www.parkesarchitecture.com](http://www.parkesarchitecture.com)  
Depts: 16,19,24,33,87



### BUILDERS • RENOVATION

#### Paul the Plasterer

City & Guilds Qualified  
Internal plastering and boarding  
External pointing and rendering  
Tel: 06 48 56 22 83  
Email: [pabroadley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:pabroadley@yahoo.co.uk)

#### Hopkins Renovations

General building work. 22 years building experience in France. Full Assurance Décennale, near Monflanquin  
05 53 36 34 59 / 06 08 71 53 49  
[jameshopkins@orange.fr](mailto:jameshopkins@orange.fr)  
[www.hopkinsrenovations.com](http://www.hopkinsrenovations.com)  
Siret number: 417 916 574 00011

#### Ironwood Motif

Wrought Iron Work • Handrails • Gates  
• Railings • Pergolas • Stairs  
Inside & Outside • Made to Measure • Dept 46  
Tel: 05 65 30 53 99  
Email: [info@ironwoodmotif.com](mailto:info@ironwoodmotif.com)  
Web: [www.ironwoodmotif.com](http://www.ironwoodmotif.com)  
Siret 48119863800019

#### Plaster The Lot

Qualified English Artisan  
Plastering, Pointing, Crepi, Tiling,  
Plasterboard, Insulation, Painting  
Call: 05 65 10 76 90  
Email: [plasterthelot@yahoo.com](mailto:plasterthelot@yahoo.com)  
[www.plasterthelot.com](http://www.plasterthelot.com)  
Siret: 53068838100017 Regions Covered: 46, 19



### BUSINESS • WEBSITES

#### The Fixer

Long established professional here to assist you with ALL your French admin, tax or business issues.  
06.46253087  
[www.corporateandlegal.org](http://www.corporateandlegal.org)  
[mailthefixer@gmail.com](mailto:mailthefixer@gmail.com)



### DECORATORS

#### PAINTER/DECORATOR

All interior/Exterior Work  
Paper hanging, tiling, flooring & dry lining  
Areas 16, 17, 24, 33, 79, 86  
Adam Blackaby, Artisan Peintre  
Tel 05 45 98 07 25 Mob 06 23 18 30 95  
Email: [adamblackaby@aol.com](mailto:adamblackaby@aol.com)  
Siret 441 490 992 00027



### ELECTRICIANS

#### ELECTRICIAN

Experienced & French Registered.  
Available for all types of electrical work.  
Insured and guaranteed.  
Areas: 16,17,24,47  
Tel: 05 46 86 07 61  
Email: [trevor.miell@btopenworld.com](mailto:trevor.miell@btopenworld.com)  
Siret No. 49376573200015



### FINANCE • INSURANCE

#### IN EXTENSO DORDOGNE

Registered Chartered Accountants

- Accountancy Service in English
- Business set-up and registration
- Business accountancy
- Income tax, Wealth tax
- Payroll and legal services

Contact Alain: 05 53 92 50 00  
Email: [alain.clisson@inextenso.fr](mailto:alain.clisson@inextenso.fr)  
[www.inextenso.fr](http://www.inextenso.fr)



### GARDENS • POOLS

#### GARDEN SERVICES

Creation, Garden Maintenance,  
Tree Surgery, Felling  
Property Services  
Tel. 05 65 34 09 91  
Working dept: south 19, 46  
[brule.philippe0346@orange.fr](mailto:brule.philippe0346@orange.fr)

#### DORDOGNE SERVICES

All Gardening Work - Cutting  
Strimming - Hedge Trimming  
Clearance - Property Services  
Depts - 24,46,47  
Tel: Bob & Tracy 06 42 82 44 96  
Email: [bob.groundwork@gmail.com](mailto:bob.groundwork@gmail.com)  
siret : 48293447800017

#### DEMPSEY TREE SURGERY CONTRACTORS

British trained & qualified tree surgeon  
All tree work undertaken.  
Tel: 05 45 65 96 86 Mob: 06 61 90 04 92  
[enquiries@dempseytreesurgery.com](mailto:enquiries@dempseytreesurgery.com)  
[www.dempseytreesurgery.com](http://www.dempseytreesurgery.com)  
Working in dept: 16, 17, 24, 87  
Siret: 48930027700014

#### Jardins du Périgord

- Design - Creation  
- Garden management  
High quality work by qualified gardeners  
[www.jardinsdupericord.com](http://www.jardinsdupericord.com)



### KITCHEN • BATHROOM

#### ANDY MS

Kitchens & Bathrooms  
From A-Z

All associated minor works, modifications and repairs also undertaken e.g. replace kitchen worktops, taps, toilets, tiling, plaster boarding, electrics, etc.

Dept. 16 & 17  
05 46 49 78 30 / 06 70 40 66 01  
Email: [andym@free.fr](mailto:andym@free.fr)  
Website: [andym.free.fr](http://andym.free.fr)  
Siret : 50263448800014



### PROPERTY SERVICES

#### Bob Freeman

Satellite and aerial systems installed and repaired. UK boxes available.  
Senior Sky engineer  
05 53 06 08 65  
[bobfreeman@orange.fr](mailto:bobfreeman@orange.fr)  
[www.euroskydigital.com](http://www.euroskydigital.com)  
484 432 323 00018 - Regions Covered: 24, 47, 33

#### CCTV CAMERAS WiFi NETWORKS BRITISH SATELLITE TV

Satellite Internet - Sonos Audio (systems) -  
BBC iPlayer - Netflix - IPTV - VPN  
T: 06 80 55 06 09  
E: [mail@euroinstallations.com](mailto:mail@euroinstallations.com)  
W: [Euroinstallations.com](http://Euroinstallations.com)  
Region: South West Siret: 4526 2188 1000 39

### Classifieds

**ASSISTANT, 400 OFFER**  
VIE-SUR-NOIREAU, rising closely with export dependant information gathering, and Very good working Power A level bank holiday Qualifications: A level plus diploma in electrics. Good English. No former experience necessary. Starting salary, 6250 euros.  
**WAITER** Offer number, work as an ext then ip  
**MAINTENANCE ELECTRICIAN** Offer 845943P, CALVADOS, CDI: After a period of intensive training in-house, you will be responsible for the maintenance of wind turbine parks. You will undertake maintenance and repairs on the wind turbines. You must be physically fit and have a head for heights. Some weekend and bank holiday work required. Qualifications: A level plus diploma in electrics. Good English. No former experience necessary. Starting salary, 6250 euros.  
**PROPER**

### PHOENIX ANIMAL RESCUE

If you are thinking of giving an animal a home, please consider adopting. We have many cats and dogs looking for loving homes. Please visit us at:

[www.phoenixasso.com](http://www.phoenixasso.com)  
[www.facebook.com/PhoenixAssociationFrance](http://www.facebook.com/PhoenixAssociationFrance)

### Les Amis Des Chats

promotes sterilisation to improve the well-being of stray and pet cats in the rural villages of SW France.

**WE NEED VOLUNTEERS** to help run our charity shops and events.

Donations are also gratefully received at Les amis des chats, 82150 Roquecor. See how you can support us by visiting [www.les-amis-des-chats.com](http://www.les-amis-des-chats.com)  
Registered charity no: W821000447

### CHURCHES

#### ANGLICAN CHURCH IN THE TARN

Every Sunday: 11 am at BRENS CHURCH, GAILLAC  
Info: 05 63 33 12 76  
[www.churchinmidipa.org](http://www.churchinmidipa.org)  
+ ALL WELCOME +

### HEALTH AND COUNSELLING

#### ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

South West France  
Have you a problem?  
[www.aafraance.net](http://www.aafraance.net)  
Or Call  
Shepperd 06.74.95.19.66  
Angela 05.49.87.79.09

anxious? stressed?  
feeling down?

call us up!

01 46 21 46 46

3 to 11pm daily.  
Confidential & Non-Profit

[soshelp.org](http://soshelp.org)

### CHARITY

#### Chats du Quercy Cat rescue and Rehoming Charity

Where each cat receives the best possible care and attention from the day it is admitted to the moment of its adoption.

Please call to make an appointment on  
05 63 94 73 97  
[www.chatsduquercy.fr](http://www.chatsduquercy.fr)



## Houses on Internet: A Global Property Network

**Houses on Internet – Global Property Services** (hereafter referred to as “HOI-GPS”) is the internet/marketing company that helps people sell their French property to buyers worldwide.

RICHARD KROON, founder and director of the company comments, “The number of responses from prospective buyers and sales keep rising. One of the reasons for this is undoubtedly because we have been able to increase our worldwide advertising budget and reach more prospective buyers than ever.”

In the last year HOI-GPS has sold to people from 12 different countries, including Australia, Belgium, Holland, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Canada and of course France.

Richard continues, “Our continuous global marketing is definitely paying off and guarantees a worldwide exposure of your property to buyers wherever they live.”

The actual work all starts with the presentation of a property as, if that is not good enough, all other marketing efforts will be useless. HOI-GPS photographers usually take between 150 - 200 photos of a house and in addition request any good (summer) photos clients may have taken themselves. Around 50 - 60 of these photos are then selected, enhanced and presented on a dedicated website which is created for each property.

The accompanying text does not just describe the house, garden and outbuildings, but includes information about shopping, schooling, airports and leisure etc.

Richard explains further, “When the website for the house is online, it is firstly connected to our main HOI-GPS websites which attract over 135,000 visitors from 40+ countries each

month. Most of these people find us through Google and additional Google advertising.

“To reach an even larger audience, a summary of the presentation of the house is also placed on several other leading property websites. These adverts are also connected to the dedicated website of the house, making it all one big global property network.

“As the property market has become a global one, a prospective buyer can be at the other end of the world while the seller is in bed sleeping. With our approach the buyer does not have to wait for information but can see the entire property whenever he wants so at the very moment he is interested in it.”

For more information on HOI-GPS or to market your property with them please visit the website.

**Houses on Internet – Global Property Services**

**+31 (0)6 41 20 73 69**

**www.housesoninternet.com**



Richard Kroon is director of Houses on Internet – Global Property Services

## Why it's never been more important to learn French

If you're thinking about improving your fluency, consider a one-to-one language course, says French teacher **Claire Campbell**

FOLLOWING Brexit, the decision to learn French may seem more important than ever if you're living in France. Not only is it much more rewarding to speak the language and crucial if you want to apply for French citizenship, but it may also help with relationships with French people.

French teacher Claire Campbell said: “Many French people regard the referendum vote as a slap in the face. Despite the tiny majority, they are inclined to put all Brits ‘dans le même sac’, lumping us all together as people who despise French culture and their language. More than ever,

those of us who remain in France need to prove ourselves in their eyes.”

So now might be the time to choose a language course. If the idea of joining weekly classes does not appeal, you could consider a personalised, one-to-one course, of a week or two, to boost your confidence and advise on the best way to continue.

Claire, a professional language teacher with an Oxford degree and over 20 years' experience, offers just such personal courses, designed to tackle any weaknesses and build on strengths. Private lessons allow the students to work at their own speed and level. She believes that people often pick up a sort of pidgin French and get by, but need a course to get beyond that and learn to communicate more freely.

As an English speaker, she understands how the two languages compare and can explain – in English – how the language

“

People – especially those who are not so young – may be confused if they are thrown in the deep end of an immersion course where all the explanations are given in French. They may decide that they are too stupid to learn French. It's tragic!

works and, often, why it works that way. She believes this makes it easier and more satisfying for beginners and advanced learners. “People – especially those who are not so young – may be confused if they are thrown in the deep end of an immersion course where all the explanations are given in French. They may decide that they are too stupid to learn French. It's tragic!”

Claire's courses take place in Cucugnan, a picturesque village among vineyards in the Corbières hills between Narbonne and Perpignan. It is an area of dramatic scenery and ideal for walking, biking, horse-riding and wine-tasting. Claire said: “The village has three good restaurants and some of the best bread in France. Cucugnan offers both a language course and a pleasant holiday.”

For reviews, see TripAdvisor.

**www.cours-a-cucugnan.com**



Claire Campbell runs French language courses in scenic Cucugnan

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SOUTH OF FRANCE**  
Is Alcohol Costing You More Than Money?  
Call Alcoholics Anonymous. 0820 200 257  
www.aa-riviera.org  
Siret : 49197537100015

### PROPERTY FOR SALE

**BEAUTIFUL HOUSE** in Bellac, Limousin.  
€149.000 - A BARGAIN!  
Heated swimming pool, lovely garden,  
4 bedrooms.  
Good condition, ready to move in.  
Go to [www.lamaisonlimousine.com](http://www.lamaisonlimousine.com) for details and photos.

### MESSAGES

**JULIETTE VAN DEN BRULE**  
is of Dutch origin but has just  
**ACHIEVED BOTH HER  
FRENCH BAC PLUS  
ITS GERMAN EQUIVALENT**  
at Lycee Charles de Gaulle in Dijon.  
Well done Juliette

### JOB OFFERED

**Bel Air Homes**  
Low Cost Estate Agency  
**Join us**  
**Anywhere in France**  
Are you ambitious, hardworking,  
enthusiastic, professional,  
autonomous, and able to develop your  
own business?  
Do you have good people skills,  
previous experience, and  
a good level of spoken and written  
English and French?  
**80 % commission paid.**  
Tel : 0033 (0) 2 97 27 01 71  
[bel-air-homes@orange.fr](mailto:bel-air-homes@orange.fr)  
[www.properties-brittany.com](http://www.properties-brittany.com)

## AGENCE NEWTON is recruiting

We are the first choice Agency for experienced sales people seeking to work within the French Property market.

Agence Newton is synonymous with professionalism and integrity, we are proud to attract talented and ambitious people to our team.

Contact: 0233 61 92 70

[recruitment@agencenewton.com](mailto:recruitment@agencenewton.com)

## LEGGETT IMMOBILIER RECRUITMENT

More clients  
More commission  
More support

If you are confident, highly motivated, bilingual, organised, enjoy the sales process and above all love property, then we want to hear from you.  
For more information email: [recruitment@leggett.fr](mailto:recruitment@leggett.fr) or freephone: 00800 2534 4388

### WANTED

**FAMILIES** in Finistère with kids and an English teacher parent (TEFL as a minimum) – Typically 500€/wk for occasional bookings - Email: [davesaunders.englishlessons@gmail.com](mailto:davesaunders.englishlessons@gmail.com)

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW FRANCE?

Find out more about France in a fun way with our puzzle books.



Available in newsagents or online at the helpguide section of [connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)

## Useful telephone numbers

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- 18: Emergencies: This number connects to the fire brigade (Sapeurs Pompiers) but they deal with medical emergencies and should be the first port of call in life-threatening situations
- 15: Samu (for other urgent medical call-outs)
- 112: Universal European Emergency Services number - works from all phones including mobiles
- 114: Emergency calls (hearing assisted)
- 17: Police / Gendarmes
- 119: Reporting child abuse
- 196: Sea and lake rescue
- 01 40 05 48 48: Anti-poison centre
- 09 726 750 + your department number (e.g. 24 for the Dordogne): Gas & electricity emergencies
- 3237: (0.35/min) Outside hours GP and pharmacy information (also available on www.3237.fr)

### UTILITIES

- ORANGE website in English: [www.orange.com/en/home](http://www.orange.com/en/home). To report a fault online: [www.1013.fr](http://www.1013.fr) (click on the UK flag). English-speaking helpline: 09 69 36 39 00

### OTHER TELECOMS (French helplines):

- SFR: 1023 (+ 33 6 10 00 10 23 from outside France)
- FREE: 1044
- BOUYGUES: 1034 (+33 668 634 634 from outside France)
- EDF: Helpline in English: +33 (0) 5 62 16 49 08 Email: [simp\\_nergywithedfr@edf.fr](mailto:simp_nergywithedfr@edf.fr)

### OFFICIAL AGENCIES

- 3939 ALLO SERVICE PUBLIC: 3939 (+33 1 73 60 39 39 from outside France) [www.service-public.fr/langue/anglais/](http://www.service-public.fr/langue/anglais/)
- CAF: [www.caf.fr](http://www.caf.fr); Tel: 08 10 25 14 10
- CPAM (state healthcare): [www.ameli.fr](http://www.ameli.fr) English-speaking helpline: 08 11 36 36 46
- URSSAF: English-language website: [www.anglais.urssaf.fr](http://www.anglais.urssaf.fr)
- CLEISS: Social security advice when moving between countries: 01 45 26 33 41 (Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, or mornings on other week days) Some advisers speak English

### EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

- British Embassy (Paris): 01 44 51 31 00
- Bordeaux consulate: 05 57 22 21 10
- Marseille consulate: 04 91 15 72 10

- UK passport advice: + 44 (0) 300 222 0000 (calls cost up to 12p a min from UK landline - see French operators for exact cost)

### OTHER EMBASSIES

- Irish, Paris: 01 44 17 67 00
- US, Paris: 01 43 12 22 22
- Canadian, Paris: 01 44 43 29 02
- Australian, Paris: 01 40 59 33 00
- NZ, Paris: 01 45 01 43 43
- South African, Paris: 01 53 59 23 23

### OTHER HELP IN ENGLISH

- Counselling in France: for a qualified therapist near you or counselling over the telephone; [www.counsellinginfrance.com](http://www.counsellinginfrance.com)
- Alcoholics Anonymous: regular meetings are held (some are in English) across the country. For a list of local English-language groups see: [www.alcoholics-anonymous.eu](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.eu)
- SOS Help: similar to the Samaritans, with listeners who are professionally trained. Tel: 01 46 21 46 46 (open 3pm-11pm daily) or [www.soshelpline.org](http://www.soshelpline.org)
- CANCER SUPPORT FRANCE: for advice and someone to talk to. (Calls are free from a landline). Tel: 0800 240 200 or email [helpline@cancersupportfrance.org](mailto:helpline@cancersupportfrance.org)
- English Speaking Cancer Association (Geneva-based): offering cancer support in Geneva, Vaud and French border areas. Tel: +41 (0) 22 791 63 05 or email [info@cancersupport.ch](mailto:info@cancersupport.ch) or [www.cancersupport.ch](http://www.cancersupport.ch)
- Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association Forces (SSAFA): In France: 05 53 24 92 38 Email: [france@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:france@ssafa.org.uk)
- Elizabeth Finn fund: help for Britons and Irish people facing hardship, including for residents of France. See [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)
- BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK: for those grieving for a loved one and needing to talk. Tel: 04 94 84 64 89 / 06 32 35 31 24 or email [info@bsnvar.org](mailto:info@bsnvar.org)
- THE BRITISH CHARITABLE FUND, PARIS: provides financial help to British residents in France. Tel: 01 47 59 07 69 or email [britishcharitablefund@orange.fr](mailto:britishcharitablefund@orange.fr)
- Alzheimer – Bergerac English help group at France Alzheimer: Tel: 05 53 27 30 34



## The best way to furnish your property in France

**Furniture for France** has over 15 years' experience of supplying high quality furniture to its customers

FURNITURE for France is now in its fifteenth year of supplying quality furniture to properties in France.

The company specialises in providing clients with a customised service that offers good quality UK-sourced furniture without the hassle of arranging delivery and ordering furniture in the UK.

Furniture for France works with its customers all the way from the initial enquiry through to installing the furniture in their homes

Offering advice on all aspects of a customer's order, such as sofa coverings, wood finishes and delivery schedules, ensures they are kept informed every step of the way.

"With 15 years' experience and thousands of deliveries under our belts throughout France, we have encountered almost everything and put that to good use when advising and helping customers find the right furniture for their property in France," said the company's managing director Brian Muir.

The delivery service offered includes room by room installation of all furniture ordered, this includes assembly of all oak beds and wardrobes as these come in sections for ease of access to difficult staircases. All other items are solid, no assembly pieces. Our deliveries are timed to the hour on the agreed date of delivery. The Furniture for France face book page will keep you up to date with all the latest news.

Six new ranges of oak have recently been introduced, including traditional styles in a rustic finish. With competitively priced solid oak furniture it is no wonder Furniture for France had its best ever year in 2016.

In addition to the new oak furniture a choice of 12 different paint colours are now available on all pine furniture. Wood samples can also be sent out to customers if required.

"With delivery costs starting at just £99 for any quantity of furniture, there really isn't a better or easier way to furnish a property in France," said Mr Muir.

Throughout 2016 sofas continued to be the best-selling individual item for



“With delivery costs starting at just £99, there really isn't a better or easier way to furnish a property in France



Stylish Highclear fixed cover sofa design

the company. Loose-covered designs are always top of the list with the introduction of more complex fabric patterns and colours allowing customers to custom cover the sofa of their choice. "This process can take some time to work through, but as the product has a life expectancy of over 15 years, it pays to get it right," said Mr Muir. Furniture for France makes deliveries as far afield as Geneva and

the company.

Nice, as well as locally to customers in the Dordogne, the Lot, Charente and Limousin.

Mr Muir added: "We will continue to introduce great ranges of furniture for delivery to our customers in France without compromising on quality or service."

06 46 49 73 45

info@furnitureforfrance.co.uk  
www.furnitureforfrance.co.uk

## Save Up To 127.60€ A Year On Broadband When You Are Away

Wouldn't it be great if you did not have to pay for your telephone call packages and broadband service when are away from your home? Now every **UKTelecom** customer can!

UNTIL a few months ago the only way you could suspend your telephone services when you were away was to use the Orange 'Ligne Residence Secondaire' service. You could only save money if this was your second home and every time you reactivated the service you would be charged.

25% of UKTelecom customers are second home owners and we wanted to do something better than Orange for them. Once we started looking at how we could use the latest software to bring savings to them we found it was just as easy to make these savings available to all our customers. The trial arrangements have been improved making it simplicity itself for everyone to

make big savings when they are away.

With suspension only needing a quick email from our customers and a free telephone call to have the service reinstated it could not be easier. Not only that, there are no charges to suspend or reactivate.

Nearly 90% of our customers have the 'degrouper total' service, meaning that their calls go over their broadband service and they can suspend the service up to 4 times a year for a total of 4 months. When their service is suspended the monthly charge, which includes an unlimited call package, drops from 36.90€ down to 5€ pm. This saves them up to 127.60€ a year.

Customers with a separate line rental and broadband service, called 'degrouper

partiel', have to pay the line rental when they suspend their broadband so the savings are less. However the national network is being updated and every month more of them become eligible for the 'degrouper total' service which brings monthly savings as well as lower charges when suspended. So even if you have this service call us to see if we can give you an upgrade as well and making even bigger savings. These would include 215€ a year for savings on line rental and if you were away for four months in the year suspending your service with us bringing savings of nearly 350€!

For good, honest and knowledgeable advice contact us now:

Email: [enquiries@uktelecom.net](mailto:enquiries@uktelecom.net)  
Free Phone from France: 0805 631632  
or +44 (0) 1483 477100  
Web: [www.uktelecom.net](http://www.uktelecom.net)



You don't have to wait for a rainy day to save with UKTelecom

## Community events



**Dordogne residents** are invited to join Eymet's Franco-Anglaise Association and to enrol for one of their French language classes or activity groups.

ACFAA runs nine activity groups ranging from art to line dancing, a 60+ strong choir (Cantabile), gardening and photography. They also organise several social events throughout the year. Annual membership is €10, free for anyone 75 and over. You must be a member of ACFAA to join a language class, or group/s.

The enrolment event takes place on September 7 at 6.30pm, at Centre de Loisirs, Route de Bretou, 24500 Eymet. For further details, visit [www.acfaa.com](http://www.acfaa.com).

**Château de la Ballue** in Bazouges-la-Pérouse, Ille-et-Vilaine (right) is a jewel of a 17th century chateau, bordered by a lush, sweeping valley. Its unique gardens have been redesigned and reinterpreted with taste and intelligence, and have once again taken on some of their original 17th century forms.

A geometrical, terraced garden, with shaped yews and privet hedges, leads to a second garden by means of a long tunnel of black yews and diaphanous wisteria. A lime walk and a labyrinth are amongst the many features that make this one of the most beautiful and original gardens in Brittany.

The owner will be giving a guided tour in English on Thursday September 14 at 10am. Cost €15 per member, €20 for guests. [www.aikb.fr](http://www.aikb.fr)

**Moving to Brittany?** Maggie from AIKB will be running a conference entitled *Getting into The French System*, in

which she will go through the most important steps that you need to take to get things in place administratively.

She will also talk about how to integrate into life in Brittany. This will be useful to members who have just arrived, to those who have been here a while and want a review of their current circumstances, and also to people who are considering moving to France on a permanent basis. For members only. 3 rue du Sénéchal, 22570 Gouarec. September 27, 10.30am to noon. [www.aikb.fr](http://www.aikb.fr)

**Enjoy a late-summer luxury picnic** and take a tour of Château de Trégarantec, Côtes-d'Armor on September 7. Throughout the day Madame Danion will show you the house's fairytale attic, which is the size of a ballroom, and has a magnificent roof structure, as well as their private chapel, recently restored.

The orangerie will be at your disposal for the feast, with a luxury picnic and vegetarian options provided. Price €20 per person, reservation only, with payment in advance, including wine and coffee.

Please bring your own picnic table and chairs. Château de Trégarantec, 22110 Mellionec. September 7 at 12.30pm. For more info, visit [www.aikb.fr](http://www.aikb.fr).

**Book lovers are invited** to a Bring And Buy of English books in aid of the ASA Dog Refuge at Aussillon (Tarn) and Le Chat Protégé at Pont de l'Arn. Unwanted books are resold at just one euro. Early donations of books are most welcome so they can be laid out in advance, but bringing them on the day is also fine. The location is 12 rue des Ecoles, 81200 Aussillon (near Mazamet) from 2pm until 5pm on Sunday September 10th. For further



information, or to arrange book delivery, please call Chris on 06 21 37 60 01.

**Be enticed** into trying something new; from learning a new language, creating a gastronomic delight, unleashing that hidden artist, getting lost in the pages of a recommended book or discovering more of this wonderful city. WICE in Paris has something for you!

Connect with like-minded people at their friendly Open House, on September 19 from 3pm-7pm, at Gare de Marlon Gallery, 28 Rue du Pont Louis Philippe, 75004 Paris.

Refreshments available, along with prizes and offers on the day. This event is open to all; bring along your friends and family. [www.wice-paris.org/openhouse](http://www.wice-paris.org/openhouse); Phone 01 45 66 75 50; email [social@wice-paris.org](mailto:social@wice-paris.org)

**Listen up, music lovers!** La Chantonge, the multinatio-

**La Chantonge choir**



nal choir based in Charente Maritime, has announced 3Chorales, an exciting three-day concert series to take place this autumn in conjunction with the English choirs, The Winter Choir and Laudamus. The Abbaye aux Dames in Saintes hosts the first concert on Friday September 29 when the 3Chorales will welcome, for one night only, UK-based operatic soprano soloist Jessica Broad.

The magnificent church of Saint-Savinien is the site of the the second concert on Saturday September 30. The third concert, a *buffet musicale* on Sunday October 1, completes the three-day event with light music and supper in the Salle des Fêtes at Fontenet. Donations from each ticket sold for the concerts at Saintes and Saint-Savinien are in aid of their adopted charity France Alzheimer 17.

See [www.lachantonge.eu](http://www.lachantonge.eu) for further information.

**Community action: Clip your yew to help against cancer**

Leaves and seeds of the yew tree are poisonous but can also give a substance that can be used in some cancer treatments – and people with yew hedges can join in to help.

Two companies, SN.PM in Normandy and Evogreen in Alsace, organise collections each year so that gardeners in the north of France can have yew clippings picked up to help in the production of chemotherapy drug docetaxel (brand name: Taxotere).

Known to have effects in breast, prostate and lung cancer treatment, Taxotere is now largely made in the laboratory but gardeners who regularly clip off the new growth – only 'annual' growth has value, old needles have less of the active substance – can help supply chemicals used in the process.

These chemicals, obtained from the needles' poisonous alkaloid, have a molecule, baccatine 10DAB, which disrupts cancer cell division.

Although the common yew or *taxus baccata* can reach up to 15m in height, trees are not valuable in the chemical production as they contain little of the active ingredient. It is concentrated in the young growth most often seen in hedges from May to October.

Needles to be collected are generally softer and brighter green than 'old' growth.

For readers in the UK, two companies there may also be interested in clippings: Limehurst and Friendship Estates.

## Let readers know about your community event

Let readers know about your association / club / church or other community group via the community page at

[www.connexionfrance.com/Community](http://www.connexionfrance.com/Community)

You can also list your association there

**All listings and event postings are free**

We will also place as many as space permits on this page each edition

(For commercial events contact us via [sales@connexionfrance.com](mailto:sales@connexionfrance.com))



## Property showcase

Use our wide distribution in France to get your property sold!  
A property advertorial is the ideal - and cost-effective - way to market your property and costs just €300HT for two editions

PROPERTY ADVERTORIALS showcase your house in a quarter page space on the property pages.  
To book, or for details email sales@connexionfrance.com

# Houses for sale across France

**Buying or selling a property in France? We can help.**

Our partner website [www.french-property.com](http://www.french-property.com) carries details of more than 10,000 homes for sale across France. We also feature properties for sale in this dedicated section of the paper each month. To find out more about any particular property,

go to [www.french-property.com](http://www.french-property.com) and enter the reference code shown under the property in the 'Reference' field.

For sellers, the adverts are also displayed across a range of popular English-language websites and are seen by thousands of potential buyers EVERY day.

Our 3+3 package costs just €200TTC and gives you three months online advertising as well as a

**PROPERTIES FOR SALE** Go to [www.french-property.com](http://www.french-property.com) and enter the reference code shown under the property in the 'Reference' field to find out more about properties

print advert in three editions of *The Connexion*.

Our 6+6 package is our best value option at €330TTC and provides the same but for six months via both channels.

**To place an advert telephone +44 207 135 2222 or email [support@french-property.com](mailto:support@french-property.com) and explain that you would like your advert online and in The Connexion**

**€550,000**

**Saint-Coulitz, Brittany**  
Charming 15 bed holiday complex. There are 3 cottages, a bourgeois house, a barn, a hangar, a well and gardens. Sold fully furnished and equipped.  
Very good income!  
Tel: +33 (0)2 98 86 03 55



ENERGY RATING = not given

REF: IFPC28545

**€360,000**

**Campagnac, Midi-Pyrénées**  
Lovely renovated 5bed farmhouse. Large kitchen, living room and large detached study. Gite accessible from main house, sleeps 6. See [www.danslepre.eu](http://www.danslepre.eu) for more details.  
Tel: +33 (0)5 63 40 59 82



ENERGY RATING = G

REF: IFPC28596

**€165,000**

**Thourie, Brittany**  
A pretty stone longère (169m²), kitchen with fireplace, living room (23m²), 4 bedrooms including one studio with a mezzanine (16m²), 1 bathroom, 2 shower rooms and WC.  
Tel: +33 (0)2 99 44 25 20



ENERGY RATING = not given

REF: IFPC28698

**€115,000**

**Béziers, Languedoc-Roussillon**  
Lovely 2 bed town house in the village of Magalas. Pretty with south facing terrace in a quiet street, within walking distance of all local amenities. Approximately 65m² over 3 floors and also boasts a large cave of 20m².



ENERGY RATING = not given

REF: IFPC28728

**€120,000**

**Montmoreau-Saint-Cybard, Poitou-Charentes**  
In the heart of the beautiful countryside, tucked away in a private setting enjoying far-reaching views, built in 2007 in the traditional 'Finnish' style (using solid square-section logs).



ENERGY RATING = D

REF: 702592

**€125,000**

**Mont-Bertrand, Lower Normandy**  
2 bedroom home with huge barn and 4 acres. Beautiful garden with incredible views. Built in 1984 this versatile property offers great value-for-money. The beaches of Normandy are less than an hour away.



ENERGY RATING = G

REF: 703302

**€129,500**

**Mézières-sur-Issoire, Limousin**  
This 4 bed detached, fully renovated stone house with garage is located at the edge of a small and quiet village, the house is now ready to move into. Besides the garage, there are also two barns in the garden.



ENERGY RATING = C & D

REF: LIM-456

**€158,050**

**La Pallu, Pays de la Loire**  
Detached beautiful 4 bedroom farmhouse set in large plot with a separate house to restore with its own tower! The perfect opportunity to acquire a stunning house with the possibility of creating several gites at a great price.



ENERGY RATING = E & F

REF: xFP-78918DWR53

**€200,000**

**Laruns, Aquitaine**  
4 bedroom cottage overlooking the Pyrenees with a wonderful outlook, this cottage is in excellent condition and would be ideal as a second home close to the ski fields and walking trails.

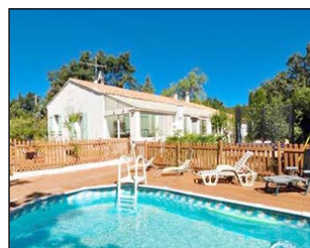


ENERGY RATING = D & B

REF: 2142

**€254,400**

**Viens, Provence**  
This Superb villa of 108m², set on a fenced and landscaped 1300m² plot with a swimming pool will seduce you by its exceptional location. Near the famous village of Viens, with shops and restaurant services. Not overlooked.



ENERGY RATING = C & D

REF: FP-79006DDE84

**€350,000**

**Morlaàs, Aquitaine**  
Charming character house and delightful independent cottage on a wooded park of 3.5 acres with stunning views of the Pyrenees, swimming pool with terrace and pool house with summer kitchen, garage and outbuilding.



ENERGY RATING = D & A

REF: 1895

**€795,000**

**Puymaurin, Midi-Pyrénées**  
Country estate totally renovated. 70 km from Toulouse airport and 60 km North of Spain with magnificent mountain views. One can enjoy the day either on the Mediterranean or the Atlantic beaches which are 2.5 hours away.



ENERGY RATING = D & C

REF: IFPC16117

## PROPERTY FEATURE

## Île-aux-Moines - Rare opportunity to purchase island house

**Fabulous large house with guest cottage set in mature gardens on charming island in France**

COMPRISING 5 bedrooms and 4 ½ bathrooms, this lovely property is set within a 1,070m² plot on the lovely island of Île-aux-Moines in the Gulf of Morbihan in southern Brittany, known as the Bijou of Brittany.

The main house is arranged over 3 floors and has four bedrooms, three full bathrooms and a cloakroom, along with sizeable living room with large working fireplace and a separate kitchen. A detached guest cottage with double height ceilings with rafters contains a large living room, galleried bedroom and bathroom.

The 1,070m² plot has potential to develop (subject to usual consents).

The Île-aux-Moines is a small and charming island only five minutes by ferry from the mainland, with a local population of 600 people and many long-term holiday homeowners during the summer.

Located in the heart of the island and 450m from the sea, the house is just two minutes walk from the main square, the twice-weekly farmers market and the local shops and restaurants. It has the unique advantage of being in the centre, while also benefiting from a large garden. There are a number of beaches on the island, two of the best of which are just a 5 minute cycle from the house and the sailing school on the main beach is an easy walk away, opening up the whole of the stunning gulf for sailing.

A rare opportunity to own a piece of this beautiful island with its strong sense of community and lovely beaches.

**Price: €787,500**



**Contact: Peter Shaw**  
e: [petershawproperty@gmail.com](mailto:petershawproperty@gmail.com)  
t: +44(0)7795 211 700



## Maximise your house sale proceeds

**Pioneer France** ensures sellers receive the best currency rates possible for the transfer of their house sale proceeds

"IT IS shame when house sellers who have tried so hard to achieve the best price for their house then relinquish an unnecessary chunk of these funds by using old fashioned, expensive banking methods to repatriate their money back into sterling, dollars or whatever", says Harris Raphael, Managing partner of France-based Pioneer France.

"The seller often relinquishes thousands which could have been so easily avoided

had they used a specialist Foreign exchange broker. Our historic data shows that the average loss is around €3,500", comments Harris.

Historic data shows that sellers are much less likely than buyers to use the services of such a specialist. Harris believes that this is primarily because the profile of a typical seller is usually older than that of a buyer, with sellers more likely to have traditionally used a bank for their transfers, while being reluctant about using 'newer methods'.

"I understand this completely, especially when it concerns one's major asset!", says Harris "However, Pioneer France's foreign exchange brokerage has been operating for over 35 years, is one of the world's largest, trading over €13billion on behalf of over 20,000 clients a year, in over 80 currencies.

"It is also one of the very few that is fully authorised and regulated by the FCA, with the right of establishment in France".

"As such, our brokerage can provide our clients with security of funds and can give expert currency exchange guidance to aid our client's decision making, which the banks are not licensed to do", advises Harris.

Pioneer France was recently voted number one for foreign exchange rates and service, so contact Harris and his team to find out more about saving thousands.

**05 53 07 06 27**  
**info@pioneerfrance.com**  
**www.pioneerfrance.com**

**The Pioneer France FX team, from left: Harris, Simon, Tanya, Zoe, James and Steven**



## ARB French Property attracts buyers from around the world

With comprehensive sales and marketing strategies, and second to none advice, **ARB French Property** run by Adrian and Jacqui Bunn specialises in helping vendors promote properties on-line to find English speaking buyers.

TO HELP sellers find UK and International English speaking buyers, ARB French property employs an array of pro-active methods. ARB French Property promotes private for sale properties throughout France.

As well as a presence on the ARB site, the company's marketing ensures every property is also seen on a range of leading UK web sites, plus international sites to

attract buyers from Holland, Belgium, Sweden, USA and others.

Adrian comments "It is our philosophy to offer the same high standard of marketing for all properties year round. All homes for sale on our web site benefit from up to 30 photos, room by room description and free floorplan.

"Using our extensive experience, we help sellers by creating the advert for them. Our newly introduced silver service is proving to be very popular. It offers the biggest savings compared to traditional agency rates, and includes a visit to photograph.

Jacqui explains "We want all our vendors' homes to look as good as they can, so they attract as much interest as possible from the potential buyers out there. This is why we are always pleased when we receive such positive feedback".

Some recent client comments to ARB

French Property include "All completed yesterday, thanks so much for the introductions" while a satisfied buyer wrote "recently completed a purchase of a property discovered on your site, thoroughly delighted with the experience."

If you are struggling to get the interest your home deserves, are thinking of selling your home, and want a pro-active marketing approach and extensive coverage along with sound advice on how best to present your home, please call or email Adrian or Jacqui.

**+44 (0)1803 469367**  
**info@arbfrenchproperty.com**  
**www.arbfrenchproperty.com**



**Adrian and Jacqui Bunn run the private property website ARB French Property**

## Transport company delivers on price and service

Have items from UK shops delivered to your door without paying a hefty fee or compromising on service, says **Watson European**

IF YOU'VE ever tried to order something online and found it can't be delivered to France, Watson European international transport can help.

Have your items delivered to the family-run firm's UK warehouse and then the team of friendly and reliable drivers will transport them to your door.

Company owner Andrea Watson said: "If you want to order a new sofa or something from somewhere that offers free UK delivery, why not get it delivered to our warehouse in Lincoln? There is always

someone available to accept deliveries and we will keep them safe and bring them straight to your door."

The firm is also offering 60-days of free storage for people who use the transport service, which could be very useful if you are moving to France but either haven't found a new property yet or your new home isn't ready for all your belongings.

With Watson European, you can rest assured that your belongings – and your stress levels – will be looked after. Andrea said: "For us, it's the small things that make the big difference. Moving home is often a stressful experience where the best-laid plans can take a sour turn. Many of our clients remark how having our friendly staff available at the end of phone is one of the most reassuring aspects of our service. Being there to deal with the smallest of detail is what our job is all about."

With weekly services to and from France, the team is there to assist every step of the way. Its services include relocation services, from partial house removals of pre-packed items to a complete packing and delivery service of a full home. The company's specialised vehicles ensure your goods arrive in perfect condition.

Watson European also specialises in vehicle transportation, including cars, vans, motorcycles and plant equipment. Andrea added: "A wise man once said 'you can't buy experience', so why not take advantage of our 20-plus years in road haulage? For more information, please visit our website or get in touch for a no-obligation quote."

**Tel: Andy 0044 (0) 7876 504 547**  
**Dave 0044 (0) 7515 722 772**  
**Email: enquiry@watsonseuropean.co.uk**



**Watson European can deliver items safely to your door with great service**

## Top tractor and machinery deals delivered to France

**Cowling Agriculture** prides itself on friendly advice and excellent aftersales service – and all at competitive prices

WITH 20 years of experience, Cowling Agriculture supplies tractors and machinery to smallholders and farmers in the UK and Europe.

The company keeps 80 to 100 tractors in stock, both new and used, along with a comprehensive range of machinery. It also has a well-equipped workshop and proficient staff who service and repair used tractors and machinery.

It specialises in putting together tractor and machinery packages for first-time tractor owners. Kim Cowling from the company said: "We take the time to listen to customers' requirements so that we can

supply a competitively priced and suitable package. We are often able to supply tractors and machinery to customers in France for a much lower price than they could source them locally. We pride ourselves on our friendly advice and excellent aftersales service."

Cowling Agriculture has been a dealer for the Landlegend range of tractors – which Kim says are the best value and most popular compact tractor on the market – for more than 10 years.

"The Landlegend 25hp tractor provides a very good spec for a very good price," she said. "It is £5,395. It can easily be fitted with a 4in1 loader and backhoe, making it ideal for farmers, smallholders, self-builders and equestrian yards. Our second-hand tractors start from around £2,500 and come fully serviced, checked over and with a minimum of six months warranty. We can team these

up with toppers, chain harrows, logsplitters or rotovators."

For customers in France wanting to see the tractors and machinery in action, the company can put them in touch with one of its many existing tractor owners. Kim said: "We have 50-plus Landlegend tractors working in France, plus many other used tractors and individual machinery items. We have many customers who come back to us to add new machinery."

The company regularly has deliveries covering the UK, Ireland and France and the driver is able to fully demonstrate the tractors and machinery on arrival.

It keeps machinery for all seasons and often runs special seasonal offers. The stock list can be viewed on the website.

**www.cowlingagri.com**  
**www.landlegend.co.uk**





# UK-France Removals

We cover any part of the UK and France and we do weekly trips to France. Door to door service, full loads and part loads



T: 0044 (0)20 8501 2069  
Email: [info@europeremove.com](mailto:info@europeremove.com)  
Web: [www.europeremove.com](http://www.europeremove.com)



**EUROPEREMOVE**  
MOVING YOUR HOME WITH CARE

# French Properties Direct

Buy or sell your French property privately  
No estate agency fees to pay

Using our marketing skills and support services you too can sell your French property without using an expensive estate agent.

- Advertising with leading international property portals
- A page on our web site with space for plenty of photos and text
- Links to your own website or supplementary information
- A PDF brochure of your property which you can download
- Marketing appraisals or customized advertising campaigns
- Inclusion in our weekly targeted mail shots and social media campaigns
- Regular news letter and guidance notes to help you through your sale
- Protection from The Property Ombudsman scheme and AIPP

It has never been easier to market a French property privately. We offer a cost effective, professional, tried and tested service which is designed to make selling your own house simple and straightforward. Get in touch with us today, or have a look at our website for more information.

see our properties on  
[rightmoveoverseas](http://rightmoveoverseas.com)

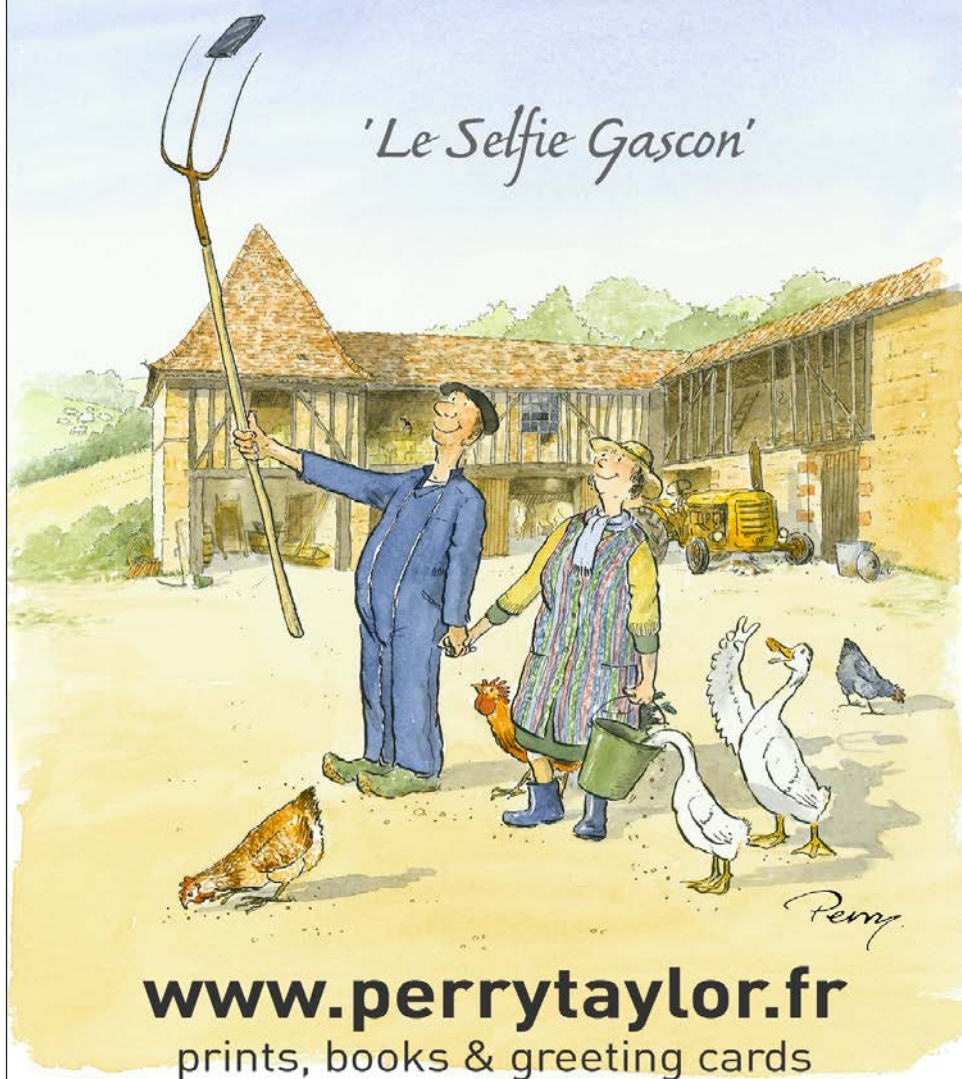
See us on  
[APlaceintheSun.com](http://APlaceintheSun.com)

**Zoopla**  
Smarter property search

[Green-Acres.com](http://Green-Acres.com)

[www.frenchpropertiesdirect.com](http://www.frenchpropertiesdirect.com)  
[info@frenchpropertiesdirect.com](mailto:info@frenchpropertiesdirect.com)  
or give us a ring on 00 33 (6) 71 61 09 26

# THE FUNNY SIDE OF LIFE IN FRANCE



[www.perrytaylor.fr](http://www.perrytaylor.fr)  
prints, books & greeting cards

# WATSON EUROPEAN



WITH REGULAR SERVICES TO AND FROM **FRANCE AND SPAIN**, OUR SPECIALISED VEHICLES CAN ACCOMMODATE FULL OR PARTIAL HOME REMOVALS, CARS, CARAVANS AND MUCH MUCH MORE.

**INTERNATIONAL REMOVAL TRANSPORT CALL TODAY**

**ANDY:** 0044 (0) 7876 504 547  
**DAVE:** 0044 (0) 7515 722 772  
EMAIL: [ENQUIRY@WATSONEUROPEAN.CO.UK](mailto:ENQUIRY@WATSONEUROPEAN.CO.UK)

**60 DAYS FREE STORAGE NOW AVAILABLE**

USE OUR ONLINE ENQUIRY PAGE FOR A NO OBLIGATION QUOTE.  
**WWW.WATSONEUROPEAN.CO.UK**



# Brittany association gives help and a welcome to new arrivals

by JANE HANKS

THE chief aim of this Brittany based association is found in its name, *Association Intégration Kreiz Breizh* (the last two words are Breton for Central Brittany) as it helps newcomers settle into their new lives in the region.

As well as organising activities such as French lessons, outings, a conversation club, fundraising events, a library and get togethers, it provides help with administrative tasks. It has links to the different French authorities and, unusually, it has its own radio show.

Maggie Fee works in the association's centre at Gouarec in the Côtes-d'Armor: "The most common requests are for help with the health and tax system, but we give advice on a whole range of subjects.

"We have formed a partnership with the CPAM in Côtes-d'Armor, and we can contact them directly by email, which is very helpful.

"We also work with the local tax offices. It is a two-way relationship as we can ask them for information, but they also contact us sometimes if they need help with someone.

"I give a presentation about the French administrative system to our members, explaining our obligations as residents and how to access the system."

At present, Brexit is a topic of concern: "We can't give any answers yet, but I have run conferences on how to apply for a *carte de séjour* and French nationality.

"We have also been delighted to take part in a research project initiated by the Brittany region which covers all aspects of the possible effects of Brexit on the area in terms of trade, fishing, education and agricul-



It's all fun and games at the AIKB's summer fête, but the organisation offers year-round assistance and support for English-speaking people in the picturesque Brittany region

ture, and we were questioned about the impact on British citizens living here."

The association has 580 members but in reality we have more as each membership card can be for a single person, couple or family.

Mrs Fee says that even though she has heard that some British people are leaving France because of Brexit, she feels there is a growing number of people coming to Brittany: "Our emphasis is very much on giving people the tools to integrate into the community. "We have activity clubs, but we make sure they do not double up on local ones in the area, so we can also offer something to the local French population."

A radio show, *Spotlight Radio*, run by AIKB, aims to give English-speakers information about Brittany. One of the presenters is retired teacher Elaine Agrell: "We want to open people's eyes up to what is going on so they will go out and meet French and Breton people.

“

Our emphasis is very much on giving people the tools to integrate into the community

"Our programme started in 2007 and was then a 15-minute weekly show broadcast on a Breton radio station, which lent us their studios.

"Now it is a monthly, 30-minute broadcast, on two local stations but also over the internet, via our website plus you can listen to it as a podcast. We have our own studio."

The programme covers many different topics: "We don't want to be a tourist programme, we want to reflect life in Brittany.

"We have interviewed the director of the Vieilles Charrues Music Festival and been to Lorient and visited the

submarine base, for example.

"Usually the interviews are in English, but if they are in French we add an English voice over. We will talk to anyone with an interesting story about their life here.

"We recently chatted to American and Australian people living here, as we thought it is such a long way from home for them. They told us they love living the simple life here."

The annual subscription to AIKB is €40 per household per year, with a one-off joining fee of €10. The premises are open at Gouarec from Tuesday to Friday, 10.30am-1pm and 2pm-6pm.

On September 14, there will be an outing to Château de la Ballue and a conference, *Getting into The French System* on September 27.

New members are welcome and details of events are posted on the *Connexion* website as well as the organisation's own site, [www.aikb.fr](http://www.aikb.fr) Email [info@aikb.fr](mailto:info@aikb.fr) phone: 02 96 24 87 90



Frédéric Nancel and wife Candice at the Run or Dye event that saw several thousand runners on Chantilly racecourse

## Church is reborn after renovation

AFTER eight years, an ambitious restoration of St Peter's Anglican Church in Chantilly, Oise has given members a reborn church and a new appetite for the concerts and events which helped raise funds.

Work started in 2009 on the 1865 church and fund-raisers ranged from golf tournaments, an auction where the former chaplain offered 10 hours' non-stop ironing, concerts from local artists and international orchestras, garden parties, cycle challenge, a gala event and a book on English horse racing.

St Peter's is steeped in horse-racing history having been set up when Henri Duc D'Aumale, son of King Louis Philippe, sold land in 1860, for the Anglican community to build a church as thanks for their work in developing racing and training in Chantilly.

Trainers, jockeys and lads were brought over from the racing community in England and Chantilly is now well known worldwide for its horse racing.

The half a million euro restoration saw work on both exterior and interior with repairs to the roof and insulation, the interior floor replaced, underfloor heating, new lighting, replacement of a boundary wall, new drainage, disabled access and new stained glass windows.

Work started after Frédéric Nancel, Domaine de Chantilly head of events; former chaplain Nick Clarke and teacher and church member Julie Howse realised the extent of the repairs needed and looked at ways to raise funds.

With several hundred regular English speaking families with around 100 adults and children regular weekly church goers and Mr Nancel said: "Starting from zero, we formed a restoration committee of church members which was a mix from different European countries, the US, Australia, Africa

and the Far East. It's this cross section of talent and different skills that has been our creative strength throughout."

One key donation came in a legacy from member Irene Sherwood, the former secretary to top French breeder and racehorse owner Marcel Boussac, who died in 2008 aged 102 and left her house to the church.

This covered the roofing and internal repairs and church members worked for years on other fund-raising events.

These included the Run or Dye charity event around the Chantilly racecourse and a cycle ride to Twickenham to mark the 150th anniversary of the church in 2010.

A book on the famous British racing families in the Chantilly area came about after Mr Nancel visited leading racehorse



St Peter's Church, Chantilly



## Give Flamenco dancing a go at any age

HAVE you ever wondered about taking up Flamenco dancing but been too nervous to join in? Don't be, says former dance teacher and reader Jan West.

Jan (pictured), 67, has been involved in a Flamenco group in the Pyrénées-Orientales for 17 years. She said: "It's liberating. I get to wear frilly frocks, shoes that make noise, flowers in my hair, lovely shawls and have a party."

She was a tap dance teacher in the UK and says there is no age limit to learning Flamenco. She said: "You have to work hard, but you will get real pleasure from it."

She is vice-president of the Coeur de Jasmin ([www.coeurdejasmmin.fr](http://www.coeurdejasmmin.fr)) in Saint-Laurent-de-la-Salanque, one of the first Flamenco associations to be formed in France.

The town is near the Spanish border, where many first – and second-generation – Spaniards are behind a resurgence of interest in their culture.

"I have learned so much from getting involved in Flamenco. You might think it is

### Feature your group here

AS a publication for English-speakers in France, *The Connexion* features news and events from groups all over the country.

We would be pleased to publicise your group or association (non-commercial) – and it is a great free way for you to bring in new members. Contact us with details at [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com) or submit an event at [connexionfrance.com/Community](http://connexionfrance.com/Community)

fluid and improvised but there is a very rigid discipline. I now know how to play castanets, and I've had to work (and made my brain ache) to remember the step series.

"The Spanish community here has embraced its culture and I am delighted to be able to share in a tiny part of it."

On September 11, Coeur de Jasmin will put on a show at the Forum des Associations de Saint-Laurent-de-la-Salanque.

■ Find more photos on this subject at the community section of [connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)



## Recycling bins turn your plastic bottles into cash

ONLY one in two plastic bottles is recycled in France but the recycling firm Réco-France aims to boost this with new-style recycling bins that give cash vouchers in return for bottles.

Anyone popping plastic bottles into the Réco-France containers sited near some supermarkets will receive a voucher to spend in the shop. Small bottles are worth one centime and large ones two centimes and people can recycle several bottles at a time and save their vouchers for later.

Users take the cap off the bottle, drop it in the slot and slide the plastic bottle into the machine where it is checked – some opaque bottles cannot be recycled but are still collected – and, when finished, press the button to get their voucher.

Réco-France has 100 sites across the country and has recycled nearly 90million bottles since 2015, turning transparent PET bottles into pellets to make new bottles or even textile fibres for clothing, while granules from opaque PEHD bottles can be made into tubes, garden products or containers for washing powder.

Bottle tops are collected by the Bouchons d'Amour association to help the handicapped and are made into plastic pallets and containers.

Until now Réco-France has used full-size containers but these are harder to site in crowded supermarket car parks and it is looking at mini versions that will allow more recycling points, especially in public car parks.



## Robot vacuum also sucks up home's smart secrets

ROBOT vacuum cleaner company Roomba is sweeping up more than dust when it scoots round your rooms; its chief executive has admitted the robot is also collecting data on the house and its equipment – which he is planning to sell to companies such as Amazon or Google.

When first on the market the Roomba was limited to little more than being able to avoid obstacles in the house and then return to its base after cleaning the floor. Now it is able to make its own computerised map of the houses, flats and rooms that it cleans.

It uses a technology called 'Simultaneous Localization and Mapping' to give 100% floor cleaning but also to map what other equipment is in use in the house. Although the firm said up until recently it did not collect client data, Colin Angle, the head of Roomba's parent iRobot, said new models were now able to do so.

He said: "There's an entire ecosystem of things and services that the smart home can deliver once you have a rich map of the home that the user has allowed to be shared."

Mr Angle added that he planned to sell on the data to companies that use 'voice assistants' such as Amazon's Alexa or Google Home in the next three years.

These companies would then be able to use the information – which could include details on which internet-enabled smart devices were installed and even the house layout.

Amazon or Google could then use this information to target advertising at the user or to better target advertising at other users knowing what would interest a typical Roomba user.



**Roomba robot collects both dust and data**

iRobot has already signed a deal with Amazon to make Roomba compatible with Alexa.

Consumer groups such as UFC Que Choisir and CLCV say they have not yet taken a position on the plans, which are so far limited to the statement from Mr Angle to a news agency.

The firm has no mention of how it uses consumer data on its website (some sales sites link to French data watchdog, Cnil) but Cnil has told *Connexion* that users have the right in French law to access any data Roomba/iRobot holds on them and make changes.

Cnil added that it and 29 authorities worldwide were auditing how the 'internet of things' affected personal privacy and could carry out more formal checks on companies.

Mr Angle has said no data would be passed on without customer consent – although some Roomba features do not work if this consent is not given. He felt customers would want to give approval to use Roomba smart-home functions.

## Anti-pollution sticker hid scam with extra charge

READERS should beware a scam targeting drivers buying the Crit'Air pollution vignette that is obligatory in Paris and some other cities.

Reader Brian Lean, in Morbihan, said he bought a Crit'Air sticker online at [www.vignettecritair-enligne.com](http://www.vignettecritair-enligne.com) believing it to be the official government site. However after receiving the €4.18 vignette for his Citroën he was shocked to see a sum of €29.90 taken from his bank account. He found the website was also charging him for an online magazine – with another sum due soon.

He spoke to his bank and tracked the company, LW-Bienpar, to ask for his money back. Happily his Cornish tenacity won out and he was repaid.

He said: "You have to be careful. I really thought I was using the government site."

Paris and Grenoble have set up closed-circulation zones where Crit'Air stickers are obligatory and Lyon Villeurbanne will do the same in October with Lille and Strasbourg following.

The official Crit'Air site is [certificat-air.gouv.fr](http://certificat-air.gouv.fr)

## Nuisance calls still a pest

A WEBSITE set up a year ago by the government to stop pest phone cold-callers has been shown to be ineffective. A poll of 3,755 people by the consumer magazine *60 Millions de Consommateurs* found 47% felt bloctel.gouv.fr had made no difference. The site's 3million subscribers have registered more than 7m phone numbers but only 15% of those polled said they felt calls had reduced.

Many said it was too difficult to give Bloctel details of callers – but Bloctel say it can only improve if more pest numbers are reported.

# KENTINGTONS

## TAX & INVESTMENT CONSULTANTS

MAKING YOUR  
LIFE IN FRANCE  
LESS TAXING

[www.kentingtons.com](http://www.kentingtons.com)

France: 0810 23 84 23 - UK: 08451 23 84 23 - Email: [info@kentingtons.com](mailto:info@kentingtons.com)



## The Connexion Money / Tax page

SPONSORED BY

**KENTINGTONS**  
TAX & INVESTMENT CONSULTANTS

# Wrong address on invoice: can I still reduce CGT?



Photo: Joel Bez, Flickr

**I AM selling a property, and the notaire will not accept certain invoices to diminish the capital gains tax liability as they do not show the correct address or are not marked 'facture'. I cannot get two large invoices re-done as the supplier, in this case a mason, has died and no one took over his business.**

**Is there a procedure whereby I can swear an oath to the effect that they are genuine and were paid by me? I.M.**

IF THE bills do not show the correct address, there is nothing that you can do as I doubt the notaire or tax office will accept a *déclaration sur honneur*.

Any attempt to change the facts after the event is always problematic and proving that you paid the invoice will not change the fact that the invoice is made out to an incorrect address.

The only alternative is to claim the 15% abatement based on the cost of the property if it has been owned for more than five years. If this is less than the amount of the total invoices then there is probably little that can be done to compensate for that.

**Will early-retirees have to pay new Puma charge?**

**IS it correct that retired people who pay social charges on pension income will now have to pay the *cotisation subsidiaire maladie* (CSM) which has replaced the old CMU payments? We pay social charges on our company pensions and on a very small amount of interest. We are not at UK state pension age yet. CS**

THE FIRST thing that would be worth checking with the Department of Work and Pensions is the age at which you are entitled to an S1 health form, as you may find that due to your past contributions you have a right to it before normal retirement age. This would resolve the issue because retirees with the S1 are entitled to French healthcare



Send your  
financial queries to  
**Hugh MacDonald at**  
[news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

with no 'CSM' (also known as a 'Puma' *cotisation*).

Secondly, even if only one of you manages to acquire the S1 form, the other can 'piggy-back' off the first's registration so that you are both under the S1 system. This can continue until the date that the other can apply for the S1 in their own name.

Otherwise, it seems that those who are state retirees are not due to pay the CSM, only those who do not work and yet have other income are due to pay (or in some cases those who do some work but only have a minimal income from this).

As for the 'social charges' in the general sense of the term, then yes, these are due at the reduced rate of 7.4% until such time as you are no longer a liability to the French health system as a result of having the S1.

**What are tax benefits of giving house to children?**

**FOLLOWING the death of my husband my two children each now own a third of the house I live in and I have the *usufruit* (lifetime use) and the full ownership of the other third.**

**I am considering making my third over to them in order to reduce any inheritance tax in the future. I am a French resident and tax payer, my children are UK residents and tax payers. What are the tax implications? U.C.**

SINCE you are French fiscally resident, French inheritance law and tax will apply.

Unlike in the UK, in France it is the beneficiaries individually, not the estate, who pay inheritance (or gift) tax. The children will each have an allowance of €100,000,

and then they will be liable to inheritance tax on the excess as follows :

- 5% up to €8,072
- 10% to €12,109
- 15% to €15,932
- 20% to €552,324
- 30% to €902,838
- 40% to €1,805,677
- 45% above that

You can, however, make a *donation part-age* (with help from a notaire) where you gift the *nue-propriété* (ownership element) of your share to the children now and retain the *usufruit*. This value of the ownership element on which gift tax would be due by the children would be reduced depending on your age according to the following table :

- age 50 - 60: 50% reduction in the value of the ownership element assessed to tax for the children
- age 60 - 70: 40%
- 70 - 80 : 30%
- 80 - 90 : 20%
- 90+: 10%

As a result, bearing in mind the €100,000 allowance per child, and the fact that you only have a one-third value to give away, the house would, for example, have to be worth more than €1million for there to be any tax payable by your children on their individual shares of the *nue-propriété* if you are aged 60 to 70.

This said, for there to be any tax benefit to the children, you would need to survive 15 years after making the gift, since, if you were to die before then, the value of the gift made now would be added to the value of the estate at the date of death.

The information on these pages is of a general nature. You should not act or refrain from acting on it without taking professional advice on the specific facts of your case. No liability is accepted in respect of these articles. These articles are intended only as a general guide. Nothing herein constitutes actual financial advice.

The Connexion welcomes queries and publishes a selection with answers every edition. However, please note that we cannot enter into correspondence on money topics. Queries may be edited for length and style. Due to the sensitive nature of topics we do not publish full names or addresses on these pages.

## Local tax bills on the way

THE *AVIS d'imposition* for the *taxe foncière* local property tax for homeowners will be going out this month, unless you have been making monthly payments (*mensualisation*), in which case it is sent at the end of October. If you pay both main local taxes on a monthly basis, a letter with both of your *avis* sheets will be sent from October 15 to early November.

Your *avis* will show how much you have to pay and by when, and the calculation.

You are also able to see your *avis* in your personal space at [impots.gouv.fr](http://impots.gouv.fr)

The deadline for payments is October 16, or October 21 at midnight if you pay online (in which case you are debited on October 26). September 30 is the deadline to sign up to pay à

*l'échéance*, involving a direct debit from your bank account, 10 days after the payment date. You may sign up to pay next year's tax on a monthly basis starting in January 2018 if you do so by December 15, 2017.

For *taxe d'habitation*, payable by whoever lives in a home on January 1 of the year, most bills will be sent next month, with a payment deadline of November 15. Ones for second homes may be sent up to the end of November, in which case the deadline is December 15.

You will be able to see your bill in your space on the tax website from mid-October.

For more about France's local property taxes, see our 2017 helpguide, priced €7.90(+P&P) at the helpguide section of [connexionfrance.com](http://connexionfrance.com)

## Housing benefit lowered

HOUSING benefits are being cut by €5 a month per household from October 1 as part of a controversial economy drive.

The government says the measure had been decided on (but not yet applied) under president Hollande – however, this was refuted by the former housing minister, who said no 'generalised lowering' was agreed. It follows earlier reductions in July and October last year and represents about €390million in annual savings.

It comes in a context in which the Macron government is aiming to lower public spending in several areas where ministers say it is higher than in neighbouring countries.

Housing benefit is paid out to around 6.5 million households by the *caisses d'allocations*

*familiales* (Caf). There are three variants of housing benefit: *aide personnalisée au logement* (APL), which especially concerns some 800,000 students, *allocation de logement familial* (ALF) and *allocation de logement social* (ALS).

Student organisations are particularly opposed to the cut, which amounts to €60 less per year per student.

Hollande era housing minister Emmanuelle Cosse said last year's lowerings related only to families owning investments over a threshold and students whose parents pay wealth tax.

Some 50,000 others who are eligible for €15-19/month were set to lose it because of a rule that it is not paid if the amount is less than €15. To avoid this, the level is dropping to €10.

## Latest pricing changes

A VARIETY of everyday pricing changes have come in over the summer relating to savings, utility bills and travel.

The price of electricity for those on the regulated tariffs has increased by 1.7%, though this is slightly off-set by a lowering in the price of gas.

The latter ranges from 0.3% for those who use gas just to cook to 0.8% for those who use it to heat their homes.

It has also been confirmed that the interest rate for Livret A tax-free savings accounts will remain at a meagre 0.75% until at least February 2018.

The cost of using public transport in Paris has gone up, with the price of a monthly Navigo pass rising from €73 to €75.20, while a *carnet* of 10 single tickets – popular among visitors – has increased by 40 centimes to €14.90.

# MAKING YOUR LIFE IN FRANCE LESS TAXING

**KENTINGTONS**  
TAX & INVESTMENT CONSULTANTS

\* The Kentingtons service is exclusive to individuals with a minimum of €250,000 in financial assets.

Kentingtons SARL, RCS 500 163 282 DRAGUIGNAN, Conseil en Investissement Financier (CIF) – Conseil en Gestion de Patrimoine Certifié (CGPC), Catégorie B, référence sous le numéro F000116, association agréée par l'Autorité des marchés Financiers, conforme article L.541-4 du Code Monétaire et Financier, Assurance Responsabilité Civile et professionnelle conforme à l'article L.541-3 du Code Monétaire et Financier. ORIAS 08038951 Garantie Financière et Assurance Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle conformes aux articles L.512-6 et 512-7 du Code des Assurances. Head Office: Z.A. les Esparrus, 83690, VILLECROZE



# France v. Luxembourg for your *assurance-vie* plan

This column is by Bill Blevins of Blevins Franks financial advice group ([www.blevinsfranks.com](http://www.blevinsfranks.com)) who also writes for the *Sunday Times* on overseas finance. He is co-author of the *Blevins Franks Guide to Living in France*



PEOPLE looking at a move to France must review their tax and estate planning and update investment strategy for the new circumstances. They will find France offers an invaluable financial planning vehicle which enables them to combine tax planning and investments, at the same time as providing succession planning advantages – *assurance-vie*.

*Assurance-vie* life assurance bonds are a popular and effective savings vehicle in France, used by many French nationals to save considerable tax. They are also successfully used by expatriates for tax and succession planning.

There are different types of *assurance-vie* available; they can be based in various jurisdictions and both the type of product and jurisdiction can make a difference to the advantages they offer. So be careful when selecting which bond to use.

For example, some of the tax advantages are only available to European Economic Area policies, so bonds based in the Channel Islands and Isle of Man do not benefit. UK bonds may lose out too after Brexit; we shall have to wait and see.

French banks offer local *assurance-vie* policies, but Luxembourg bonds are also very popular here. So, which should you choose, a French or a Luxembourg bond?

Much actually depends on your situation.

The initial investment and incremental investment amounts are generally much lower in France than Luxembourg. So if you are using bonds as a savings vehicle, putting money in regularly to build up for your future, you may find French bonds suit you better. The same applies for smaller amounts.

It is also generally much easier to invest in and top-up a French policy than a Luxembourg one.

If, however, you have a lump-sum to invest, or you have higher amounts of savings, you may want to consider a Luxembourg policy.

Here we look at the key advantages they offer compared to French bonds.

## Currency flexibility

French bonds are usually in euros, while their Luxembourg counterparts can be denominated in another currency.

This does mean that the reporting currency may not be in euros and the growth calculated and then converted into euros. However, this gives a degree of flexibility not usually available from a French bond, and can be useful for expatriates who have capital in other currencies or who want currency diversification.

## Breadth of assets

A French bond will not usually have the breadth of assets available within a Luxembourg bond, and will often also hold *fonds en euro*, where the asset is denominated in euros, rather than expressed as units. Banks will also restrict you to certain investments, rather than having a more 'whole of market' general approach. Such funds may not be as flexible or as diverse as those in a Luxembourg bond, where it is also more possible to 'custom-style' assets.

Portfolio diversification helps to lower risk, so

you want to establish if you can hold a suitable range of funds, tailored to your circumstances, objectives and risk profile, within your policy.

## Loi Sapin 2 and freezing bond assets

Last year the government passed an amendment to the "Sapin 2" law which gives the French authorities the power to freeze withdrawals from French *assurance-vie* contracts. Additionally, they can set the return to be paid by euro funds of local life assurance companies.

We have yet to see if and how this will be used but it is definitely a concern.

If you use a Luxembourg bond, provided the life assurance company is not a Luxembourg subsidiary of a French company, or the *fonds en euros* are not reinsured in France, this risk is very much diminished.

## The Luxembourg 'Super Privilege' and 'Triangle of Security'

France's investor protection for life insurance bonds, in the event that the company fails, has a limit of €70,000. In Luxembourg, there is no limit to the guarantee so your whole policy is covered.

In Luxembourg, investors in an *assurance-vie* type of investment are also preferred creditors, being higher up the list than in France, so are more likely to see a return of their funds if there are problems.

Luxembourg's 'triangle of security' surpasses the security offered by France and is superior even to the 'super privilege' mentioned above.

The cornerstone of this investor protection regime is the legal requirement that all clients' assets must be held by an independent custodian bank approved by the state regulator.

The bank is required to ring-fence clients'

securities (investment funds, shares, bonds etc) so they are off its balance sheet. If the bank fails, these securities remain in segregated client accounts. 100% of the policy holder's securities are therefore protected (note that cash deposits are not securities, although cash held in monetary funds is treated as securities and protected).

## Wealth tax

New President Emmanuel Macron has promised to reform wealth tax (*ISF*), so that investment holdings are excluded. In the meantime, though, all your investment capital is included in your wealth tax calculations. Non-French bonds, however, are not subject to wealth tax during the five-year wealth tax 'holiday' period.

## Language

Finally, it is worth adding that the contract language of a French bond is, of course, French. This is not necessarily the case for Luxembourg bonds, so for most expatriates the small print is somewhat clearer.

Before signing up for any new investment, it is important to read the terms and conditions and risk warnings, rather than relying on what the adviser or investment firm tells you.

*Assurance-vie* can successfully help you with various aspects of your wealth planning, but remember that your and your family's situation is unique, so decisions must be made depending on your own unique situation.

■ Tax rates, scope and reliefs may change. Any statements concerning taxation are based upon our understanding of current taxation laws and practices which are subject to change. Tax information has been summarised; an individual is advised to seek personalised advice.

## HEALTHCARE IN FRANCE WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS



Contact us now for more information, or see our website for more details



UK Tel: 0121 288 1448 | Fax: +33 (0) 494 512 490 | Email: [enquiries@exclusivehealthcare.com](mailto:enquiries@exclusivehealthcare.com)

[www.exclusivehealthcare.com](http://www.exclusivehealthcare.com)

ALL ENQUIRIES **+33 (0) 494 403 145**

## PRINCIPAL AGENTS

BIBA, BP 19, 6 Rue Roger Bissière, 47210 Villereal. Tel: +33 (0) 553 011 384. Fax: +33 (0) 553 366 217. Email: [bibasarl@wanadoo.fr](mailto:bibasarl@wanadoo.fr)

ASTTRAL SA Route d'Oupia, 34210 Olonzac. Tel: +33 (0) 468 324 120. Fax: +33 (0) 468 325 880. Email: [nchubb@asttral.com](mailto:nchubb@asttral.com)

J-F ASSURANCES Villa Quinsay, CH. de St Antoine, 83600 Bagnols-en-Forêt. Tel: +33 (0) 494 406 094. Fax: +33 (0) 494 406 087. Email: [jf@jf-assurances.com](mailto:jf@jf-assurances.com)



# The mystery towers that watch over the dead

by NICK INMAN

BESIDE the A10 motorway, heading south to Bordeaux from Paris, there stands a strange tower with no obvious purpose. If you came across it in the grounds of a chateau you would assume it was a folly, a whimsical structure with no function, simply meant to decorate the landscape.

This particular tower, however, had a deadly serious use in the Middle Ages – we just don't know exactly what.

It is called a *lanterne des morts* (lantern or beacon of the dead) and the tower next to the motorway is a modern construction, an exhibit in an outdoor museum intended to advertise the local heritage. It is a replica of the original structure, which stands not far away, out of sight of the motorway down winding lanes, in a field outside the tiny village of Fenioux.

Fenioux's *lanterne* is the finest of around 50 such towers that survive in France (out of an original total of 80 or more). It consists of 11 columns pressed together, rising from a plinth and culminating in an ornate pointed fish-scale roof with a finial 18m above the ground. Inside, the lantern is hollow. There is a door at the bottom that gives access to a narrow flight of 38 steps up to a series of openings at the top.

The other *lanternes des morts* are similar in structure – tall, narrow and hollow – although they vary in shape and height. The others though rarely exceed 10m.

As far as anyone can tell, all were erected in the 12th or 13th centuries and all are found in central western France in territories that were then under the sway of the Duchy of Aquitaine. Many stand in cemeteries; the rest mark the sites of former medieval cemeteries that have since been transformed into squares and gardens.

There are perhaps 100 other similar structures elsewhere in France, some even bear the name of *lanterne des morts* but, although historically interesting, they were built at later dates and had or have different functions.

The morbid name was given to the towers by historians in the 19th century and we have no idea what they were called by the people of medieval Aquitaine. There is only one contemporary account of a *lanterne* written by Peter the Venerable, 9th abbot of Cluny, on a visit to Charlieu in the Loire. "In the centre of the cemetery," he wrote, "there is a structure of stone with a place at the top to receive a lamp whose light illuminates this sacred place every night as a sign of respect for the faithful who are buried here."

The earliest illustration, meanwhile, appeared in a German book published around 1490, in which a *lanterne des morts* forms the backdrop for



No one knows why *Lanternes des Morts*, such as the ones at Fenioux (left) and Cellefrouin, were built

another, more familiar, late medieval subject, the Dance of Death.

The rest is guesswork.

The great restorer of France's ancient monuments, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc tried to link them to the Celts. The Templars and Irish monks have also been cited as instigators but no documents substantiate either idea.

“

It has even been suggested their function was to show hordes of ghosts the way home after a night spent haunting the living

Other theories maintain that they were built on the orders of crusaders. In Jerusalem they had seen an "elongated chimney" built over the tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and they decided to imitate it at home.

The obvious question is: what was their purpose? It seems fairly certain that a fire was lit at the top. In Fenioux, there are steps for this but other *lanternes* may have been operated by scrambling up iron pegs inside or operating a system of pulleys.

Their location in graveyards indicates that they were associated with rites of burial.

It is possible that they were used to simply honour the dead by keeping a flame burning over the tombs – a practice dating back to antiquity. A more fanciful notion is that they were lit to guide the departing soul on the first part of its journey away from the earth.

However, at least one author on the subject argues that they were not a generous gesture to the dead but a selfish contingency of the living. Cemeteries have always been scary places but in the Middle Ages they were scenes of imaginary terrors. For this reason, candles were kept burning in monasteries throughout the night. The *lanternes* may have had a similar function: to scare off evil spirits, to warn the dead to stay in their place – or even, it has been suggested, to show hordes of ghosts the way home after a night spent haunting the living.

Throughout the Bible, there are references to divine light as a gift of god to steer the pious away from evil. In the New Testament, the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is a lesson about spiritual vigilance represented by keeping an oil lamp alight through the night. This parable is depicted on the portal of Fenioux church, not far from the *lanterne*.

Indeed, it is hard to look at a *lanterne* and not be reminded of a candle burning in church in remembrance of those who have died: a huge stone candle permanently placed among the tombs of the cemetery that will never burn down.

## Lanternes des Morts to visit

**Cellefrouin**  
(Charente, north of La Rochefoucauld)  
In the cemetery above the town. Take the steps up from the main street.

**Sarlat-la-Canéda**  
(Dordogne) A stout *lanterne des morts*, also called the Tour Saint Bernard, is behind the cathedral.

**Felletin**  
(Creuse, south of Aubusson) Octagonal granite *lanterne des morts* in the cemetery

**Fenioux**  
(Charente-Maritime, north of Saintes)  
Although next to the motorway, Fenioux can take some finding but it is worth it. The replica is in Lozay service area on the A10, about 20km south of exit 33 for Surgères. There is another replica on top of the hill of Sion-Vaudémont in Lorraine.



**Moutiers-en-Retz**  
(Loire-Atlantique, southwest of Nantes)  
In the middle of the village. The small statue on one side is of St Joseph, "the patron saint of a good death".

**Pranzac**  
(Charente, east of Angoulême)  
The lantern (*above, right*) is on a village green on the road out of the village leading to Angoulême.

## Which assurance-vie is right for you?

French Property Exhibition

If you're in London visit us at Olympia 16 & 17 Sep **STAND 64**

Assurance-vie can provide considerable tax and wealth management advantages in France, if used correctly and with specialist advice. But be careful as not all assurance-vie are the same.

Blevins Franks can help you establish which bond will achieve your tax, estate planning and investment objectives.

Talk to the people who know

**0 805 112 163** (N° Vert)

france@blevinsfranks.com

www.blevinsfranks.com

BLEVINS  FRANKS

TAX ADVICE • INVESTMENTS • ESTATE PLANNING • PENSIONS

Blevins Franks Group is represented in France by the following companies: Blevins Franks Financial Management Limited (BFFM) and Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF). BFFM is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK, reference number 178731. Where advice is provided overseas, via the Insurance Mediation Directive from Malta, the regulatory system differs in some respects from that of the UK. Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF) is registered with ORIAS, registered number 07 027 475, and authorised as 'Conseil en Investissements Financiers' and 'Courtiers d'Assurance' Category B (register can be consulted on www.orias.fr). Member of ANACOFI-CIF. BFF's registered office: Parc Innolin, 3 Rue du Golf, CS 60073, 33701 Mérignac – RCS BX 498 800 465 APE 6622Z. Garantie Financière et Assurance de Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle conformes aux articles L 541-3 du Code Monétaire et Financier et L512-6 and 512-7 du Code des Assurances (assureur MMA).

003-exh-fr



## Rule change for sick pay and declarations of self-employed workers

TWO changes are coming in that will affect the revenue declarations and sick pay of self-employed workers such as artisans, sole traders, liberal professions or freelancers.

In 2018 they will be obliged to register their earnings to the Régime Social des Indépendants (RSI) online if they earn more than 10% above the Plafond annuel de la Sécurité sociale (PASS), which in 2017 was €7,846. In 2015 and 2016 they were only obliged to declare online if they earned 20% more than the PASS.

The same workers will also be obliged to pay their social charges online ie by bank transfer or standing order (and not cheque). There is also a new 'télépaiement' method for artisans and traders.

Independent workers who fall under the new obligation must register on the net-entreprises.fr website using their SIRET and social security numbers.

Anyone not adhering to such online declaration rules faces a penalty of 0.2% of the total declared by the wrong method.

*Micro-entrepreneurs* (the old

*auto-entrepreneurs*) must also make online declarations and payments if their turn-over exceeds 25% of a set amount relating to VAT payments called the *franchise de base de TVA* (it was previously 50%). This is currently €16,600 for people offering services (but not accommodation or on-site meals services) or €41,400 for the sales of goods.

A second change will affect sick pay. Since 2016 independent workers have been able to claim sick pay from the RSI if they were signed off by a doctor or were hospitalised.

Payment started after three days off for hospitalisation or seven days for illness – on receipt of a medical certificate.

Now, the rules will change from January 1, 2018, to be more in line with those of salaried staff – meaning that the three-day rule will be brought in for all absences of longer than seven days.

However, there is no change for shorter lengths of time off and independent workers who are off sick for less than seven days will still not receive pay.

## Modistes let fashion go to their heads

by EMILY COMMANDER

BOTH *chapelier* (hatter/hat-maker) and *modiste* (milliner) are *métiers d'art*, and the differences between them are subtle: the *chapelier* works primarily with felt, straw and fabric and produces classic hats for both men and women; while the *modiste* sees hats as art objects and tends to make unique pieces, usually for women.

The *chapelier* also makes each entire hat (both the brim and body) from a single piece of material but no such constraints exist for the *modiste*.

Some artisans work as *chapelier-modistes*, to do both types of work.

To work with hats, you need to have a lively interest in the world of fashion, whether your target market is high-end or mass consumer. Like most *métiers d'art*, it combines the general skills of creativity and a sense of colour with an ability to work in minute detail.

You also need an instinctive sense of volume to complement the measurements you will take of your clients' heads. Finally, particularly because many of your customers are likely to be both wealthy and demanding, you need to be good at building a rapport.



Brigitte Varnier says it is unusual for *modistes* to work with straw (*paille cousue*), but it is an additional skill that allows her to create something different

Most *modistes* work independently, usually in their own workshops, to make hats for individual clients, fashion designers, and for the performing arts. Because millinery is so linked to fashion, it is constantly evolving as new trends emerge. *Chapelières* can work independently or in a more commercial setting. There are about 200 *modistes* in France.

Every town boasted at least one hatter and one milliner until the 1950s slump and there has since been a general decline in hat-wearing, with cheaper competition from the Far-East, making life more difficult for *chapeliers* in par-

ticular, but also for *modistes*.

However, interest in hats has steadily risen since the start of the 21st century, but it remains a tough market.

Those wanting to enter the profession can work for a diploma called a Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle (CAP) in *métiers de la mode: chapelier-modiste* at one of three institutions.

The *chapelierie* section of the Lycée des Métiers Camille Claudel in Lyon, takes 12 students each year for the one-year CAP, with work experience abroad a possibility.

The Lycée Professionnel Les Sapins in Coutances, Normandy, also offers the specialist CAP over a single year.

In Paris, the Lycée Octave Feuillet offers a two-year CAP in *mode et chapellerie*.

Those not wanting a diploma can take a year to study for the more unusual Formation Complémentaire d'Initiative Locale (FCIL) in *arts de la mode broderie chapellerie fleurs plumes*, which is currently offered at the Lycée Octave Feuillet.

Otherwise, numerous short courses offer either a general introduction or an insight into new techniques.

A good place to start is the Atelier Musée du Chapeau in Chazelles-sur-Lyon, in the Loire department, where a vast array of training programmes is available throughout the year and the museum is worthwhile.

As with all *métiers d'art*, work experience is indispensable before you start out.

## CRAFTS in focus

Métiers d'art are ancient ...and protected in France

## Hats should add a 'touch of elegance'

MODISTE Brigitte Varnier of Atelier B in Haute-Normandie says that if she does not "add a touch of elegance, then I've failed".

Saying there is no such thing as someone who does not look good in a hat, she adds "inside your head you have to want to wear a hat, to look and feel good when you put it on".

Becoming a *modiste* was a career change for Ms Varnier, who was an export manager. She had wanted to be creative when younger but her parents advised going into business.

She remembered marvelling at the hats in the window of the *modiste* in Rouen when she was young, so when she looked to change career hat-making seemed logical... plus the Rouen *modiste* was about to retire, leaving an opening.

She studied for a CAP in hat-making at the Ecole Mod' Art in Paris, taking three days a week over a year in a class with 12 students from all over the world, which made for "a stimulating cultural exchange".

Atelier B is "in the middle of nowhere" and Ms Varnier said she felt that buying a hat was a sufficiently unusual act that people would find her if they



Brigitte Varnier marvelled at hats in shop window and now produces her own designs

needed her. "There are just three *modistes* in Haute-Normandie, so people are willing to go off the beaten track".

Plus, when anyone wears one of her creations, they act as a walking advert, drawing people in through word-of-mouth.

Four in five of her hats are made-to-measure. "I love this aspect of my work. You listen to what the customer wants, you look at them, you give them advice, and hopefully they will go away feeling good when they wear their hat".

Hats average about five hours'

work to produce, although some take far longer, particularly when the material has to be dyed. Prices, too, are surprisingly affordable given each piece is individual:

"Wedding hats cost between €150 and €250 each. I try to keep my prices down so the hats remain accessible, and one of the ways I do this is by cutting out the middle man".

Today the majority of hats are bought for weddings, meaning a seasonal working pattern.

"I start getting the orders in February, but am at my busiest



## Small business and tax advice



**Q: I AM told that employees can claim *kilométrage* costs against taxable income for their car journey to work. Can you tell me how I work this out? Do I need to keep details of all work/non-work usage and what happens with insurance costs?**

**A:** Yes, you can claim *kilométrage* costs against your taxable income and you can do it by one of two methods; plus there is a separate method if you are self-employed.

Employees can claim either an allowance for *frais professionnels* professional expenses for the use of a car, motorcycle, scooter or, since 2016, a bicycle. This is done either automatically by the tax office at 10% of income or according to your actual expenses submitted with your *déclaration de revenus* if these are higher (called *frais réels*).

In the case of *frais réels* for a vehicle, you can take into account all the *kilométrage* if you live 40km or less from work. If you live farther away you may claim up to 40km, or more if you can give good reasons for the extra (care for an elderly relative etc).

You can deduct either: Actual costs (depreciation, maintenance, repairs, fuel, insurance, parking – but you must keep receipts for these for three years as you may be asked for justification); or, a simpler way – as long as your car is not rented – is to use a fixed calculation (called *barème des frais kilométriques*, or *indemnités kilométriques*) available from the tax site [tinyurl.com/ybfur66w](http://tinyurl.com/ybfur66w)

If you are self-employed (*travailleur indépendant*) you can claim your real travel expenses if you are under the *frais réel* tax regime. This does not apply if you work under the micro-entrepreneur (former auto-entrepreneur) scheme or the micro-BIC/BNC regimes.

If the car was bought on credit, you can also deduct the annual interest, pro-rata with the proportion of work use as opposed to the personal usage.

■ Email your tax questions to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)

This column was written by Olaf Muscat Baron who is a Fellow of the Chartered Association of Accountants UK, a French expert comptable and an International tax advisor. He is the principal accountant of Fiscaly, an accountancy firm based in the Dordogne which serves individuals and businesses in or out of France. See [www.fiscaly.fr](http://www.fiscaly.fr) or call 09 81 09 00 15



# Empty lock-keepers' cottages reborn as tourism ventures

WITH 660km of canals and waterways in its control, the Brittany region has a vast network that links tourist sites as well as being a tourist destination itself with great walks, majestic locks... and some empty lock-keepers' cottages, *maisons éclusières*.

Many of the region's 300 or so locks have cottages beside them and the region owns 156 of them, with lock-keepers living in about a third. Now, however, 21 of the unused ones have been given a new life after appeals for suitable projects.

Most offer different types of accommodation on the popular walking and cycling routes of the *chemins de halage* towpaths that are part of France's national *Voies Vertes* (routes where motorised vehicles are banned).

But others are used by local associations. One, at Hilvern, Saint-Gonnery, on the Nantes-Brest canal opens next month as Louarnig Park, a site for Breton games such as *boules* (played on a curved pitch) or tug o'war along with local specialities such as *Bazh yod*, or *Patigo* and the many different Breton varieties of skittles games.

At Rouvray, near Lanouée, two different projects are being run on one site with Ti War An Dour offering two floating wooden gites on the lake near the lock plus electric bike hire for visitors wanting to see the Château de Josselin.

The second project is sited at the lock-keeper's cottage and will offer horse-drawn carriage rides. It will also have a canal history exhibition when renovations are complete. Built as a river supply route to the naval bases of Brest and Lorient which were often under siege by the English, the canal was started in the early 19th century and extends for 364km.

In another project, the cottage at La Haie 103 near Noyal Pontivy is known for its fine coffee thanks to Italian hostess Paola Camoletto who opened it for walkers and cyclists as well as fishermen fishing trout in Le Douric that runs beside the canal or pike and perch in the Etangs du Roz.

Running from Pontivy to Lorient, the Blavet canal has 28 locks and the Au Fil de l'Eau company uses the one at Les Gorêts at Hennebont for navigation linked activities which even see sailing barge trips on the Dutch *tjalk* to the Ile de Groix off the Breton coast at Lorient.

Run by Tanguy Rogel and Linda Guidroux, the company offers accommodation both on the *tjalk* and onshore with evenings livened by films screened on the sails of the péniche.

The Canal d'Ille-et-Rance et Vilaine is also known as the Canal Manche-Océan and has 48 locks linking Saint-Malo to



Paola Camoletto's cottage has become known for its fine Italian coffee



The Hennebont Dutch *tjalk* sails both canal and sea. The leeboards aid stability

Rennes and then Arzal on the Atlantic coast along its 240km length.

The Rubigny family have turned the Gué Noëllan cottage at Québriac into a workshop and office for their Osmonde business building and renting out canalboats.

Jean Luc Rubigny has been building wooden *barques* and *canots* since 1980 and each is made to his own design. He has just created the Ombelle, a 3m boat powered by a Free Wheeling hand crank.

He also has the *bateau gîte* Osmonde berthed near the cottage.

A little farther south, at Hédé-Bazouges, in Ille-et-Vilaine, Catherine Saint James runs Ile Flottante from the Petite Madeleine site of the canal's well-known 11 locks. Based in the keeper's cottage, she has

two *toue cabanée*, wooden houseboats as well as lodgings in the old stables for horses used on the towpath. It is a handy spot for cyclists as it has a repair workshop.

One fun addition to their complement is what they call a '*Diskiant*' – a 1960s mahogany yacht sited in a field. Sleeping three, its name is from the Breton word for 'fool'.

The Brittany region helped the new cottage occupants by bringing the buildings up to standard and they were offered on leases of between five and 30 years.

Although it has other cottages that could also be brought back to life this way, it says they are in poorer condition or with more difficult access and it is waiting to see how the first projects work out before looking at offering new buildings.



Jean Luc Rubigny's cottage is home to a boat-building firm



A perfect yacht for land-lubbers at Petite Madeleine

## Property Watch

### OCCITANIE



REGIONAL CAPITAL: Toulouse

DEPARTMENTS: Ariège, Aude, Aveyron, Gard, Haute-Garonne, Gers, Hérault, Lot, Lozère, Hautes-Pyrénées, Pyrénées-Orientales, Tarn, Tarn-et-Garonne

MAIN CITIES: Toulouse, Montpellier, Nîmes, Perpignan, Albi, Carcassonne, Rodez, Montauban, Tarbes

ONE of France's most widely – and wildly – varying regions, Occitanie rises from the Mediterranean beaches to the heights of the Pyrénées with historic sites and sights, picturesque villages, spectacular gorges and luscious vineyards.

No two areas are the same, the rocky Causses and Cévennes, the cirques of Gavarnie and Navacelles, the Canal du Midi, the long, sandy beaches... there is something for every taste and this is also an area known for its cooking and wines.

With weather influenced by the Pyrénées and Massif Central, the Midi-Pyrénées area can be hot and muggy in summer and fiercely cold in winter but is still one of the sunniest parts of the country, with more than 2,000 hours of sun a year.

Farther east, Languedoc-Roussillon has a warm and dry climate – and 2,500 hours of sun – with mild winters but rainfalls can be violent and winters are cold in higher areas.

Property prices also vary widely with price maps showing Hérault and Haute-Garonne departments commanding the highest average prices and Lozère and Ariège the lowest.

In Hérault the average house price of €2,275/m<sup>2</sup> masks prices hitting more than €6,000/m<sup>2</sup> in Grande-Motte and similarly in Haute-Garonne the average of €2,112/m<sup>2</sup> includes properties at €4,455/m<sup>2</sup> in the centre of Toulouse.

Expect to pay an average of €1,295/m<sup>2</sup> in Lozère, with a top price of €2,231/m<sup>2</sup> in Mende while €1,176/m<sup>2</sup> is the average in Ariège, topping out at €2,992/m<sup>2</sup> in areas west of Foix.

## What your money buys

### Under €140,000



**Charming 2 bedroom holiday home above the River Jaur, great potential.**

Just 5 minutes from lively Saint-Pons-de-Thomières, a great lock up and leave holiday home. This property is solid and clean, just in need of a bit of TLC.

**€61,000** Ref: 64919CG34



**Spacious character 4 bedroom house with garden, close to the centre of town and station.**

A very sought after house close to the centre of this popular market town with parking. Excellent value in Lézignan with many amenities including a weekly market to hand.

**€139,520** Ref: 56143LHS11

### More than €210,000



**Well-presented stone 3 bedroom village house, in a peaceful hamlet with sun terrace and gardens.**

This property is 5 minutes from the village of Oms with views of Canigou and the sea, and just 20 minutes from the historic and vibrant town of Céret and 40 minutes from Perpignan.

**€210,000** Ref: 60058JTU66



**Spacious house near the southern Ardèche with 4 bedrooms, swimming pool and garden.**

A well designed house that is great value for money. Only five minutes by car from Saint-Ambroix with its schools, supermarkets, and lots of individual food shops.

**€243,800** Ref: 66499ABE30

Properties available through Leggett Immobilier  
www.frenchestateagents.com Tel: 05 53 56 62 54

Next month: Midi-Pyrénées (depts 12/46/81/82)





## Legal Notes

Your questions answered



**heslop & platt**  
SOLICITORS & FRENCH LAW SPECIALISTS

**Barbara Heslop of  
Heslop & Platt  
answers a reader query**

**Q: Is it appropriate for an elderly person living in France to give an English Power of Attorney option to a relative in the UK?**

**A:** Where an English or Welsh national has validly executed a Legal Power of Attorney (LPA) while habitually resident in England or Wales, the LPA is generally (but not obligatorily) accepted as valid in France, and its powers take effect in France.

Where the donor is an English or Welsh national habitually resident in France, then an LPA may be advisable for any assets held in the UK, as the UK banks/Land Registry will be familiar with the document, more so than if presented with a legally correct French equivalent, known as a *Mandat de Protection Future (MPF)*.

If the donor habitually lives in France and owns assets in France, it would be appropriate to seek a *Mandat de Protection Future*, which could appoint their UK friend or relative as Attorney (*Tuteur*).

Where there are assets

in both jurisdictions, it is practical to have an LPA for the UK assets and an MPF for the French assets.

Note that, if the LPA is being used in France, perhaps to sell the donor's French property, France will need to ascertain the validity and effect of the LPA. The notaire or bank will ask for a certified translation with *apostille*, an affidavit of law from a solicitor explaining the LPA's authority.

For reasons beyond the scope of a short answer, where the donor is Scottish and has granted a valid LPA or Scottish equivalent, the enforceability of it should be more straightforward by virtue of the relevant Hague Convention.

In general, it is simpler to have an LPA or equivalent in each jurisdiction where there are assets to administer – as long as the parties understand what the document is, how it works, and what their duties are.

Most people will stick with an LPA and later seek the complicated and expensive specialist help in order to demonstrate its validity.

Tel: +44 (0)113 393 1930 • [www.heslop-platt.co.uk](http://www.heslop-platt.co.uk)  
[contact@heslop-platt.co.uk](mailto:contact@heslop-platt.co.uk)



**Sarah Bright-Thomas  
of Bright Avocats  
answers a reader query**

**Bright Avocats**

**Q: We were told our *permis de construire* application for a workshop should be approved without problem. Can you tell us when we will be able to start work on the project? J.C.**

**A:** Having received your building permit from the mairie you would think you would be safe to start work but that is not the case.

There can still be several complications and challenges to the permission from neighbours, from the mayor (who may have made further checks) and, more rarely, from the prefect.

Each of these parties can object to the character of the building permit and cause delays in any work.

The *permis de construire* has to be displayed on the site for two months (you can

organise a *huissier* visit to prove it has been posted) and neighbours have this time to raise a complaint about it to the mairie or administrative tribunal. If, after that, there is no complaint within two weeks and a day then there can be none.

For the mayor, they can only withdraw the permit if it is illegal and they have three months (+1 day) to do so. However, there is no limit if you are found to have lied or committed fraud to obtain the permit.

Prefects can intervene only after having been told a permit was approved. The mairie will tell you when a file was forwarded. A prefect then has two months (+1 day) to decide and two weeks (+1 day) to file an appeal or none can be laid.

Tel: 05 61 57 90 86 • [www.brightavocats.com](http://www.brightavocats.com)  
[contact@brightavocats.com](mailto:contact@brightavocats.com)

If you have a legal query send it to [news@connexionfrance.com](mailto:news@connexionfrance.com)  
We select questions for answer every edition

# Local green power for local buyers

A NEW energy supplier, Ilek, allows consumers to buy green electricity from a local supplier of their choice, whether it is a neighbouring windfarm, solar power station or hydro-electric dam.

After signing supply deals with about a dozen renewable energy producers in Occitanie, Ile-de-France, Provence-Alpes Côte d'Azur, Bourgogne, Franche-Comté and elsewhere it allows these suppliers to have a local contact with local buyers.

Electricity users are guaranteed prices that are up to 12% lower than the regulat-

ed market price even though their bills will include a €10 service charge to Ilek each month.

The company is part of the collaborative economy in linking up renewable energy suppliers with keen green-minded buyers and takes a step towards showing buyers' wishes to end France's reliance on ageing nuclear power stations.

At the moment about 20% of the energy 'mix' in France comes from renewables and the vast bulk of the rest from nuclear and Ilek aims to create a link between

buyer and green producer by signing purchase deals with producers and supply deals with energy users.

The company says it is the first time this 'direct selling' of renewable energy to customers has taken place in France and that this allows it to cut out middlemen and reduce the cost of the energy supplied.

For energy suppliers, it guarantees buyers for the power they produce and, once costs for the Enedis and RTE national grid which transports all electricity are taken out, a fair return for their energy output.

# An empty space can fill your coffers with a monthly rent

by KEN SEATON

FOR people living in the country a parking place usually comes with the property but for those living or working in a town or city it may be a bit more difficult.

Some flats will have parking underground or alongside but drivers who have no space can rent a parking spot – and that makes owning a parking space and renting it out a decent commercial idea.

It is not only parking spaces in towns that can be valuable but people living near airports can also rent out unused space to travellers keen to avoid expensive on-site parking.

Parking spaces in towns can be profitable with returns of 5% to 9% a year against 3-4% for an apartment rental – but that means having a keen idea on local pricing and what is being offered elsewhere.

Rental values depend on what the space offers: if it is a closed 'box' or open, if it is on the first level underground or near the access door and lift, if there is enough roof height for a 4x4. Rates in Paris, for example, can vary from €45 to €500 a month. Average rentals in Paris



Parking spaces can be valuable, especially in town centres

being about €200/month but could see a bounce coming as the city increases on-street parking checks – where just 10% of drivers pay for parking – and increases the fines from €17 to €35 or €50 in 2018.

You can check what rents are being charged on websites such as [monsieurparking.com](http://monsieurparking.com) that cover the country.

With a Hong Kong parking space selling for €592,000 this summer Paris is much cheaper with spaces starting at about €10-15,000. Notaires in Paris said an average cost in the capital is €24,500. The top value areas for those looking to

invest are the Marais and Saint-Germain-de-Prés.

In the regions, a spot will go for about €6,000 to €15,000 but some major city centres will see prices similar to Paris.

Sites such as [parkinggarage.fr](http://parkinggarage.fr) can give an idea of purchase prices for garages across France

Local contacts can also make a difference as purchasing a spot from a neighbour who needs cash can be a better buy than going onto the open market – although notaires must be involved and their fees borne in mind.

Notaire fees are proportionately higher for low-value

properties so a €9,000 garage purchase can mean €1,818 in fees while buying a garage in Paris at the average €24,500 will mean notaire fees and taxes of about €3,500 on top of the price.

One of the advantages of a car park purchase is that unlike residential rentals in some cities there is no maximum rental level, there is next to no maintenance and shared ownership charges are low as are local taxes.

There is no set contract length, which is can be both an advantage and disadvantage.

Contracts can be cancelled at a month's notice if the tenant finds a better spot but this can also mean a speedy turnaround.

As for tax, rents are declared as '*revenus fonciers*' if there is no service being offered at the same time. If they are less than €15,000 a year you can benefit from the simple *micro-foncier* tax regime where a 30% deduction is allowed and you pay tax on 70% of revenue.

Earnings above that are taxed in the *régime réel* where deductions such as loan costs, management costs and others can be made depending on your situation.

# New owner must pay old owner's damage

A NEW flat owner has had to pay damages to an upstairs neighbour for work done by the previous owner after a court judgment from the Cour de Cassation.

The previous owner had taken down partition walls, causing the floor upstairs to sink. The neighbour sued the owner to get the damage put right and compensation.

In his defence, the new owner said he was not the source of the problem and the neighbour should be suing the previous owner over the work.

The appeal court, however, did not agree as he had signed the *acte de vente* sales papers which specified work had been done and that the upstairs floor had subsided showing he knew about the problem, and should take it over personally.

If the purchaser had not known of the problem before the sale he would have had a claim against the seller and would have been able to sue over a *vice caché* hidden defect in the property on purchase.

## Website saves throwing out items if they can help others

GETTING rid of old household items can be a problem but a website offers a way to recycle products instead of throwing them out. [Donnons.org](http://Donnons.org) has so far stopped more than two million items being junked as someone has taken them for their own use.

Covering a vast host of product ranges, from animal goods to sports gear and clothing, it advertises items available for pick-up and people's requests and has localised adverts for the whole country.

## Arcachon is top choice for French second home owners

AS FRENCH people look once more towards buying holiday homes, they are looking at three main locations – with Arcachon, Deauville and Cassis at the top. A survey by Explorimmo found buyers

were looking at flats more than traditional houses and the No1 dream destination was the Arcachon Basin in Gironde, with 21% of hopefuls. Deauville in Normandy draws 18% and Cassis on the Mediterranean east of Marseille just behind on 17%.

Filling out the top 10 were Biarritz, Ile-de-Ré, Saint-Jean-de-Luz, Quiberon, Ramatuelle, Sainte-Maxime and Porto-Vecchio.

## Paris holiday rental landlords must register their property

FLAT owners in Paris who let their homes for short-term rentals through internet sites such as Airbnb must register with the mairie before December 1 to get a registration number to be shown on each advert.

An online registrar will open on October 1 to speed up registration and owners who rent for more than 120 days or those without the number will see their adverts withdrawn or refused.





This small 'vernacular' tower *pigeonnier* is attached to a farm just outside Monflanquin, Lot-et-Garonne



The *colombier* in the manoir d'Ango in Varengeville-sur-Mer, Seine-Maritime, would hold up to 3,200 pigeons



Not many *pigeonniers* can boast an east and west wing like this one that is now a residence at Villeréal, Lot-et-Garonne

# Living larders that gave food from the sky

by MICHAEL DELAHAYE

BEFORE gas, electricity, refrigeration or other modern conveniences people scraped a living from the land. Their cereal-based diet was heavy in carbohydrates and protein supplements were hunted or trapped... but man found a way to have fresh meat without needing to hunt it.

The solution was the *pigeonnier* or, as it was traditionally known, the *colombier*, in English, the dovecote.

Its origin goes back millennia to the ancient Egyptians and Persians but it is thought the Romans spread it across Europe – as far north as Caledonia. In Scotland today it is called a doocot.

In our age of freezers and online grocery deliveries, it is hard to appreciate just what a boon the *pigeonnier* must have represented for our ancestors. Indeed, miraculous – for it offered nothing less than the Biblical 'manna from heaven': food from the sky. Pigeons entered, nested, and not only laid eggs for the taking but provided fresh meat at the twist of a neck.

A *pigeonnier* was 'a living larder'.

Such enthusiasm may surprise those who today identify pigeons with the scruffy, incontinent 'avian vermin' that desecrate our public places; but in former times pigeon flesh was regarded as a great delicacy.

Particularly prized were the month-old birds – *pigeonneaux* (in English, squabs). Their meat has been described as not just succulent but even 'perfumed'.

As for the poop, that was a valuable resource. Before the introduction of chemical fertiliser, nitrogen-rich pigeon droppings offered one of the best means of soil improvement.

They had a market value and even featured in marriage contracts.



Set in the middle of fields at Puymiclan, Lot-et-Garonne, this *pigeonnier* is a typical feature of the countryside

It is also why *pigeonniers* were often placed in the centre of fields: so the guano could be spread over the surrounding land. When you consider that a single *pigeonnier* could accommodate hundreds, even thousands, of birds and one pigeon produces three or four kilos of droppings a year... you can see the appeal.

So, the *pigeonnier* was a godsend that benefited all... Sadly not – and certainly not if you were a peasant living in pre-revolutionary France.

As often happens with the good things in life, the rich and powerful did their best to keep pigeons and *pigeonniers* for themselves.

Until the Revolution, the *colombier à pied* (the freestanding version that, like a tower, rises straight from the ground) was, by law, the preserve of royalty and nobility – typically the local *seigneur*, the lord of the manor – even if in some parts of France the law was only patchily applied.

As a result, the *colombier* became a hated symbol of privilege – not least because, to add insult to inequity, the rich man's *colombier* attracted birds which would eat the poor man's seeds as fast as he could sow them, and then repeat the havoc at harvest time.

Thus, in just one step, the poor ended up feeding the rich.

But, as 19th century architect and historian Eugène Viollet-le-Duc said, this was all part of a wider pattern of feudal control: "During the Middle

Ages... the peasant could not even have his own oven. Instead, he had to take his bread to the communal oven belonging to the chateau or the abbey – and pay a fee to have it cooked."

He added, so it was with everything else, including the beasts of the forest and, yes, the birds of the air. The *seigneur* 'owned' the lot.

No surprise then that, come the Revolution, one of the first laws to be abolished, less than a month after the storming of the Bastille, was *le droit de colombier*, the nobility's exclusive right to possess *pigeonniers* and limit their construction.

Although many seigneurial *colombiers* were destroyed during the fervour that followed, some gems of the genre survived – examples of how a mere agricultural outbuilding can be a work of architectural excellence.

The construction of a *colombier* required as much thought as that of a modern apartment block. In some respects it was more complex in that it had to provide accommodation, nursery and – not to be sentimental – 'death row' in a single structure.

Particular consideration was given to orientation. Olivier de Serres, whose seminal farming guide, *Le Théâtre d'Agriculture*, appeared in 1600, was himself a seigneur and so knew a thing or two about pigeons. The *colombier*, he instructs, should be situated on dry, raised ground but sheltered from the prevailing winds.

The access holes should face south or east to catch the first rays of the sun because "for pigeons the sun is life".

Centuries before the EU, there was even a 'European norm' for the size of the holes: no wider than 10 centimetres, to allow pigeons in but keep crows, ravens, hawks and owls out.

In addition to the aerial predators, there were their terrestrial cousins: rats, martens and, not least, cats.

It is no accident many *pigeonniers* resemble fortresses. The magnificent 17th-century Tour de Rance in the Lot-et-Garonne is a classic of the type: raised on six stone columns with protruding rings and access only by lad-

der. Sad to say, it is now in urgent need of restoration despite being state-owned and registered as a *monument historique*.

Europe's biggest *pigeonnier* is, it is claimed, the one at Brue-Auriac, Var. Built in the 1750s, it is 22.5m (about seven storeys) high and boasts some 8,000 wall niche roosts.

A particular advantage of the cylindrical shape is it enabled the installation of another common feature: an internal ladder that could be pivoted around a central pole to collect eggs and birds from their niches. This was pigeon-keeping on an industrial scale.

At the other extreme were the domestic *pigeonniers*. Once pigeons were free for all after 1789, a pigeon-loft could be readily created in an ordinary house by adapting the roof-space. It might be just a row of holes punched into the stonework below the tiles – or, to give a building 'un petit air de château', it could involve the addition of box-turrets.

Today, the *pigeonnier* has come full circle. It has lost its original usage (You're unlikely to hear, 'I'll just go and strangle a bird for dinner, dear!'), but it is once again a status symbol for those with seigneurial pretensions.

If a residence with a crenelated tower is beyond your budget, one with a *pigeonnier* could be the next best.

Tastefully renovated, many have found a new role: as retreats for executive hermits, studies for aspiring authors and – a current vogue – novelty gîtes for those tired of windmills and water-towers.

Just one piece of advice if you are considering such a conversion and want to keep your TripAdvisor rating: remember to block up the access holes. Fail to do so and your guests could wake up beneath a layer of feathers... or worse.



The Tour de Rance at Bourran, Lot-et-Garonne is in a very sorry state despite being protected



An inside look at the roosts or *boulins* in this cone-shaped *colombier* that is still standing in good condition at Rosel near Caen in Calvados



# Mint museum looks at money in all its glory

THIS month the Paris Mint, Monnaie de Paris, opens its new museum revealing the most valuable and most historic treasures of a collection dating back to 600BC.

Opening on September 30, the free museum will have 1,800 exhibits from archives of 140,000 coins, medals, sculptures and jewellery pieces revealing craftsmanship and fine metal-working from the earliest days of coinage.

At its heart is the Grand Monnayage, the room where coins were struck until 40 years ago, and which has returned to its original use with a dozen presses showing how metals are transformed into valuable coins with the stages of casting, striking and engraving.

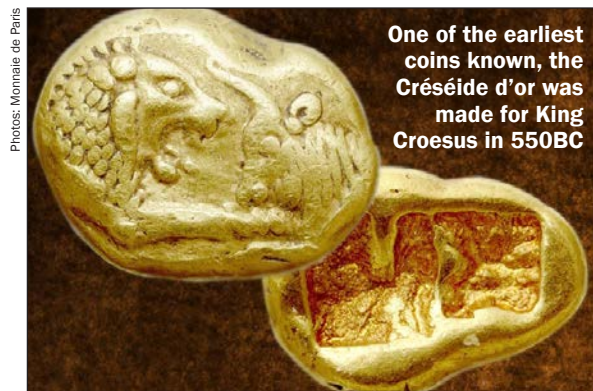
One of the world's oldest coins will be on show – the Créséide d'Or showing the heads of a lion and a bull that was struck for the fabled King Croesus of Lydia in about 550BC.

Head curator Dominique Antérion said the museum was a “walk through centuries of history” as the mint is France's oldest business. It was created as a royal mint in 864 and moved to the present site on Quai de Conti in 1775.

The museum is a themed *parcours* with views into the workshops where the 150 staff work, he said: “We have created a place where you can see everything the mint has done and what it does now – and even the work at our site at Pessac in Gironde which makes 1.5 billion coins a year.

“We show how we bring metal to life; how base metals are transformed into value whether gold, silver or platinum or less ‘noble’ metals like aluminium or zinc.”

He added: “Visitors should not miss the Rue Mouffetard cache of Louis XV coins but also the Créséide or the 16th century Japanese Oban d'or which has ink writing on gold.”



One of the earliest coins known, the Créséide d'or was made for King Croesus in 550BC



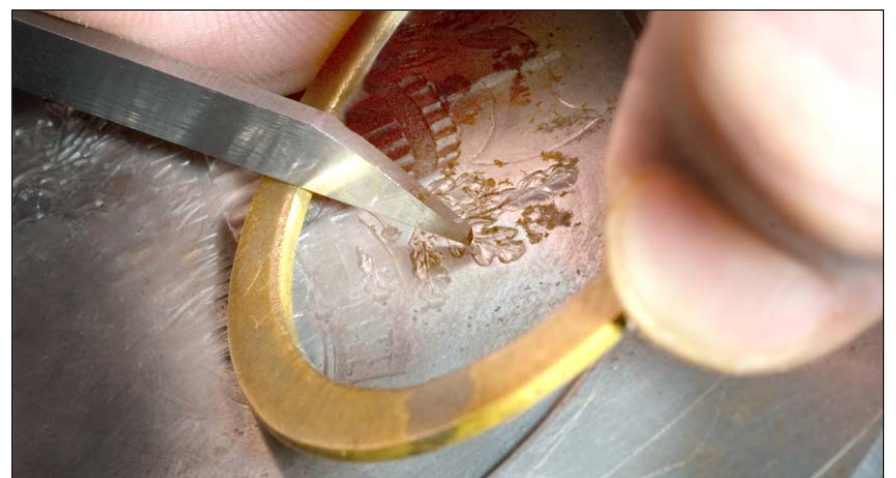
The Légion d'Honneur has been made at Monnaie de Paris since Napoleon created the order in 1802



Marianne €5,000 pure gold coins are the latest made for sale by the Monnaie



Intricate design and workmanship on the dies for medals and commemorative coins



## Thinking of leaving France? What do you need to do with your finances?

It is essential to put strategic financial planning in place before you leave France. You need specialist advice early on, to take action at the right time to secure all the tax advantages and consider every aspect of your wealth management.

Blevins Franks has offices in France and UK and are experts on the interaction between the two regimes.

Talk to the people who know

0 805 112 163 (N° Vert)

france@blevinsfranks.com

BLEVINS  FRANKS

TAX ADVICE • INVESTMENTS • ESTATE PLANNING • PENSIONS

Blevins Franks Group is represented in France by the following companies: Blevins Franks Financial Management Limited (BFFM) and Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF). BFFM is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK, reference number 179731. Where advice is provided overseas, via the Insurance Mediation Directive from Malta, the regulatory system differs in some respects from that of the UK. Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF), is registered with ORIAS, registered number 07 027 475, and authorised as 'Conseil en Investissements Financiers' and 'Courtiers d'Assurance' Category B (register can be consulted on [www.orias.fr](http://www.orias.fr)). Member of ANACOFI-CIF. BFF's registered office: Parc Innolien, 3 Rue du Golf, CS 60073, 33701 Mérignac – RCS BX 498 800 465 APE 6622Z. Garantie Financière et Assurance de Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle conformes aux articles L 541-3 du Code Monétaire et Financier et L512-6 and 512-7 du Code des Assurances (assureur MMA).

[www.blevinsfranks.com](http://www.blevinsfranks.com)