



BULLETIN



Welcome

Claire Riley, President

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Dear Members

It's here again, Christmas with all those celebrations, parties, choir performances, church services, craft markets selling gifts to buy for family and friends. Cakes to bake, trees to decorate, presents to wrap, cards to write, the list continues.

It has been very heart-warming to be back to a full programme of ACFAA activities after what has been a very difficult couple of years for all of us. It has been wonderful to see everyone meeting up again.

We are almost at the end of another year and this Bulletin gives you a brief resume of a very busy season for The Association.

On behalf of the ACFAA Committee may I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Claire Riley

President, ACFAA Association



Did you know?

HOW ENGLAND GAINED AND THEN LOST AQUITAINE

For 300 years until its conquest by France in 1453, followed by the expulsion of the English, Aquitaine was under the rule of the kings of England. **Charles Bethune**, who runs our courses on French history and literature, tells the story.



The tomb of Henry and Eleanor at Fontevraud

In 1151 Henry, son of Geoffrey, Duke of Normandy, and his wife Matilda, daughter and heiress of King Henry I of England, inherited his father's lands and titles. In 1152 King Louis VII of France divorced his wife Eleanor, ruler as Duchess of Aquitaine. Henry, who through his mother claimed the throne of England, promptly married Eleanor and added Aquitaine to his father's lands. In 1154, he became King of England as Henry II.

For the next 300 years, through many struggles, Henry and his successors ruled this pleasant province from its capital at Bordeaux, from where its products, in particular its wines, flowed to England in huge quantities. When in 1337 Edward III of England decided to conquer the rest of France, so launching the Hundred Years' War, men and supplies landed at the ports of Aquitaine advanced along the southern front.

Gradually English conquests were whittled away. Inspired by Joan of Arc, France regained lost lands and England fell into internal strife. By 1451 the French had reached the Garonne. On 17 July 1453 the last English army was destroyed at Castillon on the Dordogne and on 19 October Bordeaux surrendered. The empire founded by Henry and Eleanor had vanished and the only English possession on the mainland of Europe was the trading post of Calais, lost in 1559.



The battle of Castillon, 1453

Recent Events

Walk and lunch at Allemans du Dropt

In September a group of almost forty members joined together for a walking tour of Allemans du Dropt. Our tour guide Linda pointed out many local landmarks and features, including



the wonderful frescoes in the church; it was a



most interesting and informative morning. We finished at midday, when many of the group enjoyed lunch together at the Hôtel l'Etape Gasconne in the village.

Due to the success of this visit, we plan to arrange a similar tour of Issigeac in Spring 2023. Nicola J Lack

Visit to Chateau Monbazillac

At the end of September a group of members spent an enjoyable afternoon visiting Chateau Monbazillac. The tour started in the newly developed visitors centre which had many presentations on how the wine is produced and harvested. The history along with the unique qualities and handling of this wine were demonstrated via videos, interactive boards and statistical quotes. The group spent many a while in this area before visiting the actual Chateau, where the family history and photos are presented within the ground floor rooms. Finally, the group took part in a wine tasting session, which included three different wines.



Wendy O'Meara



Bowling

We were 30 people making 5 teams that met at the Bowling Alley in Bergerac on Sunday October 2nd to play for the President's Trophy. This was the second edition in this format



and the Trophy was therefore put back into competition. After a quick and efficient induction by the bowling staff, the players quickly got into the game. The games went on in a convivial and joyful atmosphere with the players leaving the competitive aspect in the background. The end of the game was uncertain but saw one team break away in the very last few throws. Our congratulations go to the winning team of Julie and Chris Maydon, Linda and Dave Waude, Mimi and Ken Knudsen. If you can play, then why not join the next event to be held in 2023. Michel Moreau

30th Anniversary

During the summer the Association celebrated 30 years in existence. Set up in July 1992 by Roger Philip, as an Art Group, our thriving Association now boasts over 600 members and numerous activity Groups, French and English language classes, social events and trips to appeal to all our members.

The party took place in October at the Salle Des Fêtes in Agnac, with a delicious luncheon prepared by Joel Pierron, a local traiteur from Sigoulès and dancing throughout the afternoon to songs by the stunning, Diane Moore, professional entertainer and Group Leader of the ACFAA Singing for Pleasure Group.



Our experienced party planner, Christine Sumner, organised the team in preparation for the highlight event of the year, that included VIP guests, Gerry Jackson-Philip, the daughter of Roger, and her husband Peter, and former ACFAA presidents Christine Etches, Ron Tillyer and Michel Mezin. The event was enjoyed by almost 100 of our members. Claire Riley, President



Christmas decorations workshop

Friday 18th November saw more than 30 members attend our first Christmas decoration demonstration at the Centre de Loisirs in Eymet.

Six members of the craft group helped with the demonstration, which included five different decorations from wreaths to garlands and more. It was a very enjoyable afternoon with festive refreshments being served during the break. Many members advised that the workshop had reignited the interest in home made decorations and the afternoon closed with four decorations being raffled.

Christine Sumner – Craft Group Leader



Perigueux Coach Trip

On the 2nd December, ACFAA's members went to Perigueux for the Marché de Noël and to see the wonderful sites. Unfortunately, there had been a delay in the setting up of the market, but this did not spoil members enjoyment.

One member wrote:

Just a quick note to say thank you for arranging the trip to Perigueux. Coffee on arrival, exploring the Cathedral, a walk around the old town and down along the river, lunch in the Cathedral square, a wander around the wonderfully decorated shops, coffee and a brandy back at the cafe where we started and just time to buy the 'must have' pair of boots I'd seen before catching the coach home—who needs a Christmas market! We appreciate all the effort that goes into the organising of events like this so a big THANK YOU from us. Janet & Ian

Future Events

Various talks, walks, workshops and demonstrations are being organised with dates to follow.

- ◆ Bordeaux Coach Trip – Friday 20th January 2023
- ◆ Coffee Mornings to be held on the second Monday of the month from 10.30am. Dates and venue to be confirmed as Tortoni and many other venues are closed in January
- ◆ Quiz Night with ACFAA joining together with the Eymet Cricket Club – March 2023
- ◆ King's Coronation Fête – May 2023. ACFAA in conjunction with the Rugby Club will be hosting a celebration event
- ◆ Songs and Dancing with Diane Moore – May 2023. Diane will be performing her Land of Hope & Glory show and then singing songs from the 50s 60s 70s and 80s to get you dancing the evening away.



Get involved in ACFAA's Social Committee

We would love to hear from members who would like to join a team of hardworking people who enjoy putting together and executing a calendar of events that meet the needs of our members.

We meet monthly to discuss and agree the activities that our members would enjoy, along with setting dates, timings and venue.

A committee member usually hosts an event with full support with the marketing, organisation and help on the day.

It really is fun and very fulfilling to put together a wide range of events, activities, talks, workshops and demonstrations.

Please email me with any questions: [Wendy O'Meara](mailto:Wendy.O'Meara@acfaa.org). We look forward to you joining us.

Supporting the Community

Octobre Rose

On Sunday 9th October ACFAA, in association with the mairie d'Eymet, led the October Rose Solidarity walk. After the runners had departed from the Quai d'navigation starting point, Claire Riley, ACFAA's President, led the huge group of people that were supporting the walk.

On Monday 10th ACFAA held an Octobre Rose Coffee Morning raising further money.

Finally, the ACFAA Line Dancing Team – the Agnac Crazy Stompers held a Line Dancing event and raised a whopping 414 €.



Christine Sumner representing the Association handed over a cheque for 1382.46 € to Madam Le Cam, President of the Comité Féminin de la Dordogne Contre le Cancer, which was raised during Octobre Rose by a walk, line dancing and a coffee morning.

In just a very short space of time, Eymet put together a great event celebrating **St Catherine** with many of the local associations supporting the day.

On a cold, but sunny Sunday, ACFAA's groups, Craft, Gardening, Photography & Bridge joined together to host a number of demonstrations on the ACFAA stand. The Line Dancing Group – The Agnac Crazy Stompers and the Singing for Pleasure group offered wonderful entertainment to everyone who attended the fête. It really was a great day!



Lyceé Visit

On Thursday, 1st December a group of volunteers from the ACFAA Association visited Lycée Maine de Biran in Bergerac to be interviewed by the final year students studying English as a speciality subject. We arrived at 10.30h and were greeted by their teacher Isabelle Andres and then proceeded to the main foyer to meet the students. We were interviewed at tables in groups of three or four. The students had a list of prepared questions to ask us.

They were very interested to understand why so many English people had chosen to settle in



this part of the Dordogne. They also wanted to understand how we have been affected by Brexit, if we were working or retired, the things we miss about living in the UK, the Royal Family and many more questions. Our interview session was followed by lunch in the

staff room where we chatted more informally with the students.

This was a very interesting experience, and we found the students to be delightful company.

Thanks to ACFAA members Brian Postles, Jacqueline Takashi-Postles, John Simmonds, Jane Harrison, Bee Silcock, Joanne Harbron, Bill Harbron, Bill King, Graham Harris, Brian Berks, and Pam King for taking part.

Claire Riley

News from the Groups

The **ACFAA Atelier group** have been involved with a number of projects this Autumn. The local school asked ACFAA to help build a dog Kennel and the team put together a sizeable kennel which is now in place in the school grounds.

Having built the Christmas Santa hut a couple of years ago, the Atelier group made some enhancements along with adding a Christmas tree made from pallets. This hut is currently on display in the Place de Gambetta in Eymet.

Finally, the group made an impressive bench, which got very positive comments from the Centre de Loisir Manager Nadia. The bench is sat outside and provides a resting point for members who attend the ACFAA activities on a Tuesday.

If you want to join this group, please contact Tim Richardson the Atelier group leader.



Language Conversation Evening

This year saw the ACFAA Association Language volunteers increase the number of classes that are held for both French and English. From Beginners to Advanced over 200 members currently attend lessons and it is thanks to the Language Course Co-ordinator Sally Blackman and Nicola Lack that a full programme of course material is now available.

The volunteers work extremely hard to offer relative and progressive class topics and the feedback from members after the first term has confirmed just how important these classes are for their ability to communicate with the local community.

In November, ACFAA held their first Language Conversation evening and 60 members attended a table swap event which hosted five topics from Christmas/ Food, Drink and Eating out/ Sports and Leisure/ Hobbies/Travel and Holidays.



Singing for Pleasure group with Diane Moore

October saw the start of the newest group in the ACFAA portfolio, which includes songs in French and English and across all genres. Wow! Every Thursday afternoon a huge group of ladies and men join Diane for a wonderful afternoon of great songs and fun.



From Diane hosting part of her Land of Hope and Glory show for the Armistice Day session where a number of members of the group dressed in 40's style to the final Christmas session with festive jumpers and songs, it has brought many members huge joy, emotion and fun. Diane and many other members are taking part in the Cinderella Pantomime in January so are very busy, but look forward to the return of the group in February.

If you would like to contribute to the Bulletin, contact the editor [Wendy O'Meara](#)



For more information on ACFAA and details if you wish to join visit the web site: acfaa.com

