

THE FRENCH CONNECTION
WRINGTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION
The John Locke Room, Silver Street, Wrington BS40 5QE
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There is not much news this month. Most of you will have heard that, like everything else, all French Connection activities are on hold. There is no real news from France other than corona virus news. France is in a lock down even fiercer than ours here. To leave your home you have to complete a form setting out where you are going and why. If you get it wrong you can be fined. The second round of the local elections was, at the last minute, postponed until June 21st, so we still do not know who will be the new *maire* of VLB. So this month's newsletter will look for items that might make self isolation more bearable and, since we are French connected, it seemed only right to start with matters of food and drink.

Just to get things into perspective:

Paradise is where:

- **the cooks are all French**
- the lovers are all Italian
- the mechanics are all Swiss
- the administrators are all British

Hell is where:

- **the cooks are all British**
- the lovers are all Swiss
- the mechanics are all French
- the administrators are all Italian

French culinary delicacies

The French are less squeamish than most British people about eating the parts of some animals that the Brits tend to shun. Some of these shunned dishes are extremely tasty and absolutely harmless, so the next time you are in France why not put aside your pre-conceived notions of distaste and try some (or all) of the following:

- *Andouillette*. This is a speciality of the Lyon area, but can be found in bistros and brasseries all over France. It is a form of bulky sausage, made from pork or veal, cows' intestines, pepper, wine and seasoning. It is frequently served with a mustard sauce and chips. It is not to be confused with *andouille*, which is a smoked sausage with similar ingredients but is usually served cold, in thin slices and with salad.
- *Cuisses de grenouille*. Frogs' legs. These are a speciality of the Dombes area, close to Bourgen-Bresse, but can be found on restaurant menus all over France. Most of the frogs' legs these days are imported from the Far East. They are coated with flour and lightly cooked in olive oil, flavoured with a good dose of garlic and parsley. They are eaten with the fingers (there is no other possible way) and have the texture of chicken. The garlic tends to hang around for a couple of hours after the feast and you would be well advised to practice social distancing - at least 2 metres.
- *Lapin à la moutarde*. Saddle or leg of rabbit in a mustard sauce. These are reared rabbits and have a different texture and flavour from the wild sort that some of the more adventurous of us eat in Britain. It is popular all over France
- *Escargots bourguignonnes*. These are snails. There is a variety of ways of preparing them, but the '*bourguignonne*' version is to cook them for a few minutes in a sauce of butter, white wine, garlic and seasoning and replace them in their shells, from which they have been removed after being 'purged' for several days. As with the *cuisses de grenouille* it is better to practice social distancing for an hour or two after eating them.
- *Pieds de porc*. These are pig's feet. They are often eaten cold after being fried in

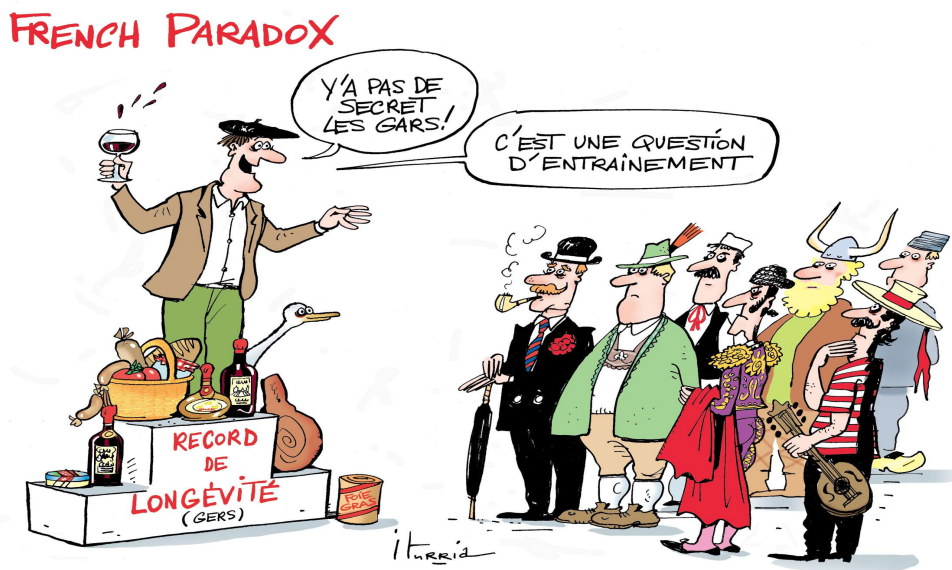
breadcrumbs, but they are also delicious in a casserole - excellent peasant food.

- *Tripes à la mode de Caen*. Cow's stomach cooked in a casserole with vegetables and seasoning. A delicacy in Normandy,
- *Rognons blancs*. These are the parts of a male sheep that come in pairs and are not often discussed in polite company. They are cooked in butter, garlic and parsley. Perhaps because even the French have their limits, they are rarely seen these days and you are unlikely to find them on a restaurant menu.

So next time you are in France put aside your British misconceptions and - *bon appetit!*

Kir

When you are in France do you enjoy a glass of that wonderful aperitif, *Kir*? Usually a mixture of dry white wine and *cassis* or *framboise* (the proportions being a matter of taste) it can also be made using sparkling wine or even champagne, when it becomes a *kir royal*. Whilst sipping it do you ever wonder how it got its name? The name goes back to a hero of the Resistance, a priest from Dijon called Félix Kir. During the war Canon Kir managed simultaneously to help the resistance with their sabotage campaign against the Germans, to act as the town's spokesman to the Germans, to save the synagogue from destruction and to survive an assassination attempt. After the war he became *Maire* of Dijon, a post he occupied until his death in 1969. As well as being a hero he was a *bon viveur* and used to offer his guests before the meal a glass of dry white wine mixed with *cassis*. This tippie became popular and, perhaps due to the prominence to which he rose during the war, it was eventually named after him.



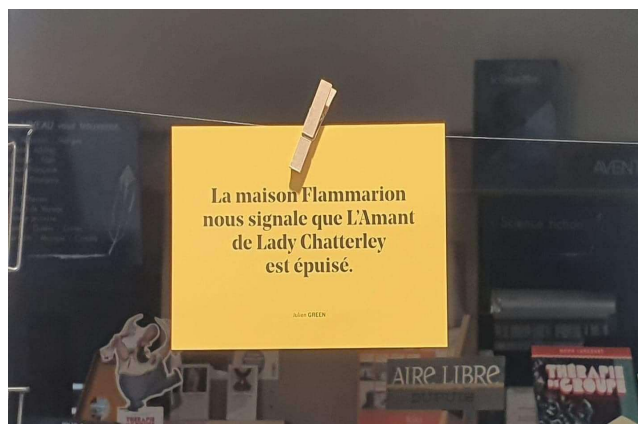
The Fonserannes locks at Béziers

One of the essential local attractions to visit if you are in VLB is the Fonserannes locks at Béziers. This is a series of 8 locks on the Canal du Midi that have to be navigated by people using the canal to go inland. By using them boats are raised by 21.5 metres over a distance of 300 metres. There were originally 9 locks of which one, at the downstream end, enabled boats to cross the Orb River, has, since 1858, been replaced by an aqueduct and is no longer in use. Today boats enter the system through a side entrance in the 7th lock, so there are now only 6 locks to negotiate. This however can be quite a lengthy experience, especially at busy times in the summer.

Many tourists now visit the site and much has recently been done to cater for them, including a visitor centre and a restaurant.



Notice in a French bookshop



Not surprising really!!

Taking exercise during isolation



Keep your distance and stay healthy,

ANTHONY HANCOCK