



**THE FRENCH CONNECTION**  
WRINGTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION  
The John Locke Room, Silver Street, Wrington BS40 5QE

**NEWSLETTER October 2022**  
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**Welcome to your *October* newsletter**

***L'Automne***

Autumn begins in France, officially, at the Autumn equinox, this year on 23<sup>rd</sup> September. As in the UK, the finest months are September and October, but it can be mild and pleasant right through to the end of November, with some beautiful, rich colours among the trees.



Autumn in the Tuileries (Stock photo: Alamy)

## News from France



Bookshops thrive as France moves to protect sellers from Amazon

Six years ago, France banned free book deliveries as part of the notion of ‘cultural exceptionalism’, which aims to protect independent booksellers from market domination by Amazon. Amazon got round this by charging a cent for delivery, whereas independents would sometimes have to charge as much as €7 to protect their narrow margin of profit. Unlike in the UK, where some of the larger retailers offer three-for-two deals on novels, French law allows a maximum discount of 5%, so readers pay the same whether they buy online, from a big high-street store, or from a small independent. This has worked to protect the 3,500 independent bookshops in France—above three times the number in Britain—and their 12,000 workers.

On 23 September, however, in a move to try to even up the situation, a law was passed that establishes a minimum postal fee of €3 for orders under €35. This is a mean figure, negotiated with the postal regulator, between the lower fee proposed by Amazon and the higher charge of €4.50 proposed by the independents.

In a statement issued by the culture and finance ministries: ‘This will adapt the book industry to the digital era by restoring an equilibrium between large e-commerce platforms, which offer virtually free delivery for books whatever the order’s size, and bookstores that cannot match these delivery prices.’

## The cost of living crisis

This is what the French government are doing to help households:

1. Gas prices are frozen until the end of the year and electricity price increases frozen at 4%. In 2023 the cap on both fuels will be 15%.
2. Public sector pay, pensions and some welfare payments are raised by 4%.
3. Rent increases are capped at 3.5%.
4. Means-tested student grants are raised.
5. A subsidised rebate on petrol and diesel prices now at 30 cents per litre, dropping to 10 cents in November.
6. Encouraging employers to offer an annual tax-free bonus of up to €6,000 (previously capped at €1,000).
7. TV licence is abolished (€138 per annum).
8. A handout in September to low-income families on welfare benefits of €100 + €50 per child, per household, towards fuel bills.
9. In response to the energy crisis, which has cost the French government €24bn in caps and subsidies, the energy giant EdF will become fully nationalized.

## Cultural news

The French Film Festival is at venues across the UK November 3—December 15<sup>th</sup>. Look out for showings near us, there are bound to be some in Bristol, by signing up for information at [frenchfilmfestival.org.uk](http://frenchfilmfestival.org.uk) .

Busking fearlessly on my personal subscription to an online journal called The Design Edit, I am sending you a link to a delightful film, just five minutes long, of a sculptor called Bernar Venet who has a studio in the south of France, with a sculpture park. He talks about his home, his work and his collection with great charm and excellent English. Enjoy!

[https://thedesignedit.com/tde-tv/video/at-home-bernar-venet/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=230922\\_TDE](https://thedesignedit.com/tde-tv/video/at-home-bernar-venet/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=230922_TDE)

## News from VLB

The experimental plan to extinguish street and public lighting in VLB has begun, with lights off from 1am until 5.30am. The idea is to save energy, but also to benefit wildlife.

October is pink in VLB, an active programme of support for cancer sufferers, with blue week being a parallel endeavour to support those over the age 60 with routine health checks and other aspects of wellbeing.

## Conversations with our friends in VLB

Next conversation is on **October 3rd, 6pm**, and the topic is 'your favourite film'. For us in Wrington this must be a French film, for those in Villeneuve, a British one.

## French Conversation

We shall meet at the Langford Inn on **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October at 3pm** and on **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October at 3pm**. If you haven't been before and would like to come along, we are a friendly group and French is spoken at all levels, from hesitant to fluent. Why not give it a try? You can have a chat about it with Margaret Hancock at [margaretdivonne@gmail.com](mailto:margaretdivonne@gmail.com).

## Saturday mornings at Mère Poulet

Sophie at Mother Hen in Wrington is very proud of the *chocolat chaud de bon qualité* that she serves on a Saturday morning, with, of course, croissants. From 10am, this is a must for the Wrington Francophiles.

## Cinéphiles de Wrington

September's meeting went awry. There was, it's fair to say, a comedy of errors about the time, and a couple of people, including John, had to pull out just hours before. For these reasons we are rescheduling the discussion. On **Tuesday 4 October**, 5pm on Zoom, we shall discuss *400 coups* (1959), the directorial début of François Truffaut, starring Jean-Pierre Léaud, Albert Rémy and Claire Maurier. Léaud's character, the rebellious adolescent Antoine Doinel, is semi-autobiographical (Truffaut co-wrote the film with Marcel Moussy), and the actor went on to star in four subsequent films in the same role. It is shot in Dyaliscope, on location in Paris and Honfleur, and is one of the defining films of the French New Wave. It was Truffaut's most successful film in France, and he won Best Director at Cannes and a Palme d'Or nomination. It was also recognized by the Academy with a nomination for Best Original Screenplay in 1960.

**Please note the universal log-in for all French Connection and Wrington Twinning Association Zoom meetings, whether committee, conversation or Cinéphiles:**

<https://zoom.us/j/4933115546?pwd=bmhLSnZrSkIPRHZhRjhQaFFNczJHZz09>

Meeting ID: 493 311 5546

Passcode: 610359

One tap mobile

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**Subscriptions are due on 1st October.** Following the resolution at last year's AGM membership now costs £10 per individual or £20 for a couple or family.

Cheques payable to Wrington Twinning Association should be sent to The Treasurer, c/o The John Locke Room, Silver Street, Wrington BS40 5QE or alternatively you can pay direct into our bank account with Santander, Sort Code 09-01-27 Account No. 88663595.

Your editor will be grateful and delighted if no reminder is required in the November newsletter!

**The French Connection/Wrington Twinning Association AGM** will be held on **November 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**, venue tba. Full details will appear in the October and November newsletters, but please put this in your diary now. There are important discussions to be had as to the way forward, so watch this space, and come along to give your views!

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## Recipe of the month

### Tarte de Cambrai

A change from Tarte Tatin that uses pears. It's lovely with cream and works as a pudding or a cake. The recipe comes from Jane Grigson.

4-5 large, ripe pears  
1 tbsp lemon juice  
10 level tbsps. self-raising flour and pinch salt  
6 level tbsps. vanilla sugar  
4 tbsps oil  
8 tbsps milk  
2 eggs  
2 ozs butter  
A little extra sugar

#### 200 degrees centigrade

1. Peel, core and slice the pears and sprinkle with lemon.
2. Make a batter with the flour, vanilla sugar, oil, milk and eggs.
3. Grease a 10" flan or shallow cake tin with butter paper.
4. Pour in the batter.
5. Arrange the pears on top.
6. Sprinkle evenly with extra sugar.
7. (An optional extra is to sprinkle an ounce of flaked almonds on top)
8. Bake for 50 minutes until brown and risen with bits of pear showing through.
9. Eat warm or cold.

**Enjoy!**





## Wine of the Month

This month I'm pushing out the boat with Barsac. It's an autumn wine, with a touch of the orchard about it, but so much more. Barsac is a small village 40 miles south of Bordeaux. Its wine growers make sweet, white wines based on the Semillon grape. They differ from Sauternes chiefly in the soil in which the grapes grow. In Barsac the soil is clay and limestone, Sauternes is grown in stonier soil. Barsac is fresh, bright, lemony, where Sauternes has more tropical fruit flavour. These are expensive wines, but perhaps we need a short flight of luxury as we start to think about lighting the fire and closing the curtains. They cost a lot because they are subject to 'noble rot' (botrytis), which is essential in their concentration, and must be harvested at exactly the right time when the rot appears. Yields are low, however, and harvesting is slow, so the process is laborious. It really is worth looking out for a good vintage. You'll find a guide to this here: <https://www.decanter.com/learn/vintage-guides/bordeaux-vintage-guide/sauternes-and-barsac/vintage-guide-2-117815/>



The Wine Society have a variety of Barsac starting at £35, but nothing from the outstanding 2014 vintage. 2015 can be very good, but the quality is uneven (though this risk can be taken as the Wine Society will always refund a bottle that disappoints). Aveyrs have two, including the reputable Chateau Doisy-Daëne, but they are very young, so a tasting might be advised. There is also a good selection at the online French wine shop Vinatis ([vinatis.co.uk](http://vinatis.co.uk)), starting at £37.

### ***Le mot juste***

This month's word is an early seasonal reference, but one we have already experienced in September: *le givre*, meaning hoarfrost. It comes from the transitive verb *se givrer*, meaning to ice up, and some of its adjectival uses are similar to English: *la fenêtre givrée*, the frosted window, even *la verre givrée*, frosted glass. It can also be used to mean tight (similar to frigid), but its most interesting colloquial use is for madness, the derivation of the analogy being cracked ice. So *devenir complètement givré* means to go completely nuts, mad, off one's head. I hope not too many of us can relate to that at the moment.

*Lindsey Shaw-Miller, Newsletter Editor, Wrington Twinning Association and The French Connection.*  
**With thanks to Anthony Hancock for the cartoon.**

