



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

NEWSLETTER September 2022
Website: <https://www.wringtontwinning.co.uk>
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Welcome to your September newsletter

La Rentrée

Bienvenue! Encore une fois le Newsletter. I hope you have all had a good summer, not melted in the heat (though you might, of course, have been in France, where it was even hotter). It already feels like autumn and the apples are falling early from the trees. They are probably not yet quite ripe, so even if they are an eating variety, it's best to cook them, especially if the pips are still white. And so we are begin, already, with the foodie stuff ... I feel a Tarte Tatin coming on ...

But first, something to celebrate!!

FRENCH CONNECTION BOULES

The French Connection Boules team came top of the 2022 league of 15 teams!



Boules, or Petanque to give its official name, is a national sport of France but it has an international following with tournaments and leagues everywhere including this country. You may have seen it played in France or elsewhere and marvelled at how it is played by people of all ages and sex. Why is it so popular? Because it is sociable, easy to play, and anyone can become reasonably proficient making it a fun but competitive pastime.

Did you know that there is a league in Wrington? If not, you only have to go to **The Plough Inn** on a weekday evening during the late Spring and Summer and you will find people playing league Boules in the garden of **The Plough**. You will also find people playing at other times when the

weather is (reasonably) clement and the one characteristic of all matches is the *bonhomie* which accompanies them! Then, whatever the result, you can NOW all repair to the bar for the well-earned refreshments.

If you are interested in playing Boules just email **THE FRENCH CONNECTION** and we will pass on your details to the Organisers. During 2022 the league played at the **Redhill Village Hall & Club** as **The Plough Inn** was sold to **Punchpubs** and was closed for some considerable time. It has now re-opened and Boules can be played there again. **THE FRENCH CONNECTION** currently has 1 team in the league and is named, strangely enough, **The French Connection**. So if you are interested, please give it a try! The league is likely to return to this venue in 2023.

News from France

La Rentrée en France has been prefaced by a strong statement from the President, Emmanuel Macron, of commitment to improved education, increased funding, and increasing the supply of teachers. Issues related to education were at the heart of his second term, he emphasized, and he has promised to raise teachers' salaries. He wants the government to make a 'new pact' with education, and a programme of rigorous consultation has begun. He has a new Minister for Education in place, Pap Ndiaye, who takes on the role at a difficult time, the biggest challenge being the shortage of teaching staff. The French curriculum is quite rigid and classical, and heavily dependent on teacher delivery. It will be interesting to see what sort of reforms are implemented, and how the shortage is addressed.

Rat runs (lit.) are proving an increasing headache in Paris, where cases of leptospirosis have doubled in recent years. More of the rodents, especially *surmulots* (brown rats), have been spotted in the open, and there is, in the 17th arrondissement, a 'citizens de-ratting brigade', consisting of a dozen volunteers (and recruiting) to track their transits and burrows. There is a notable movement in favour of non-lethal solutions, especially among followers of the *Partie Animaliste*, of which there is a member on the Paris Council. Fair to say that they are in the minority, but it is heartwarming to know that the intelligence of these maligned creatures is being acknowledged. And it's not just Paris: there has been an increase in the UK rat population also during the pandemic; it's interesting to speculate on the causes.

Diplomacy prevails in Algeria, where President Macron has just finished a three-day visit aimed at addressing the difficult relations of recent years. Following the French withdrawal from Mali, which has a border with Algeria, and with the common threat, as they see it, of Russian imperialism, the two countries have worked hard to make progress and reach a better understanding than they have in 60 years. Fragile though the relationship may yet prove, it is a positive moment, with benefits for both in the areas of defence and power supplies. It would be great if other countries, traditionally in conflict or an oppressive relationship, could aim for the 'appeased, shared and common memory' that has been one of the aims of these talks.

Cultural news

The Riviera is the setting for a series of exciting design exhibitions. There is a dynamic history of ceramics in the area, with Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger having both made ground-breaking ceramics from the local clay. Another artistic skill with a strong local history is glass-

blowing, and contemporary glass blower Antoine Pierini has an exhibition at the stunning, Greek-inspired Villa Kerylos in Beaulieu-sur-Mer. The exhibition is called 'En rêvant la Méditerranée', and the work seems to harmonize perfectly with the style of its setting.

'Touching the Earth' at Fondation Villa Datris, L'Isle-sur-la-Sorgue

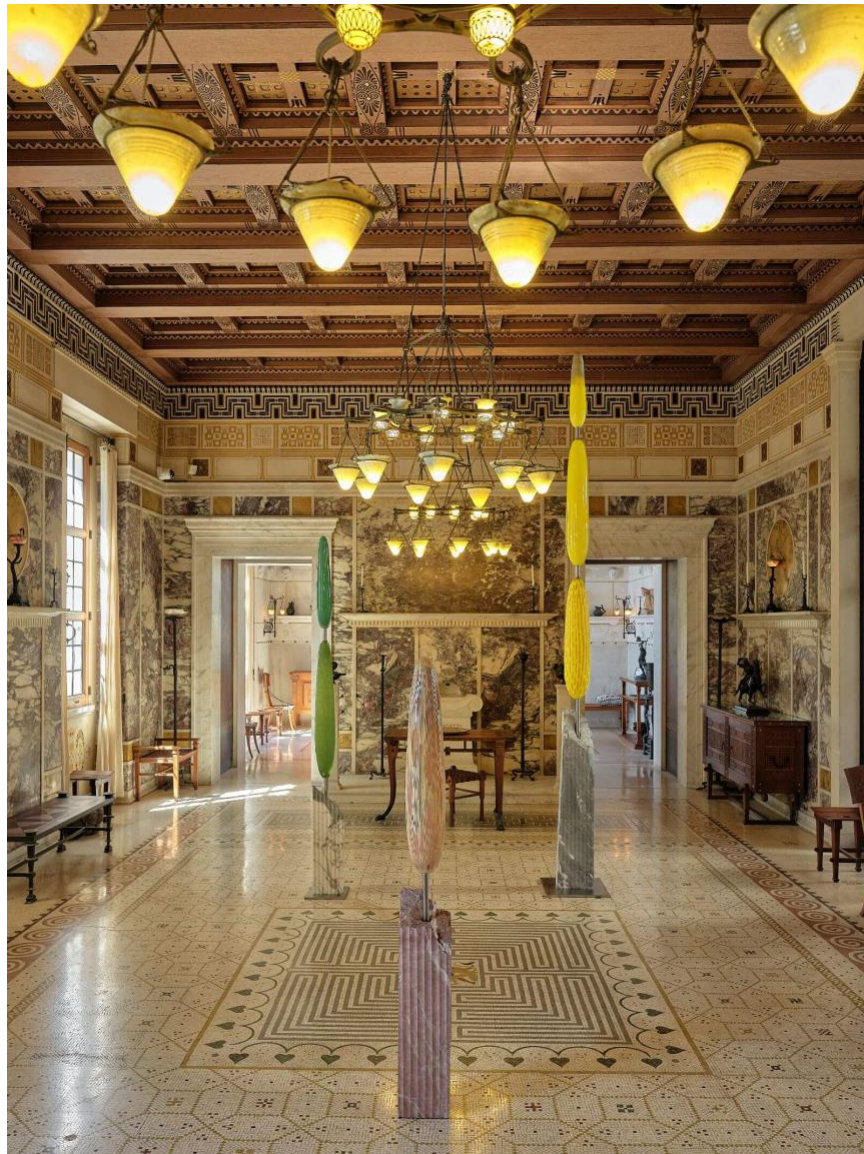
Until 1st November 2022

'Against Nature' at MO.CO. Panacée, Montpellier

Until 4th September 2022

Antoine Pierini: 'En rêvant la Méditerranée' at Villa Kérylos, Beaulieu-sur-Mer

Until 2nd October 2022



Antoine Pierini, 'Reference Trees', 2022

COURTESY: Antoine Pierini & Villa Kerylos / PHOTOGRAPH: © Ilan Dehe

News from VLB

Floods and mudslides led to VLB being declared a site of national disaster in June (Reconnaissance de Catastrophe Naturelle). For pictures of this truly shocking inundation, go to <https://www.wringtonwinning.co.uk/page%203.htm> .

Since then, of course, it has been hot, hot, hot ...

From 15th September there will be reduced lighting at night in VLB. This is to save energy, to protect the environment and to limit light pollution. Concerns about security are being acknowledged and there is an aim to reinforce security at night: one of many interesting challenges for the new Chief of Police in Villeneuve, Frédéric Cocus.

Le Brigade Environnement is also tackling fly-tipping, a serious problem in the region, with increased surveillance and reporting. Recently, they even found a boat that had been dumped, complete with outboard motor.

The Judo Club is going strong, with one of its members, Clara, achieving her black belt on her 16th birthday.

There is a new artisan boulangerie-pâtisserie in VLB, called Au Soleil Gourmand. Yum!

Conversations with our friends in VLB

Next conversation is on **September 19th, 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 13th September at 3pm** and on **Thursday 29th September 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 .

Cinéphiles de Wrington

Tuesday 6 September, 6pm on Zoom, we 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

+442080806592,,4933115546#,,,,*610359# United Kingdom

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The French Connection/Wrington Twinning Association AGM will be held on **November 16th 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

Those of us who were lucky enough to enjoy Bastille Day celebrations at Shail and Sally Patel's house were treated to some great food, including these wonderful desserts. Stone fruit is plentiful at the moment, so if it's too late for the exact fruit to which the recipe refers, I'm sure that substitutions are possible: damsons, plums, blackberries, apricots are all still possible.

Jane Finn's Fruit Tart

FOR THE PASTRY CRUST

170g cup all-purpose flour
32g cup granulated sugar
1/2 tsp. sea salt
140g butter, melted
1/2 tsp. almond extract

FOR THE FILLING

1/2 cup heavy cream
225g mascarpone cheese
115g cream cheese, softened
115g icing sugar
Juice of 1/2 lemon
1/2 tsp. almond extract

FOR THE TOPPING

1 cup halved strawberries
1 cup blackberries
1 cup raspberries
2 mandarins

1/3 cup blueberries
1/4 cup apricot jam

1. Make crust: Preheat oven to 350°/175. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, and salt. Add melted butter and almond extract and stir until dough forms. Press mixture into a 10" tart pan with a removable bottom, pressing dough all the way up the sides and until dough is smooth.
2. Prick all over with a fork and bake until golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely.
3. Make filling: In a medium bowl using a hand mixer beat heavy cream until stiff peaks form. In a large bowl, beat mascarpone and cream cheese until smooth. Add icing sugar, lemon juice, and almond extract and beat until no lumps remain. Fold in whipped cream.
4. Spread filling over cooled crust and arrange fresh fruit on top.
5. Heat together apricot jam and 2 teaspoons water on a low heat until warmed, through. Brush over tart and refrigerate until well chilled, 2 hours.



Belinda Kumpel's Blackcurrant Fool



Cook about **1 lb of blackcurrants** with water almost to cover them. I often use frozen currants – laid out on trays and when frozen they can be put in a bag like frozen peas, they work just as well as fresh. When cooked, sieve through a large mesh sieve to remove the skins. I use a large cooking spoon to press them against the sieve, scraping the sieved mixture underneath into the new bowl from time to time so that they sieve better. Then, as there will still be pips present, I sieve them again through a small mesh, as before, into another bowl or measuring jug. I tip in some **caster sugar** and mix well, adding enough to sweeten the mixture. They can need quite a lot of sugar. Then dissolve **gelatine** in a little hot water (the amount and method according to the packet instructions); it must be enough to set the volume of sweetened currant mixture, plus extra for the whipped cream to be added later. Make sure to mix in the dissolved gelatine evenly, and it is best to do this while the currant mix is still warm. Cool in the fridge for a few hours, checking regularly for a soft set. Then whisk a couple of **egg whites** to a hard foam and blend into the currant mix. Lastly, whisk about **300 ml double cream** (more or less to taste) to a soft foam and blend it in, perhaps in swirls to make a marbled appearance. Tip it all in the serving dish, refrigerate again until it is set to a harder consistency than when it did not have egg whites and cream.

Enjoy!

Wine of the Month

This month, for the end of summer and for the stone fruit season, I'm going to recommend a beautiful blend of Chardonnay and Viognier. Chardonnay still has the cool freshness of summer, but Viognier rounds it out, softening the acidity of the Chardonnay and adding complexity that echoes the flavours of stone fruit. Moulin de Gassac, from the Hérault region would be my choice. You can buy this online from SipWines for £11 a bottle, or from Cave in Bristol for £12.30.



Le mot juste

Souffler: what an ordinary word, you might think, meaning simply 'to blow'. But it has so many interesting uses in French, from the robust to the gentle. *Laisser souffler quelqu'un*, means to let them recover their breath; *souffler un conseil, ou un réponse* is to whisper to someone, and *ne pas souffler un mot*, not to breathe a word; in the theatre, it is the word used for prompting an actor: *souffler son rôle*. Yet it can also mean to flabbergast, to astonish, to stagger, so *soufflant* for stunning. *Un soufflet* can mean a slap in the face (which staggers, surprises, takes the breath away). *Le soufflet* is also used in couture as the word for gusset (where a breath of air might creep in ...). In general, then, it has a more subtle, subdued range of meanings than our word 'to blow', which must be why a light, effortlessly risen dish of which many of us are fond, is called *le soufflé*.

Lindsey Shaw-Miller, Newsletter Editor, Wrington Twinning Association and The French Connection.

