

THE FRENCH CONNECTION
WRINGTON TWINNING ASSOCIATION
The John Locke Room, Silver Street, Wrington BS40 5QE
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We are still in a situation both in Wrington and in VLB where all activity is at a standstill and we have no idea when it will be able to recommence. So there is no news from either place. However 10th October marks the tenth anniversary of the signature of the Charter of friendship between Wrington and VLB. It will be marked by a Zoom get together of people from both communities and a virtual clinking of glasses.

News from France

- Like the UK and other countries France has seen a large spike in Covid-19 cases and a number of lockdown measures are in force including compulsory wearing of facemasks and a 10.00 pm closing time for bars and restaurants.
- There are close cultural and other ties between France and Lebanon. President Macron was the first world leader to visit Beirut following the huge explosion that ripped through its port on August 4th, killing at least 137 people and injuring 5,000. He later organised a UN conference which helped raise €250 million in aid pledges. There are around 23,000 French people in Lebanon and around 210,000 Lebanese people in France. Although French ceased to be an official language in Lebanon in 1943, around a third of the population still speak it and it is Lebanon's second language. It is used on bank notes and on certain signs and buildings. The country's founding laws were all written in French. There are many French language schools in Lebanon.
- The new website for UK citizens living in France to apply for residency there after the end of this year has been delayed again.
- Two people have been seriously injured in a knife attack in Paris close to the former Charlie Hebdo offices where Islamist extremists killed 12 people in 2012. Police are treating this as another Islamist terrorist attack.
- The French government is unfazed by reports of possible huge jams of lorries moving to and from the UK and France in early 2021. Although the UK government is taking steps to ease the problems caused by new paperwork, France is not and the full impact of border controls and customs checks will be faced by vehicles entering and leaving France. There is still no agreement on what rules will govern the use of the Channel Tunnel when the transitional period ends and there are some fears that trains will be halted.
- Some, but not all, British banks are currently considering closing accounts of Britons living in the EU before 2021 in view of new complications expected for the banks next year. The problem has arisen because no agreement has been reached on a continuation of 'financial passporting' rules after the end of 2020.

La Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin

The Association of Knights of the Wine-tasting Cup is an association created in 1934 to defend and promote the interests of the wines and cuisine of Burgundy. It now has some 12,000 members worldwide. Ever since its creation in 1934, the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin has set itself the task of promoting Burgundy, notably its wines and cuisine, preserving and reviving its traditional festivals, folklore and customs, and encouraging the development of tourism in the region. It is based in the Château du Clos de Vougeot, near Beaune. The château, which has its origins in the 12th century hosts receptions for its *confrères* in grand style. To become a member of the *Confrérie* you have to be sponsored by two other members.

The *Confrérie* has branches in many countries (but not the UK). The Chevaliers, whether in France at Vougeot or abroad, meet only to share views and brotherhood over a glass of the nectar of the gods.



A tastevin

The Château de Vougeot no longer produces wine on the estate, but it does have its own *appellation*. It is open to visitors and for anyone wanting to taste the traditions surrounding the great wines of Burgundy this is a good place to start.

Provence

Provence is a geographical region and historical province of southeastern France, which extends from the left bank of the lower Rhône to the west to the Italian border to the east, and is bordered by the Mediterranean to the south. It has no political or administrative significance, although it largely corresponds with the modern administrative region of Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. The largest city is Marseille, which claims to be the second largest city in France, but then so does Lyon. The word 'Provence' must not be confused with 'province' which literally means 'provinces', but which is used, rather disparagingly, particularly by Parisians, to mean anywhere that is not in the Paris region. It also has to be said that many people in Provence view Parisians as foreigners.

Although Provence includes the coastal areas of the Bouches-du-Rhône, the Var and the Alpes-Maritimes, to experience the real Provence you need to go inland to the rural area South of Carpentras, where you may get the feeling that, even if time has not stopped still, it has slowed down considerably.



The perched village of Venasque, near Carpentras

If you want to experience a provencal city go to Aix-en-Provence, home of Cézanne and an important cultural and university centre. This area can easily be reached from the airports of Lyon, Marseille, Nice or Grenoble. It is an area of lush vegetation and charming old villages, the best-known of which, to most British people, is perhaps Ménerbes, immortalised by Peter Mayle in his book *A Year in Provence*. Many of the villages are perched precariously on hillsides. Provence also includes the Lubéron National Park, with mountain ranges of up to 1,250 metres.

Provence is an area of hot summers and fairly cold winters. It produces fruit and vegetables (delicious cherries and melons) and is also justly famous for its wines. If you start at the northern end, just to the East of the Rhône, you will find the villages of Gigondas and Vacqueyras, where some of the best Rhône wines are produced and close by is Beaumes-de-Venise, famous for its desert wines. Further south is Châteauneuf-du-Pape, famous for its red wines (although it also produces white wines). Further to the south-east are to be found most of the vineyards producing rosé wines, probably the best-known product of Provence and hugely popular. Provence is an area best enjoyed in the late Spring or early Autumn when the weather is pleasant and there are fewer tourists. It is a region to be enjoyed in a leisurely relaxed fashion, so you can soak up the atmosphere in the leafy village squares as well as the wine. A special treat for opera lovers might be an excursion to nearby Orange to see an opera in the famous open air arena a few kilometres north of Avignon.

Charlie Hebdo

Who remembers Charlie Hebdo? It is a French satirical weekly magazine, featuring cartoons, reports, polemics, and jokes. Irreverent and stridently non-conformist in tone. It describes itself as above all secular, skeptic, and atheist, far-left-wing, and anti-racist, publishing articles about the extreme right, religion, politics and culture. Its offices in Paris were the target of two terrorist attacks a few years ago, both presumed to be in response to a number of controversial anti-Islam cartoons it published. The attacks gave rise to a great deal of support for the right to free speech and to publish offensive material. Charlie Hebdo nevertheless continues to be published and, for those who might be interested in this kind of publication, it is available on line.



Charlie Hebdo is back in the news because of two stabbings that happened a few days ago close by (see above). (In case you might be asking yourself, 'Hebdo' is a shortening of '*hebdomadaire*', meaning 'weekly').

In support of language learning

Le Franglish!

You Can't Read This Article Si T'es Pas Bilingue
(English & Français)

Being bilingual est parmi the best pleasures dans le monde entier. Think about it pour un instant. You can utiliser deux different languages en même temps in a such a way that makes ton cerveau wants to exploser from the speed par la quelle it switches from one langue to l'autre but still tu peux do it and ressentir spécial(e) at the same time, et c'est pour ça you are unique. Le fact that tu peux lire this article without stopping to think est un talent très few people have. La majorité of people struggle to lire juste in one single language, but what you are doing maintenant est un signe of absolute genius. Reading a très complicated texte in two langues différentes seamlessly makes you un(e) nerd et someone qui trouve joy in languages. Reading cet article must have given your brain a nice little workout.

That's why you should le partager avec vos amis.
De rien in advance and have a très bonne journée.

ANTHONY HANCOCK