

A message from our Chair, Sue Kortlandt

2020 started well, with our traditional, festive and most enjoyable Fête des Rois on 11th January, French conversation sessions at Brentwood Library and at Diane Matthews' home, and a Film Night on 7th March, with Le Grand Bain, plus crêpes and plenty of wine. Unfortunately, almost all our social activities had to be cancelled since our lock downs from the end of March.



Thank goodness for Zoom! The Executive has been able to meet virtually, Dave and Jude have organised a couple of quizzes and, from October onwards, we have met up for a monthly chat in French. We hope to continue in the New Year. Other social events are also planned, we hope you will join us.

The visit from Montbazon planned for July 2020 also had to be postponed. All being well, they will come **between 21st and 28th August 2021**. The exact dates depend on their travel arrangements – they were/are hoping to come by train. We shall soon be asking members if they can offer accommodation. Please keep these dates free if you possibly can.

News of events in Montbazon featured the election of Sylvie Giner as “Maire” for 2020-2026 on 23rd May (see p.2). Also, sadly, they have lost two longstanding members of the Twinning Committee, Pierre Gissat and Marie-Françoise Dorgueil (see p.3). I have sent condolences on behalf of the Association.

You will find news and photos of Montbazon on the official website: www.ville-montbazon.fr and on the Twinning Association Facebook page: www.facebook.com/jumelagemontbazon.

My thanks go to all the Officers, but particularly to Jude Ripley, who has kept us going with her briefings throughout the long months of Covid, and to Neil Hornsby, who stepped in as temporary Treasurer when George Dunseath was

unable to continue. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I should like to express our appreciation of this review of 2020 to Christine Minns ably assisted this year by Graham Lacey, standing in for Judy Withyman during her temporary incapacity.

Now that Brexit is finally complete, Town Twinning has become even more important in maintaining our friendships with the people of Montbazon and Landkreis Roth in Germany.

With my best wishes for the New Year. I look forward to seeing you all in 2021.

News from Montbazon

Election of Sylvie Giner as Mayor of Montbazon

This position is an important full-time post, unlike the ceremonial role of most British mayors. Sylvie is, in effect, the Chief Executive of the town. Together with her deputy, Nancy Texier, she leads a team of councillors including Eric Rival, President of the twinning committee.



Sylvie Giner has a long connection with Brentwood which began in 1974 when she first came to Shenfield School through the regular school exchange with Montbazon. She has been involved in the Jumelage in Montbazon since its inception.

Le 23 mai 2020 Sylvie Giner a été élue maire de Montbazon. Après avoir salué tous ceux qui ont œuvré avec courage pour faire face à l'épidémie Madame le Maire a rappelé ses valeurs humanistes et souhaité que ce mandat se déroule dans le respect et l'écoute. L'équipe municipale sera aux côtés des Montbazonnais pour construire un avenir solidaire.

On the 23rd May 2020, Sylvie Giner was elected Mayor of Montbazon. After having thanked everyone who has worked bravely in the face of the pandemic, the Mayor reminded them of her humanistic values and hopes that her mandate will progress with mutual respect and understanding. The town council will work with the people of Montbazon to build a solid future together.

Obituaries

Sadly, Montbazon has recently lost two longstanding members of the twinning committee who were well-known to many of us. Pierre Gissat was President after Marie-Thérèse Goizet from 2002 to 2008, Treasurer from 2012 to 2014 and Assistant Treasurer from 2015 until his death.



Marie-Françoise Dorgueil was Secretary in 2003 and 2004, Assistant Secretary in 2009 and on the Executive until 2010. With her husband Christian, she took part in all their various activities especially the tea parties, where he tried out her cake recipes.



They will both be very much missed.

Fête des Rois – 11th January 2020 by Sheila Hornsby

On Saturday 11th January, in true Gallic style, we held our most enjoyable annual celebration of Twelfth Night with a traditional Fête de Rois. Before settling down to enjoy our meal we had to put our knowledge of France and French to the test with a three-part quiz covering What, Where and Who, Loire Valley Châteaux and Fish, Flowers and Birds.



Having completed our exam papers, we were treated to a tasty meal of Chicken Chasseur with jacket potatoes or pommes de terre en robe des champs as they are known in France. Dessert was of course the Galette des Rois, an almond puff pastry tart in which is concealed a china token or fève which one lucky person on each table will find in their slice. This discovery will make him or her king or queen for the rest of the evening!



Soirée Ciné-Crêpes 2020: 7th March by Sue Sanders



In a world where every news broadcast bombarded us with horrible headlines this waterlogged version of 'The Full Monty' put us all in a buoyant mood.

After a crêpes supper at the Belli Centre last March, Gilles Lellouche's film, 'Sink or Swim', last year's success story of French cinema, was full of sheer charm and genuinely funny moments as the 'Dad Bod' brigade trained and moved through choppy waters.

We followed a troubled group of middle-aged men who get a new lease of life when they form the French male synchronised swimming team.

Happily, at the end of the movie they had changed from plump ducklings to graceful swans to win the World Male Synchronised Swimming Championships.

Once again thanks to Richard Millwood, our projectionist who provided all the equipment and our fantastic committee for a most enjoyable evening.

ZOOM QUIZ by Jude Ripley



Having had no social events since our Soirée Ciné-Crêpes in March, we decided we ought to be brave and attempt an event using Zoom, since many other organisations seemed to be using it successfully.

So on the 21st November, we organised a short quiz with a festive theme, as a substitute for our usual Pre-Festive event, in which twelve “teams” took part. Jon Cloke was kind enough to be the host on his Zoom account so that we weren’t cut off mid-quiz!

The rounds were: Born on Christmas Day; Art and Literature; Christmas Songs; Christmas Traditions; and Christmas General Knowledge. As a Christmas gift, we allowed the teams to play their jokers at the end of the round to try and maximise their scores.

The winners were Jon and Noelle, closely followed by Ros Garrod and Sue and Derek Kortlandt, with David and Christine Minns having the third highest score. It was lovely to see all the members who were able to take part and to share a virtual drink together.

Forthcoming events for 2021

We are now planning a Zoom Games Evening on the 16th January since we won’t be able to hold our ever-popular Fête des Rois event. We hope to see as many of you as possible there, eating your Galette and wearing your crown – and enjoying a drink or two of course!



Galette des Rois Recipe

300gr puff pastry
Egg yolk and 1 tbsp milk for glazing
170gr ground almonds
Grated zest of 1 small orange
1 tbsp brandy or similar
100gr caster sugar
100gr unsalted butter
Fève to put inside

1. Divide pastry in half and roll each into a circle about 8-10ins diameter. Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper and place one circle of pastry in the centre.
2. Combine ground almonds, orange zest, brandy, caster sugar and butter until smooth.
3. Spread filling over pastry leaving 1in border. **Tuck token into filling.**
4. Moisten border of circle with a little glazing mix and then position 2nd circle of pastry over the first, pressing around edge to seal. Prick with fork and using a sharp knife cut a criss-cross pattern all over. Brush surface with remaining glazing mix.
5. Bake for 20-30mins at 200C/gas 6/180C fan oven.

Annual General Meeting (AGM) to be held on 21st January 2021.
Zoom invitations will be sent out in advance.

Montbazou visit to Brentwood 2021



Date to be announced

French Chat Sessions



Sadly, our monthly chat sessions in Brentwood Library have been on hold since the beginning of the first lockdown. However, Sue has held several successful sessions via Zoom; these have been on various days and at various times to fit in with other commitments. Watch out for emails from Jude with details of the next ones if you are missing the opportunity to speak some French!



