

CITYLINK

(THE CITY OF CHICHESTER twinned SINCE 1959 with THE CITY OF CHARTRES)

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF CHARTRES

Chichester's French Twinning Association

www.friendsofchartres.org.uk

March 2016

[Re-numbered from the Millenium] ISSUE: 64



PRESENTATION OF LEGION D'HONNEUR

by

*Captain François Jean,
Consul Honoraire de France*

to

'Market Garden Veterans Fraternal'

(See more details on page 4)

FROM THE CHAIRMAN . . .

Since our last edition of Citylink, we have once again had an enjoyable Annual Dinner at Chichester College (see p.5). If it is decided to continue with this long-standing event, we will be able to appreciate the new facilities both in the kitchen and at the table. Of course the very important student involvement will still be maintained.

I have enjoyed the films at the Picture Palace, where a 'full house' is almost guaranteed, and following the Business side of the AGM (see p.2) we watched the French film 'The Red Balloon', a last minute change of plan due to the hospitalisation of our guest speaker, Barry Shears.

Although unable to attend myself, the visit to the Wallace Collection was a great success (see p.6). Hopefully this will be the first of many interesting days out.

Sadly March saw the death of one of our members, Wilfrid Grenville-Grey. Margaret and I attended his funeral service on 18th March at a very full St Mary's Church, East Lavant. Friends of Wilfrid's from South Africa and USA were present as also were his wife, Cynthia, sons and daughter and his sister, the Duchess of Richmond and 'Goodwood Family'. Wilfrid's son, Peter, paid tribute to his father in both words and music. He invited us to 'listen in' on a conversation that he was having with his father and to feel relaxed. He spoke of his father's involvement in South African life in the Apartheid years and how he had been responsible for getting over £50 million of aid

into the country from sources all over the world. It made me wonder what he would be doing for Syria at the moment if he had been born at a different time.

Summing up his father's qualities he said that he was generally regarded as a 'Good Egg'. I thought that this was very appropriate and struck a chord with me, even though I had only known him since 2007.

Peter finished with a musical tribute on the saxophone. Everyone joined in and there was hardly a dry eye in the church.

Jim Payne (see p.3) rejoined the Executive following a break of six years. Jim was responsible for my spending over 15 years as a Governor at the Lancastrian Infants school, during which time along with Margaret, Anne-Louise Briggs and Lin Chaplin, links were established with Chartres and Ravenna schools and long-lasting friendships made with teachers in both cities.

Thanks to Sandy & Peter Barnett who, for the last two years, have been custodians of our wine and glasses. They are now standing down from this 'very important role' and we are looking for others to take over.

Finally, although slightly down in numbers on previous years due to the loss of 'regular exchangers', we should be blessed with better weather for this year's Annual Exchange to Chartres at the later time of the end of May. (I will probably regret saying this.)

**RAY BROWN
CHAIRMAN**

1959

2015

57
years

CHICHESTER
Twinning



CHARTRES
Jumelage

57
years



Friends of Chartres Chairman, Ray Brown and the now "Immediate Past President", John Hughes

Because the Mayor was ill and his Deputy was in Haywards Heath, the Association's 55th Annual General Meeting held in St George's Centenary Centre on Tuesday 10th March 2016 was chaired by our Immediate Past President, the previous Mayor of Chichester, John Hughes.

Having maintained their Family Membership John and his wife Cherry continue to be fully paid up members and had intended to come to the AGM, this time as 'spectators'. Ray ensured that John was appropriately 'chained' for the task in hand by presenting him with a 'special' medallion. After John had welcomed the 24 members attending and a query from Tony French was clarified he then signed the Minutes of the last AGM and handed over to Ray for his Chairman's Report.

Ray thanked committee members and those who had helped with the various events which took place throughout what had once again been a very busy year. In addition to last year's Annual Dinner in February, AGM in March and hosting our French twinning partners during the Exchange in May, there had been a Garden Party in the summer, two illustrated talks in the autumn, and the year concluded with a Cheese & Wine Soirée at the Bishop's Palace in November. We had again worked with the Friends of Ravenna & Valletta to provide Three Cities events during the Festival of Chichester, which had also been good.

He confirmed we are now working with the University for the Schools Art Challenge but still involving Marc Steene, Executive Director PHG, as one of the judges and a very successful launch had taken place with a record number of schools attending. The Mayor had accompanied last year's Exhibition when it was taken to Chartres and because the Mairie is now in the process of being rebuilt it was displayed, later than in previous years, in a central location within the city and was now awaiting collection.

Finally, additional thanks were given to Peter Barnett who had helped Sandy with regards being 'in charge' of glasses & wine and, as Sandy was retiring from the committee, we need a replacement for this role.



John Wilton, Honorary Treasurer, then presented the annual accounts, copies of which had been sent to members together with the papers for the AGM. He explained that the 'deficit' included a budgeted subsidy to members who were hosting the 2015 Exchange and also that, like two years ago, the deposit for transport costs for the 2016 Exchange to Chartres had been paid. The overall balance included ring-fenced monies for the Schools Challenge and savings for our 60th Anniversary Celebrations in 2019. The Accounts were adopted by those present and John was congratulated on his management of these. A vote of thanks was also recorded for the 'Examiner' of Accounts, Michael Merritt, who was unanimously re-appointed.

The Immediate Past President then conducted the elections to the Executive and the following members were elected unanimously by all members present:

Officers: Chairman, Ray Brown, Vice-Chairman, Julia Sander, Hon. Treasurer, John Wilton & Hon. Secretary, Margaret Brown

Committee Members: Martyn Bell, Anne-Louise Briggs, Penelope Johnstone, David Nason and Jim Payne, which left ***one vacancy** on the committee - (*see note below).

As no matters had been received for Any Other Business he then handed back to the Chairman. Ray explained that the Executive had considered an item put forward by Paul Devonshire at their January meeting which would be taken forward to the next meeting. Members were still in the process of renewing their membership with a few technically 'in arrears' until the end of March. Sadly we learned that Wilfrid Grenville-Grey had died and condolences sent to his wife, Cynthia. Wilfrid was a great supporter of the Schools Art Project and also Martyn Bell's talks. Anne-Louise mentioned the Three Cities events (on page 7) and Julia confirmed 40 people had signed up to this year's Exchange.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their support and following a break for refreshments a short French film 'The Red Balloon' was shown,

**MARGARET BROWN
HONORARY SECRETARY**

[*At their next meeting, the Executive AGREED to co-opt Paul Devonshire to fill this vacancy on the committee.]

PRESIDENT	
The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Chichester	
Councillor Peter Budge	
OFFICERS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS	
CHAIRMAN	Ray Brown.....783776
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Julia Sander.....527435
HON SECRETARY	Margaret Brown.....783776
HON TREASURER	John Wilton788833
Martyn Bell...(01903) 530700	Penelope Johnstone...771881
Anne-Louise Briggs....784346	David Nason.....573716
Paul Devonshire.....641457	Jim Payne.....372900
<i>(Co-opted)</i>	
Tony Harrison (Chichester Lions Club).....	532893
Julie Schofield (Cathedral/DEEC link).....	784244
Rob Campling (Photographer).....	532910
CITY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES	
(July 2015 - June 2016)	
Cllr Clare Apel783738	Cllr Anne Scicluna.....789065

FRIENDS OF CHARTRES
Chichester's French Twinning Association



Come and join us for a fun

FRENCH QUIZ

EVENING

7.30 pm on

Thursday 14th April, 2016

at the **BELL INN P.H.**, Broyle Rd, Chichester

£7.00 per person

to include choice of: (order in advance)

- Scampi & chips
- Sausage & chips
- Veggie Samozas & Chips
- Pancake Rolls & Chips

Buy your own drinks at the bar

Non-members/guests welcome to attend

Please complete the enclosed form with your choice of meal and return together with your cheque made payable to 'Friends of Chartres' to:

Clare Apel,

123 Cedar Drive, CHICHESTER, West Sussex, PO19 3EL

by Thursday 7th April 2016

(+ enclose sae if you require a receipt)

FRIENDS OF CHARTRES
Programme of Events - 2016

APRIL 14th **FRENCH QUIZ EVENING**
(Thursday) 7.30pm TheBell PH, Broyle Road, Chichester
{See 'advert' for more details}

MAY 8th **CINE CLUB - 'Fanny'**
(Sunday) 5.00pm New Park Centre's 'Picture Palace'
(See p.8 for more Programme details)

MAY 26 - 30th **EXCHANGE GOES TO CHARTRES**
(Thursday to Monday) Travel by Woods Coachand Brittany
Ferries, Portsmouth to Caen.

[The programme is being organised by our French counterparts]

JUNE 17th (Friday) **SCHOOLS ART CHALLENGE**
PRIVATE VIEW - FoC Members & Guests

18th (Saturday) **AWARDS CEREMONY - (for Schools)**

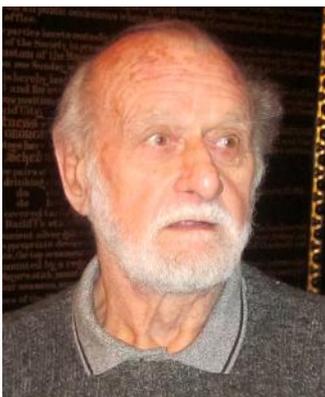
18th - 25th **EXHIBITION on PUBLIC VIEW in**
artOne Gallery, University of Chichester

JUNE - JULY FESTIVAL OF CHICHESTER
Three Cities Events: Working with Friends of Ravenna & Valletta
(Please see 'Advance notice' information on page 7)

JULY 16th (Saturday) **FRIENDS OF CHARTRES**
GARDEN PARTY
3.00pm : Hosted by Clare & Ralph Apel
123 Cedar Drive, Chichester

OCTOBER 11th (Tuesday) **"19th CENTURY OPERA IN PARIS"**
ILLUSTRATED TALK by David Nason
7.30pm Mitre Theatre, College Lane,
University of Chichester

NOVEMBER 28th (Monday) **FESTIVE SOCIAL EVENING**
The Council Chamber, North Street



**A 'NEW' FACE ON
THE EXECUTIVE**

Whilst technically Jim Payne is classed as a 'New Face' on the Executive in reality, and during his long-time membership and involvement with the Association, he has 'been here' many times before and has taken on many different roles during this time.

As Mayor of Chichester in 1990-91 & 1995-96 he was President of our

Association and has since served as an elected member of the Executive, becoming Vice Chairman in 2001 and then Chairman from 2002-2005. He has, for many years, spread the word about our long-standing twinning with Chartres - and continues to do so.

Both he and his wife Diana are regular 'Exchangers' and they are looking forward to once again meeting with their French 'family' - François & Martine Remy - in May. Most members will remember François taking the Exchanger's annual group photograph (often in front of the coach) and also for usually organising some 'special' entertainment during our formal dinner - remember the 'Muppet Show' of two year's ago when we celebrated the 55th Anniversary of our twinning.

Fiends of Chartres Members

**** SPECIAL INVITATION ****

PRIVATE VIEW
of the

Exhibition

of the children's artwork entries

FoC - University of Chichester
Schools Arts Challenge

to be held in the

Department of Fine Arts' Foyer Gallery
'artOne' building - College Lane, Chichester

Friday 17 June 2016

6.00pm - 7.30pm

NO CHARGE

BUT NUMBERS ARE REQUIRED IN ADVANCE
FOR CATERING PURPOSES

Please contact : Margaret Brown

Tel: (01243) 783776

**PRESENTATION OF
LEGION D'HONNEUR**

To the

'Market Garden Veterans Fraternal'

When local Chichester resident, John Riley, invited us to attend this presentation which was held in the Council Chamber, both Ray and I felt very honoured indeed. John and 7 other Members of the 'Market Garden Veterans Fraternal' were presented with France's highest honour in a venue which was most appropriate as it is where our Twinning Charter with Chartres was signed.

In addition to our Mayor, Councillor Peter Budge, other VIP guests included the Lord-Lieutenant of West Sussex, Mrs Susan Pyper and Captain François Jean, Consul Honoraire de France. All eight recipients, namely Len Butt, James Corrigan, Den Hosgood, Len Pease, Rob Piper, John Riley, Joe Sealey and Eric Warburton, all live within the county of West Sussex

The presentation on Friday 12th February began with a welcome from our Mayor who then introduced the Lord-Lieutenant. Mrs Susan Pyper conveyed direct greetings from Her Majesty the Queen with congratulations to these eight veterans and a thank you for all they had done.



With Chichester resident -
WW II Veteran , John Riley

In paying tribute to these WW II veterans Captain Jean said it was a great privilege to honour them all and that by celebrating their courage, France remembers all from the Royal Navy, the Army and the Air Force for helping to recover its liberty, its pride and its honour. *"You are true heroes and you will be our heroes forever"*

In his vote of thanks on behalf of the 'Fraternal', Mr Joe Sealey informed us that within the 'Fraternal' there are no ranks nor former regiments, they meet as equals. The 'Fraternal' were members of the now disbanded Normandy Veterans Association & the Market Garden Veterans Association and the previous Lord-Lieutenant, Mr Hugh Wyatt, was the Association's County President. An Arnhem Day celebration for the survivors still takes place annually in Rustington and John briefly informed me of a project regarding 6,000 un-named graves in German/French graveyards starting next year. I will endeavour to discover more about this and report at a future date.

MARGARET BROWN

HENRI POUJADE REY



On 5 February, we were in Champhol, on the outskirts of Chartres, for the saddest of reasons, the funeral of our dear friend, Henri Poujade Rey. We became twinning partners with Françoise and Henri fifteen years ago and in that time had developed a very close friend-ship to the point where we all felt like family - the French side and the English side.

Françoise had not known we were going to attend and was quite taken aback at the end of the Church service to see us there. We then went on to the Crematorium in Mainvilliers and finally back to Françoise and Henri's house for champagne and refreshment. Our trip was very brief, Thursday to Saturday, but there was time for breakfast with Françoise and the family before we set off for Dieppe and the bumpy crossing back to Newhaven.

Henri was the most convivial of people, with a love of literature both French and English. His conversation and letters always included quotations from English writers - especially Shakespeare. This was typified by the charity chosen for donations in his memory - the Association des Bibliothèques Sans Frontières (BSF). He had an enviable skill in telling all manner of jokes in English and his enjoyment of food and drink was wonderful to watch - a true trencherman. He was also a keen jazz fan, and this was recognised in the music both at the church and especially at the crematorium.

We are going to miss him very much indeed, but we have many happy memories of time spent with him both here in England and in France on Twinning Association trips and on the private visits back and forth. Our friendship with Françoise will of course continue for all the years possible in the future.

We were very grateful for the kindness shown to us by Philippe and Sylvie Rabartin and Claire Creze, and indeed the many members of the Twinning in Chartres whom we met at the church. Although we will not be taking part in the Jumelage this year, we look forward to seeing them all in Chichester in 2017.

The photograph shows Henri hamming it up at Hampton Court Palace, and indeed it was used on the front of the Order of Service.

SUE & EDDIE SAUNDERS

Friends of Chartres



ANNUAL DINNER 2016



in the Goodwood Restaurant - Chichester College



This year the College's Goodwood Restaurant was in a slightly different place - because of building works ! We knew that works on refurbishing the Goodwood Restaurant were due to start after the Easter break and therefore we were able to book this usual venue for our Annual Dinner held in February to celebrate the signing of the Deed of Jumelage on 28th February 1959. However, in January we were informed that building works would start earlier than originally planned and would now commence immediately after the spring half term. We were assured that, apart from being in a different area within B Block, everything else would be as usual - and so it was. Just 4 days after the holiday break we were the first group to use this new, rather temporary, arrangement.

Occupying the area which had previously been the department's Bistro Restaurant and had now been transformed into the Goodwood Restaurant, we enjoyed a welcoming Sherry Reception whilst the students received their final instructions for the evening. We were delighted that the Mayor and Mayoress, Peter & Pippa Budge, were able to accept our invitation to join us as our Honoured Guests.

Once again our members were given a choice of four dishes for each of the three courses - ordered in advance, of course, to enable their students to rise to the challenge of accommodating our individual requests rather than all having the same 'set' menu. It's interesting to note which dishes prove to be most popular and this year more than half those present chose 'Salade de poisson' making this a clear winner for 'starters' whilst 'Betterave et fromage de Chevre' and 'Terrine de poulet' tied for second choice and 5 people enjoyed the 'Soup au Tomates'. The all out winner for 'mains' was 'Confit de Canard' with 'Bœuf a la Mode' in second place just pipping 'Filet de sole Véronique' and finally, with just 2 servings, was 'Domaine de champignons'. Once again we were spoilt for choice with desert and the most popular was 'Delice au Cassis' with 'Tarte au citron' taking a very close second place. In third place was 'Assiette de Fromages' and 5 people just couldn't resist the 'Profiteroles au Chocolat' - plus there was our usual special 'non-dairy' dietary request for one serving of fruit. They really do cater for our variety of culinary needs - and also the variety of wines which could be purchased separately.

After a short comfort break and as we were served coffee and hand-made mints the Chairman invited the Mayor to say a few words. Peter then spoke about his first visit to Chartres last September, which had been at the invitation of the Chartres' Mayor, Jean Pierre Gorges, to be his guest at their Fête de la Lumière. He spoke about his time there and how this had left a lasting impression on him. He also took the opportunity to mention his forthcoming Mayor's Charity Quiz evening. Following which David Nason gave a brief preview into his Illustrated talk on "19th Century Opera in Paris" at the Mitre Theatre in October.

Giving us an insight into the future, College Lecturer Claire Wilding, explained the development of the Catering Department which is taking place and anticipated to be completed by the end of September.

Finally Ray was able to present the students with the 'gratuities' collected on the evening and gave our heartfelt thanks for yet another very enjoyable evening under quite difficult circumstances.

MARGARET BROWN

THE WALLACE COLLECTION

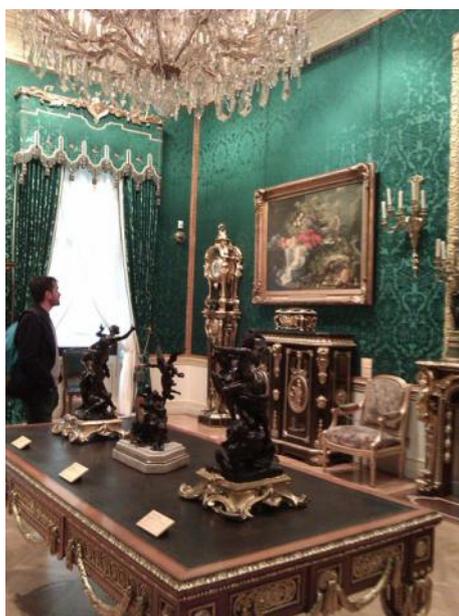


On Saturday 19th March our guide kept us enthralled as she not only explained the intricacy and meanings of detail in the paintings but also the social acquisition of finance to purchase the paintings. A fascinating insight of social history and art acquisition, largely it seems, by the illegitimate children of royalty and the social elite. Passing through the different galleries we caught sight of wonderful furniture and paintings of other nations' celebrated artists, an astounding collection, a feast for the eyes as we were ushered from room to room. Two very large Canaletto paintings of Venice caught my eye.



The size and scope of the art collection just amazed me as my memories of the building go back to 1947 when, as an apprentice working for E.H. Burgess Civil Engineers of Grosvenor Gardens, Victoria whenever we were working in that area of London my foreman would take me to the Wallace Collection to eat our lunchtime sandwiches. On every visit he would sit and look at the painting of the Laughing Cavalier, I as a 16 year old boy would

wander around and look at the armour. I do not remember any other paintings and the building like most of post war London was pretty bleak. However, 'that painting' has always been prominent in my visual imagination and arriving at the venue early, I sought out the Laughing Cavalier. Quite a shock to find that the large painting that I remember from my youth now overshadowed by much larger paintings and although it features in the basic introductory pamphlet to the Wallace Collection it does not have a prominent display area. It was however the last painting explained by our guide and that was very satisfying.



What a difference today, marvellous silk wall hangings, modern lighting and air conditioning. A genteel catering restaurant, paintings that stagger the imagination at their potential worth, the whole experience presented a challenge to my memories.

My memory of the Wallace Collection is of the Armour, and again I made a point of seeking out the lower floor area which houses the armour. Very well displayed, two full size armoured horses and riders and a display of armour to equal the displays at the Tower of London, the Knights of St John in Valletta in Malta and the Sultan's Palace in Istanbul (though not as many jewels).

An altogether very rewarding day, to me a mixture of memories of war torn London and an austerity that our present day society could not begin to contemplate, together with the satisfaction that this wonderful Wallace exhibition rivals anything in the World and here it is in London free for everyone to enjoy.



JIM PAYNE



Chichester - Chartres les arts plastiques à l'honneur
 L'exposition des travaux d'élèves
 de Chartres et de Chichester
 arrive à la Maison du Saumon



Cela fait aujourd'hui cinq ans que les écoles élémentaires de Chartres et de Chichester sont invitées à participer au concours d'art organisé par les *Friends of Chartres* et Pallant House Gallery à Chichester (Angleterre), notre ville jumelle.

En 2014 -15, les élèves ont travaillé sur le thème "*Chichester - Chartres, Ombres et Lumieres*" à travers la photographie pour représenter un lieu emblématique de leur ville, de façon figurative ou abstraite, en couleurs ou en noir et blanc.

Les oeuvres ont été exposées à Pallant House Gallery en juin et dans les deux écoles chartraines participantes (Rechèvres et le Grand Jardin). L'association des Amis des Jumelages de Chartres vous propose de les découvrir à la Maison du Saumon, rue de la Poissonnerie (Office de Tourisme de Chartres) du 13 au 22 novembre 2015.

Claire Crézé sent the article from Chartres' *'Votre Ville'* magazine which goes to every household, for me to share with all readers of Citylink. The above photos show the Headteachers of both French schools at the official opening by the Deputy Mayor, Patrick Geroudet, which took place on Saturday 14th November last year.

Working with Friends of Ravenna & Valletta
Advance Notice of Three Cities Events

during the

FESTIVAL OF CHICHESTER

Thursday 7th July

7.30pm in The Assembly Room, Chichester

The Very Reverend Nicholas Frayling
 Dean Emeritus of Chichester, will speak on:

**"A Tale of Three Cities:
 Twinning and why it matters"**

Tickets **£10.00** - to include refreshments

**The following films are to be shown at the
 New Park Cinema**

Tickets **£8.00p.p.** will be available from the box office at New Park

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 19th June (Sunday) at 3.00pm | "The Sweet Escape"
in French with sub-titles |
| 3rd July (Sunday) at 5.30pm | "The Great Beauty"
in Italian with sub-titles |
| 17th July (Sunday) at 3.00pm | "Simshar",
a Maltese film in English |

CONCESSIONS: By showing your 'Friends of Chartres' Membership Card at the time of purchase for the French film, members will be able to purchase their tickets for just **£4.00**.

EDITORIAL

Thank you to everyone who has contributed towards this edition of Citylink. I really do welcome your inputs be it in the form of photos, reports and articles, or just the occasional 'nod' to alert me of newsworthy items.

It was just 'by chance' that I learned about the Legion d'Honneur presentations but thanks to the Mayor's Secretary and the Lord Lieutenant's office at County Hall I was able to follow this up. Unfortunately we were not able to accept John Riley's invitation to join them all for lunch at the Nag's afterwards as Ray and I had arranged to meet with Claire Wilding at the College to check out the new arrangements necessary for our Annual Dinner. However, it was so good to meet the Consul Honoraire de France in the Council Chamber (where I presented him with copies of recent editions of our Citylink) and, as John lives near us I do look forward to meeting him again for further 'updates'. It will also be interesting to hear about his previous 'Twinning' connections with Littlehampton. On checking their website it appears they have two Twinnings, with Durmersheim in Germany and Chennevières-sur-Marne near Paris, each of which is twinned with the other.

If you have anything which you think will be of interest to our members then do please contact me directly either by telephone (01243) 783776 or by email: mbrown121@fsmail.net The deadline for me to receive copy for the next edition is Friday 22nd April - but I would also welcome news, features or crosswords (with the answers please) etc. for future editions beyond that date.

Finally I'm pleased to be able to report that we now have a date and venue for our November Soiree which, with thanks to the Mayor, is to be held in the Council Chamber, North Street on Monday 28th November.

MARGARET BROWN
EDITOR

FRENCH Conversation Groups

LE PETIT CERCLE (Morning meetings)

This group has been meeting monthly on Thursdays for lively, informal conversation in French. As numbers have increased we are putting on extra session on Tuesdays. All sessions will be held in members' homes (details below). For further information contact **JULIA SANDER** on (01243)527435

Petit Cercle du mardi (Tuesday) - from 10.30 am to Midday

APRIL

5th ANNIE WEBER
11, William Cawley Mews, Broyle Rd, Chichester787230

MAY

3rd SANDY BARNETT
23 Highland Road, Chichester..... 527278

JUNE 14th - To be confirmed

JULY

5th JULIA SANDER
19 Jubilee Road, Chichester.....527435

Petit Cercle du jeudi (Thursday) - from 10.30 am to Midday

APRIL

14th JULIA SANDER
19 Jubilee Road, Chichester.....527435

MAY

12th MARJORIE WINN
Northways, 10a Lavant Road, Chichester.....527376

JUNE 16th - To be confirmed

JULY

14th DAPHNE BOWLING,
Sandpipers, Mill Lane, Sidlesham.....641660
(Contact Julia on 01243 527435 to arrange transport)



Friends of Chartres Cine Club Spring 2016

The Friends of Chartres have a busy programme over the next few months, so we will be showing just one film before the summer break. As usual this will be shown in the Picture Palace next to the New Park cinema. Places cost £7.50 per head. Book early to be sure of getting a place.

Cine Club will start again in September. In the meantime, contact Julia (details below) if you would like to borrow any of the films shown so far.

Sunday May 8: 17.00 - Fanny

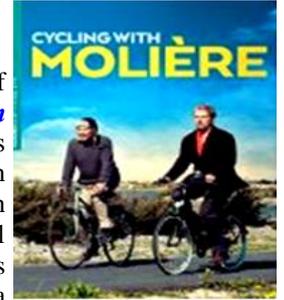
Based on the second play in Marcel Pagnol's famous trilogy, "Marius, Fanny, César", this film is the sequel to 'Marius', shown in March. Marius and Fanny are torn between freedom and responsibility, and every decision they make leads to greater heartbreak. If you enjoyed 'Jean de Florette' you will love this film.

For those of you who were unable to come to 'Marius', we will give a quick recap, so that you can enjoy this second film in the trilogy. We are still hoping that one day, director Daniel Auteuil will film the third play in the series.

Contact Julia Sander for further information and to book a place: julia@sander.plus.com. Tel: (01243) 527435

COIN LITTÉRAIRE

Shown in January at the Friends of Chartres Cine Club, "*Cycling with Molière*", was inspired by Molière's famous play, *Le Misanthrope*. The main character in the play is Alceste, a man who refuses to follow the social conventions of his time and despises his peers. In the film, the protagonists, a washed-up classical actor and a popular soap star vie for the role of Alceste. Both wish to play the excessively misanthropic Alceste, and are reluctant to take on the role of his sensible and rather boring Cléante. As the film progresses, life increasingly mirrors art.



'Le Misanthrope' is as familiar to French audiences as 'Twelfth Night' or 'The Merchant of Venice' might be to audiences here. However the plays of Molière are less well-known in this country, so some background to the playwright and his times might enhance our appreciation of the film. Molière was, in fact, a stage name adopted by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin to avoid bringing disgrace on his respectable family when he opted to become a travelling actor. Born into a prosperous bourgeois family in 1622, Molière was destined for a career as a lawyer. His father held the position of 'tapissier du Roi' at court, and this position passed to Molière in 1641. However, in 1643 Molière turned his back on this secure and lucrative career and left Paris to found an acting troupe known as 'L'illustre Théâtre'. For over 12 years, the troupe toured the provinces putting on plays wherever they could. During this time, Molière honed his skills as a comic actor and started writing his own plays

.By 1658 he was ready to return to Paris. It was the beginning of the great classical period of French literature. The young King Louis XIV was on the throne and had gathered around him a great number of writers, artists and musicians. The Académie Française, founded by Cardinal Richelieu in the 1630's, was the arbiter of good taste, and the tragedies of playwrights like Pierre Corneille and Jean Racine were in vogue at court. These were based on Greek or Latin themes and written for the educated classes.

Comedy at this time was aimed at a different audience – the ordinary people. In his early plays Molière drew on folk drama and the Italian *commedia del arte* which included slapstick, stock characters such as Harlequin and Columbine and farcical situations. Such comedies were never performed at court.

Soon after he returned to Paris. Molière found favour with the king's brother and started to adapt his plays for court audiences. He took comedy to a new level where it relied less on slapstick and more on character development and his social commentary. Molière's great achievement is that he raised comedy, formerly considered an inferior art, to the level where it could be performed to highly educated audiences.

In his plays Molière exposed different aspects of the society of his day, in particular social pretentiousness and excess of all kinds: excess piety, hypochondria, avarice. The main characters in the plays all demonstrate some kind of excessive behaviour. In addition, Molière includes a foil to the main character in the guise of 'un homme raisonnable', embodying a more rational attitude to life. The traits displayed by his characters are universal, and relevant today.

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