

CITYLINK



Chairman's Letter Michael Bevis writes:

Welcome to our winter edition of Citylink

Christmas seems to start earlier every year, but it really felt like the start of the season when the festive lights went on in the main streets, and we held our Christmas Soirée.

This year we tried something new and held it in St John's Chapel in St John's Street Chichester. Our Vice-chair **Anne Scicluna** gave us an introduction to the history of the chapel and then handed over to **Alan Thurlow**, former organist at the cathedral and

a member of the association. He gave a fascinating talk about the history of the organ in the chapel and played a selection of the 18th century music for which the organ was designed. You can read more about this on page 3.

Ellen Haigh has again found some great French films for us to enjoy and has selected more for the new year. She and I have also had some discussions with the New Park Cinema to have a talk and then watch a French film in the cinema at as the Speyer and Ravenna twinning groups did recently.

On the last page you will find details of our programme for the coming months. Please do book for our Annual Dinner which we are holding again at Restaurant 64 at The Chichester College on Thursday February 26. Details will follow in the near future.

We were hoping that **Martyn Bell**, who rejoined the committee at the last AGM, would give us a talk about the Resistance in Chartres and surrounding area during the last war as there is much more to this than the story of Jean Moulin. We hoped that he would be able to give his talk at our AGM on Thursday March 19, but this will now be postponed to a date in April. In its place, Anne Scicluna will give a talk about influential women in Chichester.



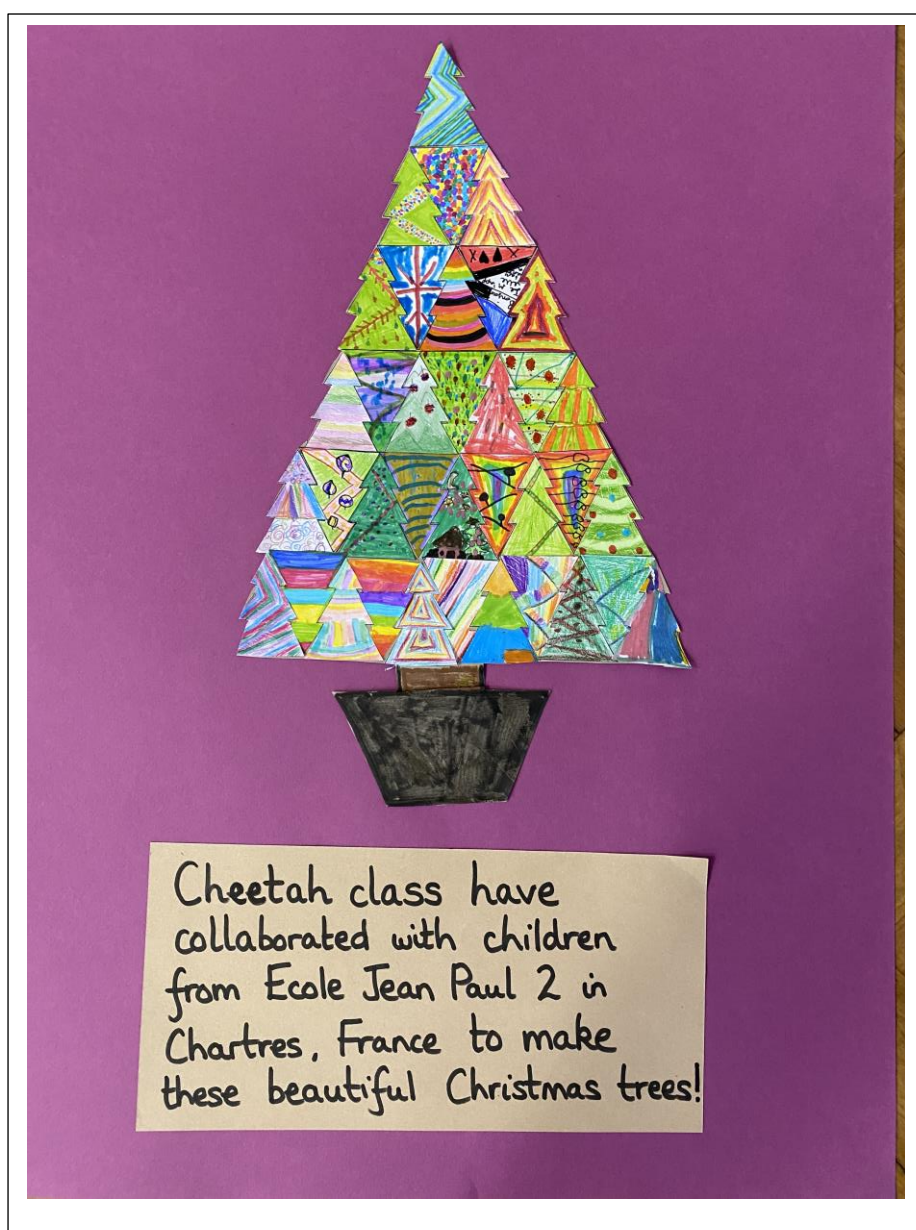
The highlight of every year is the exchange visit, and we are looking forward to going to Chartres between 30th April and 4th May next year. We will be travelling as foot passengers from Portsmouth to Ouistreham and taking a coach from there to Chartres. **Julia Sander** sets out further details in this edition on page 7.

My thanks to the members of the committee and to all those who have contributed to the success of our events this year.

And finally, a reminder that subscriptions are now due!

School link

We are very pleased to report that a link has been set up between Fishbourne Primary School and the Ecole Jean Paul 2 Chartres. This link is already proving fruitful as this delightful image proves.



Christmas Social evening at St John's Chapel, Chichester Thursday December 4, 2025

The highlight of the evening was a demonstration by Dr Alan Thurlow, former organist and choirmaster at Chichester Cathedral of the chapel's recently restored organ. In his informative talk, Alan told us that the St John's organ formed an integral part of the drawings produced for the interior of the church by architect James Elmes in 1813. The organ was built by George Pike England, who was one of the last classical organ builders in this country. In common with the classical tradition, the St John's organ had no pedals and just 54 notes on the Great (bottom) keyboard and 34 on the Swell (top) keyboard.



During the Romantic period, organs became larger and louder to play. In 1898 the St John's organ was rebuilt and enlarged by the firm of Hele in Plymouth. Hele had respect for the integrity of this classical organ and preserved much of the original organ within his new and enlarged instrument.

After the closure of St John's in the 1970's, structural problems with the east wall of the church behind the organ were discovered. The organ was consequently dismantled, and the pipes were stored in boxes on the gallery floor. There they remained for the best part of half a century.

In 2022, a local charity, The Pallant Charitable Trust, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary and was looking for a project to celebrate the life of its founder, Mrs Barbara Stocker. The Trustees became interested in restoring the organ and they arranged for it to be reassembled under the guidance of the specialist Nottingham firm of Goetze and Gwynn.

There are not many church organs in Britain where you can authentically perform the music of the 18th and early 19th centuries on a period organ such as the one in St John's. There is much interest in organ circles about the instrument, and several organisations are arranging visits in 2026 to see, hear and play the organ.

Organ demonstration given by Dr Alan Thurlow, Honorary Custodian

Adagio (K356) for glass harmonica

Air for Organ

Adagio and Trumpet Andante (Voluntary VI)

Praeludium from Parthenia

W A Mozart (1756-1791)

Samuel Wesley (1766-1837)

John Stanley (1713-1786)

Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)

Organ duet with Canon David Nason

The Grand Hallelujah in The Messiah

G F Handel (1685-1759)

(arr. John Marsh 1752-1828)

The Tour de France



Michael Bevis writes: The Tour de France stands as the most iconic and gruelling event in the world of professional cycling. Since its inception in the early twentieth century, it has become a symbol of endurance, strategy, and sheer human determination. Held annually (except during the world wars), the race attracts the world's best cyclists and millions of spectators along the roads and via television broadcasts.

The Tour de France was first organised in 1903 by Henri Desgrange, the editor of the French newspaper *L'Auto*. The race was conceived as a means of boosting newspaper sales and outpace its rival, *Le Vélo*. The inaugural edition covered six stages over 2,428 kilometres, starting and finishing in Paris. Maurice Garin emerged as the first winner, completing the gruelling course in 94 hours.

Following its successful debut, the Tour quickly gained popularity. The route expanded, as did the number of stages and the overall distance. In the early years, the race was notorious for its harsh conditions—racers rode on unpaved roads, repaired their own bikes, and sometimes cycled through the night. Now the riders are followed by a fleet of team cars with mechanics who repair and often replace bikes for those who suffer punctures or mechanical problems.

Over the decades, the Tour de France has introduced numerous innovations that have helped shape modern professional cycling. The most famous symbol of the race, the yellow jersey (*maillot jaune*), was first awarded in 1919 to distinguish the overall leader, the colour being that of the paper on which *L'Auto* was printed. Other jerseys followed: the green jersey for the best sprinter (introduced in 1953), the polka-dot jersey for the best climber (1975), and the white jersey for the best young rider (1975).

Although it remains a wonderfully French event, technological advances, changes in team tactics, and the advent of live television coverage have transformed the Tour into a global sporting phenomenon. The race now covers approximately 3,500 kilometres over three weeks, winding through the Alps and Pyrenees, and often starting outside France's borders and now finishing on the Champs Élysées in Paris.

The Tour's history has not been without controversy. From the early days, the use of stimulants and other substances was an open secret. The late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries saw a series of high-profile doping scandals, most notably involving Lance Armstrong, who was stripped of his seven titles. These incidents prompted significant reforms and stricter anti-doping controls, reaffirming the commitment to clean sport.

The breakthrough for British cyclists was the 99th Tour in 2012 won by Bradley Wiggins of Team Sky. The pivotal moment came on Stage 19, a 53,5km individual time trial from Bonneval to Chartres. With the general classification still in play, riders faced a flat, fast route which was ideal for time trial specialists like 'Wiggo'. He not only increased his overall lead, but it also meant that with the final stage into Paris a largely ceremonial affair. Barring unforeseen accidents, he knew that he had won. The television helicopter shots of Chartres cathedral contributed to an unforgettable moment for cycling fans like me.

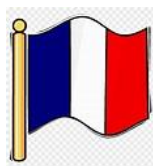
There have been further victories for the Brits with Chris Froome winning in 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017 and Geraint Thomas 2018. The legendary Belgian cyclist Eddie Merckx held the record for winning the most individual stages of the race, until in 2024 Mark Cavendish broke Merckx's record, set in 1974.

The closest that the Tour has come to Chichester was in 1994 when Stage 5 began and ended in Portsmouth with the route coming south through Harting, Compton and West Marden. I stood near the top of Harting Hill thinking that they might be going slowly at that point, but the peloton swept past in a few seconds at a speed I could not dream of cycling at!

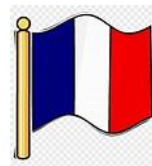
Since then, I have seen the Tour at St Malo, Le Mont St Michel, le Havre, Eymet, Villamblard, Lalande and this year in Caen, Vire Normandie and Mur de Bretagne. People ask why go and stand by the roadside for ages as the riders come past in a few seconds? Well, firstly there is the joy of being in France, then there is the amazing atmosphere with every town they go through being *en fête* - and it really is the incredible impression of speed and the sound of eighty bikes going by in a bunch which make it an unforgettable experience after the spectacle of the publicity cavalcade.

The individual time trials in which the riders set off at two-minute intervals are fun too as you position yourself close to a buvette and with suitable refreshment in hand, you get to see each competitor go past with the current leader wearing the maillot jaune sent off last to add to the tension at the finish line.

The 2026 race will start in Barcelona and the following year in Edinburgh. And what if you fancy having a go at one of the stages – well, every year ASO (Amaury Sport Organisation), who organise the tour, give amateurs the chance to ride one of the stages before the competitors and thousands sign up for a day of torture on one of the mountain stages. I have friends who have signed up for next year's Etape du Tour as it is called. On 19th July they will be riding 170k through the Alps with 5,400m of climbing finishing at l'Alpe d'Huez. I think I prefer the thought of another ride through Normandy to Chartres!



France Trivia Quiz



These were the questions set in our French Trivia Quiz at Fishbourne in September. If you missed the quiz, see if you can beat the top score of 16/20.

Answers below – no peeking please!

- 1** What is the French name for Lake Geneva?
- 2** In which Mediterranean city is the popular TV soap “Demain nous appartient” filmed?
- 3** What is the name of the French-speaking part of Belgium?
- 4** Which country has the longest land border with France?
- 5** What is the distinguishing feature of a Tarte Tatin?
- 6** Which French Enlightenment figure’s real name was François-Marie Arouet?
- 7** What is the name of the French-speaking part of Switzerland?
- 8** What is Vichyssoise? Name at least two ingredients it contains
- 9** Where did Napoleon III, last sovereign of France, die and was buried?
- 10** Which is the most populous French department?
- 11** What is Coquille St. Jacques a fancy name for?
- 12** What title was given to the heir apparent to the French throne from 1350 to 1791?
- 13** What was the main Paris airport before Roissy Charles de Gaulle was built?
- 14** If a French person tells you they are suffering from “la gueule de bois” what is their problem?
- 15** What is the name of President Macron’s wife?
- 16** What is the amusement park based on stories by Uderzo and Goscinny called?
- 17** What was written by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle in Strasbourg in 1792?
- 18** Which regional French language has declined from more than a million speakers in the 1950’s to about 200,000 in the 21st century?
- 19** Which artillery officer’s conviction of treason in 1894 become one of the most infamous political dramas in France?
- 20** Which region of France produces Chablis wine?

Answers to Trivia quiz
1 Lac Léman 2 Sète 3 Wallonia 4 Brazil 5 It’s an upside-down fruit tart. 6 Voltaire 7 Suisse Romande 8 Cold soup. Leeks, potatoes, onions, milk/cream 9 Chislehurst 10 Nord 11 Scallops 12 Dauphin 13 Orly 14 They have a hangover. 15 Brigitte 16 Parc Astérix 17 La Marseillaise 18 Breton 19 Dreyfus 20 Burgundy

EXCHANGE FROM CHICHESTER TO CHARTRES

Thursday April 30 to Monday May 4, 2026

It is our turn to visit Chartres this year. We greatly look forward to visiting this beautiful city. If it's your first time visiting, you are in for a great experience.

This year, we plan to take the morning ferry from Portsmouth to Ouistreham on as foot passengers. We will arrange transport from Chichester to Portsmouth and will travel by French coach onwards from Ouistreham to Chartres. We will return to Chichester by coach and ferry in the same way.

We warmly welcome new participants. If you have not taken part before, you will find it is an excellent way of learning more about France and making new and often life-long friends. A programme of visits and social events will be organised for us in Chartres. This generally includes a day trip to a place of interest, visits in and around Chartres (including the city's famous cathedral) and a gala dinner.

If you are unable to host, we encourage you to join us on this visit by travelling with us and staying in a hotel in Chartres. You will be able to join the programme organised for us in Chartres at your own expense. You will find that our French friends are very welcoming and I'm sure you will enjoy the visit.

Raymond James (Jim) Payne



Anne Scicluna writes: It is with great sadness that we learned of the death of **Jim Payne** on Monday December 22 at the age of 95. Many of us will remember Jim with both love and respect. He was a staunch member of Friends of Chartres and a former Chairman of the Committee. His exchange partners were François and Martine Rémy, with whom he and Diana spent many happy times.

Jim was Mayor of Chichester twice – in 1910 and 19195. He had been in the British Army in Germany, after which he worked in a Young Offenders' establishment at a borstal in Shaftesbury. After teacher training, he became a lecturer at

Chichester College. His charitable activities included Cancer Research, Chichester Youth Wing and raising funds for a Chichester Canal trip boat, which is still used today. A keen sailor, his Mayoress was his wife, Diana.

Jim was a man of great integrity and a born organiser for others. If he was asked to do something, he would do it, and he would do it properly. He was a Governor of the Lancastrian Infants' School, and it was this school which was chosen during Jim's mayoralty to provide the children for their annual Mayor for a Day which is run by the Mayor each year. He also organised the visit to the Wallace Collection for Friends of Chartres a few years ago.

Everyone who knew him would echo the words of one of our friends: "He was a lovely man, who has a great sense of community and civic duty,"

Our thoughts and love go to Diana in her loss.

Information Page

President The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Chichester

Councillor Sean McHale

Officers and Committee

Chair: Michael Bevis 781016
Vice Chair: Anne Scicluna 789065
Treasurer: Stephen Northdale 822148

Members

Clare Apel	783738
Martyn Bell	539806
Anne-Louise Briggs	784346
Emma Heaver	575306
David Nason	573716
Julia Sander	527435
Peter Tudge	023 9273 2538

Exchange visit

Thursday April 30– Monday May 4

This year it's our turn to visit Chartres. Details are on page 7. If you haven't signed up yet, there's still time to join us. Let us know by the end of January at the latest.

For further details about the exchange and conversation circles, contact **Julia Sander:** focevents1969@gmail.com

Friends of Chartres Future Events.

Annual Dinner

Thursday February 26: 6.00 – 9.00 pm
64 Restaurant and Bar, Chichester College

Annual General Meeting

Thursday March 19: 7.30-9.30 pm
Followed by talk on influential women in Chichester, by Anne Scicluna
Jubilee Hall, New Park Community Centre

Talk on French Resistance by Martyn Bell

Thursday April 16 (TBC): 6.00 – 9.00 pm

Cine Club Showings for January and February TBC

Details of these events and how to book will be circulated in advance.

Conversation Circles

Groups meet monthly for lively, informal conversation in French. We welcome new members, whatever your level of French at Petit Cercle meetings. For the Cercle Avancé, you need to be reasonably fluent to contribute to the conversation, but we are happy for you to listen if you wish to improve your French.

Petit Cercle du mardi

10.30 am to Noon

Tuesday, January 6

Tuesday, February 3

Tuesday, March 3

Tuesday, April 7

May: no meeting due to French exchange

Tuesday, June 2

Venue: The Coffee Bar, Festival Theatre, Oaklands Park, Chichester PO19 6AP

Cercle Avancé

5.30 – 7.00 pm

Monday, January 12

Monday, February 9

Monday March 9

Monday April 13

Monday May 11

Monday June 8

Note: We have changed our venue to **The Chichester Inn**, 38, West Street, Chichester PO19 1RP