



Neighbourhood Network . . . The Project is growing, be part of it

The original group was set up nearly two years ago by Joan Taylor and is now a fortnightly meeting at café L'Arpillon in Les Issambres on alternate Tuesdays at 11h. On a Sunday evening Joan emails regular participants reminding them of the coming Tuesday meeting. She does not arrange any other activities other than the meeting.

As Joan pointed out, many BA members in Les Issambres are transient and the Tuesday coffee date is their base to keep them in touch. Mainly it is just the chance to listen and talk that draws couples and individuals together to participate for the cost of a coffee.

The BAV Committee see the rolling out of a "Neighbourhood Network" across the Var as the most efficient way of becoming aware of problems, be they members just requiring assistance with bureaucracy or a question about where you can get oil delivered by a lorry small enough to negotiate their driveway or *chemin*. Occasionally it could be a potential welfare problem that needs to be passed on to the Welfare Team.

In the December Newsletter I promoted the project in my Notes to the members and encouraged participation. Jim and Pauline North took up the baton for Les Arcs and rang some local residents from the BA Address Book. Like Joan, they have established that a public venue is the best location. We all have a local café where we could hold a meeting.

So what feedback did the Norths supply us with to help those members who may be considering starting a Neighbourhood Network group in their area? Eight members attended their inaugural meeting and all agreed it was a good idea, they appreciate the interchange of information, thought that a twice a month get together would be perfect, liked the informality with each paying their own café bill. During such local meetings discussion topics could be limitless, very probably biased in favour of the local environment, governed and constrained only by the time span of the get together.

Who else would like to organise an informal group like this in their community? Think of the flood disaster of last summer. A Neighbourhood Network could be of real benefit to everyone who participates. Information could be reported back to the Welfare Team or a Committee Member if welfare involvement was deemed necessary. This Newsletter will carry details of all the groups as they pop up and will promote the venues with a contact name and email address. New members will be advised of their local groups and the group leaders will be advised of new members in their area.

Continued on page 2 . . .

Forthcoming Events

for your diary

February

**Les Issambres
Neighbourhood Network**

Tuesday 1 and 15 Feb

Painting Group

Wednesday 2 Feb - Les Arcs

Lunch at La Cousteline

Friday 4 Feb - Grimaud

Digital Photography Group

Wednesday 9 Feb - Montauroux

Lunch and Quiz

Friday 18 Feb - Lorgues

Committee Meeting

Tuesday 22 Feb

Happy Boules

Contact: Rob Flanagan

rob@baofthevar.com

March

Buffet Lunch

Thursday 24 March - Montferrat

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 March - La Motte

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www.baofthevar.com

See the Latest News and
Forthcoming Events on our BA
website

Continued from page 1 . . .

We often hear, particularly from single members, that they don't like to drive too far to events, or walk into a room full of people they don't know, or even go to large gatherings: Perhaps a Neighbourhood Network would be a comfortable local alternative? **If you would like to organise a small group like this, please contact me**, and let's get going – being in touch with one another and showing concern for each other.

Auriol Langen ***** or email
chairman@baofthevar.com

Lunch and Quiz

at "Brasserie Le Marine", Lorgues
noon on Friday 18 February

Lunch followed by the Quiz at about 14h. The Menu will offer the following choices:

Terrine Campagnarde

ou

Terrine de Poissons

Daube de Boeuf

ou

Noix de St Jacques en Coquille

Tarte aux Fruits

ou

Fromage

12€ per head for 3 courses

Wine or coffees ordered on the day will be charged directly at the table.

The Quiz will follow the usual format of 10 rounds of 5 questions each. Each team member will pay a 3€ entry fee on the day to the quiz master, in cash, a team consisting ideally of 4 members. The entry fees will be split 50/50 between the winning team and the BA Welfare Fund.

Please complete the attached Reservation Slip and return to Roy Corless, ***** , 83510 Lorgues **by Saturday, 12 February**. We look forward to seeing you.

Mike Milner

**British Association of the Var
Welfare Coordinator**

Shirley Wigglesworth

06 43 86 49 01

welfare@baofthevar.com

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Secretary - Clare Brown

***** secretary@baofthevar.com

Treasurer - Terry Joyce

***** treasurer@baofthevar.com

Welfare Officer - Shirley Wrigglesworth

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welfare@baofthevar.com

Events Secretary

events@baofthevar.com

Publicity - Mike Milner

***** publicity@baofthevar.com

newsletter@baofthevar.com

webmaster@baofthevar.com

Member - John Collingwood

***** john@baofthevar.com

Member - Rob Flanagan

***** rob@baofthevar.com

Chairman's' Letter

The Mimosa is already coming out, are we really through the winter?

Did anyone actually read last month's Newsletter? There certainly has not been a rush of 'phone calls to volunteer to help with holding or organising even one event or setting up a **Neighbourhood Network** in your own area. For many members the BA is all about the social events that we provide, but the Committee and few faithful others cannot carry the load entirely and indefinitely.

Usually in February the Committee is asking you to read the AGM papers we send you. However, this year we are holding the AGM at the end of March, so everything will be sent out next month. It will be a 'bumper pack' this year, as we present you with two sets of accounts and two AGM Minutes - for the Var Branch up to the end of October, and for the new organisation up to the end of December. Also, a complete set of the Statutes (in English and French) and the Rules and Regulations under which we are now operating.

This year we will ask you only to vote acceptance of them both as they are. We will not be discussing changes at this year's meeting, but if anyone feels that we have got things wrong, we are prepared to set up a working group after the AGM to put together proposals to amend them at the AGM in 2012!

Congratulations and Best Wishes to Jim Blythe who celebrates his 80th Birthday towards the end of the month. Most people in the BA know Jim, a founding member and treasurer of the Var Branch for many years and of the Central Committee for even more. It is largely thanks to Jim and his wise planning and management that we are now in such a healthy financial state. Jim, I wish you a Happy Day and a healthy year ahead.

Finally, it is with much regret that we mourn the passing of Peter Davis. He was an outstanding member of the Tourtour community for 15 years, and was also one of our earlier members and a great supporter of all that the BA stands for. Our thoughts are with Ragni and their family at this time.

Auriol Langen *****

EDF

On 1 January 2011 a new law (NOME – Nouvelle Organisation du Marché de l'Electricité) came into effect. This law requires EDF to sell on up to 25% of its electricity production to its competitors. Its competitors can then invite current customers of EDF to change supplier.

To permit customers to change supplier EDF will have to install digital meters in all properties that do not currently have one. The cost of installing these meters will be high and there is little doubt that EDF will try to recover the cost from the customer. It is thought that the cost could be in the region of 300€ per household.

No one should seek to try to prevent EDF from installing the new meters but the cost can only be recovered from the customer if the customer signs a contract requesting its installation or signs a document confirming that the work has been done.

So, it is important that you **read carefully anything you receive from EDF**, or it's appointed contractor, and, if it relates to the installation of a new electricity meter, **do not sign it**. Also, it is equally important that when EDF, or its appointed contractor, arrives to install the meter, that you **do not sign anything on site** that authorises the installation or confirms that it has been done.

EDF's competitors are already making contact with potential customers by mail shots and cold calling. If you are asked for details of your EDF supply contract (all of which appear on your electricity bill) **do not give them**. Armed with this information, it will be possible for EDF's competitors to switch your supply contract without you being aware of it. The decision to switch should be yours and yours alone. More information is available on www.poursavoir.fr

Clare Brown



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Neighbourhood Network

Les Issambres:

Contact: Joan or Brian Taylor, *****
*****@aol.com

Meeting details – every other Tuesday 11h at L'Arpillon café next to the Casino on the main road.

Les Arcs:

Contact: Jim or Pauline North, *****
*****@wanadoo.fr

Meeting details – please get in touch with Jim.

St Raphael:

Contact: Eric or Pauline McMinn, *****
*****@orange.fr

Meeting details – to be arranged later in the month.

Brave lady journalist

The other month we pointed out that under the new Highway Code law a pedestrian more than 50m from a pedestrian crossing only needed to show "intent" to cross the road, and vehicles must allow them to cross. Those with an internet link may view this young lady putting the law to test:

<http://www.francesoir.fr/actualite/societe/j-ai-applique-nouveau-code-route-65179.html>

One for You Tube perhaps?

Mike Milner

For next month's Newsletter

Please let us have your advertisements, articles and reports for the March issue by

Sunday 20 February

**All contributions to
newsletter@baofthevar.com**

or send to Mike Milner, Publicity,
*****, 83520 Roquebrune S/A

Provence Sun spreads the word!

Over to the west of us in the Languedoc region there has been a bi-monthly publication for some time, aptly named [Languedoc Sun](#). The publisher has decided to create a publication for Provence appropriately named [Provence Sun](#) as you would expect. This is also a bi-monthly publication and is now starting to move its distribution base into the Var region. So I thought I would bring it to the members' attention.

Currently it is easily accessible by an internet download link, <http://www.languedocsun.com/> at which point you will see on the right the current [Provence Sun](#) and an option below to download the file. If you go to page 25 on the pdf download you will see that your BAV gets a half page promotion. We are spreading the BAV word across a wider area and now the more westerly part of the Var.

There is a good detailed article on Aix en Provence written by Martin Hills which certainly has made us consider that the city warrants more exploration, other than just a route mark along the A8.

Mike Milner



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New Flight from Toulon to London

Appreciating that not all our members choose to travel by air from Nice airport, that some happily drive to Marseille or Toulon, it would seem appropriate that the Air France subsidiary City Jet is proposing to start a service from Toulon direct to central London City airport.

The service is supposedly going to commence on 28 May and, with the airport's underground links, it would provide a convenient destination for those aiming for the capital. It is not a daily service but an alternative if you can fit your schedule to their flight times.

Mike Milner

Secretary's Notes

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 22 February. I will be circulating the Agenda to Committee Members about a week before the meeting.

If you have any ideas or suggestions that you would like to put to the Committee, please pass them to me by Thursday, 10 February at the latest.

Clare Brown *****
secretary@baofthevar.com

Desperate to Stop?

call Alcoholics Anonymous
24 hour helpline

08 20 20 02 57 aa-riviera.org

THE AGM

Auriol said earlier that the AGM papers this year will constitute a much bulkier document. This is happening for a number of reasons which Auriol has mentioned but I will deal with them in more detail below. In view of its size, the Committee has decided that it will be sent to all members through the post, rather than by email because some members may find it difficult, if not impossible, to download and open.

We are in the run up to the first **Annual** General Meeting of the new Association. Committee Members were the first members of the new Association and they held an **Ordinary** General Meeting to formally constitute it as a 1901 Association which qualified for full registration. The Minutes of that Ordinary General Meeting will be included with the AGM papers for acceptance.

A copy of the Minutes of the 2010 AGM of the Branch will also be included for information only. You have been members of the new Association since 1 November 2010 and the old Branch has now been formally closed down so you will not be asked to formally accept these Minutes.

A copy of the final accounts of the Branch will also be included to enable members to make sense of the final accounts of the new Association which only operated for the last two months of 2010. The Branch accounts have already been approved and audited for consolidation by the British Association of the Alpes-Maritimes (the Var reference has now been dropped from their name).

At this AGM you will be asked to adopt the Internal Rules and Regulations. These are supplemental to the Association's Statuts which were formally adopted at the OGM referred to above. The Statuts are much longer and more detailed than those originally planned and circulated with last year's AGM papers. We acted on advice we were given and included in the Statuts many of the provisions that had originally been included in the Internal Rules and Regulations which were, again, circulated last year. The Statuts cannot be amended at this AGM but it is open to members to put forward suggestions and observations about them to me for possible amendment next year.

Those Statuts provide for the election, or re-election, of a Chairman at each AGM so that will be an Agenda item and Auriol Langen will be offering herself for re-election to the role. The

next Agenda item will be the re-election of the other Committee members. The Committee will elect the Secretary, Treasurer and Welfare Officer from its ranks following the AGM. The Statuts provide for the Committee to have a maximum of eight members. At the moment there are seven. The Committee needs a member to take on the role of organising, and coordinating the organisation of, events for members across the region. Any member who feels they would like to join the Committee to take on this task is encouraged to seek nomination for election to the Committee. They should submit their name, supported by the signatures of two other members as nominees, to me **before 22 February**, the date of the last Committee meeting before the AGM when the papers will be finalised. Nominations can be accepted after that date but cannot be included in the AGM papers.

Finally, the Statuts provide for the nomination and election of two Honorary Members each year. If you wish to nominate a member for this, please send your nominations to me by the date mentioned in the last paragraph.

The AGM papers themselves will also contain an explanation of their content so don't panic if you've lost this Newsletter!

Clare Brown
Secretary

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Mike Lorimer - Orias No. 07032481



65 Million of us in France

This is not the total number of British ex-pats now resident here but the current population in mainland France, plus its overseas departments.

Way back in 1981 the figure was 54 million and in 2001 there were 61 million. According to the official figures, the population increase in France, unlike other European countries whose population growth is driven by immigration, is driven by a rising birth rate.

Women over 30, more specifically those over 35 are now increasingly included in the birth statistics. In fact the average age for childbirth in France is now 30.

Life expectancy in France is now 78.1 years for a man and 84.8 years for ladies. This increase means that the percentage of the population over 65 is now just a fraction under 17%.

Another interesting statistic is the decline in the numbers of couples getting married. Last year marriages dropped to 249,000. However, the number of couples who opted for the legality of the *pac*s arrangement rose by 13% to 195,000 couples. This means that for every 4 couples who marry, 3 couples prefer to cohabit and sign up for the *pac*s arrangement.

Mike Milner

Capital Gains Tax on main home sale?

This is not a new law, yet, but one of the options that are being considered if the "wealth tax" is scrapped.

Currently tax is only levied on second home sales, but President Sarkozy has mentioned the proposal of main home taxation.

The ISF wealth tax currently starts at 800,000€ but there are suggestions that this could be raised to only include those with possessions worth more than four million euros and taxing sales of homes worth more than 1.2€ million.

All these options are in a big melting pot as the French and Germans consider a closer convergence of their tax systems. No need to panic yet but it is always interesting to see what is under scrutiny.

Mike Milner

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Orange and Lemon Time Again

After the unusually damp winter we have endured the countryside is slowly, along the coast from Bormes-les-Mimosa to the hillsides around Tanneron, turning yellow with mimosa blossom. Various towns and villages will be celebrating with their own processions and events.

If you really want to do something different drive down the A8, spectacularly mimosa lined after the Les Adrets junction, all the way to Menton. There you will discover that between 18 February and the 9 March it is the 78th Annual Citrus Festival.

With the help of 145 metric tonnes of oranges and lemons held together by 500,000 elastic bands, this year the theme is les Grande Civilisations, and if past years are anything to go by the static displays in the gardens and the organised parades will not disappoint.

Full details are available on the website at:

<http://www.fete-du-citron.com/Lemon-Festival-Menton-French,34.html>

which includes details of parade dates and times plus the daily central garden opening hours. While you are there don't forget that there is also an excellent indoor display of orchids.

Having visited the festival over the years I can say that it makes no difference if you go at the start or the end of festival as the displays are refreshed daily, so ensuring perfect presentation for the visitor. For the camera buff a later visit means less people cluttering your view finder as you click away.

Mike Milner

MEMBERS' GROUPS

Digital Photography Group

Over the Christmas holiday seemed an ideal time to take advantage of the opportunity to photograph the lights and displays that all the local towns and villages put up to celebrate the festive period. Unfortunately the weather had a different idea and it was difficult to find a clear day or night, to go out with a camera. Everybody made an effort but more came back disappointed with their efforts than at any other time because of the persistent rain and bad light. It was a good exercise for those of us that tried to use the manual settings and a tripod but certainly not an easy subject.



'Christmas lights' taken by Mike Harper

As requested, we are now working on photographs of the "Var" for the 2012 Calendar and with that in mind we have planned a visit to the village of Grimaud later this month.

We are putting our photos onto the web where they can all be viewed, including the ones "potentially" for the "2012 Calendar". The address is www.pbase.com/bavarphoto.

For further information on becoming a member of the group, **please contact** Mike Harper at *****@yahoo.co.uk

Sandie Doherty

Bereavement Support Network in the Var (BSN)

For help please contact: Sandra
04 94 84 64 89 or Sue 06 48 46 93 21
email: info@bsnvar.org
website: www.bsnvar.org

Happy Boules

The New Year started well despite the inclement weather with a record turnout of 18 boulistes on 10 January. We are now working towards another competition with the BSN to be held in the spring. If your New Year's resolution is to take more fresh air with a minimum of exercise then boules is the game for you! For more information **please contact** Robert Flanagan:

*****@hotmail.com

Painting Group

The next Painting Group will meet on **Wednesday, 2 February** *chez moi*. **Please let me know** if you would like to join us, and bring along a dish to share for lunch.

Pauline North *****
*****@orange.fr

Services at St John's for the Var St John the Evangelist - Ave Paul Doumer, St Raphaël

Holy Communion is held **every Sunday at 10h30**
followed by refreshments and a monthly lunch.

Grimaud Village Church

1st Thursday of each month at 11h00

Eccumenical Service

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www.sjevar.com

~ ~ ~

MONTAUROUX CGA Prasada Church of England

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for a service of Holy Communion

We also have a Bring and Share Lunch afterwards

For further details about this or
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Prasada, 294, RD37, 83440 Montauroux

~ ~ ~

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