



British Association of the Var

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January 2011

Newsletter

No 104

Happy New Year

A Revised Newsletter Format

What a year 2010 was for your Newsletter. September 2010 saw the 100th issue distributed to the Members and a commemorative four page flyer to celebrate issues 1 to 99. Its success has been due to all those who from that first issue gave their time freely. I was going to also say enthusiastically, but when a printer continually jams enthusiasm does wear thin. What started as one sheet of 2 pages with occasional distribution grew to become the monthly publication it is today.

Its growth has been achieved by a stalwart growing band of sponsors who have financially supported the Newsletter as it has grown, so helping to defray some if not all its production cost. When the current Newsletter Team took up the mantle of production it limited the size to four A4 sheets per issue, printed both sides and produced over 400 copies per month. Over 1600 sheets of paper to be printed both sides, 3200 pages at 15 seconds per sheet took over 13 hours of volunteered time, without accounting for the collation and stapling, plus insertion into the envelopes that had also been printed.

Hence with the arrival of our website and an opportunity to promote our Association to a worldwide audience - using the website to carry a Newsletter archive - a decision was taken to use an electronic distribution system and source a professional printer to produce the paper version for posting. Whilst we had been a wholly print distributed Newsletter we had created a back page which was completely dedicated to our sponsors. So, if the Newsletter was placed face down our sponsors benefitted from maximum promotion.

However, you the Members have been keen to embrace our electronic distribution and from this issue onwards the sponsors' boxes will be spread randomly throughout the Newsletter. This means that electronic readers will need to read all eight pages, rather than perhaps skip the last page.

The sponsors' income has certainly made professional printing sustainable. Through that link we were able to produce the much admired BAV Calendars and Christmas cards to the highest quality. We will appreciate any feedback you may have and hope both Members and sponsors like the new format. On a personal note, those of you who know the "How do you like your eggs in the morning?" song lyric may be amused to hear that when CIAIS took on the printing and our dining table lost the two printers, I have enjoyed my eggs "with a smile" if not the kiss, although that could be an age thing.

Mike Milner

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Forthcoming Events

for your new diary

January 2011

Digital Photography Group

Wednesday 12 Jan - Montauroux

Wednesday 26 Jan - Visit tba

Happy Boules

Contact: Rob Flanagan

rob@baofthevar.com

Painting Group

Contact: Pauline North

*****@orange.fr

February

Lunch at La Cousteline

Friday 4 Feb - Grimaud

Lunch and Quiz

Friday 18 Feb - Lorgues

March

Buffet Lunch

Thursday 24 March - Montferrat

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 March - La Motte

FEELING POORER THESE DAYS?

Saving is a real headache these days, with poor exchange rates, high taxation and low interest rates; it's difficult to know where to turn.

UK banks will not understand your financial position in France and associated issues that may come with French residency. They will probably not offer you the best rate of exchange available when you move money to France, worse still it is unlikely they be able to guide you on tax efficient solutions for your money, meaning you will be paying far more tax than necessary.

There is a solution! Let one of our French based, qualified and regulated consultants guide you. We are also qualified in the UK, meaning we understand what you have, what you need and how to steer you in the right direction, making sure you hold on to your money.

No matter where you live in France, or the UK, why not call our office today?


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Friday 4 February

Lunch at La Cousteline Grimaud

This is one of your Chairman's favourite restaurants in the Gulf of St Tropez. It is an old converted farmhouse: in winter an intimate but sophisticated dining room with a log fire, in summer dining under umbrellas in the garden. Run by the owner Virginie and in the kitchen, her mother who is a professional chef.

12 noon for 12h30

Menu du jour à 28€ compris

Saumon mariné

or Millefeuille de Brébis

or Soupe du jour – légume

or Terrine de Campagne

Confit de Canard

or Dos de Loup au fenouil

or Daube de Bœuf provençale avec des pâtes

Crème brûlée

or Mousse au chocolat

Café

Carafe du vin, rouge ou rosé ¼ litre per person

The restaurant can cater for a maximum of 40 people. To book please complete the attached **Reservation Slip** and send it to Jim North, **before Monday 31 January.**

To get there: From Le Muy péage, go toward St Tropez. At Ste Maxime bear right still towards St Tropez with the sea on the left. Travel along the coast, across several roundabouts on N98 and take the turning to the right at St Pons marked Grimaud D14. La Cousteline is exactly 2km along the D14 on the left. GPS 43.276112 6.552916.

From the Garde Freinet direction, travel through Grimaud village in the direction Ste Maxime. Shortly after the turning to Plan de la Tour on the left, La Cousteline is on the right.

Plenty of parking spaces.

No steps for access but the 'loo' is upstairs!



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See the Latest News and
Forthcoming Events on our BA
website

Chairman's Letter

I am writing this the day after the first Carol Service this year, still looking forward to all that Christmas brings. By the time you read it, it will be next year: 2011 already! What is the New Year going to bring to us all? And for how many people is 'getting rid of the extra pounds/kilos of festive indulgence' high on the list of January priorities, or 'New Year Resolutions'?

At the last Committee Meeting of the year, one of our priorities for 2011 is to find help with the planning and running of **Events**.

Although our *raison d'être* is to look after the small minority of people in need, it is also important for us to look after the social needs of all our Members: meeting old friends or making new ones; get-togethers over coffee, at book sales or lunches; entertainment at Quizzes; meeting at people's homes or on the boules court; finance seminars; capturing the Var for posterity on camera, or satisfying a creative need in painting or card making. Also, I am delighted that BATS are going to entertain us again in the summer.

But any event, however small or large, needs to be co-ordinated into the calendar for the year, and for this **we need some help**. A single person or a small team of people: if you are socially minded and like organising, don't mind 'phoning people you don't know to ask for help, have some spare time and would like to get to know your way around the Var, you could just be the person we are looking for. Preferably, you would also make yourself available to stand on the Committee.

Needless to say, I would also welcome hearing from anyone who would like to host or organise an event. **Fundraising** is also still a priority.

If this sounds a bit too much to jump straight into, how about organising a '**Neighbourhood Network**' in your area? (see article in last month's Newsletter on page 5). A few people have come forward already but there are many country areas that are still not covered. This should develop into being an important link, even a lifeline, particularly for people living on their own. If you are in mind to volunteer help, you will only get our *repondeur* until 12 January. After then I will be delighted to hear from you.

To go back to the Committee Meeting: the accounts of the 'Var Branch' have been successfully audited up to the end of October 2010 and new books opened for the BAV (British Association of the Var). At the AGM in March we will present accounts to the end of December as usual, another audit to fit in.

Then the strategic planning for the AGM started: plan the date the reports have to be produced in draft for proof reading, then finalised and sent to the printer, collected, packed and posted. Also, get the advertisers and sponsors lined up for the Address Book and the Members' name and address lists checked for accuracy so that it can be printed as soon as we know the new Committee at the AGM. In other words, the Committee is going to be a busy bunch of people early in the New Year!

'Meilleux vœux, bonne année et santé'. My best wishes for a **Happy and Healthy 2011**.

Auriol Langen 04 94 *****

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SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR MEMBERS OF BRITISH ASSOCIATION

Cyclists turn right on RED

Knowing many members are keen cyclists this latest change in the Highway Code will be of interest to them. The new rule allows cyclists to skip red lights if they are turning right.

However, before you do this at every set of traffic lights, if you don't already do so, you are not supposed to do it unless there is a sign to confirm your right to that effect. How will this decision be made as to which lights you can skip? It will be up to each local mayor to make that decision and arrange for the appropriate signage.

Mike Milner

Welfare Team Report

As a result of the Anglo-Info day held on 30 October, we are pleased to welcome two people who are joining the Welfare Team - Christina Schramm who resides in Roquebrune sur Argens and who has lived in many parts of the world. Although her mother tongue is German, she is very comfortable with the English language. Andrew Lewis-Smith is from St Endreol and known to a number of you. Their help has already made a big difference to our workload.

Diane Jenkins and Maureen Kelly are visiting a member in a Fréjus Rehabilitation Centre where she will be until Feb/March. Our work sheet is much quieter than in mid year, giving us all a chance to catch our breaths and make plans for the coming year. The lack of 'home' accidents has helped a lot - PLEASE BE CAREFUL WITH THE WINTER SNOW AND ICE. It is no shame to use a walking stick to help you with your balance - just sensible. Remember also, if you have one TAKE YOUR MOBILE 'PHONE WITH YOU, even for a saunter down to collect the post or to take the dog for a run in the garden – it's amazing where 'accidents' happen.

In addition to the hospital visits, we said good bye to Geoff Hobbs and his wife in mid-November as they returned to the UK to live near their son in Wales. Geoff celebrated his 80th birthday a few days after the move. Little did we realise how short lived their happiness was to be, Geoff passed away with his family around him on 29 November.

We are still providing full administration support to a person who is at home after an operation but unable to leave the bed. Day-to-day nursing and personal care are supplied by HAD (Hospitalisation Aide Domicile) and SENDRA who prepare his meals. Also, there have been a number of calls regarding the various tax payments due at this time of the year.

We have had a number of calls from people needing contacts for central heating service engineers. We are reluctant to provide these as we have no proof of the quality of their workmanship. However, we do try to contact the system manufacturer and locate their local office. Mike Wrigglesworth has been helping a number of people sort out their computer problems as well as delivering wood.

Although still in December as I write this, the New Year is already starting to get busy. We have

members going into hospital in December and will be in rehab centres until possibly February/March. I have also arranged transport for a member having to go to Hyères for an operation in early January. We wish them all a speedy recovery.

If you are interested in receiving additional information on any of the 'agencies' mentioned above, or others, please email:

welfare@baofthevar.com

The only thing for me now is to wish you all a **Healthy and Happy New Year.**

Shirley and the Welfare Team

04 94***** or 06 43 86 49 01

Member Abuse, the translations!

Our membership is not 100% British, so we benefit from a varied cultural input.

However, following our item in last month's Newsletter about our stance on the inflammatory email currently being circulated, it is obviously now being received (as a result of the improper use of the members Address Book) by some of our non-British members.

We have been contacted by some of those members to advise that the unsigned email's attached translations in their respective languages are nothing to do with them and all have added that the translations are of very poor quality.

The translations have obviously been obtained using a poor internet translation programme and we are more than happy to inform all members that our non-British members wish to be totally disassociated from these translations.

Newsletter Team



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Enjoy a luxury Buffet Lunch

At Montferrat, north of Draguignan on the D955, is the imposing **La Bastide des Moines** Hotel and Restaurant. We have provisionally booked a Lunch at this splendid 17th century venue for **Thursday 24 March**.

The food offered makes the trip worthwhile but the scenery and setting are further reasons to pencil the date into your diary.

The format commences with an array of starters from a buffet which you can visit as often as you wish. Prior to the starter you order your hot or cold main course. After the main the format returns to buffet style choice of cheeses and deserts. You will not be disappointed. The price includes choice of the house rouge/blanc/rosé wine. The only extras are your pre-meal *aperitif*, your final *digestif* and your coffee.

During 2010 the buffet lunch with wine was 25€ per head; splendid dining at a truly remarkable price with its not to be forgotten ambience.

Further details in the March Newsletter, along with your booking slip. NO booking slip with this advance notification.

The Events Team

Quiz for 18 February at Lorgues

Your Quiz Master has received a request to provide a quiz in Lorgues. Pam Corless and Sandra Carruthers successfully organised a lunch and games afternoon in the town early last year, at "**Brasserie Le Marine**" and the management of the establishment are more than happy to have the British Association of the Var back again for a Quiz.

This is advance warning that at **noon on Friday 18 February** at the above restaurant there will be a 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

As with all our Quiz lunches, the menu is a very competitive price, this time it will be **12€ per head** for a 3 course menu which is the restaurant charge. All wine or coffees ordered on the day are the responsibility of those attending and 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.

The reservation slips for the event will be available with the February Newsletter, they are NOT with this issue, but they will need to be **returned by Saturday 12 February**. Thanks go to Pam and Sandra for arranging the venue and menu. Please note, the venue is stair access only.

We look forward to seeing some old "Eggheads" plus some new ones too.

Mike Milner

**British Association of the Var
Welfare Coordinator**

Shirley Wigglesworth

04 94 ***** or 06 43 86 49 01

welfare@baofthevar.com

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New Property Energy Efficiency Rules Apply from Jan 2011 covering Sales and Long Term Rentals. Are you affected?

As you are all probably aware, there are a number of diagnostic checks to be carried out before you sell your property in France and they have to be annexed to the '*compromis de vente*'.

Most vendors do not have these surveys done until they are sure of a buyer, as they do not want to have to pay out hundreds of euros months in advance of a potential sale. From 1 January 2011 however, under French law all properties for sale must have an energy efficiency certificate and all advertisements from the beginning of 2011 must carry the readings from A to G (such as you currently see on fridges or washing machines for sale). This is compulsory for all private advertising of your property on the internet, as well as via estate agents and for long-term rentals. Seasonal holiday lets are exempt from this ruling. The cost of this survey ranges from approximately 200€ - 350€ and the report is valid for 10 years.

If you are selling or thinking of selling your property, it would be a good idea to have all the other necessary diagnostic checks done at the same time, as the inspector will give you a special price for a package. In order to find out which checks are necessary for selling your property, ask your *notaire* or estate agent.

The diagnostic checks necessary on a property prior to selling now extend to septic tanks from 2011. If your property has a septic tank, you will have to provide a report from the government body, the SPANC (*Le Service Public de l'Assainissement Non-Collectif* or non-collective sewage system), who is responsible for checking that all septic tank installations are functioning correctly and are properly maintained. As it takes some time to set up the appointment and receive the report, it is advisable to contact your local SPANC office now if you are thinking of putting your property on the market. There are offices in Draguignan, Brignoles and St Raphaël or ask your local Mairie. The report can cost between 50€ - 80€ and is valid for three years.

Pat Toohey

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Jaywalking for France!

Pedestrians of France, the French Highway Code now actively encourages you to step off the pavement and cross the road, where or whenever you like, well with just one exception. Knowing how the French politicians hate what they see as the Americanisation of French culture, this latest ruling certainly can be viewed as a definite tactic to encourage Jaywalking which in parts of America sees the pedestrian ticketed for the action.



In France it now works against the motorist who must stop for that jaywalking pedestrian. As a motorist any pedestrian who shows a clear movement to walk across a road, defined as ***an ostensible step forward or a hand gesture in front of your vehicle*** is within their rights to cross the road and you must allow them to do so. There is one exception, if the pedestrian is within 50 metres of an existing designated pedestrian crossing, then pedestrians must use the crossing.

Drivers who ignore this new ruling face a 135€ fine or having 4 points deducted from their licence. This is **not** a spoof item, it is fact, so when out driving, that *kamikaze* pedestrian who appears in front of you has right of way, unless you are within 50 metres of that distant designated crossing area, which could in best British pantomime tradition be "behind you."

As a final thought, perhaps you ought to add a camera and a 50 metre builder's cloth tape measure to the mandatory red triangle we carry, to prove you were within your rights when you knocked the pedestrian over.

Mike Milner



Your key to the French Riviera

If you are looking to buy or sell a property in this beautiful part of France, please contact Pat Toohey in our Var office on 06 60 73 29 48 or pat@rivierakeys.com. We are always seeking new properties for our international clientèle and would be delighted to hear from you.

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The **new** registration certificate for the British Association of the **Var**:

Happy Boules

We wish all boulistes a Happy and Properous New Year. We are continuing to play throughout the winter and have extended the locations to Villecroze, Cotingnac, St Antonin, Lorgues, Salernes, Tourtour, Flayosc and Aups. The players generally meet for lunch followed by a game and a warming drink. New boulistes are always welcome. If you wish to join us **please email:**

*****@hotmail.com



Digital Photography Group

The emphasis was very much on the technical side of digital photography at our last meeting. The modern SLR digital camera has a bewildering array of 'bells and whistles' to confuse and intimidate the would-be photographer and our brief this time was to try and make sense of the various options commonly available.

We attempted, many of us for the first time, to master techniques such as panning, altering the depth of field and changing the shutter speed. In all, it was a very worthwhile exercise which hopefully will encourage us to experiment freely and move on from the basic 'point and shoot' approach which is all too easy to adopt.

The group decided that to do the Var justice in our next calendar, we needed to get out a bit more – in particular, investigate what the west of the department can offer photographically. Many options were discussed and at our next meeting on **Wednesday 12 January**, we hope to firm up on some of these venues. Over the Christmas period, we will be drawing on the rich variety of local festivals and activities staged at this time of year in the Var, to provide both inspiration and a Provençal flavour as our next theme. The results of this mission will also be reviewed at the next meeting. For more details **please contact:**

Mike Harper 04 94*****
*****@yahoo.co.uk

FANBOX EMAIL WARNING

Please be aware, if you receive an email, likely to be from someone who is on your address list, which invites you to view their photo albums via **FANBOX** and then provides a link to follow, **DON'T**.

The only action you should take is **DELETE** the email immediately. It is a virus attempting to use your computer as a means of spreading its message. By clicking on the link you are unwittingly inviting it to have approved access past your firewall and anti-virus software. Our own Shirley Wrigglesworth unfortunately received such an email and followed the link expecting to see some photos from a known friend.

On gaining access to her computer the virus started sending emails to her address book contacts automatically. Being made aware of invites being issued she has eventually resolved the problem.

Please therefore be on your guard for any unexpected request to link to unknown websites by people you know. Delete immediately and then make enquiries to the person who sent it. Be safe and secure rather than sorry.

Mike Milner

Painting Group

For information about the group **please contact:**

Pauline North 04 94 *****
*****@orange.fr

Post mortem on Christmas Cards & Calendars

Once again, sales of **Christmas cards** have been most successful. Having them professionally printed this year on glossy paper made a big difference to the appearance at the same cost as printing them at home on an 'inkjet'. We had 1700 printed, and sold 1300. It was noticeable that people are buying fewer but the result is nevertheless a most pleasing financial success.

A big 'thank you' to all the artists who so gamely submitted artwork, I do realise it was a great disappointment for those we did not choose. I hope it will not put you off next time.

Our new venture in 2010 the **Calendars**, were very well received. We had 100 of each size printed, the sponsor HiFX paid all the costs, and there are only **6 large ones remaining unsold**: the A4 size sold out very fast.

Thank you to all the photographers whose work was chosen. Both the photographs and the content is very professional, we look forward to seeing what another year's guidance, hints and practice in the Photographic Group will offer. And please . . . all Var next time!

Also, very many thanks are due to Mike Milner for getting the sponsor 'on board' and for the hours he spent negotiating with the printers on layout and content as well as public holidays and spelling!

Auriol Langen

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Stuart Cameron 04 94 *****

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David Beamish 04 94 *****

***** between Le Thoronet and Vidauban.

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~ ~ ~

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