

Support for English-speaking people touched by cancer in France

The Newsletter of Cancer Support France — Association N° W163000037

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Submitted by Sue Smith

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I know that the majority of readers of this newsletter will originate from the United Kingdom and I am sure most of them will know exactly where they were when the news of the death of Queen Elizabeth II broke on September 8th 2022. Royalist or Republican, I don't think anyone can deny that the late Queen was a remarkable woman. Reigning over the United Kingdom for over 70 years; what changes she saw in the country, the Commonwealth and the world. The tributes paid to her are testimony to the respect felt for her across the world.

The late Queen had a particular relationship with France, she was a fluent French-speaker and visited the country many times, meeting 10 Presidents. As President Macron remarked *"She loved France and France loved her back."* Queen Elizabeth has been a constant in my life as she has in many other's and I have felt very moved by the images from the United Kingdom, particularly those from the state funeral.

May she rest in peace...

What a remarkable summer we have had this year. From extreme heat to violent storms, from forest fires to drought. So many activities were postponed or cancelled, people stayed home in darkened rooms instead of going out into the burning air.

Many of us moved to France for better weather but I doubt the majority of us expected the extremes we have seen in 2022. Finally however, the temperatures are dropping; it is becoming dark earlier and earlier and our thoughts are already turning to sweaters and log fires. In CSF Associations across France, activities are beginning again - Drop-ins, coffee mornings, book sales etc. It is time to catch up with friends we haven't seen for two or three months. Life is moving on, seasons are turning.

It was in September 2002 that Cancer Support France was officially formed and we are entering our 21st year. Much has been achieved since our founder Linda Shepherd set up her first support group around her kitchen table. Look at us now, 16 Associations covering much of the country, supporting people in so many ways. There is a lot to be proud of but we are already looking towards the next 20 years and building on our achievements, looking for better ways to help Anglophones in France who are affected by cancer. If you would like to know more about the history of Cancer Support France, Penny Parkinson of CSF Sud has written about the beginnings and you can read it here: -

<https://cancersupportfrance.org/twenty-years-cancer-support-france>

Thank you, Penny, for such an informative article.

On the weekend of 8th - 11th September, I attended this year's *Activity for Life* held in the beautiful Lot Valley. It was aptly subtitled '*A Lot of Cycling*' for there certainly was a lot of cycling involved. The number of cyclists varied each day but a total of 25 took part. On each day, the cyclists set out from Puy l'Eveque on the river Lot in a different direction; each evening they returned tired but pleased with the way the day had gone and exclaiming how wonderful the views were. Some were experienced cyclists, some less so but from talking with them, each one of them had enjoyed the challenge and were proud of their achievements.

In addition to the cycling, a group of around 30 walkers, including some canine friends, left Douelle for a 7.5km walk around the local byways, passing vineyards and again, seeing and enjoying some wonderful views. We met up with the cyclists for a very convivial lunch provided by CSF Lot's '*Dream Team*'. These lovely ladies and gents provided a buffet lunch on both Saturday and Sunday and from the quiet and occasional "*Mmmm!*", we could see how much their efforts were appreciated.

Thanks must go to our Lot Association, especially to Rachel and Mark for trying out different routes and plotting them so accurately; it was no easy task and was managed very well. The final distance cycled was around 170km, even more for those who cycled to the start point beforehand. Rachel and Mark must have put in a great many hundreds more in their planning – *chapeau bas* to them for all their work. Thanks also go to Anna Shackleford, President CSF Lot for the organisation of meals and hotels; to Sasha, who dealt with the administration; to the marshals and support riders and to every single cyclist and walker who took part. Donations received so far for the *Activity for Life* are in excess of **€7,500** and still rising. Thank you to everyone who supported a rider or walker, especially in such a difficult year.

The *Activity for Life* is not, however, all about fundraising, even though it is the single event that CSF National hold each year. *Activity For Life* is about raising awareness and bringing people together from as many Associations as possible over a few days of fun and conviviality. This was certainly achieved at this year's event. Here's to the next time...



The final group evening meal



2022 group photo

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS ROUND-UP

CHARENTE-MARITIME - Submitted by Sue Smith, President

Things have been quiet in Charente-Maritime this summer. The extreme heat meant that all activities were postponed or, in one case, prohibited by the *Préfecture* which was a great disappointment. However, onwards and upwards, we are looking forward to autumn Drop-ins in the south of the department and plans for many more.

The *Bureau* is very sorry to say farewell to our fundraiser, Morag, who has decided to step down for personal reasons. Morag's enthusiasm and her work in organising fundraising activities will be very much missed but we are very pleased that she will be continuing to support us in as many ways as she can.

This means that Charente-Maritime is sending out a call for volunteers again - we need people to help us with: -

- fundraising
- organising activities
- supporting us at coffee mornings and events
- people to train as Active Listeners

We also need ideas for venues for meetings and Drop-in sessions, especially in the centre and north of Charente-Maritime. If you can help with any of the above, please contact us by e-mailing: -

csfcm-enquiries@cancersupportfrance.org

One activity we did manage this year was to support the *Activity for Life*, CSF National's annual fundraising and social activity. Charente-Maritime was represented by four walkers and four cyclists. Over four days the cyclists, Catherine, Sarah, Ray and Terry, covered around 170km, the walkers Jon, Lynsey, Shaun and Sue joined the group walk on Saturday and cheered the cyclists on too. The weekend was most convivial, new friendships were made and important links between Associations were formed.



Our Charente-Maritime Activity for Life group

LANGUEDOC - Submitted by Hilary Galea and Karen Powell

While the summer months were a relatively quiet time for CSF-Languedoc, we have hit the ground running now that Autumn is here.

WEBSITE RE-VAMP AND AWARENESS-RAISING

As well as a total re-vamp of our website, which is now in its final stages and will be ready for launch in the next few months, we have recently embarked on a campaign to drive greater awareness of Languedoc's services and boost membership.

Autumn is also the busiest season in our events calendar. We are preparing for our annual *Walk for Life* at *Domaine La Sarabande* (Cabrerolles) on October 16th and starting to plan our stand at the *Cracker Fair* held at the *Abbaye de Valmagne* on November 26th and 27th. Our Christmas tombola is always a big attraction at the *Cracker Fair* and a great way of introducing us to new people, as well as being an important fund-raiser. Other awareness-raising events are also in the pipeline, the first being a Coffee Morning on October 7th in the village of Margon.

ACTIVE VOLUNTEER INDUCTION TRAINING - ON-LINE DELIVERY

Languedoc has been running Active Volunteer Induction Training since 2013. This one-day programme is for anyone interested in volunteering with us, in any capacity. It aims to: -

- explain about us as an organisation - what we do and how we do it
- explore core issues, including confidentiality and boundaries
- introduce Active Listening techniques
- allow those trained to understand us as part of our team, and act as our ambassadors

Before Covid restrictions were put in place, this training was held in small groups at a hired venue but it has now been successfully developed for on-line delivery. During the worst of the pandemic, this enabled us to maintain training and, going forward, it gives us increased flexibility as well as saving on venue hire...

The materials on our on-line training platform include: -

- pre-recorded videos
- observation sheets
- self-assessment sheets
- reading materials

Supported by: -

- interactive Zoom sessions with a trainer
- individual trainer contact via phone or video call

This allows the delivery of all the elements of our Induction in bite-sized chunks.

TRAINEES AND FEEDBACK

We trained 5 people in April and May of this year and have subsequently run an expedited version to fit in with trainees who have work commitments. Feedback from Trainees has been positive, including from people who were initially anxious about using new technology. Below is some of the positive feedback we have received: -

"I thought that the training was done very sensitively. The balance between this being an important training programme but also being enjoyable and sometimes even fun, was very well done. It gave me the confidence and knowledge I needed to be able to try to help."

"The training was very practical and informative - a good introduction to becoming a volunteer with CSF."

"The training clearly identified, for participants, the range of volunteering opportunities."

LOT - Submitted by Anna Shackleford, President

ACTIVITY FOR LIFE

I am sure that our National President will be giving a full account of the 2022 *Activity for Life*, but here are a few words from our perspective as host Association. From the get-go members of CSF Lot were on board with the idea of organising this year's event – although I am sure that none of us really knew how much time and effort would really be involved!

Our Membership Secretary, Rachel Galloway, did the lion's share of the work, criss-crossing the *département* on her trusty bike and covering hundreds of kilometres to perfect the routes spanning 4 days. She was assisted by her other half, Mark, along with former secretary Cathy Ractliffe and her other half, Gus, and although there were a few worries

LOT - cont...

expressed about the topography here in the Lot, none of the participants were, in the end, daunted by the rides which took them up hill and down dale!

An amazing team of volunteers provided picnic lunches, coffee stop refreshments and, on the final 2 days, mouth-watering buffet lunches; and restaurants in and around Puy l'Evêque catered admirably for our group dinners - one even opened up just for us so that cyclists at the end of each day had somewhere to unwind over cool beers. The *Mairie* came up trumps in cordoning off an area on the banks of the river Lot with an *abri* providing much-needed shade which was especially welcome on the last day when an outdoor *vide-grenier* was vying for space, but left our area sacrosanct.

At the time of writing, our Alvarum page shows we have raised **€7,752** - so a massive thanks to everyone involved - CSF members, cyclists, marshals, support crew, volunteers. What an amazing team effort! *Chapeau à tous!*



Day 2 - Coffee stop courtesy of one of our volunteers and her campervan followed by a very relaxing stop at the house of one of our volunteers



Day 4 - Gathering at Bèlaye and the final farewell luncheon



Dogs welcome. Walkers on a bridge.

PLANS FOR THE AUTUMN

Yes, we do still have energy and enthusiasm to fill our Autumn calendar with events. We resume our Drop-ins on September 28th with a 'Gardeners Question Time' session featuring a panel of 3 local gardening experts; our art group will resume in October and we will round off at the end of November with a Christmas wreath-making session and tabletop Christmas sale, all accompanied by homemade mince pies and shortbread.

We have 2 informative discussion groups planned – on 20th October we will be talking about living arrangements in later life and also distributing the 'Just in Case' checklist produced by CSF, whilst 9th November will see our postponed women's cancer session take place.

And finally we are getting up a team to participate in the 9th October *La Cadurcienne* – an annual 6 kilometre walk/run around Cahors, the capital of the Lot Valley, as part of the *octobre rose* initiative.

THANK YOU

At our last Drop-in before the summer break, staunch supporter Carolyn Lindsay (and mum) turned up to show us how to make beautiful summer wreaths and also brought along unique handmade greetings cards which had been on sale and proved so popular at our Spring Market. These cards are prints of works created by Helen Ahpornisiri from pressed plants.

We were later joined by Jan Goody, who along with Carolyn had organised a Platinum Jubilee tea party in Saint-Cybranet and the ladies presented CSF Lot with a cheque for **€300.00** from funds raised.

Carolyn has agreed to do the Christmas wreath-making session at our November Drop-in as mentioned above as sadly, the one planned for 2021 had to be cancelled due to Covid restrictions.



Carolyn with one of her summer wreaths and Anna receiving the €300 cheque from Carolyn and Jan

CONGRATULATIONS!

At our September Council meeting, we welcomed our newest qualified Active Listener, Diana Harrington, who completed her Initial Training Course in June and has already proved to be a valued Council member. Diana here after being presented with her certificate and Active Listener handbook by the Lot President, Anna Shackleton and Vice-President, Phillipe Mica.



On September 28th we will be recommencing our drop-in centre at the *Salle* in Notre-Dame-du-Touchet.

We will be serving brunch from 10h00 last orders taken at 12h30. If you don't fancy brunch, then do just come along for a cup of tea, coffee and a chat. Looking forward to seeing you.

SUD DE FRANCE - submitted by Penny Parkinson, Secretary

Despite the exhausting heat which persisted here in the south throughout May into September, we have been surprisingly active!

Our team in the Aude due to continuing Covid restrictions, were obliged to hold their annual Spring Fair in June this year! The heat had ramped up and people were already staying inside during the main part of the day. The stall-holders were incredibly supportive considering the low footfall. However, valuable contacts were made with the *Mairie* and we have been invited to attend the *Argens-Minervois Forum des Associations* - an added opportunity to explain who we are, and what we do.

At the end of July over in the Ariège, our team were able to take part in a wonderful and successful Open Garden. This was held at the home of Janet Henderson in the pretty medieval town of Mirepoix. Despite the scorching heat, the event raised a stunning amount - over **€760**.

August was a deserved month of rest, and we geared up again for September with CSF 20th anniversary celebrations at our *Activity for Life* in the Pyrénées-Orientales. This annual Activity was well attended with 43 people (a mix of English and French) taking part in one of the activities. Rosie and Maurice ('2 Partout') entertained us with their personal mix of jazz, sax and piano over our picnic lunch and French people popped along to buy the homemade cakes. We were interviewed by a journalist from *L'Indépendant* and a very informative article with photo appeared in the paper a few days later.



This was followed by a Birthday Supper celebrating 20 years of CSF at *Lac de Jouarres* in the Aude where a delicious Lebanese meal was enjoyed by around 50 people. The sun setting across the lake is stunning to see and the candlelit tables make for a romantic backdrop.



SUD de FRANCE - cont...

Sadly, the *Ceilidh* due to be held in the Tarn, has been postponed until the Spring when it will be even more lively and exciting. We are now looking to storm out of 2022 with a *Bien-être* day in the Pyrénées-Orientales and a Christmas Quiz in the Aude.

And having mentioned the 'Christmas' word, we do have CSF cards for sale again. There are five new designs this year and they can be found here: -

<https://cancersupportfrance.org/csf-national-shop>

Please consider sending these to publicise CSF. They are very reasonably priced.

Finally, many thanks as always, must go to all our volunteers - Active Listeners and members. They have not only been out there managing all these events, but also continuing our monthly Drop-ins, coffee mornings and book exchanges across all five departments throughout this '*canicule*' summer.

VIENNE and DEUX-SÈVRES - Submitted by Jacquie Kelly, President

We have grown over the last year following a merger with Deux-Sèvres. We are still finalising the details and paperwork with the *Préfectures* but hope this will all become official in the near future.

On Sunday 25th September, we held a very enjoyable 20th Birthday Party Picnic at the Fort in L'Isle Jourdain. We had music, bubbly and cupcakes. There was also a Memory Tree for people to write a message for anyone they knew who has cancer or a memory of a person that had died. There were some very poignant and heart felt messages on the tree. Thank you to Helen for an amazing venue. A great time was had by all.



Dining at the Fort: Our Memory Tree



Delicious cupcakes

We are holding our 2022 AGM on 19th October at 2.30pm at *Cafe Laitgendaire* in Availles-Limouzine.

This will be the last year that I will stand as President as I think that, after 6 years, it is important to have a new person at the helm to bring new ideas and energy.

I have enjoyed my time and am grateful to CSF National, our *Bureau* and all our members for their support and encouragement. I will continue as an Active Listener and support CSF in anyway I can.

'Stool tests might help spot early pancreatic cancer' published by the BBC, 09.03.22

STOOL TESTS MIGHT PROVIDE A USEFUL WAY TO HELP DOCTORS SPOT EARLY PANCREATIC CANCER, SAY RESEARCHERS.

They have been trialling the concept in a study with 136 volunteers. The findings, described in the journal, **Gut**, suggest detectable changes involving gut bugs could provide a warning sign that a tumour is present. (Since 1960, **Gut** is a monthly peer reviewed medical journal on gastroenterology and hepatology. It is the journal of the British Society of Gastroenterology and is published by British Medical Journal - BMJ).

Pancreatic cancer often doesn't cause symptoms in the early stages. That means it is usually more advanced and harder to treat when it is found.

As the cancer grows it may cause vague symptoms, such as indigestion, changes to bowel habit and some tummy or back pain. Some people see their GP several times before being diagnosed.

KNOW THE SIGNS OF PANCREATIC CANCER

Currently, fewer than one in 20 of those with the most common form - ductal adenocarcinoma - will survive for five years or more. Earlier detection could improve those odds.

The Spanish team behind the work recruited patients from two hospitals - one in Madrid and the other in Barcelona. Only some of the patients had pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, while the others were selected as controls for comparison.

The researchers collected and analysed spit and stool samples from the volunteers to see if there was any discernible difference between the groups.

While the saliva samples drew a blank, the stool samples did show a difference that the team believe could be useful for helping to diagnose pancreatic cancer.

It was a distinct pattern or genomic profile of gut bacteria, fungi and other microbes. This consistently identified patients with the disease, irrespective of how far it had progressed, suggesting that characteristic micro-biome signatures emerge early on and that the stool micro-biome might pick up early stage disease, say the researchers.

They recommend more studies - and some are already taking place.

Independent researchers in Germany have validated the findings in a small number of patients, and the test is also being trialled in Japan.

Further information about pancreatic cancer can be found at: -

[www.https://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk](https://www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk)

Best wishes to all our readers from the Editor





We remember our
Founding President,
Linda Shepherd
1953-2017

Cancer Support France are proud to be in partnership, affiliated to or supported by the following associations and groups: -

In partnership with:

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THE BRITISH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Also [Here](#) to Help...



www.prostatecanceruk.org



www.be.macmillan.org.uk

Bloodwise

Beating blood cancer since 1960

www.bloodwise.org.uk



www.breastcancersupport.org.uk

**THE
BRAIN
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CHARITY**

www.thebraintumourcharity.org



www.cancerresearchuk.org

**Pancreatic
Cancer
UK**

www.pancreaticcancer.org.uk



www.targetovariancancer.org.uk



www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk

If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact your regional CSF branch. All telephone numbers and email addresses can be found on the back page of TOUCHLINES.

Ed.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Association Siège Social

Espace Clément-Marot
Cancer Support France, Box 25
Place Bessières, 46000 Cahors

National HELPLINE

Telephone: 0800 240 200 (FREE from a landline)

(Your call is taken on an answerphone and is free from a landline - there is a short message in English - we will reply to you as soon as possible and normally within 24 hours)

Useful Contacts

President: Sue Smith
president@cancersupportfrance.org

Treasurer: Jean Winter
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Email: helpline@cancersupportfrance.org

Website: www.cancersupportfrance.org

forum.cancersupportfrance.org

CSF FORUM - Visit the CSF website and take a look at the FORUM, packed full of information and interesting conversations - maybe even meet new friends...

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

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Touchlines

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Items for inclusion should be sent to the Editor: Margaret York - email:

touchlines@cancersupportfrance.org

Please send photographs as separate JPG files - NOT embedded in your editorial. Thank you.