

Autumn 2015

# P-O Life

*Life in the Pyrénées-Orientales*

N° 49  
FREE / GRATUIT



Simon Brown - Paladia



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# EDITO:-)

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*Hola amics meus!*

Stylish September announces another golden autumn in the P-O, my favourite season of the year. Love the vivid reds and oranges that replace the faded summer greens. Love the light, which continues to chase away the blues as summer wanes. Love the warm days and cool nights!

In this edition, we look at the history of that fine French institution, the 'association' and find out more about the French Poppy equivalent, the 'Bleuet de France'.

Picnic with Katja at the St Ferr ol hermitage, walk with Leigh and Merry above Villelongue-dels-Monts, sip hot pumpkin soup on a cool autumn eve with Lisa..... Hilda tells a tale of courage during WW1 and John searches for good news on the local flight situation!

Look out for our new, trendy, mobile friendly website going live this autumn. Progress eh!

And as those spooky darker nights approach.....

*What did the French vampire say to the pretty girl?  
"Merci beau cou."*

Yes, and there are even worse jokes than that on our French and English language pages!

Ooooo, you have to love that English humour!

Time for me to go??

Hope your autumn is golden

*Kate*

## Contact us

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### CERET AREA:

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Ref: 4116 - mandat 2011  
DPE: E - Price 86,000€



### SAINT JEAN PLA DE CORTS:

typical Catalan village, close to Céret, Spain, the Sea and Perpignan. Building plot of 668m². South-West facing, not overlooked, includes a barn to renovate. Excellent potential. Rare opportunity not to be missed.

Reference: 4151 - Mandat 2026  
Price: 140,000€



REYNES: Pleasant stone village house, very typical with south-facing terrace. Mountain views & calm surroundings. Kitchen/living room of 24.4m², terrace of 24m². Upstairs 1 bedroom, attic room with velux and bathroom. Also cellar with utility room & pantry.

Reference: 3862 - mandat 2004  
price: 99,000 €



CERET: close to centre, new villa of 102 m² of habitable surface. Terrace, garden, 3 bedrooms, 1 with en-suite, separate bathroom & toilet & garage. Traditional construction with air con and electric shutters. Calm area close to all amenities. Excellent opportunity.

Reference: 3893 - mandat 1856  
Price: 269,000 €



### SAINT JEAN PLA DE CORTS:

Tastefully renovated, stone building on 563 m² of land. Beautiful lounge with fireplace, kitchen, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, shower room. Terrace. Garage. Fabulous unobstructed views. Love at first sight!

Référence 4238 - mandat n°2062  
PRIX : 448 000 € - DPE : D



## Your photos

Some great autumn photos from around the P-O. We love seeing them so please do keep 'em coming!



Paul Cartmell



Simon Brown



Malcolm Cooper



Danièle Farmbrough



Peter Spencer

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# WALK The REGION

with Leigh and Merry Foster

## Prieurie Santa Maria del Vilar

This walk is a circuit in the Alberes hills above the small village of Villelongue-dels-Monts. It is a bit steep in places and over varied terrain, so stout shoes and a walking stick are recommended. Part of this route was one of the "PATHS OF FREEDOM" used by many escaping Jews, allied pilots and French Resistance to enter Spain, and in the opposite direction for escaping Spanish Republicans during the 'Retirada'. It is about 6 km (with about 500 metres of ascent) and takes 2 hours or more depending on how often you stop to take in the spectacular views.

**ACCESS** The start point is reached from Villelongue. Follow the signs up the 'Cami del Vilar' towards the Prieurie Santa Maria del Vilar about 1.3 km until you come to a parking spot in the woods on your right, with a large green water tank. The Prieurie is about 1km further up the track, but our path starts at 491990E 4706920N elev 208m, and follows the signs for the walking path DFCI AL7.

Map IGN 1:25000 Banyuls/Col de Perthus/Cote Vermeille (GPS) 25490T.



Prieurie Santa Maria del Vilar



### Yellow marks throughout.

Follow the dirt track down to the right from the car park, past a small stream after which it doubles back and starts to climb. After about 300 meters you come to a hairpin bend where you can see across the plain of Roussillon from Cangiu to the sea. From here the footpath leaves the track behind, climbing the west side of the ridge while the track heads south and east. The path climbs quite steeply through the brush and trees until you come to a fork at 491600E 4706500N. Take the left fork which continues upwards for another 300 meters until you emerge from the woods onto the same dirt track at an elevation of 370m. From here the view is even more spectacular with clear views over the villages of the Alberes and Le Boulou all the way up to Canigou and back towards the shining coastline.

Now follow the track to the right, as it climbs south along the ridge for another 450m where, just before a right hand bend, you leave it and turn left on the footpath at 491550E 4706100N – elev 424m.

After only 20 meters, turn right and continue climbing the hill through the forest. If you can spare a few minutes, go straight on for another 50 meters or so you come to a clearing to find the Ruines de cortal Cossanes, with its amazingly precise ancient pink stone walls and arches overgrown by vegetation.

After climbing for another 600m as the forest slowly changes from cork oaks to beech and conifers, surrounded by the constant chorus of thousands of crickets,

you reach a plateau on the ridge and start to descend slightly, crossing the course of the stream of Sant Cristau. This is a welcome break before the final climb to the head of the valley of Villelongue, which is the southernmost point on the trail, at about 580 meters elevation

– continue northeast up the hillside over a ridge marked on the map as 'El Reposador' or



"the restful one" in Spanish, at 492260E 4705380N. Certainly you will need a rest after reaching the 610 meters elevation and a long, hot climb. There is a small ferny, grassy clearing there where you can take a well-earned break, relax and take in the amazing views back down the valley, over the villages and the plain below, with the Puig de Sant Cristau at your back.





# WALK <sup>The</sup> REGION



After getting your breath back and maybe a picnic, it's time to start your descent, heading north, passing many ruined walls and pavings on the way which hint that this was an ancient pilgrim's (and smuggler's) path. About 250m beyond the rest stop, there is a path to the right down into the next valley which you should not take, but stay on the ridge as it descends, quite steeply in places, back towards the bottom of the valley about 1km away. There is a short rocky section to clamber down, and near the bottom continue straight, passing by a couple of paths leading off to the left, and turn right at the bottom towards the Prieurie.

If you have time and it's open, do call in at the Prieurie which is a charming building, having been rescued and restored as a convent after being abandoned and used as a home for pigs in the

18th century!. It has a fascinating history which the charming Romanian nuns will be happy to tell you about, and to show you around their ancient treasures.

Continue 1km down the road from the Priory back to the parking place, and congratulate yourself on discovering another hidden part of this beautiful region!.

outskirts of Puig del Mas. Take care to take the left fork along Rue de la Colline aux Oliviers and wind back down into the hamlet by the T junction, turning right along Chemin de Mas Guillaume, then right again on to Avenue Pierre de Marca, back to the railway bridge.

*If you aren't up to a steep climb or don't have time for a long walk, you can easily just go as far as the first hairpin bend and enjoy the view, then stroll up to the Prieurie from the car park for a very interesting tour.*

## RESTAURANT

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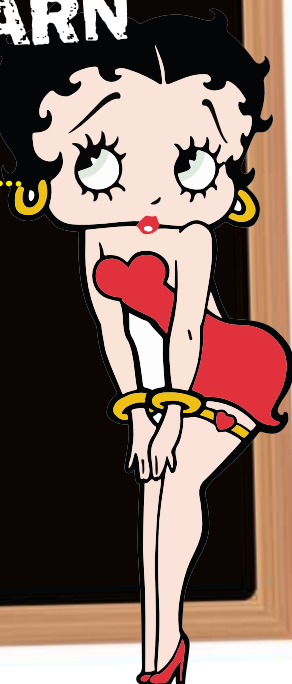
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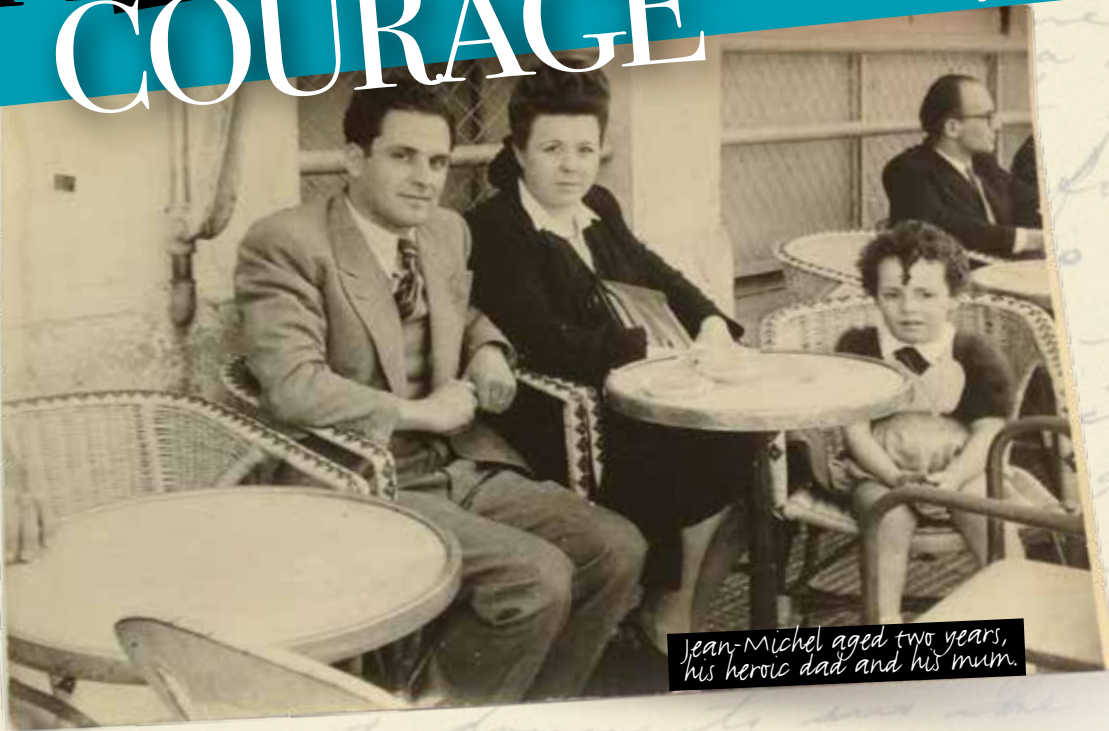
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# A story of COURAGE

by Hilda Cochrane



Jean-Michel aged two years, his heroic dad and his mum.

During the occupation of France in World War II, there were many tales of courage and tragedy. Here is a friend's story.

In 1943, when the Gestapo came to Prades, Jean-Michel's father was fighting with the Resistance and frequently absent. The worry was too much for his wife and six months into her pregnancy, she miscarried. At just 1 kilo 30, Jean-Michel was not expected to live. His mother was very poorly, and he was placed in a shoe-box, lined with gauze, and set at the side of the stove whilst the midwives turned their attention to saving the mother. It was therefore quite a surprise when a noise was heard – the baby was alive! And this despite the poor medical care and facilities of the war years

These were hard days. Food was short, fear a constant. And there were enemies within! Jean-Michel was two months old when his absent father

was betrayed by an unexpected source, a family member. One night the Gestapo came storming through the house, searching and terrifying the family. The shock was too much and Jean-Michel's mother could no longer breast-feed, a calamity when food was a problem and there was not even powdered milk. The nurses came to the rescue. They knew of a woman in the town who had recently given birth to a baby boy called Christian. Would she help in this desperate situation? She was approached and she agreed to save Jean-Michel by nurturing him as well, thus making him a milk-brother to her son.

Unaware of this family upset and having been warned in advance of his denunciation, Jean-Michel's father had fled. His escape route was through the Pyrenees, his destination Barcelona. He was part of a small band but it was not safe. To find their way it was necessary to trust the few shepherds, farms and villages they came across. They needed food and above all, advice on the

German patrols searching for escapees. There were no guarantees the group would not be betrayed. Capture meant torture and death.

During this perilous journey, Jean-Michel's father had no idea what had befallen his family, and the family had no notion of his whereabouts and bravery. As a Resistance fighter, he planned to join the French army in North Africa – but his courage had not gone unnoticed. He was needed. At Barcelona he was approached and recruited by the French Consulate. In Toulouse, a Resistance Organization known as Réseau Morange and part of the French Secret Service were smuggling people at risk out of France – among those being rescued were allied British, French and American fighters, famous French families, high-ranking officers. The dangers were immense. By the end of the war and within this organization, ninety percent of them had been killed.

For Jean-Michel's father, the first two traverses were the worst. He was caught on the second crossing, not by the Germans but the Spanish Police and for two days he was imprisoned at Figueres. Luckily, he had contacts in the French Consulate and they managed to free him and bring him to Barcelona, and the rescue missions began again. Many times he crossed and many men were brought to safety. He was awarded the Croix de Guerre, the American Star and the D.S.O. signed by Winston Churchill.

The war ended but Jean Michel's father was still needed. He was approached by a Governmental department to help hunt down escaping Nazis. This he did.

To his joy, his wife and two year old son joined him in Barcelona. Jean-Michel was too young to remember the emotions which must have accompanied this longed-for moment, that wonderful meeting after all the dangers, but he was told of it later, of the sudden lifting of long endured hardships, the wonder of a nice home, of enough to eat. It was an unbelievable turn-about!

There was a downside. Jean-Michel's father was not happy. The task was a distasteful one. He was expected to hunt down escaping Nazis who,

when caught, were killed and buried. He now felt he belonged to an organization who had become killers. Although afraid, he decided to leave and secretly departed, with his family, for Prades and the home of Jean-Michel's grandfather.

One day, he saw an advertisement in Le Monde for construction workers in the Colonies. He showed it to Jean-Michel's mother: "Let's go", she said! Within two weeks he had an initial two-month contract for work in Togo. They stayed for twenty years and long enough to cancel any ties with the Secret Service! Here they had a sense of freedom and togetherness, happy until schooling became an issue. Primary education in the Colonies was fine but this was not the case for further schooling. Jean-Michel left for boarding school and then on to Perpignan University. Eventually and no doubt with joy, his parents returned to Prades. At last they were home.

*In Jean-Michel's heart, lies a deep pride and a treasured memory of his wonderful father.*



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### DID YOU KNOW

#### Can you dig it?

According to legend, in 1939, seven lorries carrying Republican gold bars left the Spanish village of La Vajol, in the Albères, heading for the nearest port. Only six arrived.

Eyewitnesses stated that they had seen it around Las Illas near Maureillas, others at Argelès where they suggested that the drivers had buried it in the sand, awaiting better times. Taking a bucket and spade to the beach will never be the same again!



### DID YOU KNOW



#### Love it or hate it!

To feed the expat Marmite habit, the delicious/disgusting (cross out as appropriate) spread is now being brought out in a 70g Marmite jar to ooze easily through airport security! The name Marmite actually comes from the French word for cooking-pot (pronounced mar-meet) because it originally came in a small earthenware pot. You can still see the original 'Marmite' pot pictured on the front.



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P-O Life



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The French were way ahead with the selfie stick

## DID YOU KNOW

I forgot to tell you.....



The sad death this year of the great actor Omar Sharif, closely following the revelation he was suffering from Alzheimer's disease, makes his 2009 film "J'ai oublié de te dire" (I Forgot To Tell You) even more poignant. Filmed entirely in the Pyrenees Orientales, it stars Sharif alongside the lovely Emilie Dequenne. The story follows Jaume (Omar Sharif) as an aging artist descending into dementia, from flowers in the fridge to vinegar in the cake mix. Amidst the stunning scenery of the P-O, his apprentice, Marie, (Emilie Dequenne), is searching for new beginnings after a turbulent adolescence, and the chance to pursue her interest in painting. A strange kind of friendship develops between the two as Marie takes on the task of unravelling, repairing and protecting the gruff artist as his mental health deteriorates. Tender, heartbreaking..... described as 'a Sharif who has never been better, despite his rapidly approaching 80 years!'



## DID YOU KNOW

### Renaissance

Watch out for a documentary, due out in October 2015, dedicated entirely to the Canigou!



Entitled «Renaissance», this one hour long documentary produced by perpignanais Olivier Moulaiwill, follows two archaeologists who cross the Pyrénées to try and uncover the secrets of the mining of iron on Canigou since Roman times, including interviews with the last miners to work the mountain. Described as an 'aventure scientifique et humaine, au coeur d'une montagne mystérieuse', google Renaissance Canigou to take a pre-peak.



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# FOOD & DRINK

## Restaurant reviews

The following reviews are not adverts, they are just restaurants that I have enjoyed, or that friends have recommended. They are based on that person's opinion, on that day, usually taking into account the whole package. You might not always necessarily agree!

*Bon appétit!*

with Kate & Mates



### L'AMPHYTRION Collioure

with Danièle

1

In March 2005 we celebrated a birthday with a meal at l'Amphytrion and I still have the bill from that occasion – 2 menus at 15€ each. There is still an excellent menu at this same price, and l'Amphytrion has remained one of our favourite haunts, with its great situation by the beach and the beautiful view. The 15€ menu is great value, offering a choice of 3 starters, 3 mains (sardines, salmon or parmentier de joues de porc), followed by crème catalane or ice cream. The main dishes come with potatoes (meat) or rice (fish) plus an interesting mix of various vegetables.

There is also a very good 23€ menu (and more expensive ones), and à la carte – on our last visit we splashed out a little and my husband had the most delicious and tender piece de boeuf (22€), and I enjoyed a creamy bourride of lotte and gambas (20€). Food always appears piping hot (and is served on very hot plates!). They have wine in carafes as well as bottles, and the service is attentive but not intrusive.

As dusk falls, diners have an uninterrupted view of the lights of Collioure twinkling across the bay. If you want to eat on the terrace, booking is probably necessary as it is very popular. In summer the restaurant is open 7 days a week, lunch and dinner, but unfortunately they close from the end of October until April, so if you do fancy trying it, go soon or you will have a bit of a wait!

L'AMPHYTRION,  
rue Jean Bart,  
Collioure  
Tel: 04 68 82 36 00



## DID YOU KNOW



### Castanyada /// 31st October

Tots Sants or All Saints Day and the evening before are known as the 'Castanyada' after the traditional castanyes (roast chestnuts) eaten along with moniatos (roast sweet potatoes) and panellets (small almond balls covered in pine nuts). Also known as the Dia dels Difunts (Day of the Dead), Catalans eat white, bone-shaped ossos de sant cakes, and visit the cemeteries to sprinkle the graves of family and friends with holy water, leave flowers and hold vigils. If you see beautiful pots of chrysanthus for sale everywhere, **don't buy them for the mother-in-law like I did many years ago!** They are for the dead!



## Two tasters

Gouter : to taste

Déguster : to taste with the intention of identifying judging a product or its characteristics



## LA VOUTE ETOILEE ET LES UNS VENDABLES, Sorede

with Rose

Open 8h – 20h every day in season.

Here's something a little bit different in the Place de la Republique, Sorede. Just 13 euros for lunch at this quirky restaurant, with a menu that changes each day. Today, starters were a very light Tarte de Courgettes on a tomato and basil sauce or a crêpe with goats' cheese, followed by a main course of sardines, a tuna steak or souris d'agneau. Dessert was Tarte d'abricots or ice cream, strawberries and chantilly cream. Quirky because inside is also a brocante as well as various teas to buy and musical evenings once a week, and there is an odd collection of tables, one pink, one made from palettes.... They serve an artisan beer and a cafetière for coffee from which you can pour two good cups, as well as tea in assorted Limoges pottery cups, saucers and pots. They also have a collection of armchairs outside, such as you might have found in your granny's house. There were lovely glasses inside at 5 euros each and many knick knacks. Lovely, welcoming ladies.



LA VOÛTE ÉTOILÉE ET LES UNS VENDABLES  
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04 68 39 42 68



2



# FOOD & DRINK

3

## LA TAGLIATELLA La Jonquera

with Kate



**L**a Tagliatella, in the Gran Jonquera Shopping Centre on the Figueres side may not have sea or mountain views.... but it's a great place to lunch or dine after a bit of retail therapy.

Neither rain nor

shine alter the atmosphere or temperature in this clean and spacious Italian-inspired restaurant. Despite getting busy in high season, the service is always impeccable.

Pizza and pasta fans in particular are spoilt for choice although there are steak alternatives. A wide range of enormous and delicious thin base Pizzas are prepared before your eyes and my Dad was delighted with his smoked salmon pizza. For 'pativores' (my made up word for pasta eaters), **there are more than 400 combinations of pasta and sauces and some great salad choices.** I dithered between the pasta Calabrese with dried

tomato, grana padano, toasted pine nuts, balsamic onions, garlic and basil and the 'Tagliatella' salad with boiled ham, king prawns, prawns, crab sticks, sweet corn, olives, cherry tomato, carrot, egg and artichokes. You can see the predicament can't you? I have since had both. Both delicious. Portions are large and unlike many restaurants in France, they are happy to provide doggy bags.

**As for the desserts....wow! For a chocoholic like myself, the 'Croccantino', made up of crunchy biscuits with nuts, Rocher mousse, chocolate and ice cream was memorable, though several other worthy contenders brought out the ditherer in me once again.**

**Prices are reasonable, a typical main course costing from 12 to 15 euros. One of my favourite rainy day restaurants. Open everyday from 11am to midnight.**

**LA TAGLIATELLA.**  
Centre Comercial Gran Jonquera,  
17700, La Jonquera  
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## DINING WITH DALI

Have you tried any of the off-the-wall recipes in Dali's cookbook yet? Well, many would say that you probably haven't missed much but Dali fans will be fascinated by this expectedly eccentric recipe list. The introduction to 'Les Diners de Gala', published in 1973, states that the book is "... uniquely devoted to the pleasures of Taste. Don't look for dietetic formulas here" and carries on to warn the reader....."If you are a disciple of one of those calorie-counters who turn the joys of eating into a form of punishment, close this book at once; it is too lively, too aggressive, and far too impertinent for you."

Recipes are exotic, erotic and experimental. Below is one of the few that could actually translate to the average kitchen.

### Casanova Cocktail

The juice of 1 orange  
1 tablespoon bitters (Campari)  
1 teaspoon ginger  
4 tablespoons brandy  
2 tablespoons old brandy (Vieille Cure)  
1 pinch Cayenne pepper

This is quite appropriate when circumstances such as exhaustion, overwork or simply excess of sobriety are calling for a pick-me-up.

Let us stress another advantage of this particular pep-up concoction is that one doesn't have to make the sour face that usually accompanies the absorption of a remedy.

At the bottom of a glass, combine pepper and ginger. Pour the bitters on top, then brandy and "Vieille Cure." Refrigerate or even put in the freezer.

Thirty minutes later, remove from the freezer and stir the juice of the orange into the chilled glass.

Drink... and wait for the effect...



...It is rather speedy.



# OUT for THE DAY

With Katja Willemssen

## Pretty Perfect P-O Picnics



at Ermitage de St Ferréol

*After summer's blistering heat and suffocating crowds, it's time to come up for air at the St Ferréol hermitage where the view changes around every corner of its tree-filled grounds. Walk one way and you'll see the Pyrenees melt into a Matisse-blue sea, go through the old stone gateway and Mount Canigou and entourage wearing their capes of early snow dominate the mountainscape. Stroll a little further and you'll be looking into the disappearing depth of the Tech valley. This haven of peace is just ten minutes from Céret and the perfect picnic spot for a crisp autumn day. (See inset for directions.)*



### Who was saint Ferréol?

Back in the 4th century, Ferréol, a Roman officer, was thrown into prison after trying to protect a fellow Christian. The intrepid military man escaped but was quickly recaptured and brutally beheaded. The Catholic Church declared him a saint and some of his relics are now inside two busts of the saint that have been in the St Ferréol chapel since the 18th century.

### What does saint Ferréol mean to Céret?

In the 1650's, the plague was decimating the people of Céret. Legend has it that because prayers to St Pierre, the town's patron saint, went unheard, desperate locals turned to Saint Ferréol. The epidemic stopped, a miracle was declared, and St. Ferréol has been Céret's unofficial second patron saint ever since.

Four centuries later, pilgrims still walk up to the hermitage on 18 September every year, the day of St Ferréol's execution, for a day of thanksgiving and festivities in true Catalan style: prayer, dance, barbecue and wine.

### A history of gratitude

The humble chapel is unassuming but worth a visit. In one of the alcoves, you'll find wooden crutches huddled together as if in prayer. Some are over a hundred years old, with threadbare padding and worn-through handles. Called ex-votos, they are gifts left as a tokens of gratitude for prayers answered. Stand still for a moment and imagine mothers with heads bowed over sickly babies, fisherwomen fretting for men in stormy seas and soldiers begging to outlive their injuries. The custom back then was to leave a gift or a thank you. The wealthy etched their gratitude on costly marble but the poor scratched their merci directly onto the altar.

The grounds of the hermitage are picnic heaven. Throw down a blanket on one of the many terraces or straddle the old ramparts, there is room for everyone. Lots of open ground for children to run wild and for dogs to chase balls, but also many quiet corners if you're à deux. Wherever you choose to picnic, when you open your bottle of Rivesaltes Ambré, your views will be breathtaking.

A wolf cult, kidnapped child, and the Tour de Massane create high tension in Shepherd's Prayer, a fast-paced thriller set in Collioure.  
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### FESTA MAJOR AT THE ERMITAGE DE ST FERRÉOL ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2015

> Prayers to St Ferréol coincided with the end of an epidemic that was decimating the local population so the saint has held a special place in the hearts of Cérétans for 400 years.

Every year on 18 September, lanterns and candles swing from the hands of pilgrims at dawn as they follow the path of their ancestors up to the hermitage to commemorate Saint Ferréol. The day starts at 5 am at the Pont du Diable, followed by dawn mass at 6 am up at the St. Ferréol chapel, and rolls out with late morning dancing, lunch under the trees (phone Céret tourist office to book on 04 68 87 00 53), and the day ends with Sardanes festivities in the afternoon.

### ARE RELICS REALLY THE BONES OF SAINTS?

> Relics are the bones, ashes, clothing or personal possessions of a holy person held in reverence by the church and usually linked to miraculous healing or other divine acts.

From what is known about this early custom, the saint's skeleton would be divided between churches. This meant that a skull would end up in one place, a foot in another, an arm elsewhere, resulting in many churches legitimately being able claim that they have relics of the same saint – a powerful draw card to the small graffiti-covered building.

### DIRECTIONS TO ERMITAGE DE ST FERRÉOL

> From Céret centre, cross the Tech River on Avenue des Aspres and turn left into the D615 to Oms and Llauro.

After about ten minutes on this winding road, follow signs to Hermitage St Ferréol, perched on the hill on your right.

> The chapel is **only open on Saturdays (3pm to 4.30pm) and Sundays (2.30pm to 5.30pm)** but even if it's closed, the grounds and views are well worth the visit!



# OUT for THE DAY

With Ted and Kate Huscock

## On yer bike! Argelès >> Le Boulou



Maybe you're in training for the Tour de France, or the crossing of the Pyrenees via the GR10.....or maybe your GP has advised you to lose a few of those extra kilos! On this 'piste cyclable', there is something for everyone. Go as far as you wish along this flat, linear track, a great resource for those who want to leave their 4 wheels in favour of 2 of everything and take some exercise! I take my bike and Kate runs! I think I have the better deal!

Coming from Argelès to Le Boulou on the 'voie rapide', turn right at the Saint André roundabout and park. From there, simply follow green cycle signs to Le Boulou, marked out every kilometre to encourage the weak minded.

The views to the Albères and to Canigou (forever in the distance as a fantasy target to achieve), are always a reminder of how lucky we are to be alive. Sail past vineyards, cherry, peach and nectarine orchards, family allotments, stables and the gloriously majestic Chateau Villeclaire, the family seat of famous French equestrian, Jonqueres d'Oriola. Oh! And look out for the private airstrip laid out on a paddock not much bigger than a football pitch! Could it be competition for Ryanair?

There are a few stretches where local traffic is permitted, but mostly your only companions will be other walkers and cyclists. Wild meadows, Mimosa in Spring, Broom in early summer and teams of multi-coloured Laurier provide a fitting backdrop for butterflies and birds of all varieties, including the clowning Hoopoes and the visually elusive nightingales.

Back at the car, look out for the sign to Mas Cristine, a further five minute walk, to end a perfect afternoon with a 'dégustation' of their excellent wine. Santé!

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# Pumpkin Soup

With  
Lisa Temperley

At this time of year, pumpkins are in all the shops. Rich in vital antioxidants, and vitamins, low in calories (100g provides just 26 calories), it is one of the food items recommended by dieticians for cholesterol control and weight loss programmes.

## INGREDIENTS

- > 700 g Pumpkin or butternut squash (peeled, deseeded and chopped into 2.5 cm dice) rubbed with olive oil and roasted in the oven until soft.
- > 25g butter
- > 1 medium onion (thinly sliced)
- > 275ml whole milk
- > 725ml made with marigold Swiss vegetable bouillon powder
- > ½ Chilli
- > Salt and pepper
- > Handful Parmesan and Emmental cheese to serve

Melt butter and cook onion for about 8 mins  
Add chopped pumpkin, and chilli, stir, season and cook  
Cover and sweat gently on low heat for 10 mins  
Pour in milk, and stock, simmer gently for 20 mins (keep lid slightly off so milk doesn't boil over)  
Pour into food processor or use a hand blender and puree  
Once smooth, serve sprinkled with a little cheese.



## TRICK OR TREAT?



'Des bonbons ou une farce' is one way to beg for sweets on Hallo'ewe, 'friandises ou bêtises' is another.....but as there is no literal translation, just about anything goes.

## OTHER HALLOWEEN VOCAB

Se déguiser (en) – to dress-up (as)  
Sculpter (une citrouille) – to carve (a pumpkin)  
un crapaud – toad  
un chaudron – cauldron  
Un fantôme – ghost  
Un vampire – vampire  
Une sorcière – witch  
un balai – broom  
Un squelette – skeleton  
Un épouvantail – scarecrow  
Un diable – devil



Un monstre – monster  
Une chauve-souris – bat  
Une araignée – spider  
Une toile d'araignée – spider's web  
Un potiron, une citrouille – pumpkin  
Une bougie – candle  
un cercueil – coffin  
un drap blanc – white sheet  
un loup-garou – werewolf  
une momie – mummy (the bandaged type)  
J'ai la chair de poule – I've got goosebumps



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# OUT for THE DAY

## Col de la Bataille

### Lest We Forget

« Un peuple qui oublie sa mémoire est condamné à la revivre »

Victor HUGO

**M**illas, our starting point on the N116 between Perpignan and Ille sur Tet, has a rather lovely church, full of great Baroque art, plenty of shops and cafés - but today we are heading up to the Col de la Bataille. Ancient battle ground, it is also a poignant memorial to members of the resistance group Henri Barbusse, whose leader Julien Panchot, along with other members of the group, was interrogated, tortured and shot by the Germans whilst defending the villagers of Valmanya.

Archive records state "il lui ont brisé les tibias avec une barre a mine attachée sur une table pour le faire parler".

After the treaty of Bayonne, which set the borders between France and Spain, the King of Aragon, Jean II, handed over the Roussillon and the Cerdagne to Louis XI of France. Years later, Louis's successor, Charles VIII, decided that the rebellious Roussillonnais were a nuisance - he no longer wanted them, and handed them back to Spain! In 1496 this fickle king changed his mind again, marched back into the Roussillon and waged war to win back the region, a decisive battle which took place on the Col de la Bataille, as it was subsequently named.

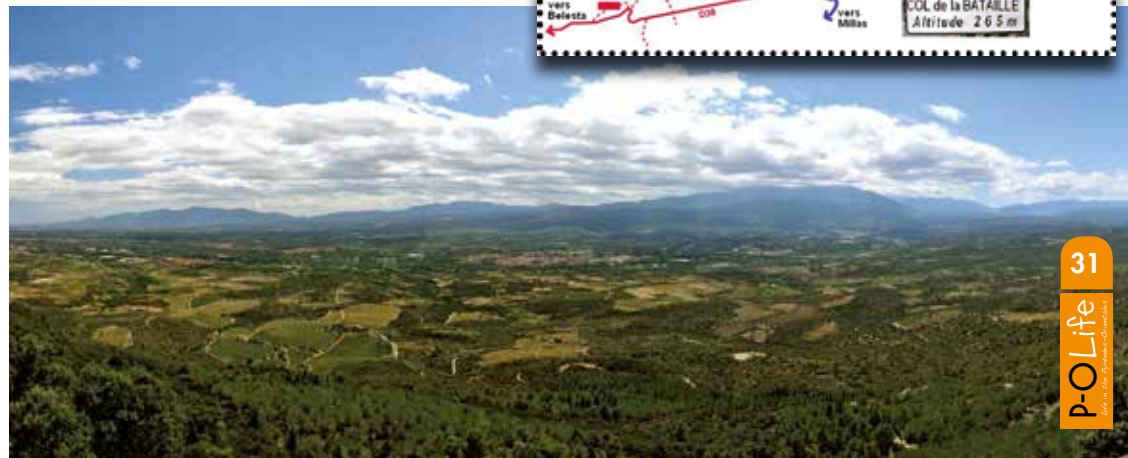
It is on this spot that you will find the memorial to the maquis Henri Barbusse. Symbol of Catalan resistance, the village of Valmanya (Great valley in Latin) near Vinça, was totally destroyed by the Germans in August 1944, in reprisal against resistance fighters operating in the area.

Villagers who were unable to flee to the safety of the mountains were machine gunned. From this 'maquis' stronghold, Captain Julien Panchot, later to be brutally tortured and killed, led brave resistance fighters who sheltered in the nearby mines of La Pinosa and set up the Sainte Jeanne escape route for refugees. The village was rebuilt but the ruins of the mines remain.

Let's lighten the mood a little. Before you head back down for a drink, or if you've packed a picnic, follow the winding road up to the large free car park and a five minute tarmac climb will take you up to Força Réal. Pretty chapel with orientation table, fascinating polished steel convex mirror, the original signal tower and small fort, constructed on two adjacent hills, was destroyed in the 17th century. Transformed into an hermitage and 'Conjurador', its function was to appease the elements and chase away storms and summer drought. Stunning views along the coastline from Port-Vendres to Leucate, across the Agly and Têt valleys, over the Albères, Canigo, Carlit make it well worth the visit.

For the more energetic, there is a labyrinth of well signed walks for all levels, with 'sentier botanique' identifying trees and shrubs around this former signal tower and small fort, built in 1258.

*On a clear day, the view will take your breath away.*





# TEST your FRENCH

## 1 B pour Boat!

Match up the words, all beginning with B, with their definitions.

(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

- |               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| bâbord 1      | a grosse abeille               |
| boîter 2      | b petite colline               |
| bourdon 3     | c petit chariot de jardin      |
| bouilloire 4  | d truc                         |
| bûcheron 5    | e personne qui abat les arbres |
| brouette 6    | f pour chauffer l'eau          |
| bidule 7      | g petite barbe                 |
| butte 8       | h le plus gros mammifère       |
| barbichette 9 | i côté gauche d'un bateau      |
| baleine 10    | j marcher en penchant          |



Blague bête!

Tu as mauvaise mine?  
Va en Irlande  
Pourquoi?  
Parce que ça fait Dublin  
(might need to think about this one!!)

## Réflexions

Comment sait-on qu'on n'a plus d'encre invisible?

(n'a plus - no more  
encre - ink)

## Useful vocab

**bluffer** (bluh-fay)

to amaze, impress, stun  
Je suis bluffé/ C'est bluffant

## Trust me!

I trust you.....

Je compte sur toi/vous  
Je me fie à toi/vous  
je te/vous fais confiance  
j'ai confiance en toi/vous

You can trust me!

Tu peux/vous pouvez compter sur moi  
Fais/faites-moi confiance

## Language origins

**De but en blanc**

direct, or straight to the point

Je vais vous parler de but en blanc -  
I'll come straight out with it

This expression has shooting origins with 'blanc' representing the target, and 'but' (which should really be spelt 'butte') representing the little mound from which one shoots. The straight line from the mound to the target gives the idea of straight talking.

## tongue twister (virelangue)

Repeat quickly three times  
Papier, panier, piano!

## Blague bête!

Qu'est-ce qu'un squelette dans une armoire ?

C'est quelqu'un qui a gagné à cache-cache.

(cache-cache - hide and seek)

## Language tip

Don't forget QUE

I know you're sad

BUT

Je sais QUE tu es triste

He said you knew

BUT

Il a dit QUE tu savais

## 2 Talking texto

Even my Dad sends texts these days!

Here are a few of the most popular French 'texto' abbreviations.  
Can you match them up with their English meanings?

- |         |    |                    |
|---------|----|--------------------|
| A+      | 1  | a I'm sad          |
| Snif    | 2  | b Shut up! (vulg)  |
| Raf     | 3  | c And you know it! |
| EDR/MDR | 4  | d See you later    |
| NSP     | 5  | e What's new?      |
| TOK     | 6  | f Dunno            |
| Koi29   | 7  | g Are you OK?      |
| TG      | 8  | h Nothing to do    |
| A12C4   | 9  | i See you sometime |
| Tmtc    | 10 | j LOL              |

## 4 Trouvez la bonne définition

**1 fainéant**

- a) gros oiseau à longue queue
- b) qui n'aime pas travailler
- c) avoir faim

**2 périmé**

- a) hors date
- b) hors d'œuvre
- c) hors sujet

**3 marteau**

- a) un outil pour frapper
- b) un vêtement contre le froid
- c) venant de la planète Mars

**4. supprimer**

- a) ajouter à la fin
- b) faire disparaître
- c) réduire le volume

**5. orage**

- a) espèce de singe
- b) fruit rond
- c) grosse pluie avec éclairs

## 3 You're 'aving a larf!

The following expressions all use the word **rire** (to laugh). Can you find their English equivalents without giggling too much?

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Avoir le fou rire 1   | a Seriously though...       |
| Eclater de rire 2     | b Burst out laughing        |
| Non, mais sans rire 3 | c For fun                   |
| Pour rire 4           | d Have a fit of the giggles |



See Page 42 for answers



# AMELIOREZ votre ANGLAIS

## 1 F is for Foot

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec la lettre F.

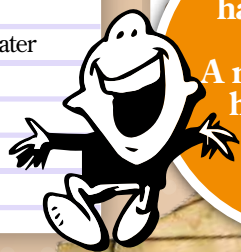
- |             |                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| flesh 1     | a not plain or ordinary           |
| fellow 2    | b moving through the air          |
| fee 3       | c soft parts of the body          |
| fancy 4     | d chairs, tables, beds....        |
| fake 5      | e male person                     |
| flight 6    | f unusually large amount of water |
| forecast 7  | g money paid for service          |
| forehead 8  | h predict (the weather for eg)    |
| furniture 9 | i not true or real                |
| flood 10    | j face above the eyes             |



What goes  
ha ha boom?

A man laughing  
his head off

(to laugh your head  
off - mourir de rire)



Language tip

Il y a  
There is + singulier  
There are + pluriel  
Il y avait  
There was + singulier  
There were + pluriel

Il y aura  
There will be + singulier ET pluriel  
It is = c'est  
It was = c'était  
It will be = ce sera

## 2 False friends

Aie aie aie, ces faux amis. Ils sont partout. Ces mots anglais ressemblent à des mots français, mais ont un sens totalement différent.

Pouvez vous trouver leur équivalent en français?

- |              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| Grave 1      | a pièce de monnaie   |
| Rude 2       | b danger             |
| Sensible 3   | c finalement         |
| Actually 4   | d costume            |
| Coin 5       | e grossier, mal poli |
| Delay 6      | f grand magasin      |
| Suit 7       | g retard             |
| Eventually 8 | h raisonnable        |
| Store (US) 9 | i tombe              |
| Hazard 10    | j en fait            |

silly...

Mr Smith reached for his liquid Viagra in the middle of the night and accidentally swigged from a bottle of Tippex. He woke up the next morning with a huge **correction**.

(swig - boire à grands traits huge - grand)

bad joke!

How do you make milk shake?  
Say BOO!

Worse joke

Doctor, Doctor I keep thinking I'm a dog.  
Sit on the couch and we will talk about it.  
But I'm not allowed up on the couch!

Quelques phrases argotiques, (dont certaines sont vulgaires **et même très vulgaires!**) pour demander à quelqu'un de s'en aller. (A ne pas utiliser avec la grand-mère de votre voisin !)

- Run along
- Shove off
- Get lost!
- Scram!
- Piss off (très vulgaire)
- Go to hell!
- Beat it
- Push off

Votre partenaire est stressé(e)?  
Voilà quelques phrases pour le/la calmer!

- |                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| • Cool it           | • Take it easy |
| • Take a chill pill | • Loosen up    |
| • Relax Max         | • Hang loose,  |
| • Chill out         | Mother Goose   |

## 3 Ces mots se prononcent et s'écrivent presque pareil - mais ils ont un sens différent

Lequel veut dire.....

- |  |                                      |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 ... teindre?<br>A dye<br>B die             | 5... talon?<br>A heal<br>B heel      | 9... prier?<br>A prey<br>B pray      |
| 2... les vêtements?<br>A cloths<br>B clothes | 6... poireau?<br>A leek<br>B leak    | 10... sorcière<br>A which<br>B witch |
| 3... freiner?<br>a break<br>b brake          | 7... saint?<br>a holy<br>b holly     |                                      |
| 4... laiterie?<br>A diary<br>B dairy         | 8... permis?<br>A aloud<br>B allowed |                                      |

## 4 Confusing words

- He gets \_\_\_\_\_ very easily.  
**a boring b bored**
- I haven't been back to England \_\_\_\_\_ five years.  
**a since b for**
- I usually finish work \_\_\_\_\_ 6pm  
**a by b until**
- It is difficult to choose \_\_\_\_\_ the two  
**a amongst b between**
- Do they still \_\_\_\_\_ your passport at the Spanish border?  
**a check b control**

Reflexions

Is there  
anothe'r  
word for  
synonym?



See Page 42 for answers



# OUT for THE DAY

with Merry Foster



## Dolphin-Spotting: the long & the short of it.

Up for a full day out at sea? Join Roussillon Croisières ([www.roussillon-croisieres.com](http://www.roussillon-croisieres.com)) and head out to sea in search of whales, sunfish (strange looking fish shaped like large white disks with one fin sticking up waving at you who sun bathe on the surface and love to eat jelly fish), cormorants, puffins – and dolphins. In fact, at one point, we were surrounded by them, so graceful and doing all the tricks that we had seen years ago in the dolphin shows at Brighton.

It was a great feeling – everyone was giddy, feeling so lucky to be at the centre of this exciting party.

But it was a long day at sea. A shorter, but equally delightful alternative is their half-day trip from Saint Cyprien, Argeles, Port Vendres and Collioure. We were always within sight of land and followed the trawlers across the bay, which soon led to dolphins. It was magical to watch the mums and babies showing off their synchronized swimming skills. Watching dolphins seems to make everyone happy!



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# LET'S <sup>We</sup> FORGET

## Le Bleuet de France

The poppy is a powerful and iconic symbol of remembrance in England, but did you know that the French have an equivalent, 'Le Bleuet de France', their own poignant reminder of the First World War?



In 'flowerspeak', the 'Bleuet' or cornflower symbolizes delicacy and innocence. It used to grow abundantly in France, and, like the poppy, was often the only sign of life, and colour amidst the mud and desolation of WW1. It was also used to describe fresh, young soldiers of WW1, whose bright blue uniforms initially stood out in sharp contrast to the grey and muddy misery of the trenches.

Les poilus, as the French soldiers were known, suffered terribly. Survivors trailed home maimed, mutilated and mentally traumatised. Seeing the importance of keeping these poor souls active, French nurses Suzanne Lenhardt, and Charlotte Malleterre, started up 'Le Bleuet de France', a workshop where ex soldiers created cornflower blue lapel badges from blue tissue paper to sell to the public. The initiative spread slowly around France.

In 1928, French President Gaston Doumergue publicly gave his support to the Bleuet, and in 1935, the sale of the Bleuets on Remembrance Day finally became official throughout France.

The symbolic poppy is well known in France, mainly thanks to British footballers and celebs who are spotted wearing them throughout November. Le Bleuet however is unknown internationally and little known amongst the younger French generation.

Maybe it will never become high profile like the poppy in Britain, but it nevertheless continues to support veterans and their families. Look out for Le Bleuet de France on November 11th, the only day it is sold, and pin a cornflower next to your poppy.



Le Poilu, informal term of endearment for a French World War I infantryman, and literally meaning 'hairy one' was also used to describe soldiers in the time of Napoleon Bonaparte. (The term 'groggnard' (grumbler) was also common.) The word was coined from the caricature image of the bear-like, bearded and moustached French soldier, much used in propaganda at the time.

The stereotype of the Poilu was brave but undisciplined. During the disastrous 'Chemin des Dames' offensive of 1917, they were said to have gone into battle baa'ing like sheep, to symbolize lambs to the slaughter.... as proved to be the case. Widespread mutiny followed, and a mini military revolution was only avoided by withdrawing from the whole offensive.

A popular poem  
by Alphonse Bourgoïn,  
written in 1916 goes....

Les voici les p'tits « Bleuets »  
Les Bleuets couleur des cieux  
Ils vont jolis, gais et coquets,  
Car ils n'ont pas froid aux yeux.  
En avant partez joyeux ;  
Partez, amis, au revoir !  
Salut à vous, les petits « bleus »,  
Petits « bleuets », vous notre espoir ! »

Here they are, these little 'Bleuets'  
These Bleuets the colour of the sky,  
Are beautiful, gay, stylish,  
Because they are not afraid.  
Merrily, go forward  
Go, my friends, so long!  
Good luck to you, the little 'blues'  
Little 'bleuets,' you are our hope!





# OUT for THE DAY Mas Cristine

## Straight from the Horse's Mouth!



**Tucked away off the Saint André roundabout between Le Boulou and Argelès, lies Mas Cristine.**

If you're looking for ancient chateaux and wine soaked oaken tasting tables, Mas Cristine isn't for you. This winery is modern, airy, spacious and clean, with temperature controlled warehouse and cutting edge wine making equipment. But it does have a history!

Léon Cristine was the mayor of Collioure from 1919 to 1935. A well-heeled chap, as village mayors tend to be, his estate on his death consisted of half the houses of Collioure... and the rather dilapidated Mas Cristine and winery, established in 1810, in the hills above Collioure. The estate was split down the middle and one 'héritier' received the houses whilst the other received the Mas. I know which half I'd have put my name down for!



Soooo... Mas Cristine wine was already a well established brand when British wine importer Andy Cook took it over in 2006 with two French partners, Julien Grill and Philippe Gard.

"Wine importing was easy compared to wine making" Andy told me with a smile "but the best part of the making is knowing that I have been in control of every stage, and when someone tastes my wine, it is a taste that I have created. Feels good".



Andy's wife, artist Kirstin Mackintosh, also helps out with the wine – by painting it! Her fabulous paintings and portraits are on display at her atelier, 12 Rue Arago, in Collioure.

They quickly grew too big for the original Mas Cristine wine domaine and battled their way through 5 frustrating years of thorny French admin and planning permissions to build their fresh and contemporary winery at the edge of Saint André. They're still waiting for permission to put a sign up!

It's just the beginning. Andy's vision of a 'dégustation' is refreshing. "The tasting is important, and of course we want to sell our wine,

(Mas Cristine offers a free bottle of wine to P-O Life readers who spend 30€ or more) but a visit to a winery should be part of a whole experience.

"Good atmosphere, a chance to chat about the wines....Eventually, there will be a play and picnic area, events and live music – there's no reason why wine tasting shouldn't be a fun family affair".

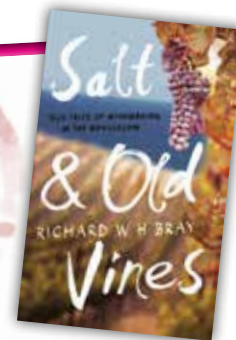
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## SALT & OLD VINES

By **Richard Bray**

Andy's close friend and assistant wine maker, Richard Bray, has written a book about an insider's look at what really goes on at harvest time, Mas Cristine, Andy, wine picking, making and drinking in the Roussillon. It is random, honest and endearing. "This isn't a wine book, not really. It has quite a lot of wine in it, both made and drunk. It has some vinous vocabulary..... But the intent is not to teach you everything about wine in the Roussillon, Collioure and Banyuls. There are no photos of pristine grapes bathed in the Mediterranean sun. Instead there are stories; the stories about the place and the people that take wine from grape to bottle." Wine, claims Richard, is a happy accident. Its

journey from vine to bottle is fraught, and involves lots of human, fallible people. Men and women who've been picking grapes since six in the morning, or working the press since six-thirty; people who get hurt, who sweat, who bleed, who don't finish until late and need a beer at the end of the day; winemakers who started off as blues guitarists, and octogenarian Catalan farmers who hand-cut grapes faster than their grandchildren. Salt and Old Vines is the story of wine, a portrait of some of its people, and a biography of the place it comes from, inspired by his own experience in the Roussillon.



Buy it at Mas Cristine, or Amazon or Google the publisher, Unbound



# OUT for THE DAY

Mas Cristine

# FRENCHLife

## Les Associations - join the club!

The beginning of autumn brings out the 'Forums des Associations' in every town and village throughout the region. Often running alongside an autumn fair or a local produce market, this gives local clubs and community groups a chance to strut their stuff – and gives us a chance to sample and enrol in the many activities, sports clubs, community and social organisations available in the area throughout the year.

**L**a Vie Associative' is an important part of French community life, with over a million 'associations' offering all manner of educational and leisure pursuits.

At the beginning of the 20th century, most groups were run either by the Catholic Church or a political party. A new government made up of anti-clerical atheists passed the law for creation of associations to separate state and church and reduce the power of the clergy.

The aim of the 'assoc' is to allow groups of two or more people with shared interests the chance to establish not-for-profit organisations, to meet and to raise funds legally.

All associations must have a 'Bureau' consisting of President, Treasurer and Secretary. These positions are voluntary and unpaid. Salaried staff are not part of this management, so a person setting up an association will often ask family and friends to form the 'bureau,' in order that he or she might receive a salary for the activity.



Assoc Recyclerie du Vallespir, Céret.

Associations may organise 2 'rifles' (bingo) per year to raise funds for their activities, so when you see the RIFLE posters going up around the region in late autumn, your support will be much appreciated – and who doesn't enjoy a game of bingo on the sly?

Don't let shaky French put you off. They usually appreciate new members and are happy to make an effort to speak slowly.

Why not pop along to the 'Forum des Associations' in your town or village? You might well be surprised at the activities on offer.



Assoc Trampoline 2000, Maureillas

>>>

Mas Cristine vineyards, mostly planted on schist terraces up on the slopes overlooking Collioure, are so steep that cultivation and harvesting has to be done by hand. This involves pickers who pick and porteurs who 'porte' in baskets on their backs. "Picking does your back in and carrying does your legs in" Andy tells me – a useful tip for those considering a bit of grape picking in their spare time.

Oh – and let's not forget Titan!

At 700 kilos, this semi retired and much loved horse helps to ensure that the vendange plods along nicely – and that's straight from the horse's mouth!



our recommendations  
**Mas Cristine Côtes du Roussillon Rouge**, a unanimous hit amongst friends. Perfect with a Roquefort Papillon. (available at Crèmerie La Voie Lactée, Thuir)

**Mas Cristine Muscat de Rivesaltes**, 'light, fresh and delicate'.  
"I'm not a Muscat fan, but I like it!"

TEST your FRENCH answers

- 1i 2j 3a 4i 5e 6c 7d 8b 9g 10h
- 1d 2a 3h 4j 5f 6g 7e 8b 9i 10c
- 1d 2b 3a 4c
- 1b 2a 3a 4b 5c

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- 1c 2e 3g 4a 5i 6b 7h 8j 9d 10f
- 1i 2e 3h 4j 5a 6g 7d 8c 9f 10b
- 1a 2b 3b 4b 5b 6a 7a 8b 9b 10b
- 1b 2b 3a 4b 5a

## Oooooops!

Did you spot the deliberate mistake (yeah, right ) in the last P-O Life?

In the joke 'Tel père tel fils' on p38, we said "Votre bébé est un vrai petit ange." Fortunately, several eagle-eyed readers pointed out the missing 'n' – it should have been 'ange'! Just testing!







## Airport news

Over the years of compiling this article for PO Life, I've always looked for good news to report. A new airport or airline coming on stream, a new route starting, or an enhanced frequency. On this occasion, looking at the situation as regards services from our local airports to the UK/Ireland over this coming winter period, I'm afraid I see nothing but unmitigated gloom.

Ryanair's abandonment of this region continues apace, with their return of providing a winter service from **PERPIGNAN** to Stansted pulled after just one season. And, perhaps more significantly, for the very first time since I started the article there is not one single service to the British Isles out of **GIRONA** this winter period. There are cuts at other airports too, with only Barcelona services bucking the trend slightly and seeing a little growth. So, here is what remains:

**CARCASSONNE** now provides the nearest connection to UK/Ire for the vast majority of PO residents and visitors

STANSTED	3x	pw	Ryanair
LIVERPOOL	2x	pw	Ryanair
DUBLIN	2x	pw	Ryanair

Even **BEZIERS** airport does not escape unscathed.

LUTON	2x	pw	Ryanair
-------	----	----	---------

**MONTPELLIER** provides much the same service level as previous winters;

GATWICK	4x	pw	EasyJet
---------	----	----	---------

And a similar story at **TOULOUSE**;

BRISTOL	4x	pw	EasyJet
GATWICK	11x	pw	EasyJet
HEATHROW	18x	pw	BA

So, like never before, it rests on **BARCELONA's** shoulders to provide the best possibilities for flight connections, although I get a lot of mail from readers about the unwieldy public transport options from PO to El Prat airport.

HEATHROW	35x	pw	BA
GATWICK	9x	pw	BA
	34x	pw	EasyJet
	18x	pw	Vueling
	4x	pw	Norwegian
	4x	pw	Monarch
STANSTED	28x	pw	Ryanair
LUTON	10x	pw	EasyJet
SOUTHEND	2x	pw	EasyJet
BIRMINGHAM	3x	pw	Ryanair
	4x	pw	Monarch
	2x	pw	Norwegian
	2x	pw	Vueling
MANCHESTER	2x	pw	Jet 2
	3x	pw	Ryanair
	4x	pw	Monarch
	2x	pw	Vueling
BRISTOL	7x	pw	EasyJet
LIVERPOOL	6x	pw	EasyJet
	4x	pw	Ryanair
LEEDS BRAD	2x	pw	Jet 2
	2x	pw	Monarch
NEWCASTLE	2x	pw	EasyJet
EDINBURGH	3x	pw	Ryanair
DUBLIN	7x	pw	Aer Lingus
	18x	pw	Ryanair

So, there we have it. Things, as they say, can only get better! In future editions I hope to have some brighter news, including details of the completion of the refurbishment of Perpignan Airport, and, fingers crossed, some new flights out of the bigger terminal building. Over the summer, I've used Carcassonne airport a number of times, and it has always been a hive of activity, so let's hope that PO's local airport can follow suit.

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### DID YOU KNOW

#### Gone with the wind

Did you know that the game of billiards became popular in France in the time of Louis XIV when the king's physicians advised him to take stretching exercise to relieve him of chronic wind?.



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# OUT for THE DAY

## On Track for a Tasting the TPCF

A trip on the 'Train du Pays Cathare et du Fenouillèdes' (TPCF) with its bright red and white carriages is not just recommended for train enthusiasts. Along the way, there are magnificent views, oceans of vines, Cathar castles – and plenty of opportunity for wine tasting!

Starting at Rivesaltes, north of Perpignan, the train chugs along this 100 year old railway line to Axat, high up in the Fenouillèdes – a slow climb of over 60 kms.

Through Espira onto Cases de Pène, where the tiny hermitage church of Notre Dame de Pène can be seen on the left hand side, and the vineyards of Château de Jau on the left. Make a note to come back this way again (with a teetotal driver if possible) for the fabulous Château de Jau tasting lunches and dinners held by the lake in the shade of a 300 year-old mulberry. ([www.chateaudejau.com](http://www.chateaudejau.com))



On the front of the station, you will also get a taster of something else that Maury is famous for – its murals! Is that really a dog standing in front of a wine barrel? In fact, is that really a wine barrel? These incredible 'Trompe l'Oeil' throughout the village were painted by Bernard Gout from Perpignan and are well worth a wander.



On next to Estagel, birthplace of François Arago in 1786, scientist, astronomer, politician, adventurer and general swashbuckler. Find out more about him on our website.

Look out too for Mas Amiel, with its multiple glass 'bonbonnes' full of naturally sweet wine. This 80 hectare domaine was won in a game of cards two centuries ago by Raymond Etienne Amiel, and originally belonged to the gambling Bishop of Perpignan.

In the distance, across the seas of vines, the last of the Cathar strongholds, Château de Queribus stands proud on its 728m high rocky pinnacle. As you draw into Maury station, most fortuitously linked to the cellars of the Vignerons of Maury, it is time for some wine tasting – or the perfect stop if you want to visit the nearby castles.

From Maury, continue on to St Paul de Fenouillet, where a bus is sometimes laid on to explore the Gorges de Galamus. (Check with the train website.) with its spectacular and dramatic scenery, for a delightful picnic by the pretty rock pools.

Onwards and upwards to Caudiès de Fenouillèdes, last stop in the P-O. At Lapradelle the train stops on the 1904 viaduct to allow you to admire the Château of Puilaurens, before finally stopping in the pretty little town of Axat. In the reception hut is a perfect model of Axat Station in the 60s made by one of the founder members of the TPCF.

Check out their website on [www.tpcf.fr](http://www.tpcf.fr) and have a great day.

This autumn, why not try the **Scary Halloween Special** on 31 October?

The timetable and differing circuits and events offered vary from month to month.





# GOLF <sup>in</sup> CATALUNYA

with  
Simon Bridges

For those of us fortunate enough to live in this wonderful part of the world, the opportunities for fair weather golf are almost limitless. I mainly concern myself with courses within a fifty kilometre radius south of Perpignan because there really isn't any need to look further. There are beautiful full sized courses in both Spain and France which take around four to five hours to get round but there are also shorter par three courses taking around half that time.



To my mind the latter are perfect not only for beginners but also for experienced players when the weather is very hot or time is simply limited.

Eighteen holes on a full sized competition course on a summer Sunday can cost you €130 per round but a wizz round a par three on Tuesday morning can cost as little as €12.

We concentrate on Spanish courses, largely because they are cheaper. Par three courses are far less common in France, so a trip over the border for eighteen holes in the Figueras area followed by a Spanish lunch at €12 makes a really lovely day out.....without breaking the bank.

We have played Torremirona, Girona and Peralada (all can be found on the Internet) or for those wishing for a less strenuous but equally challenging round, par three courses Mas Pages, Gualta, Castello, Formels and Françiac are recommended.

Earlier this year the group spent three nights in Platja D'Aro partying and playing golf. With thirty players and other halves, the social element was just as good as the golf. It was a spectacular success and next years trip is already planned.

One problem with playing in this locality is the effort it takes to ignore the spectacular views. Liz Bridges has played Falgos many times but is still impressed by the backdrop of the Pyrenees straddling the border with Spain.

It must surely be one of the most beautiful courses anywhere. Even more spectacular is the twelfth. If you over shoot the green you find yourself in a bunker, if you over shoot the bunker.....you could find yourself having to don mountaineering gear to retrieve your ball.

Not everybody is ready to go straight out and play; for absolute novices I can recommend the Jackson Golf Academy at Gualta course. Richard Jackson is a thoroughly nice chap as well as being an excellent coach, both for beginners and experienced players. Lessons can be taken individually or more cheaply in groups of four and equipment can be loaned for lessons. It is incredibly helpful to have one's swing videoed and then analysed in slow motion. People often say "Do I really do that?" The answer is inevitably "Yes". Richard speaks Spanish, Catalan, Danish and of course English.

Golf is not only a time consuming hobby but also very addictive. The wonderful handicapping system ensures that everybody has an equal chance to show just how unequal they are. It is also exceedingly social and many lasting friendships have been forged on the fairways of Catalunya. I heartily recommend it to you all and look forward to meeting you on the first tee.

"La raison pour laquelle un pro vous demande de garder la tête basse est de vous empêcher de le voir rire".

*Phyllis Diller*

## golf vocab

Most golfing vocabulary and rules are believed to have originated in Scotland. When Mary Queen of Scots married the Dauphin of France in 1558, she introduced the game to France. In fact, she names the young boys carrying her clubs 'cadets' – French for the youngest child in a family, which gave us the word 'caddy'!

So....If it's not below, simply say it in English with a French accent (le fairway, le tee, le rough, handicap, le green...) and you won't go far wrong!

golf course - terrain / parcours de golf  
greens fee - droit de jeu  
driving rang'e - terrain d'exercice  
hole - trou  
stroke - coup (de golf)  
divot - motte de gazon  
score card - carte de pointage  
par - normale  
birdie - oiselet  
bogey - boguery  
hole in one - trou d'un coup  
(Not used often !!)



**Simon Bridges** is the U3A golf co-ordinator for the Pyrenees Orientales.

For more info, contact Simon on  
[Bridges.simon@neuf.fr](mailto:Bridges.simon@neuf.fr)







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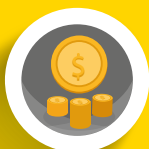
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## Things You Might Need to Know

### First Come, First Served

Want to be a MAXtrotter? Then visit [www.idtgvmax.com](http://www.idtgvmax.com) to book your 12 month season ticket giving you unlimited travel on the high-speed iDTGV service for **only 59,99 per month**.

To celebrate its 10th birthday, iDTGV and SNCF are offering 10,000 of these rail passes, including unlimited travel to more than 40 TGV destinations around France. You have to reserve in advance but can book your trip as late as 45 minutes before travelling, space permitting of course.

All iDTGV trains will have a special reserved space just for MAXtrotters. However, there are a limited number of seats and a limited number of passes available.



### Danger: What a boar!

For your security, do check with the local town hall or ACCA (hunting association) where the designated boar hunting areas are during the hunting season. Permitted from mid-August to the end of January, it can be dangerous and frightening to find yourself in the vicinity of an organised boar hunt (une battue). Warning signs should be put up at all entrances to woodland but this law is not always enforced as strictly as it should be.



### Ex Pat pensions Getting a life certificate

A 'life certificate' is a form that might be sent to you by the Department for Work and Pensions to check you're still alive - and eligible for the State Pension. If you receive one, you should have it signed by a witness (anybody who can 'countersign' a passport photo will do) and send it back, as instructed on the form.

Your payments may be suspended if you don't send it back.

### Saffron



From the Arabic za'faran, meaning yellow, keep an eye out in the P-O for saffron fields of deep purple crocuses, in bloom in Autumn. It can take 250,000 saffron stigmas, fine, richly coloured, orangey-red strands pulled from the flower, to produce half a kilo of saffron spice. Cultivated and harvested by hand, it is hardly surprising that it is considered one of the world's most expensive spices, and even costs more than gold. And beware! If it's cheap, it's probably not the real thing!

## CONFIRMATION - Compulsory Breathalyser Kits in Cars

All vehicles should carry a breathalyser. However, there will be no penalty for cars not equipped with a breathalyser, if stopped by the gendarmes! Imagine the conversation:

'Avez-vous un éthylotest?'

"Non"

"OK, au revoir!"

Doh!



## E-constat

It is now possible, in cases where there is no injury to occupants, to declare a car accident directly to the insurance with an E-constat, electronic statement for "smartphone", and downloadable free.

Visit [www.e-constat-auto.fr](http://www.e-constat-auto.fr) to find out more.



Good things don't always come in small packages! Most spiders are pretty harmless to humans, and only four are known to be dangerous. Unfortunately, one of these is 'la recluse brune' (brown recluse spider, known as the fiddleback, or violin spider due to its shape and markings) spotted recently in the neighbouring Gard and Hérault departments, where two people were bitten this summer, resulting in emergency treatment.

On the positive side, this venomous spider is not aggressive, and mostly avoids confrontation - but its bite is undoubtedly worse than its bark and you will have no warning that it is reclining in your underwear until it bites!

Reactions to a brown recluse bite vary depending on the individual and the amount of venom injected, but you are advised to pay a visit to your local A&E if any symptoms start to develop (pain at bite site, severe itching, nausea, vomiting, fever, muscle pain...) to be on the safe side.

Google 'brown recluse spiders' if you really want to find out more... but remember that sometimes ignorance can be bliss!!

Emergency number for the deaf or hard of hearing

114

This free 24/7 number is available by fax or text message. The line is manned by a specially trained team, who will assess the emergency and contact the service required, police, fire brigade,...

Check out [www.solidarite.gouv.fr](http://www.solidarite.gouv.fr) for more details.



more Things You Might  
Need to Know



## Your British Driving Licence



Despite an irate gendarme telling you the opposite, (and let's face it, they have guns so best to agree!) the driving licence of a EU-member state driver resident in France does NOT have to be exchanged for a French one.

Of course, if you commit a driving offence in France, you will be expected to change to a French licence for points to be deducted.

If in doubt, quote from the government site [vosdroits.service-public.fr](http://vosdroits.service-public.fr) as follows. (Carry your P-O Life round with you to save you having to learn this paragraph off by heart! ☺)

*"Les permis de conduire délivrés par les autres pays de l'Espace économique européen (EEE) sont reconnus en France. La personne qui réside en France, titulaire d'un permis de conduire obtenu dans un autre pays européen, peut circuler avec. Elle doit toutefois respecter certaines conditions. Elle peut demander l'échange de son permis national contre un permis français. Mais ce n'est pas une obligation, sauf exception."*

## DID YOU KNOW

Count Joseph Augustin De Mailly d'Haucourt entered military service as a musketeer in 1726. In true 'musketeer' style, he was exiled by the king in 1753 for 'stealing' one of the king's mistresses! Reinstated as commander in chief, De Mailly was the driving force behind the creation of Port Vendres as a port.

## Police be careful

Motorway pirates, posing as police, and armed with flashing blue lights, have been stopping and 'searching' cars, and helping themselves to valuables. Foreign cars are particularly targeted.

The real police say they would never search a car on the motorway for safety reasons, that they rarely operate in plain clothes and in unmarked police cars, and that if you have any doubts, you should not stop. You can find the different forms of police identity at [www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-police/Fausse-qualite-la-carte-police](http://www.police-nationale.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/L-actu-police/Fausse-qualite-la-carte-police).

*PS According to a recent ruling, the gendarmes are now allowed beards and tattoos - which probably doesn't help!*



## The creation of Port Vendres

As a foil to the enormous amount of construction of flat concrete, De Mailly called in Charles De Wailly, architect and painter to the king, to build the Obelisque which has now become a focal point of Port Vendres.

**The first stone was placed on 28th September 1780.**

Who you Gonna Call?

SAMU (medical emergency)

15

Fire service emergency

18

POLICE emergency

17

European emergency line

112

SOS Doctor 24/24

08 20 20 41 42

Emergency vet

04 68 83 35 85

Anti-poison centre

04 91 75 25 25

Perpignan Hospital

04 68 61 66 33

CPAM (English spk serv)

0811 36 36 46

Cancer Support France

04 68 69 01 37

Directory enquiries

118 008

International

directory enquiries

118 700

International Mastercard

08 00 90 13 87

Local weather forecast

08 36 68 02 66

GDF (gas problems)

08 10 43 30 66

EDF (electricity problems) 05 56 17 40 70

You can use the **European emergency number 112 in any EU country** from any telephone. **You do not need a card or money to ring this number** from a pay phone. 112 may also be used from a mobile to connect you with all emergency services.



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