



Paris Branch

Newsletter

N° 19 - October 2023



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Chairman's introduction for the October 2023 Newsletter.

Welcome to this month's Newsletter.

September was a memorable month with the "Pedal to Paris" covered in our last edition rapidly followed by the Battle of Britain ceremony at the Arc de Triumph on the 15th which some of us attended. Alex Lake, a recently appointed committee member, carried one of the standards and the Ambassador and the Air Attaché laid a wreath.

The big event of the month was, of course on the 20th when His Majesty King Charles III and Queen Camila attended a very spectacular ceremony at the Arc de Triumph accompanied by President Macron, his wife and our ambassador. Some of your committee managed to get themselves on TV chatting with their majesties and the President.



Noreen Riols, Caroline and Richard

On the 21st we had our first lunch at the club house after quite an absence. It was very enjoyable and it was a great pleasure to see and chat with one of our oldest members, author Noreen Riols. Our next lunch should also be interesting, as

our branch chaplain the Reverend Mark

Osborne has very kindly volunteered to cook. It will again be at a reduced price. Details a few pages below.

Janet Warby and I have been going into the branch as usual each week, and we have prepared the Poppy Boxes for this year's Poppy Appeal. They will be distributed to our helpers within the next week or so.

Let me remind everyone that the Coffee morning at the Embassy will be on the 26th of this month. Please try to attend.

Janet and I are also preparing this year's service of remembrance along with the support of the Defence staff from the Embassy and staff at the Cathedral Invalides. You will be pleased to know that we shall have three Chelsea Pensioners attending this year along with our regular Piper who comes from Scotland every year.

I look forward to seeing you at some of our events for October.

Richard Neave

Janet's October Quiz



1. What is the Italian word for October?
2. If you were born in October, what is your birthstone?
3. If you were born in October, what is your birth flower?
4. The popular children's Halloween film *Hocus Pocus* features a cat, what is his name?
5. Every October, *The Simpsons* release a Halloween special, what is the name of this series?
6. According to the ancient Roman calendar, October was which month of the year?
7. If you were born on October 23rd, what would your zodiac sign be?
8. In October 1974 which famous fast-food chain opened its doors in London for the first time?
9. How many days are there in October?
10. Every year October ends on the same day of the week as one other month, which month is it?
11. What was the Anglo-Saxon name for October?
12. Which world-famous political and spiritual leader was born on October 2, 1869?

Answers on last page

EVENTS

15 September: The Battle of Britain ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe

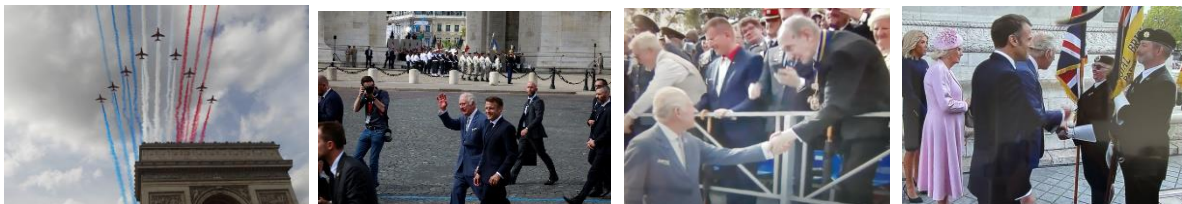
Several committee members attended this event. Alex Lake, a recently appointed committee member, carried one of the standards.

Menna Rawlings, our Ambassador, and the Air Attaché laid a wreath.

20 September: King Charles' Visit to France.

On Wednesday 20th September 2023, Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camila arrived in Paris, marking the start of their State Visit to France.

The RBL Paris Branch was present during Their Majesties' arrival ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe, where Janet, Pierre, Caroline, and Bill held their respective standards. Other branch members were present on one of the two stands dedicated to the event, and some like Richard, Branch Chairman, were even lucky enough to shake hands and exchange a few words with King Charles, Queen Camila, President Macron, and Brigitte Macron as they walked past and greeted guests. Quite a few pictures were taken during the event, which will be shared in due course. There were smiles all round as our members watched Their Majesties' prepare to head down the Avenue des Champs Elysées as the crowd cheered on.



[Click here to see a wider selection of bigger photos.](#)

(use your browser's back arrow to return to this page)

COMING EVENTS

19 October, Thursday - October lunch

See page 8 for details.

26 October, Thursday – Poppy Appeal Coffee Morning

by kind permission of HM Ambassador at the Ambassador's Residence

10h30-12h00

Reserve through Janet Warby at: janetwarby@yahoo.com or telephone 01 39

28 90 28 or mail: Mrs. J. Warby, 5 allée des Pins, 78480 Verneuil sur Seine.

11 November, Saturday - Commemoration at St Louis des Invalides.

14.40 for 15h00

Places in church limited *Reserve through Janet Warby as above*

CORRESPONDANCE

Our member Laurence David-Grant has come up with some rather interesting papers. She writes:



Recently I went through my mother's correspondence and found two letters that I thought might be of some historical curiosity for the Paris Branch Newsletter

Several items of interest can be inferred: the letters came from a British Legion which had not yet received the "Royal" prefix. The Patron was the then Prince of Wales and not the King. A specially headed notepaper was printed for Remembrance Day and the Poppy Appeal in France. The patroness of the day was the countess Haig. The address in 1934 was from the rue Chaussée d'Antin and the following year 1935 from rue Boudreau – which pretty well indicates the year in which the Paris Branch purchased the premises.



It is interesting that the "Poppy Appeal ladies" would go to the Café le Colisée and the Hotel Ritz. Maybe it would be worthwhile to remind them of it – and suggest a belated continuation!

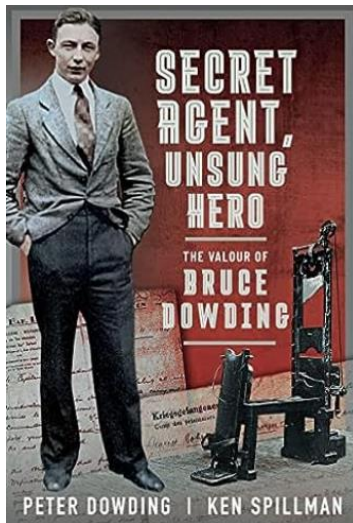
Best

Laurence David-Grant

The two letters Laurence refers to:

Click on either to see a larger picture (use your browser's back arrow to return to this page)

BOOK



Peter Dowding, former Premier of Western Australia has written this book about his Uncle, Bruce Dowding who was murdered by the Gestapo in 1943 .

Peter will be at the Poppy Appeal Coffee Morning (see above) where copies of his book can be obtained.

They can also be purchased at The Red Wheelbarrow Book Store, 9-11 rue de Médicis, 75006 Paris.

For an extensive review of the work click on this link or copy it into your browser:

<https://quadrant.org.au/magazine/2023/09/australian-hero-of-the-resistance/>

TYRANNICAL TICKETS

Another one!

I opened the letterbox the other day and there it was: another ticket, this one a fine for momentarily impinging on a bus lane at the point where the car and bus lanes suddenly invert.

Driving in Paris has become a nightmare. A speed limit that goes up and down like a yoyo, the proliferation of bus lanes, cycle lanes, no parking areas and whole stretches of the city closed off to drivers on high days and holidays. Driving across the city without incurring a ticket for some sort of traffic violation has become a challenge comparable with a computer game... Now there's an idea, a computer game where you have to make a series of deliveries and pick-ups in a limited time on a real map of Paris. You start with 12 points and lose them for infringements and, when you reach zero, you're dead. And getting a fine cancelled even for a good reason is, they say, almost impossible.

Oh, for the driver-friendly Paris of yesteryear when the only difficulty was to attain a level of invective capable of holding at bay all the other drivers just as selfish as you were.

Or was it? An occasion comes to mind when I did refuse to pay a parking ticket. Indeed, I thought it would be easy – not so!...

What happened (some 40 years ago) was that I had parked the car for the week in front of our flat on Boulevard Richard Lenoir. In those days that was fine. I usually cast a glance at the vehicle on returning home from work to ensure that all was in order. A formality I thought; the somewhat dilapidated Peugeot which served as the family chariot was not of a kind to attract the attention of the ill-intentioned. One day I noticed an ominous scrap of paper on the windscreen. A cursory glance revealed that it was – yes – a parking ticket! I looked at the motive: parking on a zebra crossing! Only then did I realise that I was standing on the first of a series of white stripes across the road. They hadn't been there that morning!

A glimmer of light dawned and, in search of confirmation I crossed the road to a neighbouring ironmonger's and spoke to the man. « Ah yes », he said, « that was quite amusing. Some workmen turned up this morning, lifted up the front of your car and turned it at right angles to the pavement. They used it as a sort of shield to protect them from the traffic as they worked. Then, when they'd finished painting the crossing, they just lifted the front of the car again and put it back in place – only now on the zebra crossing they had just painted. ». He paused, « That's when a policeman stopped by, saw your car and stuck a ticket on it. » He laughed...



Shortly afterwards, back home, « No » I said to Isabelle, « I'm not going to pay that one.

"You'll have to," she said, "It's just bad luck."

"Bad luck!!" I fulminated. "There's an address on the form where you can write to complain." I'll write."

"It won't make any difference you know." She shrugged. But I did write. It was a letter in which I tried to inject the ludicrous nature of the "offence", not forgetting to add a touch of humour to appeal to what I trusted would be the human side of whatever "fonctionnaire" read my missive. A waste of time, that. Fonctionnaires don't have a

human side. It had taken me a long time to formulate the letter and, all I got back was another form saying my request had been rejected.



Isabelle shrugged again. "I haven't finished.", I said, and sat down and wrote a request to see the Commissaire of the arrondissement. To my surprise I got an appointment with him.

Isabelle said she wanted to come along and see what happened - her sadistic side coming out probably. She brought young Frank who must have been about two at

the time. In due course we ended up in the commissaire's office. All my hopes of getting a laugh out of him as I explained the ludicrous aspect of the "offence" faded as he looked unsmilingly at us. "Well, I guess that's it." I thought, "maybe I'd better get out my chequebook.". Then he reached over his desk, picked up the ticket which I had waved dramatically during my discourse, tore it up and said "Bonne journée". Nothing else, and a few seconds later we were on our way home.

We had just arrived back at the flat when the sound of a police siren rose from the street 3 floors below. A common occurrence, unworthy of attention you will say. Less so was the screech of tyres in front of the door. What, we wondered, could it be? Had a neighbour fallen sick? Feet thundered on the staircase, one floor, two ... They stopped on the third and the thundering was transferred to the door. Good god. What had I done? Had the commissaire collapsed at his desk and was I suspected of...

I opened the door to find two large policemen standing there. "The commissaire sent us to return this to you sir." The largest announced and he handed me a small woolly hat. "We think it's your son's.



Mark Yates



**Don't forget to
book in for this
month's lunch.**

**Thursday 19 October
1215 for 1230
Only €20 - Pay on the day
(in cash please)**

Contact Richard at 06 45 10 47 70 or
richard.neave05@gmail.com

*Reserve early to be sure of a place.
(Cancellations up to 48h before)*



LUNCH MENU 19th October

Aperitif

STARTER-
Celery soup

MAIN COURSE-
*Quiche Lorraine,
potatoes and green salad*

DESSERT-
Tarte Tatin

*Wine served with the meal
Coffee or tea*

A Word in your Ear...

Editorial note:

Maxine's piece this month starts off with a single expression but goes on to become a fully developed and interesting article on a whole range of words which have been happily imported into the English language from India. These were quickly adopted with none of the heart-rending discussions which would have racked the Academie francaise had any injudicious French ex-colonial attempted to similarly "pollute" the French language with importations.

Thank goodness we never had an "English Academy" to impoverish our language.

"Have a dekko"?

Those of you who speak English but don't live in England may not have come across this expression before and even here it is now rather archaic. Nevertheless, I like to help keep such expressions alive, so here's the derivation...

'Dekko' is the usual spelling, but as it is a slang term derived from spoken language the spelling is somewhat arbitrary; sometimes 'decko', sometimes 'deko'. The proper spelling, which is virtually never used, is 'dekho'. The word, which we'll come to later, is one of the numerous examples that the British army harvested during the period of governance of India known as the British Raj (1858-1947). These include the everyday words:

Avatar

Bandana, bangle, bazaar, bungalow

Cashmere, catamaran, chutney, cummerbund, curry

Dinghy, dungarees

Guru

Juggernaut

Khaki, kedgeriee

Nirvana

Pundit, pyjamas

Sari, shampoo, swastika

Thug, typhoon

Yoga

All these words were assimilated into English with their (more or less) correct spelling. The British soldiery, however, also invented more, mangling mispronunciations of the Urdu or Hindi originals. Among them:

Blighty (England) - bilāyati (foreign, especially European)

Buckshee (free, without charge) - bakhshī (giver, paymaster)

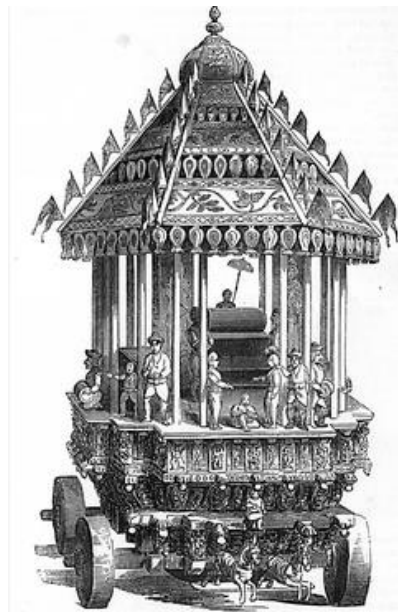
Choky (jail) - chauki (shed)

Mulligatawny (soup) - miḷaku-taṇṇi (miḷaku black pepper + taṇṇi water)

Pukka (very good) - pakkā (cooked, ripe, substantial)

The British in India also appropriated words to form new phrases in English, for example:

Hobson-jobson (a version of the call 'Yā Ḥasan! Yā Ḥusayn!')



Hindu deity Jagannath's huge cart in a 19th century festival. Notice the size of the figures.

Go doolally (from the place name Deolali)
Tickety-boo (from the Hindi 'ṭhīk hai', meaning all right)

'Have a dekho' belongs in the latter list, 'Dekho' being a Hindi word meaning 'look'. The expression first began to be used by the British in India in the middle of the 19th century and soon migrated back home with soldiers on leave. The phrase was originally 'have a deck', which derived in the same way, but which has now gone out of use. 'Have a dekho' is first found in print in January 1856 in an appropriate place - Allen's Indian Mail, a newspaper devoted to news of India and China aimed at the families of servicemen stationed there:

'The natives of the place flock round, with open mouths and straining eyes, to have a dekho.'

'Have a dekho' was (and is) used mostly in the London area, as are two other phrases with the same 'have a look' meaning - 'have a Captain Cook' and 'have a butchers', which are both rhyming slang rather than foreign imports. 'Take a shufti' is yet another London expression with the same meaning, also a foreign word mispronounced by members of the British army but this time from the Arabic 'šufti', meaning 'have you seen?'

At the risk of wandering from my original theme and pondering all these expressions for "have a look", I am led to complete the list by adding another odd expression with the same meaning: to 'have a gander'. This sounds as though it could be a mispronunciation of a foreign word or another example of rhyming slang. In fact, it's neither. A gander being a male goose, it alludes to the bird's habit of stretching its neck high when looking for predators.



Maxine Arnoult

The Last Laugh:



The Doctor and his Posh Patient

Patient - Hubert, Hubert, It's an emergency!

Doctor - But, my dear Aurelia, what is it? Why are you shouting like that?

P - Ah Hubert, I've been stung by a wasp!

Dr - Now, calm down. First of all, tell me where you were stung?

P - Oh, no, Hubert, please don't ask me that. I really don't want to tell you. It's so embarrassing!

Dr - But my dear Aurelia, I am a doctor, bound by professional secrecy. And besides, my dear, we are friends. You know me. You know I never talk to people about my patients. Now tell me where that nasty wasp stung you.

P - But if I say, I'll be the laughingstock of Kensington. I'll tell you anything but that.

Dr - Look Aurelia. If you won't tell me where you were stung how on earth do you expect me to treat you?

P - Oh Hubert, Will you promise not to tell anyone? Not even your wife? I really don't want my friends to know!

Dr - I promise. I swear it! Go ahead, tell me. Where were you stung?

P - It was in the fruit and vegetable section of LIDL.

Mark Yates

Janet's July Quiz: Answers :

1. *Ottobre*
2. *Opal*
3. *Aster**
4. *Binx*
5. *Treehouse of Horror*
6. *Third*
7. *Scorpio*
8. *McDonalds*
9. *31*
10. *February*



11. Winterfylleth
12. Mahatma Gandhi

* If you answered marigold or cosmos you can count that as right too.

**Comments & contributions to mfyates@gmail.com
Back numbers: rblfrance.org/ then "Paris Branch Newsletters"**