



Paris Branch

Newsletter

N° 36 – May 2025



CONTENTS

Page

- 2 Introduction**
- 3 May Quiz**
- 4 Events**
- 5 The English Pope**
- 7 A Word in Your Ear...**
- 8 The Last Laugh**
- 9 Quiz answers**



Chairman's introduction to the May RBL Paris Branch Newsletter.

Welcome everyone to this month's Newsletter.

Since our last Newsletter it's been a busy time.

We had a very successful thank you and welcome for new members cocktail evening on the 27th March. There was a very good attendance and everybody appeared to have enjoyed themselves.

Sadly, as you know we had to cancel last month's lunch due to lack of numbers signing up for it. However, we will hopefully be having a lunch on the 22nd. So, if you haven't signed up for it please email me to let me know that you will be attending.

On the 10th April Janet and I sorted and delivered Poppies to the two ships that every year support our Poppy Appeal.

On the 24th April both Janet, Tim and myself went and sorted out the branch cellar. We managed to get rid of a lot of things that needed to be disposed of, giving us some space for the Poppies when they arrive.

On the 26th April I along with Janet and some members attended the remembrance service at Maisons Laffitte.

29th April I represented our branch at the Embassy for the AGM of the British in France. A very successful meeting, which was well attended.

The 3rd May I attended the rekindling of the flame at the Arc for the Association d'Entraide des Anciens combattants Polonaise en France. A very moving ceremony it was, and I presented them with a Royal British Legion shield which they very much appreciated.

On VE day I represented the branch at the Arc for the 80th year commemoration. See some photos attached.

I had to call a special Zoom meeting of our committee on the 12th May to discuss the situation regarding our service of remembrance this year. As you will remember last year I wrote to Jean-Pierre Le Dinh at the Cathedral Notre Dame to say that now that the Cathedral is open once again we would very much wish to continue holding our 11th November service there as we had done since 1924. He replied that we would be most welcome to continue holding our service there. However, John Crothers had a video conference call with Ambroise Dumont, Chef du Cabinet at the Cathedral recently who informed John that things had changed at the Cathedral. They were receiving up to thirty thousand visitors per day, which they expected to increase to forty thousand per day, which made it very difficult. Also, at 3.00 P.M everyday they now hold a Rosary service which lasts for about half an hour. As you know our service is at 3.00 P.M. So, they didn't think it would be possible for us to have our service. I was then contacted by Ian Reed who informed me that he had been told that we were no longer allowed to hold our service there. I contacted Ian who very kindly emailed Ambroise Dumont whom he knows very well to explain about our service and asked if it would be possible to still hold our service. I suggested that we hold our service at 4.00 P.M.

At the meeting on the 12th both John Crothers and Ian Reed attended along with Julian who is our bugler and also a committee member. Sean also attended from the Embassy. We have decided that we shall, through Julian who has a very reliable contact at the Cathedral try, to set up a meeting at the Cathedral with the clergy there to try and resolve the situation. Should we not be able to hold our service there, we would have to return to holding our service at Les Invalides which as you know is expensive. Last year we had to pay a thousand euros, which is money that comes out of our Poppy fund. Sean has said that should we have to return to Les Invalides he would try and look at if Les Invalides could reduce these costs.

We now await the outcome and will keep you informed.

Richard

MAY QUIZ

1. In the annual cheese-rolling festival held at Cooper's Hill, in the UK in May, competitors chase a giant wheel of cheese down a steep hill. What type of cheese?
2. Name one of the two signs of the horoscope associated with May.
3. May Day celebrations are held in many places to mark the return of spring, and often include what medieval dance tradition?
4. What world famous horse race is usually held in the USA on the first Saturday in May?
5. April's Birthstone is diamond and June's is ruby. What is May's?
6. Towel Day, celebrated on 25th May each year, is a tribute to which popular British Science fiction and comedy author who died in 2001?
7. The Empire State building opened on 1 May in which year?
8. Cinco de Mayo, the 5th May, commemorates a Mexican military victory over whom, France, the UK or the USA?
9. What word is recognised as an international distress call?
10. What's the name of the colourful international song competition (whose entrants are mostly from Europe) held annually in May and broadcast around the world?
11. The "Palme d'Or" (Golden Palm) is the highest prize given out at which annual film festival award held annually in May?
12. Who wrote the line, "Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May"?
13. In some parts of Europe and the USA, May the 29th is a day for placing what unusual item
14. What do "April showers" bring in May, according to a popular expression?



Answers on last page

Janet Warby

EVENTS

27 March: Cocktail for Poppy sellers and new members. This went very well.

29 March: At Embassy: AGM of the British in France. A very successful meeting, which was well attended.

3rd May:

Réanimation de la flamme
at the Arc for the
Association d' Entraide des
Anciens combattants
Polonaise en France.

8th May: VE day
commemoration at the Arc



COMING SOON :



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

Thursday 22 May.
1215 for 1230

Only €18 - Pay on the day (in cash
please)

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

*Book soon to be sure of a place.
(Cancellations up to 48h before)*



LUNCH MENU 22 May

APERITIF

surprise

MAIN COURSE

Surprise

DESERT

Surprise

**WINE SERVED WITH THE
MEAL**

COFFEE OR TEA

THE ENGLISH POPE



For most of history the Italian branch of the Catholic church has managed to clutch the Papacy in its grasp with an enthusiasm and single mindedness of the Sicilian mafia.

160 Italian popes. The French only had a tenth of that – 16 and other countries have hardly had a look-in.

The latter are a scattered few, including a number of one-offs amongst whom figured, of course, the late lamented Francis, the very first from the New World, after a mere 500 year wait.

However, on examining the list of those few popes from the more obscure origins, there is to be found the one and only English Pope

Adrian IV, as he chose to be called. (I say English and not British advisedly, given his deplorable role in the subjugation of Ireland) He was born Nicholas Breakspear, son of a monk at St Alban's. As monks were subject to a vow of celibacy the charitable view would be that his father had turned to religion in his widowhood. A less charitable view is not perhaps unconnected with the fact that Nicholas was turned down by the abbot when he applied to join the abbey. Ostensibly his lack of education was advanced as a reason.

Undeterred by this he took himself off to France, studied there and joined St. Ruf monastery where he became abbot. He then went to Scandinavia as a Papal Legate, created the first ever Archdiocese there - covering Norway, Sweden and parts of Denmark - ensuring independence from the German church and consolidating the Pope's authority.

When Breakspear returned from Scandinavia in 1154, he became the 170th Pope following the death of Pope Eugenius III. There was considerable competition in the Christian world at the time, between the Pope and the Emperor contending for primacy. When Frederick Barbarossa became Holy Roman Emperor in 1155, he sought Adrian's blessing for his imperial coronation. Adrian demanded that Frederick perform the traditional gesture of kissing his foot. Frederick refused, on the grounds that it was humiliating for an emperor. This diplomatic tussle typified the

ongoing competition between their two roles and delayed the coronation. Eventually, Frederick relented and kissed the pope's foot, The coronation followed on June 18, 1155. Adrian remained in power until his death in 1159.

Some time before Adrian appeared on the scene, a radical reformer, Arnold of Brescia, had gained support for his opinion that the church should renounce worldly power and embrace poverty. He had even managed to get a preceding pope exiled from Rome for a while. Unsurprisingly, Adrian disagreed and eventually succeeded in having the upstart eliminated. Arnold was hanged but such was his popularity that it was considered necessary to burn his body and cast his ashes into the Tiber to reduce the chances of his remains becoming a cause for the creation of a martyr's shrine.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, it would seem that Adrian had not completely forgotten his British origins. In 1155 Henry II was looking to add Ireland to his possessions and Adrian issued a papal bull called *Laudabiliter*. This gave Henry papal approval to invade and govern Ireland in order to make the Irish Church conform with Roman Catholic practices. It would seem that 500 years after Hilda's Synod of Whitby had settled differences between Celtic and Roman Christianity, Irish independence had once more, as is its wont, reappeared.

It should be added that some claim that this act was invented in later years in order to justify subsequent intervention in Ireland – a situation which might be held to have continued to this day.

In Britain, Adrian is virtually forgotten in spite of his unique position in history. Only in and around his hometown of Abbots Langley are there a few reminders of its distinguished former resident. Streets such as Popes Road, Adrian Road and Breakspear Road exist. There is a tablet commemorating Breakspear displayed on the wall of the Church of St. Lawrence the Martyr and Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School in nearby St. Albans holds an annual pilgrimage to Adrian's tomb in Rome for students and staff.

Modern opinion has it that he most likely died of quinsy – a nasty throat infection – but a popular belief subsists that, more picturesquely, he choked on a fly which flew down his throat while he was drinking.



Papal conclaves are usually unpredictable, and it is unlikely that any of Britain's three possible contenders will be chosen this time round. (this article was written on the 2nd day of the conclave.) Irrelevant as it may be to many of us, whatever our persuasion, it is nonetheless impossible to completely ignore this arcane tradition of burning the ballots while watchers wait eagerly for black – and eventually white – smoke with bated breath.

Janet Warby



A Word in your Ear.... Seersucker.

I first ran into this word during a heatwave last year. I was wearing this crinkly shirt that is nice and cool in hot weather and thought no more of it until Irene said, "I didn't know you had a seersucker shirt." "What's that you're calling me now?" I replied, "Something –sucker! Doesn't sound very nice!"

She went on to explain that this time, she hadn't been insulting me but couldn't help adding that anybody who could get to my age without knowing what "seersucker" meant must be of limited intelligence. It turned out to be the crinkly aspect which is the essential of seersucked-ness and I have to admit it's nice to wear in hot weather.

The name, however seemed more than a little curious and I wondered where it could have come from. I quick dip into Wikipedia revealed that the word comes from the Persian *shîr* and *shakar*, "milk and sugar", from the material's curiously double texture, a mixture of gritty ("sugar") and smooth ("milk").

If, like me, you were not familiar with the term, with summer coming up, you might find it worth remembering next time you're in a haberdashery (Which might well turn out to be the "Last Word" next month.



M.Y.

The Last Laugh



A Compliment.

Peter - I must say John's girlfriend over there is very attractive. She's got the lot: a perfect figure; lovely blond hair. And what a nice ... smile.

Ginny - I suppose so.

Peter - And that lass over there looks great. Lovely complexion.

Ginny - And a surprisingly low neckline as you may have noticed.

Peter - Mmm - Yes. I suppose she has.

Ginny - It draws the eye from the layers of makeup she's got on.

Peter - Don't be like that. I'm only commenting on the other guests.

Ginny - Yes. All women I notice! Pity you never say things like that to me anymore.

Peter - What do you mean? You know I appreciate you, Ginny. It's just that I ran out of compliments after a time, and I don't want to repeat myself.

Ginny - Well You could sort of mention it from time to time. It wouldn't do any harm to remind me that I'm attractive too: It's been so long since you told me what I look like that I've forgotten.

Peter - Well, I still think you're a wonderful woman.

Ginny - That's a bit ... succinct. You could make it a bit more convincing.

Peter - Well, let me say how happy I am that a gorgeous young lady like you, combining both beauty and intelligence should choose to be with me rather than any of the other men clogging up the landscape round here.

Ginny - Oh, Peter: That's a lovely thing to say! See how wonderful you can be if you try?

Peter - Yes. Well, I sometimes forget how very attractive I am!

M.Y. (51)

May Quiz: Answers:

1. Double Gloucester 2. Taurus and Gemini 3. Dancing around the maypole 4. The Kentucky Derby 5. Emerald 6. Douglas Adams 7. 1931 8. France; Cinco de Mayo is sometimes incorrectly described as Mexico's Independence Day, but that day is celebrated not on 5 May but on 16 September.	9 "Mayday", this has nothing to do with the celebration known as May Day, but is adapted from the French phrase "m'aider" - "help me" 10 The Eurovision Song Contest 11 Cannes Film Festival 12 William Shakespeare 13 September, 9 letters 14 April showers bring forth May flowers.
--	---



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

