



**Paris Branch**

## **Newsletter**

**N° 41 – November 2025**



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## NOVEMBER QUIZ



1. What name was given to the revolution that took place through an armed insurrection in Petrograd on 7 November, 1917?
2. What are the two zodiac signs for the month of November?
3. Which mineral is an eight on Mohs scale of hardness, with the orange variety being both the state gemstone of Utah and the birthstone for November?
4. Which group had a hit with 'November Rain'?
5. Which flower's name derives from the Greek words meaning golden flower? It is also the birth flower for November.
6. In literature, who was born in Wattenscheid, Germany, on November 11<sup>th</sup>?
7. Bonfire Night is celebrated on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, but in which year was the Gunpowder Plot?
8. Is Thanksgiving Day in America celebrated on the first, second, third or fourth Thursday in November?
9. The November class of submarine was a nuclear-powered attack submarine in service from 1958 to 1990 for which country?
10. The national Remembrance Sunday ceremony is held in the UK at 11 a.m., on the second Sunday in November at the Cenotaph on Whitehall. Who designed the Cenotaph?
2. On the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1919, Nancy Astor becomes Britain's first woman MP. She was elected Member of Parliament for which city?
1. "The house was very quiet, and the fog – we are in November now – pressed against the windows like an excluded ghost," is a line from which book that was first published in 1910?

Janet Warby



**EVENTS**

**11 Novembre: St Louis des Invalides**

Below is a



shot of the entrée led by our faithful piper, Murdoch Mackenzie and several others.



Unfortunately the courtyard in front of the Cathedral was under repair so photographic opportunities were limited.

The youngsters' read beautifully,

The ceremony was, as always, most impressive, and John Crothers is to be thanked for his handling of the music and the choir.

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**22/10**

**A most successful coffee morning for the poppy appeal at the ambassador's residence.**

**Thursday 6 November 19h00  
War Poetry**

Les Clack, accompanied by some of his troupe which many of us know from his productions, at the Théâtre de Nesle, gave a reading at the clubhouse. Attendance was somewhat limited but, those did come were attentive and very appreciative. it was an excellent evening

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Rosemary Rudland, Vice-présidente Comité Juno Canada writes to say:

It was a privilege for me to lay a wreath, on behalf of the RBL Paris branch, at the British and Commonwealth Memorial in Beuzeville, Eure, on 11 November, followed by giving RBL poppy crosses for schoolchildren to lay in the municipal cemetery on the graves of 5 British soldiers who fell 25th August 1944. Normandie

Rosemary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### Annual General Meeting

This will be held on Monday 24th November at 18h30.  
Members should have received all the relevant papers by email.  
Please note that your subscription must be up to date to vote.  
Do your best to attend

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### Rekindling the flame, Arc de Triumph. Souvenir Français.

Richard passes on the following:

We have just received an invitation to the above on 26th November 2025.  
I shall attend and should be glad if you would let me know at [richard.neave05@gmail.com](mailto:richard.neave05@gmail.com) if you will be able to accompany me. Robin will be carrying our standard.

.....



There will be no lunch in November, However, there will be a Christmas Cocktail evening at the clubhouse on Thursday the 11th December.

Contact Richard at 06 45 10 47 70 or [richard.neave05@gmail.com](mailto:richard.neave05@gmail.com) to reserve.

Our member Francis Jolivet, publisher of his own historical magazine “Gazette de l’Histoire” has commenced a series on small French towns. Here is an abbreviated translation of his first:



## Carcassonne

Critical minds will be quick to point out that Carcassonne cannot be described as either a small town or a village, as evidenced by the latest census, which counted 46,218 inhabitants.480 of 12 November 2025

Nevertheless, it is a remarkable example of a perfectly preserved medieval fortified town and therefore fully deserves its place in this section.

The history of Carcassonne began on the site of Carsac, located two kilometres south-west of the present-day town. It is here that archaeologists have discovered traces of habitation dating back to around 800 BC. Around 550BC, this first village gave rise to the oppidum of Carcaso, which offered a clear view of the surrounding plain and the River Aude, a strategic position in case of attack. Carcaso then became a major stop on the road connecting Narbonne to Bordeaux, the Via Aquitania, two cities that were already important. Conquered by the Romans in 122 BC, it prospered thanks to the wine trade. Etruscan and Greek pottery remains attest to the central role it played in regional trade. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the first wave of Germanic invasions shook the Roman Empire; Carcaso responded by building a 1,200-metre-long wall around itself. In the 5th century and the Visigoth kingdom of Aquitaine was founded. It was a period of turmoil, however and the city was successively occupied, in 725 by the Umayyads and in 759 by the Franks.



This last episode gave rise to the legend of la Dame Carcas, photo: . her bust in front of the Narbonne Gate. According to local legend, Dame

Carcas was the wife of Balaach, a Muslim prince killed in battle against Charlemagne. After his death, she is said to have defended the city against the Frankish army and succeeded in repelling it. In 888, the death of



Charles le Gros marked the end of the Carolingian Empire and led to the rise of local lords. In 1067, the county of Carcassonne passed into the hands of Raimond-Bernard Trencavel, Viscount of Albi and Nîmes; this marked the beginning of a dynasty that would have a decisive influence on local history Bernard Aton IV, son of Raimond-Bernard, united the territories inherited from his parents and thus dominated the Lower Languedoc. In Carcassonne, the Trencavel family

ordered the construction of the Basilica of Saint-Nazaire and Saint-Celse, work on which began in 1096. They also had a palatium built around 1130, which became their seigneurial residence. This would be the origin of the future count's castle in

*La Dame Carcas*

Carcassonne. For the town, this period was marked by

significant prosperity and expansion, with the creation of several suburbs. It also corresponded to a period of independence during which the Trencavels



*St Celse*

asserted themselves against the counts of Toulouse and Barcelona, their powerful neighbours. This era came to an end in 1209 with the outbreak of the crusade against the Cathars, - the Albigensian Crusade. Catharism, a Christian movement that emerged in Europe in the 12th century, rejected the Roman Church, which it accused of not respecting the ideals of Christ. In the south of France, four churches adopted this doctrine: Albi, Val d'Aran, Toulouse and Carcassonne. In 1209, Pope Innocent III launched a crusade against these 'Albigensians', who were branded as heretics, with the support of King Louis. Under siege, the city of Carcassonne fell after fifteen days. On 15 August 1209, Raimond Trencavel was defeated by Simon IV, Count of Montfort who then seized the city. Seventeen years later, in 1226, Carcassonne was annexed to the French royal domain, while the crusade came to an end in 1229. In 1240, Raimond Trencavel unsuccessfully attempted to regain his lands with the support of certain suburbs. In retaliation, Louis IX ordered the destruction of the homes of the traitors, who were forced to settle on the other bank of the Aude. This gave rise to a dual urban layout: the medieval city remaining on the right bank, a new town appearing on the left bank – this was the origin of the bastide. It was in the 13th century that Carcassonne acquired the appearance we know today: the former palace of the Trencavel family was raised to the status of a "*chateau comtal*" and a second 1,600-metre-long wall was built to double the existing Gallo-Roman ramparts. During the reigns of Philip III the Bold and Philip IV le bel (the Fair), the fortifications of Carcassonne underwent significant modernisation. The walls were equipped with loopholes suitable for crossbow shooting, while new gates were erected, most notably the monumental Porte Narbonnaise. From then on, Carcassonne gained a reputation as an impregnable city.



It became a major political, administrative and military centre. From 1258 onwards, with the signing of the Treaty of Corbeil, which established the border between France and Aragon in the immediate vicinity, Carcassonne also played a strategic role in terms of defence. In 1659, the Treaty of the Pyrenees ended De Franco-Spanish war that had begun in 1635. The subsequent shift of the border to the south meant that Carcassonne lost its privileged status. By the dawn of the 19th century, its former power was nothing more than a distant memory. Napoleon even removed Carcassonne from the list of strongholds in 1804. Miserable dwellings were built between the walls, leaning against the inner enclosure. Abandoned to their fate, its walls were dismantled and then sold in fragments to local masons... It was not until 1840 that the city regained its former prestige: that year, Jean-Pierre Cros-Mayrevieille, a historian and archaeologist from Carcassonne, obtained the classification of the basilica in the register of historic monuments.

Subsequently, Prosper Mérimée, national inspector of historic monuments, visited the site to assess the work required and entrusted its management to Eugène Viollet-le-Duc. Viollet-le-Duc, best known for his work on Notre Dame de Paris, first undertook the restoration of the Basilica of Saint-Nazaire, renowned for its flamboyant stained-glass windows. He then consolidated the upper parts of the Gallo-Roman and medieval military architecture. This vast restoration project, begun in 1853, was completed in 1911 and it is this which has enabled the medieval city to regain its original splendour.



Violet le Duc

Francis Jolivet (trad MY) (For the original version do not hesitate to contact Francis at [francis-jolivet@orange.fr](mailto:francis-jolivet@orange.fr).)



## A Word in your Ear: Quiche

Quiche doesn't really obey any of the usual rules of pronunciation

I like the story about the American president (take your choice which) who, in a restaurant, spoke to the waitress who promptly slapped him around the ear. "What's got into her?", he said his lunch companion. "I don't know. What did you say to her?" I just said, "Can I have a quiche?"

"Ah Mr president. That's not how you pronounce it."

M.Y.

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## The Last Laugh



### Praying for Rain

**Parishioner:** Whew! It's hot today Father.

**Priest:** Yes my son. Blazing sunshine again. That's why we're holding this special service this evening. The drought is really beginning to get to people.

**Parishioner:** Yes, my garden's in a right state. And now that there's a hose-pipe-ban you can't do much about it.

**Priest:** Mrs Brown was telling me she pours all her washing up water on her flowers. She's the one who suggested having a special service...

**Parishioner:** To pray for rain? Ha, an old favourite of your profession since the days of the shaman and the witch doctor, father.

**Priest:** If you feel like that about it, why do you come to church.

**Parishioner:** It gets people together - gives them a sense of unity. And they feel that they're doing something to attack the problem. One has to participate.

**Priest:** To get elected. There's that too. I hear you're standing for the Tories.

**Parishioner:** Just doing my bit. I have to say you've got a lot of people here. Do you think they really believe it will work.

**Priest:** Oh ye of little faith!

**Parishioner:** Well, I'm not the only one. Look at that crowd. There's only one of them has faith that I can see.

**Priest:** How can you say that? Are you putting yourself up as some kind of mind reader?

**Parishioner:** Not at all father. Look at that old chap over there. Now he believes in you!

**Priest:** Who? Old Harry. Why are you picking him out as having more faith than the others?

**Parishioner:** He's the only one who's brought an umbrella!

M. Y. (63)



### *November Quiz: Answers:*

1. The October Revolution	7. 1605
2. Scorpio (Oct 24 – Nov 22) and Sagittarius (Nov 23 – Dec 21)	8. Fourth Thursday
3. Topaz	9. Russia or the Soviet Union
4. Guns N' Roses	10. Edwin Lutyens
5. Chrysanthemum	11. Plymouth
6. James Bond	12. Howard's End (by E.M. Forster)

*Comments & contributions to [mfyates@gmail.com](mailto:mfyates@gmail.com)  
Back numbers: [rblfrance.org/](http://rblfrance.org/) then "Paris Branch Newsletters"*

