



# British Association of the Var

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Association Loi 1901 No: W831001750

[www.baofthevar.com](http://www.baofthevar.com)

**March 2014**

**Newsletter**

**No 142**

## Important AGM details - Wednesday 26 March 2014

It is **very important** that those members intending to attend the AGM return the Booking Form accompanying this Newsletter.

### Location: **La Pinède**

On the DN7 between Le Muy and Les Arcs. If you are coming from Le Muy direction, the large builders' merchants SO.SA.CA is on your right and approx 500m on the left is the venue. Sat Nav 43,460255 6,524983

### Schedule for the morning

#### **10h00 - Registration**

with coffee, orange juice and croissants available for members

#### **10h30 AGM commences**

AGM documents, which will be distributed 14 days prior to the meeting, will include the Agenda and proxy voting slips for members unable to attend.

Nominations for committee must be with the secretary by **23 February**.

Members who receive electronic Newsletters will receive their AGM documentation electronically and proxy voting slips will be attached in the same manner as event booking forms.

#### **12h00 approx end of the meeting**

Members can then stay for lunch if they wish. The venue is renowned for being the home of the best pizzas in France.

**Please indicate on the reservation slip whether you are staying for lunch.** Will members who do stay note that all meals and drinks after the AGM are their responsibility and the restaurant will provide individual bills. BAV is **not** responsible for any food or drink costs. For details of the venue and menus please view - [www.pizzeriapinede.com](http://www.pizzeriapinede.com)

**ALL MEMBERS must complete the Registration Form prior to the Meeting.**  
**ONLY MEMBERS can attend and no membership subscription renewals or membership applications will be accepted on the morning of the AGM.**

Annual General Meeting 26 March 2014 - RULE 6: General Meetings

**I hope you will be able to attend the AGM. It is an important meeting in the life of our Association. You will very soon be getting the papers and then you will have the opportunity to ask questions on any item on the agenda but only if you send your question to me 7 days before the AGM. Members may participate in any discussion following the disclosure of written questions and the committee members' answer. Members may also make proposals but these cannot be voted upon at this meeting. A decision on proposals cannot be made until the next AGM or general meeting. There is also an opportunity to contribute to the meeting without written questions during the agenda item "Matters of General Interest". The rules that govern the procedures to be followed at a general meeting are printed below.**

"Any member wishing to raise a question at the AGM which relates to an Agenda item or the content of the Annual Report and Accounts shall submit the question in writing to the Secretary not less than seven days before the date of the meeting."

"Any member may put forward a proposal at an AGM which will be recorded for discussion by the Committee with the member to determine whether it should be formally adopted by the next AGM. Any proposal which is rejected by the Committee will be reported in the Newsletter and in the papers convening the next following AGM by the Secretary together with the reasons for rejection."

*Michael Wharton, secretary@bavofthevar.com*

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## Forthcoming Events

**Committee Meeting**  
**20 March**

**BAV AGM at La Pinède**  
**10h00**  
**26 March – Le Muy/Les Arcs**

**Lunch – St Maximin**  
**23 April**

**Talk & Lunch – Cotignac**  
**10 May**

**Summer Soiree – La Motte**  
**11 June**

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### Special treat for St Georges Day

On 23 April at 12 noon we will be lunching at the 3\* gastronomic restaurant, the Couvent Royale, next to the Basilica in Ste Maximin-la-Ste-Baume. We have opted for the "Plat du jour" at €29. This is a beautiful restaurant beneath the vaulted ceiling of the former convent attached to the Basilica in former times. Arrive early to visit the market and to enjoy a coffee in the pretty main square then tour the Basilica before lunch. The address is Place Jean Salusse, but as it is market day the town centre will be full. Look for parking signs on the outskirts.

### Committee Members

**Chairman - Rob Flanagan**  
[chairman@baofthevar.com](mailto:chairman@baofthevar.com)

**Secretary - Michael Wharton**  
[secretary@baofthevar.com](mailto:secretary@baofthevar.com)

**Treasurer - Lesley Honeywell**  
[treasurer@baofthevar.com](mailto:treasurer@baofthevar.com)

**Welfare Coordinator - Ann Mitchem**  
[welfare@baofthevar.com](mailto:welfare@baofthevar.com)

**Events Secretary - Kevin Bell**  
[events@baofthevar.com](mailto:events@baofthevar.com)

**Publicity -**  
[publicity@baofthevar.com](mailto:publicity@baofthevar.com)  
[webmaster@baofthevar.com](mailto:webmaster@baofthevar.com)

**John Lloyd**

[John1@baofthevar.com](mailto:John1@baofthevar.com)

**Important non-Committee Members**

**Membership Secretary - Peter Rowson**  
[membership@baofthevar.com](mailto:membership@baofthevar.com) 04 94 50 38 46

**Newsletter Editor - Shirley Rowson**  
[newsletter@baofthevar.com](mailto:newsletter@baofthevar.com) 04 94 50 38 46

### A new event for May

On May 10 we propose a lunch with a speaker – a local historian. This will be something of an experiment to see if Members would appreciate this type of event. The topic for the first event is the British in the Var. We plan something similar to remember the centenary of the First World War. On 10 May we will hold the event in Cotignac in the conference room of Notre Dame de Grâces where we shall also eat. There will be a 3 course buffet with a glass of wine for €25 at 12 noon followed by the talk. In the afternoon there will be a tour of Cotignac.

*Directions: Entering Cotignac from Carcès or Brignoles make a U-turn immediately after the petrol station and before the bridge. From Sillans-la-Cascade or Entrecasteaux turn right 45 degrees after passing over the bridge. Keep going to the top of the hill on Chemin des Verdaires. GPS: 43510526N 6220761 E*

### Bastides Des Moines, Montferrat

The Committee was delighted to see the bookings flooding in for the lunch at Bastide des Moines in Montferrat which resulted in an attendance of 39. Members and guests battled against the elements and meandering roads to the north of the Var in order to reach this ever popular and atmospheric venue. Having said that, the pouring rain was the better option than the feared-for snow!



The occasion was primarily to celebrate the birthday of honorary member, John Collingwood who had reached the age of 89 and who was treated to a rousing chorus of 'Happy Birthday'. This restaurant is one of John's favourites, having been his 'local' when resident in Ampus.



Members were treated to a vast range of buffet starters and desserts, plus a choice of five main courses to satisfy every taste, and unlimited wine. We look forward to returning to this delightful venue in more clement weather conditions, to enjoy the beautiful scenery.

## “What’s On” Guide

Zenith Oméga, Toulon: 0892 700 840 [www.zenith-omega-toulon.com](http://www.zenith-omega-toulon.com)

Opera House, Toulon: 04 94 93 03 76  
[www.operadetoulon.fr](http://www.operadetoulon.fr)

Draguignan Theatre: 04 94 50 59 59  
[www.theatresendracenie.com](http://www.theatresendracenie.com)

Forum Theatre, Fréjus and Centre Culturel, St Raphaël: 04 94 95 55 55 [www.aggloscenes.com](http://www.aggloscenes.com)

### March 2014

**1 Mar Grimaud**, centre ville. Soirée Country.  
04 94 55 43 83

**1 Mar Montauroux**, cinema. Opera film – Prince Igor (Borodin). 18h00. 04 94 50 40 30

**1 Mar La Garde Freinet**, Salles des Fêtes. Concert jazz/blues. 12h00. 04 94 56 04 93

**1-2 Mar Fayence**, Le Grand Jardin. Salon des Antiquaires. 8h00-17h00. €6. 04 94 76 11 11

**1-16 Mar Ste Maxime**, Théâtre de la Mer. Covered ice-rink. 14h00-18h30. €5. 08 26 20 83 83

**2 Mar Grimaud**, Eglise St Michel. Concert – 3 cellos. 16h00. €10. 04 94 55 43 83

**7 Mar Le Rayol Canadel**, Jardin des Méditerranées. L’Odyssée des Mimosas. €12.50

**14 May Fayence**, Ecomusée Agricole. Free guided visit. 15h00. 04 94 76 03 17

**15 Mar Draguignan**, centre ville. Carnaval. 10h00-16h30. Main parade 15h00.

**16 Mar Grimaud**, Chapelle des Penitents. Festival des Soirées Musicales – piano recital. 18h00. €20. 04 94 55 43 83

**19 Mar Draguignan**, cinema. Ballet film - Sleeping Beauty. 20.15.

**20 Mar St Raphael**, Espace Félix Martin. Ronald Baker Quartet – jazz. 20h00. €15

**23 Mar Fayence**, centre ville. Carnaval. 14h00-17h00

**23 Mar Le Rayol Canadel**, Jardin des Méditerranées. Fête du Printemps. 04 94 96 07 80

**28 Mar Les Arcs**, Café de la Tour. Fish and chips lunch. 12h00. €11. Booking essential, by preceding Tuesday. 04 94 73 30 56

**29 Mar Ste Maxime**, Le Carré. Broken Tango. 20h30. €25. 04 94 56 77 77

**29 Mar Lorgues**, Espace Félix Mitterand. L’Heure Exquise – operetta. 20.45. €15

**29-30 Mar Draguignan**, Complexe Saint-Exupéry. Salon des Seniors. 10h00-19.00. Free

**30 Mar Montauroux**, cinema. Ballet film – L’Age d’Or (Shostokovich). 17h00. 04 94 50 40 30

## Orange “phishing”

Orange has warned customers not to be fooled by an email claiming to be from its accounting department and warning of a VAT payment error on their bills. The emails, which say the company overcharged customers by calculating VAT at 80% rather than 20% and that they should click a link to reclaim payment, come a few days after it was revealed that personal details of 800,000 Orange customers had been stolen.

Orange’s *Mon Compte* client page on [www.orange.fr](http://www.orange.fr) was pirated and a link inserted which allowed criminals to get access to certain customer details such as surnames, first names, postal and email addresses, some details of the RIB bank codes (not useable, Orange says), and mobile or landline numbers. Now customers may be receiving emails purporting to be from Orange saying they can reclaim sums such as €95 by clicking on a similar link. The company said that it never sends out emails that contain clickable links – and added that the criminals behind “phishing” scams were very clever at making their emails seem believable.

Orange press office said that any suspicious emails from the company should be sent to [abuse@orange.fr](mailto:abuse@orange.fr) where they will be investigated and the sending account closed.



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[www.baofthevar.com](http://www.baofthevar.com)  
See the Latest News and Forthcoming  
Events on our BA website

## Chairman's Report

Your Committee has been busy since before the year end preparing and collating paperwork for the AGM which appears to come around with ever increasing frequency. Hopefully there will be no contentious items and we can progress swiftly through the meeting and the various reports and then retire to lunch.

We have had a very successful last quarter from a social point of view, with the Grand Christmas lunch; the lunch at Montferrat to celebrate John Collingwood's birthday and the quiz lunch at Roquebrune sur Argens. Despite shortly following Christmas and being in the 'low' season, when there is traditionally a lull, the Montferrat lunch received an impressive 39 bookings - possibly this was a result of the strength of feeling and appreciation for John.

The Quiz lunch had 34 booked, this being the maximum capacity of the room and we have, unfortunately, had to disappoint several other members who tried to book. The moral of this is to book early, ideally as soon as you receive the newsletter with booking form.

I hope that you appreciate the new newsletter format with booking form included which we hope will add to members' awareness of the events.

I am not sure if the statistics bear this out but the start of this year appears to have been unusually wet. One friend said that 'we had come to France in order to avoid this' but I retorted that this reminds us of why we moved here as this inclement weather is hopefully only temporary here whereas it tends to continue in the UK. I do hope that no members have suffered unduly as a result of the weather other than the usual roof leaks. If this is not the case, then we are always here to assist.

## Embassy seeks expat life stories

The British Embassy in Paris is looking for stories from Britons in France as part of its bicentenary celebrations for the Ambassador's Paris residence on the same street as the Elysée. Franco-British relations are about much more than just activities of governments, so the embassy would like contributions – from a one-liner to a couple of pages – about your life in France, including who you are, what you do, why you came to France, why you stay and what you love about it.

It will use a selection on its various internet platforms (social media etc) during the year. Accounts that highlight better cooperation and understanding between Britons and the French would be ideal. Stories (preferably along with a photo) should be sent to [UKFR200@gmail.com](mailto:UKFR200@gmail.com)

## "Stranded abroad" scam

Sadly this nasty trick is doing the rounds again and there are still some people who are being taken in by it, so here is another warning. Your friend's e-mail address book is hacked and a message sent to everyone in it to say he is stranded in a foreign country with no money or cards as they have been stolen, that he is very distressed and frightened, and would like you to send several thousand euros immediately to help him get home. **Do not respond.** It may sound genuine as the written English of these messages has improved greatly since they first appeared, but it will be a scam. If you are worried:

1. Check the written style – does it sound like your friend or is it stilted in some way?
2. Try to ring your friend to check where he is.
3. If he is really in trouble he will ring you – even if his mobile has been stolen he can ring from a hotel or police station.

## The Bereavement Support Network of the Var (BSN)

This organisation exists to support not only the bereaved but also those who are terminally ill, and their families and friends. If you, or someone you know, could benefit from our confidential, free support, then please contact: Sandra - 04 94 84 64 89 or 06 32 35 31 24 [info@bsnvar.org](mailto:info@bsnvar.org) or [www.bsnvar.org](http://www.bsnvar.org) for further information.

 Assurance et Epargne long terme	Luc de Bardonnèche Agent général VIDAUBAN 04 94 73 00 11
<b>Car insurance</b>	<b>House insurance</b>
<b>Health top-up</b>	<b>Travel insurance</b>
<b>Professional insurance</b>	<b>Life insurance</b>
<b>Local agency - Friendly advice - English fluent</b>	
<a href="http://www.aviva-vidauban.fr">www.aviva-vidauban.fr</a> <a href="mailto:de-bardonneche-luc@aviva-assurances.com">de-bardonneche-luc@aviva-assurances.com</a>	

## Police burglary scam

Police in the Var are warning residents of an elaborate scam in which thieves are disguised as police officers. The scammers are taking advantage of the trust and gullibility of their victims - which are normally the elderly. After a series of cases in September and a more recent scam in the Draguignan area, the police department in the Var is warning residents to beware of people tricking them into believing they are police officers.

The scam always appears to be the same: firstly, someone pretending to be an agent from a company arrives at the victim's home, claiming they need to check water flow or gas pipes. Later, two or three men posing as policemen arrive, stating there was a thief in the area under the guise of an agent. They then ask the victim if they are missing any jewellery or money from their home. Without realising, the resident leads the thieves straight to all their valuables and money. Police are advising residents to always ask for identification.

### Benefits for BAV members

(Please show your membership card)

Cigalon, Grand Rue, Flayosc 04 94 70 45 85. Offer: complementary espresso coffee at this fine dining restaurant.

Flayosc Co-operative - 5% discount available with the special BAV fidelity card. Full range of wines and sparkling wine available together with fresh cheeses, wine accessories etc.

Le Petit Romain, opposite Casino, Salernes 04 94 67 54 11. Offer: complementary espresso coffee at this popular restaurant with a menu du jour at 14.50€.

Lei Cigales, Route de Draguignan, Villecroze 04 98 53 02 88. Offer: complementary espresso coffee in this restaurant specialising in galettes and crepes with a separate menu du jour at 13.50€.

Nathalie and Fabrice Alric Antiquities, Place de l'église, Villecroze - Offer 10% discount on a range of antique style household furnishings and a larger discount on antiques.

La Provençal, Place Martin Bidoure, Aups. 04 94 70 00 24. Free espresso coffee with meal.

Le Grand Hotel, Place du Général Duchatel, Aups. 04 94 70 10 82. Free coffee or *digestif* with meal.

Les Trois Marches, 11 Cours Gambetta, Cotignac. 04 94 04 65 99. Pretty provençal restaurant. Free espresso coffee with meal.

Hotel and restaurant L'Orée du Bois, Quartier Ste Roseline, Le Muy. 04 98 11 12 40. Free coffee or tea with meal.

## MEMBERS' GROUPS

### Painting Group

Our latest meeting started on the only sunny day for ages. We were greeted by Maggie and her lovely friend Sandie with tea, coffee and one of Maggie's famously delicious home-made coffee cakes (heaven!). Nine of us finally got down to some work in the sunny conservatory, where there was lots of chatter and we even managed to get some painting done!

There was a diversity of media and styles - acrylics, watercolour and oils were in use; painting on canvas, board, paper plus Pam painting beautiful miniatures on eggs! We would all like to thank Maggie Green for our lovely day and for making us so welcome.

*Stella*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\*

### The Azur Photography Group



Lights, cameras, action! For the last meeting with the help of assorted wigs, Russian military caps and other accessories from the dressing up box, the group held its second session devoted to portrait photography.

The serious point of the exercise was to apply some of the advice given at earlier meetings by visiting experts and experiment with lighting effects and other variables critical to obtaining good photographs in a studio setting.



*Mike Harper*

[mikeharper6@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*k](mailto:mikeharper6@*****k)

### Happy Boules



The boules group meets every week on Mondays at central Var locations and has lunch at 12.00 followed by boules. Whilst not formally being a BAV event, the lunches are extremely friendly and informal, typically with 10-16 people and at modest prices of 14-16€ plus wine.

If you would like to join us or find out where we are meeting (announced at the beginning of the week) please contact [chairman@baofthevar.com](mailto:chairman@baofthevar.com) You will be assured of a friendly welcome and you may even want to try playing boules, spare boules are always available.

*Rob Flanagan*

## WALK – SEILLANS

### Les Bories de Seillans

Easy circular walk taking in the chapel *Notre Dame de l'Ormeau* and the *Bories*. 2h00. Way-marked yellow. Map: IGN 3543 OT

#### Car access:

*From the south (D53): as you near the village, before joining the D19, cross a river bridge and park nearby. From the west or east (D19): turn onto the D53 and park before the bridge. Start from the bus stop St Cyr.*

Take the path to the right of the bus shelter *Saint Cyr*. Continue straight on to the chapel *Notre Dame de l'Ormeau*. Behind the chapel take the D19 to the right for 50m then turn right at the next junction – *Chemin des Bas Plans* – and continue on this road for 100m before taking a right turn into the *Chemin de la Rouvière*. Follow the yellow signs on trees to reach the *bories* area. These are indicated by small signposts and the fourth is situated 100m after the signpost and fork which returns to the village (ignore this path). Continue straight on through woodland to the *Chemin de Blaque* then the D53. Follow this road to the right for 500m then when you reach the former crossing-keeper's cottage go right onto the former railway line. Pass under a bridge then over a second bridge. The path descends to the left of the second bridge (ignore the yellow cross) and leads to a T junction where you turn left onto the original path from the bus stop.

**Optional:** To visit the village, take the path opposite the bus shelter and follow it uphill to the village. Steep climbing at the end.

#### Information

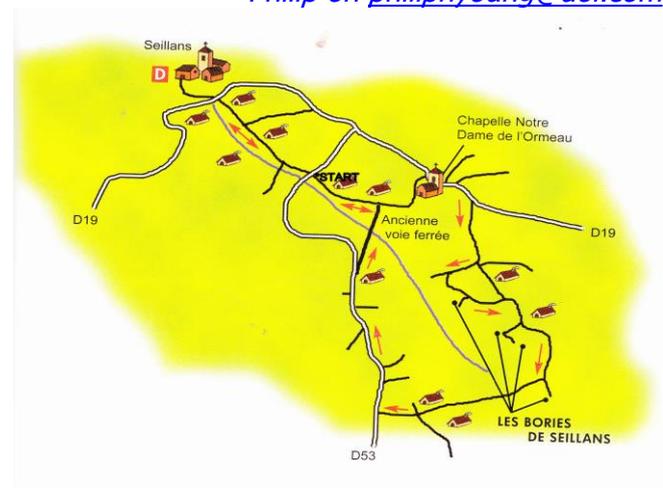
**Bories** – dry stone shelters for shepherds dating from 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Notre Dame de l'Ormeau** – 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel.

**Seillans** – an official *plus beau village de France*, originally a hilltop fortress, with a Saracen gate rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Narrow cobbled streets and ancient buildings.

### Accommodation wanted

I am looking for accommodation for June, July & August for work reasons within the Aups or Régusse area. A small chalet or caravan would suit, preferably self-contained, ideally with two bedrooms. Single occupancy each room. All types considered. Please contact



### New members

We welcome new members Joe and Marie-Claire Bishop of Cotignac and Rick and Lyn Brown of Le Muy. Joe plays a vital role in the technical side of sending out the electronic Newsletters.

### Emergency contacts:

Medical help/SAMU	15
Police/Police Nationale	17
Fire and accident/Sapeurs Pompiers	18
SOS – all services (calling from a mobile)	112
BAV Welfare phone	06 42 86 49 01
EDF English speaking number	05 62 16 49 08
Orange English speaking No.	09 69 36 39 00

### Train Touristique du Centre Var

After rail enthusiasts formed an association in 1994 to bring a disused railway line back into use, a tourist train started covering the 5,2km between Carnoules and Brignoles in 2001 (and is listed in the BAV Childrens Activities booklet), with increasing success resulting in 70 trips last year. There are special themed trips for Easter, Halloween and Christmas – complete with Father Christmas – and gastronomic outings have recently been introduced. For the 20th anniversary this year there are special projects planned, including extending the line to St Maximin station. The season starts with the *Foire de Brignoles* on 5 April. See [www.attcv.fr](http://www.attcv.fr) for details.



## Fort Brégançon

Until recently this was the holiday home of French Presidents and their families, but it has now been given to the State and will be maintained by the *Centre des Monuments Nationaux*. It will be open to the public after some improvement works from 26 June 2014. The fort is situated in the



commune of Bormes-les-Mimosas on a rocky peak near Cap Bénat, to which it is joined by a jetty and details of visiting

times should be available from their tourist office nearer the time.

Since 2007, La Lanterne, a hunting lodge in Versailles, has been made available to Presidents as a *résidence secondaire* and has been preferred to Fort Brégançon due to its proximity to Paris and superior privacy facilities.

## Married women's surnames

Married women should receive official letters in their maiden name instead of their married name, after MPs voted to clear up the rules used by the French administration. From now on a woman's surname at birth will be the default option used by government bodies, the tax office and any other state organisations. Her married name will only be used if the recipient specifically agrees to the change. It would therefore be advisable to have both names on your post box.

### British Association of the Var Welfare Coordinator

**Ann Mitchem**

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* or 06 43 86 49 01

[welfare@baofthevar.com](mailto:welfare@baofthevar.com)



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Mike Lorimer - Orias No. 07032481



## Paris-Barcelona TGV link to launch

A DIRECT TGV service between Paris and Barcelona will enter service on December 15, with the journey taking 6 hours 20 minutes. The two countries' high-speed networks were linked earlier this year but passengers still had to change trains at Figueres, near the French border, a manoeuvre that added 20 minutes to the journey time. Spain's RENFE railways operator and France's SNCF will run the line together.

The new daily services comprise two return trips between Paris and Barcelona, one return trip between Lyon and Barcelona and one return trip between Toulouse and Barcelona. There will also be one daily return trip between **Marseille, Barcelona and Madrid**. The final goal is to cut the Paris-Barcelona travel time to 5 hours and 35 minutes once the track from Perpignan to Nîmes in southern France is upgraded for high-speed travel, not expected until at least 2021.

## New Prison at Draguignan

No news of this for a while, with suspicions of budget problems, but it has now been confirmed that work will start this year at the site in Les Nouradons (between Draguignan and Les Arcs).

*Verdon Conciergerie Privée*

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## Quiz Lunch



We were fortunate to have a full complement of 34 members booked at a new venue for the quiz which was held at Restaurant du

Tour, Roquebrune sur Argens. Unfortunately due to the capacity of the restaurant we had to disappoint several members; however, those who were lucky enough to attend enjoyed a delightful lunch followed by a challenging but fascinating quiz organised by Shirley Rowson. Our thanks go to Shirley for this amusing quiz which severely stretched the grey matter. The winning team, with 39 points out of a possible 50, generously donated the prize money of 87€ to the BAV welfare fund. The team, named Genii – not! comprised Alexandra and Andrew Lewis-Smith, Peter Rowson, Rob and Cynthia Ward and Stuart Reed.



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## Ryanair cuts fees and boosts baggage

Ryanair is getting rid of some of its most annoying practices with a pledge to be more flexible on cabin baggage, stop excessive charges for fixing minor spelling mistakes and reissuing boarding cards, halve late baggage fees and junk noisy adverts during early-morning and late-evening flights.

Changes will be rolled out over the next six months with improvements to the website to get rid of the "Recaptcha" security code and a 24-hour grace period for customers to "correct any minor errors (i.e. spelling, names, routes)" made in their original booking. Ryanair will operate "quiet flights" before 8.00 and after 21.00 with no public announcements other than for safety reasons. It will allow passengers to bring a second small carry-on bag (small ladies' handbag or small airport shopping bag) no bigger than 35 x 20 x 20cm, which will allow a bottle of wine or equivalent to be carried. It will also cut the boarding card reissue fee from €70 to €15 for customers who have already checked in online. Customers who fail to check-in online will continue to pay a €70 airport check-in fee. Baggage fees will also be cut from €60 to €30 at the bag drop desk, and from €60 to €50 at the boarding gate.

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## Sirens

Sirens sound on the first Wednesday of each month across France but do you know if it is a real alert, and what to do as a result? Dating back to the Second World War, the 4,500 sirens of the *Réseau National d'Alerte* are supposed to sound a warning in the event of a major incident such as a cloud of toxic gas or nuclear accident or other imminent local catastrophe such as a dam-break. Official advice from the Ministry of the Interior says that, on hearing the siren, people are supposed to know about likely local dangers and move to avoid being affected. In most cases this means to head for a closed area or room without windows or air-conditioning, block up any gaps round doors and air vents and switch on the radio to hear France Inter, France Info or local stations. Downstream of a dam, it could mean to head for the nearest high ground. However, a study has showed that 78% of people would do nothing if they heard the siren. People are warned not to: stay inside a vehicle, go to get children from school (the school is charged with looking after its pupils), use the phone as the network should be left clear for rescue groups, remain near windows, light a flame or leave a shelter without official advice.

The alarm siren is different from the monthly reminder, which sounds for just one minute at noon on the first Wednesday of every month. In a real alarm, it sounds for three sequences of one minute and 41 seconds in a rising and falling tone with a five second gap between each sequence. The end of the alert is indicated by a 30-second siren sound.

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## Ryanair – electronic devices

Ryanair passengers can now use electronic devices such as tablets, smartphones, e-readers and MP3 players at all times on their flights, even during take-off and landing, as long as they are set to "flight mode" and all in-flight safety instructions are followed. Larger items, such as laptops, however, are not subject to the relaxation of rules. However in "flight mode" devices cannot be used for text messages, phone calls or surfing the internet. The ruling in effect allows for offline work, listening to music, reading e-books etc.

The announcement brings Ryanair into line with European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) guidelines issued at the end of November. British Airways already adopted the guidelines in December, after clearance from Britain's Civil Aviation Authority, but other airlines, including easyJet and Air France, have yet to do so.

## British TV in France – Latest

May I start by offering commiserations to those who have lost their UK TV reception since the recent Astra satellite changes. The last few weeks have resulted in major changes in reception of UK TV by satellite in the Var. As mentioned in previous BAV newsletters, UK TV providers wished to tighten reception of satellite broadcasts to the UK only. These changes mean that the Var region of France (and most of Europe) has changed from a strong reception area to a FRINGE reception area with a very weak signal. This weak signal is not uniform across the region and can change in strength and very much depends upon exactly where you live and of course the weather. Your friend in the next village may have different reception to you. Before these changes a 80cm dish will have sufficed. Satellite TV enthusiasts have done reception reports along the Riviera and it seems that a minimum recommended dish size is now 1.2 metres. I have a 1m dish and can receive all UK Freesat and Sky channels but without any "rain margin" i.e. clear skies only.

There are now two options.

- 1) Install a bigger dish.
- 2) UK TV via the internet.

### 1) A bigger dish.

These larger satellite dishes can be expensive to install (300 euros plus) and are quite heavy. We can receive strong winds in the Var so dish positioning needs careful consideration. Due to having to receive a weak signal the new dish must be setup very accurately with quality components and as such is a professional installation. Check with your Mairie whether you need planning permission for a bigger dish.

### 2) Internet TV

You will need an internet download speed of at least 2Mb. Test using this website on your computer or tablet browser. [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net). If all OK, you may be able to get UK TV via the internet.

- a) get an IPTV set top box which easily connects to your TV - it costs money and most of them have subscriptions, but you do get a remote control and is easy to use.
- b) arrange a VPN or a Proxy for your internet connection which costs a few pounds a month, makes your computer appear to be in the UK and means watching TV on your computer unless you have a compatible smart TV which connects directly to the internet.
- c) Install the Firefox web browser and MediaHint add-on (both free) on your computer and watch TV on your PC or Laptop. This add-on masks that you are in France. If your PC or Laptop has a suitable port, connect a cable to your TV and watch on your TV.
- d) Use your browser on your mobile phone or tablet with a suitable App and if it has a suitable port connect to your TV with a cable. The use of Wifi to your internet box is highly recommended because of internet charges!

A good website to try is [www.filmon.com](http://www.filmon.com) which is free to use with adverts or you can pay for the HD version with no adverts and the ability to record.

Finally, all these satellite TV channels changes are very recent and may be in a state of flux. A further satellite Astra2g is due to be launched in May this year.

*Rob Ward*

**Desperate to Stop?**  
**call Alcoholics Anonymous**  
24 hour helpline –  
08 20 20 02 57 [aa-riviere.org](http://aa-riviere.org)

**British Association of the Var**  
**Welfare Coordinator**  
**Ann Mitchem**  
04 94 \*\*\*\*\* or 06 43 86 49 01  
[welfare@baofthevar.com](mailto:welfare@baofthevar.com)

## NEIGHBOURHOOD NETWORKS

### **Cabasse, Carces, Correns, Cotignac, and Le Val**

We will be meeting again at the Cafe de Cour in Cotignac at 10.30 on **28 March**.

*Michael Wharton*

07 \*\*\*\*\* [mjw57@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:mjw57@*****)

### **Draguignan, Le Cannet des Maures, Les Arcs, Le Luc, Taradeau and Vidauban**

We meet on the **second Friday of the month** at the Café de la Tour, Les Arcs at 10h30. You will find a warm welcome and interesting discussions if you care to attend. We make available a limited selection of popular English paperback novels.

*Pauline and Jim North*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* [jim.north@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:jim.north@*****)

### **Entrecasteaux, Salernes, Tourtour and Villecroze**

The Villecroze, Tourtour etc coffee morning will be on the **4th Tuesday of the month**, place to be announced later.

*Ann & Maurice Mitchem*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* [mamitchem@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:mamitchem@*****)

### **La Motte and Le Muy**

Six of us met on a sun-filled morning in February, happily leaving umbrellas and rain gear behind for once. Fortunately, none of us were delayed by the weather, although two of our members from Roquebrune had experienced difficulties earlier. We wish all our group fine and dry days henceforth. We look forward to our next meeting on **Tuesday, 11 March** at the Bar des Cascades in La Motte.

*Alexandra Lewis-Smith*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* [andrew.lewis-smith@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:andrew.lewis-smith@*****)

### **Les Issambres**

We meet **every other Tuesday** at 11h00 at L'Arpillon café next to Casino.

*Richard Tolaini*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* or 06 \*\*\*\*\* [tolaini83@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:tolaini83@*****)

### **St Maximin la Ste Baume, Brignoles, Brue Auriac, Mazaugues, Meounes, Neoules, Ollieres, Pourcieux, Pourrieres, Seillon Source d'Argens and Tourves**

We shall meet on Thursday, **20 March** from 10.30 onwards at the Cercle Philharmonique in the main square of St. Maximin la Ste. Baume. We have become a friendly group of regulars, but there is always room for more.

*Diana Andre de la Porte*

04 94 \*\*\*\*\* [adlp.diana@\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:adlp.diana@*****)

### **Le Pradon Congregation of the Ascension CALLIAN part of the Anglican Church of Lorgues with Fayence in the Var**

You are very welcome to join us at

**Le Pradon Maison de Retraite Callian.**

We meet on the **1st and 3rd Sundays** of the month at **11h00** for Family Communion

We also have a Bring and Share lunch afterwards.

**Please ring** Hilary Rost at 04 94 47 70 67 or  
Rev Peter Massey at 04 94 73 93 37 for details

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### **St John's for the Var St John the Evangelist Ave Paul Doumer, St Raphaël**

Rev Keith Bretel

Holy Communion is held **every Sunday at 10h30**  
followed by refreshments and a monthly lunch.

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### **Grimaud Village Church**

Ecumenical service at Grimaud village church  
on first Thursday of the month at 11h00

**Please ring** 04 94 60 87 05 for details

[www.sjevar.com](http://www.sjevar.com)

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### **L'Oasis Christian fellowship LORGUES part of the Anglican Church of Lorgues with Fayence in the Var**

**Every 2nd Sunday at 11h30** at

Arc-en-Provence, 1801 Chemin des Pailles

and **every 4th Sunday at 11h30** at

**Notre Dames des Anges Maison de Retraite**

We have a Bring and Share lunch afterwards.

For details or directions **please contact**

Rev Peter or Shirley Massey 04 94 73 93 37 or  
06 87 94 04 83

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*Before taking action in response to articles about law and finance in the Newsletter, please take advice from a suitable qualified person.*

**Please let us have your Advertisements,  
Articles and Reports for the April issue by**

**Saturday 15 March**

**All contributions to:**

**[newsletter@baofthevar.com](mailto:newsletter@baofthevar.com)**

or to Shirley Rowson, 262 Chemin des Bastides  
du Mitan, 83920 La Motte

