Annual General Meeting 1st February 2026

REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I look over this last year as president I am reminded of how different AFA is to other associations. At the end of 2025 we had 342 members, mostly English or French speaking but including members from other language groups and therefore other cultures. For those members English and French are second or third languages. All these differences amongst us enrich our lives.

The committee continues to meet monthly to discuss past and future events and to ensure the smooth running of the association. In theory the committee is made up of equal numbers of English and French speakers. It is with sadness that we have accepted Annie Sadarnac's resignation. She has worked endlessly for AFA as both secretary and President. We wish her our best as she continues in the Association as organiser of the Bilingual lunches, alongside Christophe, and with the theatre group.

The Activity Leaders are so very important as they give AFA its special character. We are all grateful to them for running the various and diverse activities with enthusiasm: so enabling the rest of us to profit from their experience. Some leaders are stepping down this year and being replaced by others – Jo Walshe replaces Mary Powell in the Art Group, Didier Goeusse replaces Christine Martaguet in the Quiz and Nigel Goddard fills the vacant Golf leadership. We thank them all.

A successful Open Mic was enjoyed by many members, once again displaying the many talents of our members and the dedication of the organisers. Once again members have also enjoyed concerts by Affability and the piano recital at the Rhino Restaurant. The annual Rally was centred on the town of Saintes with well prepared clues and questions requiring hours spent by the organisers searching out interesting places and information. During the summer members enjoyed sharing picnics thanks to Irene and Paul Gardner and Stephen Elliott.

It is with sadness that Allan and Muriel Flood have stepped down from producing AFA Stories which we have enjoyed for many years. What a fantastic idea they had during Covid to provide members with the possibility of spending time writing stories and of others reading them. Again the special character of AFA shone through as folk had so many different experiences to recount or fiction to produce! One wonders how many hours Allan and Muriel spent every month for 52 editions for the benefit of AFA members.

AFA's 20th Anniversary in September was a resounding success. Around 180 members and friends spent the evening at the Palais des Évènements enjoying photos of members and activities past and present, collated by Monica Cherry, enjoying musical entertainment by Mario Zito and Ray Hall, and sharing excellent refreshments supplied by Fabrice Morel and his team. All this was made possible through the tireless efforts ofLiberation Sans Gwyn and Rich Cherriman, their small team and Eva Sabourin of the Palais.

In October a conference on “Dying in France” was organised mainly for our English members with external speakers who work in this field. It was well attended and very much appreciated.

In November the AFA theatre regaled us with some funny scenes. Again the event was well attended and appreciated as we realised how much work was involved in producing Liberation Sansthe event.

I should like to thank Stephen Elliott for managing the website which you can consult for all information.

Lynne Hall
President