



Paris Branch

Newsletter

N° 39 – September 2025



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Chairman's introduction to the Paris Branch September Newsletter.

Welcome back! I hope you all had an enjoyable summer and are now fresh and ready to face a new (school) year.

During the summer I, our standard bearers and some of our members attended three ceremonies which are detailed under "Events" below:

- 1) The 4th August ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe
- 2) 19th August the memorial ceremony at Verneuil-sur-Seine for the American pilot Major H.W. Shurlds.
- 3) On the 7th September Janet, the Pedal to Paris race arrived.

We have received confirmation from St Louis Cathedral, Invalides that we shall be able to hold our Service of Remembrance there this year. We are happy to have authorisation for our poppy ladies to offer poppies outside. Such permission was previously withheld. More information will follow.

On a lighter, but important note, you will be pleased to hear that, thanks to Bill Beauclerk the mice have been evicted from the clubhouse. This happy result was obtained via some electronic devices that give off a high-pitched sound inaudible to humans. They have been placed in several locations in the clubhouse and they seem to have been remarkably effective.

We regret that there will be no lunch in September because both Janet and I are busy preparing to distribute Poppies to our Poppy Appeal volunteers. Hopefully we will have a club lunch in October. We will keep you posted. Please note that we are seriously in need of volunteers to prepare the lunches. Should you feel inclined to help please contact either Janet or myself.

Regards to all,

Richard.

SEPTEMBER QUIZ

1. What was Liz Truss' role in the Cabinet before she became Prime Minister?
2. In which month does autumn officially begin?
3. What did "ER" stand for in the American tv series of that name?
4. How many hearts does an octopus have?
5. Which popular nursery rhyme was about the plague?
6. How many white stars are there on the Australian flag?
7. In what year did Britney Spears release her debut single "Baby One More Time?"
8. What is the national flower of Scotland?
9. Which river runs through Belfast?
10. What is catoptrophobia a fear of?
11. Which Spice Girl was the first to release a solo single?
12. Which famous book featured the four March sisters?
13. At what temperature are Celsius and Fahrenheit equal?
14. Who in history became known as The Lady with the Lamp?
15. How many players are there on a baseball team?
16. Which star sign would you be if you were born on July 1st?

Janet Warby

EVENTS



On our annual 4th August ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe the Deputy Ambassador of Australia was guest of honour. Afterwards we returned to the clubhouse for celebration drinks and snacks.

On the 19th August Janet, Roger, Helen and myself attended the memorial ceremony at Verneuil-sur-Seine for the American pilot Major H.W. Shurlds whose plane was shot down during WW2 and crashed in part of the forest there. The ceremony was followed by a splendid lunch, provided by the Mayor of the Commune.



On Sunday 7 September Janet, Robin, Lahou Keite, Helen and I attended the Pedal to Paris arrival. There were 150 cyclists this year, and we had the pleasure of meeting the new Ambassador, Sir Thomas Drew KCMG, along with the new Director General of the RBL, Mark Atkinson, who had come over for the event. Also present was the Air Commodore from the British Embassy Paris.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On the 24th September we are invited to the Battle of Britain ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe. If attending, please be there for 18.00 hrs.

22 October POPPY APPEAL COFFEE MORNING 2025

This has always been one of our most popular annual events and you are invited to bring along family and friends. Details below:



THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, PARIS BRANCH
invites you to attend a Coffee Morning which we organize every
year in aid of the Poppy Appeal for the benefit of the

EARL HAIG BENEVOLENT WELFARE FUND

The Coffee Morning will take place by kind permission of HM Ambassador at

THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE
39 rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris 8eme

Wednesday 22nd October, 2025. 10h30 - 12h00

Please contact

[Janet Warby](#)

[for your reserved place at :](#)

janetwarby@yahoo.com or by telephone 01 39 28 90 28 or send to :

[Mrs J. Warby, 5 allée des Pins, 78480 Verneuil sur Seine.](#)

Your name(s) will be put on the Security List. This is a Charity event, please give generously. All donations welcome.
I.D. Cards or Passports required. Numbers are limited. Date limit for applications 15/10/2025

The attraction of the misapplied apostrophe

As one goes past the Porte de Montreuil on the tram it is impossible not to see the strangely obsessive sign pictured here. It may be a deformation



due to having taught the English language for so long, but personally, I can't help it provoking long and fruitless speculation upon the various places, all strange, that the superfluous apostrophe might be placed.

It is odd how such a minor element of punctuation can have such an influence. The misplaced apostrophe is a common and much derided phenomenon even in the UK, but the French language seems to have taken it to heart as their very own - if only for strictly decorative purposes. The one pictured here beats the record for the number of interpretations it might be held to inflict on the viewer. Does it mean **The** Chicken's King? If so which chicken is that?

Does it mean "Chicken King" where the king happens to be a chicken? If so, it not only shouldn't have an apostrophe, but also, as a describing adjective it should be singular (The) Chicken King. Or Chickens' king – king of all the chickens.

Of course, the possessive may have been intended to the whole phrase "Chicken King's", the Chicken King's restaurant one supposes. Or has the "s" been displaced and should the corrected version be "Chicken Kings" meaning a restaurant for all chicken kings – whoever they may be...

I should maybe point out that, anyway, the establishment doesn't sell king or kings at all. It should be called Chicken legs' (keeping the decorative apostrophe in a fairly innocuous position)

And only just down the road at the next tram stop, the Porte de Vincennes, is another example of the superfluous apostrophe, this time invoking speculation as to the identity of the mystery Irishman who emigrated to Mexico and half changed his name into that of a local delicacy but couldn't quite bring himself to abandon the Hibernian prefix.



MY

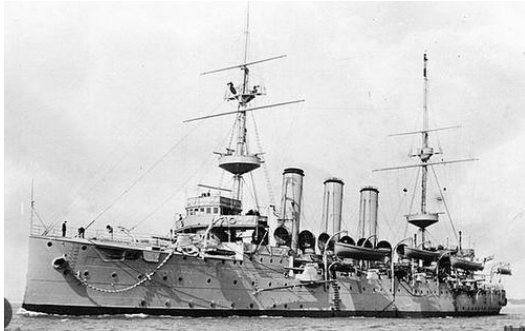


Please note that, as Richard mentioned above, monthly lunches will be resumed in October, not September – and if you think you can help – please let us know...

HMS HERMES

As a member of HMS Hermes Association I have always found the ships of that name of considerable interest. I was influenced in this by the fact that my brother served on Hermes 10, the 10th in the series of ships bearing

the name of Hermes, the messenger of the Gods. He always said she was a great ship. There is now talk of naming an 11th HMS Hermes, probably a destroyer or frigate but this is yet to be decided.



Here we look at the fourth HMS Hermes, which began service as a flagship but is particular notable as, in 1913, it was the first British ship modified to carry aircraft – initially seaplanes. In this, it was preceded only by the French cruiser *Foudre*, converted in 1911. Hermes' experimental trials were later used to

help design HMS Ark Royal.

Originally built in 1898/1899, HMS Hermes was built as a second-class cruiser. Made of steel, her length was 372ft (113.4m), a fact of some consequence given her future modification. With a 10,000 horsepower engine it could do 20 knots. It had 11 quick firing 6 inch guns with a range of 10,000 yards, 8 quick firing 12 pounders, 3 six pounder Hotchkiss's and two 18-inch torpedo tubes.

Hermes served first as a flagship of the North American and West Indies station until 1901 when it was reduced to reserve and subsequently commissioned back, once more as a flagship. In March 1913 it was reduced to reserve again and work began on the conversion under the Nore Command at Portsmouth. The ship was modified to accommodate three seaplanes, and a tracked launching platform was built over the forecastle. After trials, the aircraft equipment was removed but was then reinstalled in 1914 to allow the vessel to ferry aircraft to France. Hermes was 'paid off' on the 30th December 1913 only to come back into service at the outbreak of WW1 under the Nore Command. On the 31st October in 1914, HMS Hermes was hit by two torpedoes from an enemy German submarine, the U-27 (Bernd Wegener), and sunk in the Straits of Dover 8 miles North-West of Calais. It remains there today on the seabed. 21 lives were lost but most of the crew were saved. Hermes was sent out to sea before life saving collars to the vessel had been installed. It was carrying 400 cans of petrol. As the ship was sinking the order was given to empty these cans and use them as floats and one crew member later reported that many of the survivors would have drowned had they not used the petrol cans to remain afloat until help arrived. The submarine which sank the HMS Hermes was itself sunk by gunfire in 1915.

The HMS Hermes today lies at about 29-35m with the maximum depth being 32m and the highest part being 22m. It is said to be lightly inverted, the port side lying on the seabed.



The vessel is protected under the 2001 UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, combined with the restriction from French authorities. As the wreck is located in French territorial waters, anyone wishing to explore the site must obtain permission from the French authorities.

Other ships have been named HMS Hermes since the 1914 sinking. The most recent was sent to the Falklands where she took troops to fight the Argentinians in the reclamation of the Falklands. This ship was later sold to the Indian Navy and renamed the INS Viraat until she was finally decommissioned in 2017.

Janet Warby
Member of HMS Hermes Association

M.Y.

A Word in your Ear: Magdelene – Maudlin



There are some words in English with varying pronunciations. “Either” (and “neither”) for example can, as we all know, be pronounced with a first syllable “eee” or “iii”.

The case of the word “Magdelen” or “Madelene” is more complex. When referring to the saint - Mary Magdelene - it is pronounced as it is written but, if referring to either of the Oxford or Cambridge colleges named Magdalen and Magdalene respectively, it is pronounced “*Maudlin*”; This in spite of still being written as for the name of the saint.

However, the word “maudlin”, now spelled like that, entered the language with its own meaning, at first meaning “tearful” (as in the innumerable artistic depictions of the saint across the centuries) and then, less predictably, to its more pejorative use in modern English – excessively emotional.

MY



The Last Laugh

The Bull

Farmer 1 : Good lord. What an enormous animal!

Farmer 2 : Yes. It's one of the biggest bulls of that breed.

Farmer 1 : Must be quite valuable as a stud.

Farmer 2 : Well, it is now but when I bought it, it was too young to breed. I paid a lot for it too. I thought it would make a useful stud bull.

Farmer 1 : So that worked out OK?

Farmer 2 : Actually, not at first. Usually, bulls start breeding around 15-18 months old, but we were very disappointed when at two years old he hadn't shown the remotest interest in a cow.

Farmer 1 : That must have been annoying, but I gather you must have done something about it – You said it's a valuable breeding animal...

Farmer 2 : Yes, in the end we called the vet, and he prescribed some pills to put in his food.

Farmer 1 : That's all? And it made a difference?

Farmer 2 : Yes, it was incredible. Never seen such a randy animal! In two days he had humped every cow in sight. Then he broke down the fence and started on my neighbour's beasts.

Farmer 1 : That's incredible! What on earth was in the tablets the vet gave you for the bull?

Farmer 2 : I've no idea what they are – but they taste of aniseed.

Summer Quiz: Answers:

1. Foreign Secretary 2. September 3. Emergency Room 4. Three 5. Ring-O-roses 6. six 7. 1998 8. Thistle 9. River Lagan	10. Mirrors 11. Mel B released "I want You Back" featuring Missy Elliot 12. Little Women 13. -40 14. Florence Nightingale 15. Nine 16. Cancer
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*Comments & contributions to mfyates@gmail.com
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