

Happy New Year and all our best wishes for 2026!

2025 has come and gone, so join us for our annual pictorial recap of the past year to reflect on what we did, the people we spent time with and the moments we shared.

Heavy duty Work in Bardou



Photo Lothar Koerkens

The master house got a new roof. Can you spot the changes? The black & white photo was taken in 1977 by Lothar Koerkens (Cologne group); Klaus & Jean had already been in Bardou for 9 years so they had already started the restauration of the village.



Our new living room is finally finished and Seb, Martin, Max, Markus and Brian carried in the red Cashin wood stove in November (heavy!).

We are still missing a kitchen in our house; some “mauvaises langues” suspect it’s because we like eating with Jonas, our Michelin cook, when he uses the Taberna kitchen for his groups.



Bianca's room is almost finished, watch this space! Our big mirror, which on reflexion was a present from Klaus Dohmen, has found its place on the wall again with Ken's help (and a few helping hands to hold it in place).

Last year, Holger Gerdes renovated our kitchen & bedroom floor; this year he did a magnificent renovation the office and piano room floors - we are delighted with the result!



These two look too old to be miners!



Stefan and Brian

Stefan came in the spring for a month and back again for a month in September, helped and worked remote.

Felix has been coming to Bardou since he was a child and comes from time to time to lend a hand and give advice.



Felix with Stefan



The wall down by William's house was collapsing, Martin & Seb soon put that right but the tree had to go!

Trees always need trimming, the big pine tree in front of the School was getting just a bit too invasive, several people contributed at various stages of the year to trim and tidy it up, Brian, Ken, Stefan, Sean (our son) and Mathis (Xavier's son) ... We cut away all the branches with procession caterpillar nests which are very toxic for humans and animals.



Brian and Ken trimming the pine tree in front of the School



Of course, there is the yearly clean-up of the Theatron; this year Max's kids did the lion's share of it; yes I know it looks like contemporary theatre ...

Water tanks need to be cleaned regularly



*I'm not sure if Brian is cleaning the tank or about to have a game of chess...
P.S. He is actually in the tank!*

Max's mystery project is coming along....



Markus (who came for 3 weeks in November), Max, Martin and Seb (our 2 massons)

And last but not least, we have a new website for Bardou :

www.bardou-village.fr set up by Amon, Markus and Ing. Leo.

The website provides a fairly basic overview of the village for the general public who do not know Bardou. However, we expect each one of you to create your own individual login with password, which will enable you to visit all the nooks and crannies' which are not available to the general public (houses, music detail, and other interesting information).



Léo, Amon & Markus

Music and exhibitions

We had an exceptionally busy music season this summer with 36 concerts from June to September.

The music season opened with the *Sinfonietta*, organised by Jonas Hees, with two concerts in June directed by Cayenna Ponchione and with Selim Mazari as soloist.



After the Sinfonietta, *Selim* returned to Bardou to give four wonderful concerts of which one was in Bardou with the violinist, Eva Lesage. Selim always brings his own invigorating brand of inspirational enthusiasm to the village, which is enjoyed by musicians, werewolves and villagers alike.

He also played in Saint Chinian in the Abbatiale as well as at Rainer and Sabine's, in their amazing hall... and on their magnificent Bösendorfer!

*Selim playing in the Music Room in Bardou
with Eva Lesage*

The *Académie de Musique de Chambre de Bardou*

Directed by Thomas Posth, Maria Pache, Markus Sudermayer, *H.* A. Jonasdottir & A. Gorisse; their concerts always bring rapturous applause and their good nature and unlimited enthusiasm is something we look forward to every year.



The Académie de Musique de Chambre de Bardou at their concert in Saint-Chinian

Fritz & Gerswind Kircher, our virtuoso stars from Vienna, drove all the way from Austria to perform four beautiful concerts for us in Bardou and in the area. They played in Bardou, but also in the Chappelle de la Voulte, Chateau de Cassan and in the Chapelle du Cauduro.



Fritz Kircher (violin) and Gerswind (alto)

Eunsley Park and *Natalia Morozova* came together to form a stunning duo whose elegance was only matched by the beauty of their program and performances.



Brian and Elizabeth with the stars

In the summer, we also organize a few concerts for the Association of the Chapelle de la Voulte; one of these exceptional concerts was performed by Aisha Orazbayeva.



Photo by Steve Crushing

The **Ensemble Vocal de Berlin** (directed by Johannes Dasch) stayed in Bardou for 2 weeks and gave 3 fantastic concerts at the end of their stay. They came with all their kids who sang

one song at the beginning of the concerts and melted every one's hearts! Here they are performing in the Chateau de Cassan which is a magnificent venue; an out-door meal is offered in the courtyard of the chateau before the concerts, making it a special evening out.



The Ensemble Vocal de Berlin in Cassan

Ienissei and Nikita Ramic enjoying the beach with Brian – they gave 4 very successful piano concerts!



James Kline always leaves a lasting impression with his 19-string arch-harp-guitar.



James Kline in Villemagne l'Argentière

The music season finished with the **Choeur de la Jeunesse de Stuttgart**, a choir made up of teenagers and conducted by Christine Marx. Apart from making us proud with 2 wonderful concerts, they are also a wonderfully vibrant group who really integrated well in the village.



The Choeur de la Jeunesse de Stuttgart in Cassan

We were also honoured to receive a private concert from a choir lead by Christoph Mikula who came to Bardou end of September for one week residential rehearsal.

This year we had 2 exhibitions in Bardou.



Max Zimmerman

The first one was of paintings of **Max Zimmerman** and photos of **Heribert Hoerkens**. The expo had been set up briefly during the summer 2024 as a preview with the plan to have the actual exhibition during the summer 2025. Sadly Max passed away suddenly just before Christmas. However, Fee (Max's widow) and Heribert decided to carry through with the exhibition in his honour. Max (who had been coming to Bardou for 45 years) was a much-cherished member of the Bardou community who we will deeply miss. We owe him the beautiful music design, the writing on Klaus & Jean's mausoleum, Bardou maps and many lovely paintings.



Fee, Max Zimmerman's widow, and daughter Pia - Ruth & Heribert Hoerkens

The second exposition was by **Lorraine Sparks** of ceramic animal sculptures and stained-glass lights. It took place at the same time as the Ramic's concert in Bardou, in the Taberna.



Ceramic sculptures



Stained-glass



Ceramic sculptures by Lorraine Sparks

Help & fun

The New Year started as it had ended, with a bang in Le Lau at Karen & Hans'! Jenny and Patrick came over from Austria with their daughter Astrid.



Karen, Patrick, Astrid, Elizabeth, Jeannie, Brian, Gégé, Pierrot, Lisa, Birgit, Jenny & Hans



Max and Josie came several times throughout the year.

Their 4 children (Mali, Lorelei, Rosie and Jaro) help keep Seamus entertained.

No this is not photoshop, luckily Jaro noticed that someone had set fire to the village!

We had a great team help get the village in shape before May: Stefan came for a whole month and was in charge of “making the village look nice outdoors” and the rest of us worked indoors on the houses. Franzi came too, and her speciality is always wood work.



Coffee in the morning sun with Stefan, Elisabeth, Kirsten, Bianca, Harry & Betsy

In May, Xavier (who has been coming to Bardou for years) had his 60th birthday in Bardou with all his family and friends (about 55 altogether!). I think we partied for 4 days and the aperos were the longest we have ever known!



Xavier, Betsy & Brian, Bianca and Maria (Xavier's partner)

The weekend after Xavier's birthday, my brother James came with his group of Meher Baba followers and I think there was about 65 of them!



Bianca, James, Helga, Betsy & Brian

Several therapy groups came in spring and in the fall lead by Kirsten, Frank & Gerda, Heinz, Axel and Tom with his team (Andy, Annabel, Alice & David). We also had a small Yoga group led by Vanessa Barault, who came at the end of August.

Clara, Herwig and Clara's parent's, Martina & Olaf looked after Bardou for us so that we could go to Steffi's 30th birthday. She is a German friend from Villennes (some of our Villennes friends were there too) and her parent's own a fabulous restaurant about one hour from Fribourg. The meals they cooked for us were "einmalig"!



Steffi dancing with Jeff at her 30th

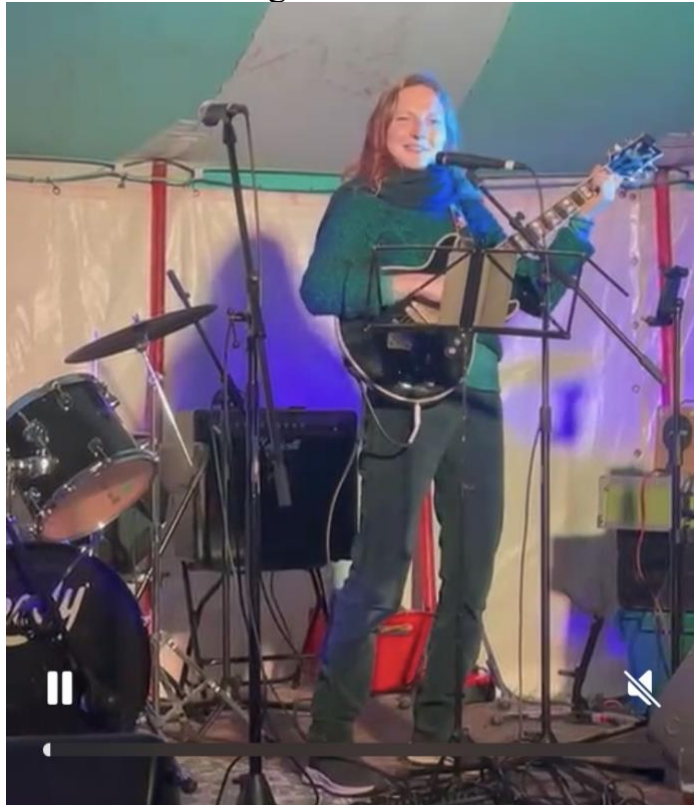


One of the incredible deserts!

Quick visit to Paris in the spring and meeting up with Cécile & Valerie (her God-mother and my dear friend!)



Mid-June we went to Ben & Sonia's wedding anniversary festival at their beautiful cottage near Bridgewater. Everyone camps out in the fields, there are dry toilets and we felt very much at home. There was music and of course Cécile sang too



but also great food; Cécile & Brian were in charge of the BBQ!



During the summer the children help with feeding the cats & the chickens and they adopted Seamus as one of the gang.





Susanne & Leo looked after Bardou and Seamus so that we could go to Bianca's graduation in Falmouth (UK)... Correction, Seamus looked after Leo, Jasper and Susanne!

Susanne with Seamus and Ken looking on – Ing. Léo with Seamus



Bianca with her boyfriend Harry at their Masters graduation ceremony

The strong arms who carried the cast-iron woodstove down to Bill's (it you are wondering why so many ... it weighs over 300 kg!



*From left to right:
Jasper, Betsy, Johnny (Brian's nephew), Franz, Julie, Sebi (Franz's sister's husband),
Daria & Firat (friends of Franz's) – Brian is taking the photo*

There were village Pizza evenings which continued into the night with music, of course!



Cécile on the guitar accompanied with harmonies and flute improvisation

Brian's brothers and family as well as our children (Sean and his wife Shannon, Cécile & Bianca) all spent time in Bardou in the summer. Cécile and Bianca took care of Bardou and Seamus for a few days, giving us the chance to go see Mike and Elisabeth, good friends of Brian's dating back to when I first met him in 1985.



Mike, Brian, Elisabeth and Betsy in the Provence

Franzi organised a very memorable reading of excerpts of the Bardou book, walking through the village; we finished the reading on the terrace by Jean's Garden with a view on to Klaus and Jean's mausoleum. They would have loved it because it captured the spirit of the 70ies when there were a lot of artists staying in Bardou.



*From left to right:
Betsy, Anna, Konstantin & girlfriend, Daria, Karsten, Gerda & Frank, Christa, Franzi
and Cécile reading*

Gerda Pullig organised a dance group in the last week of August which livened-up the village.



Photo Rudi Winkler

Every September we have an all-day outing with Albrecht & Sigrid, Petra & Irma. This year we took the steam train between St-Jean du Gard and Anduze and visited the silk museum in St-Hippolyte-du-Fort.



Cécile, Brian, Betsy, Petra, Albrecht and Sigrid

Albrecht & Sigrid usually stay in Vidal and turn the main room into a cinema during their stay. Most evenings, we are invited to discover new (and not so new) films.

Mid-September, we took a little trip to the Côte d'Azur to visit our good friends Jenny & Patrick (and just relax) while Stefan looked after the village. Jenny & Patrick's daughter, Astrid came back with us and spend a month in Bardou. It was a nice chance to catch-up with her. It was also a chance to catch up with dear friends, Dominique and Yoko.



Brian, Jenny, Betsy, Patrick and Astrid

End of September, Jenny & Patrick came to visit and we had many meals and philosophical discussions with everybody.



Felix, Patrick, Jenny, Betsy, Kenn, Brian and Stefan

In October, we were just a small cosy group: Mareike, who had helped my parents when she was 18 and hadn't been back since; Michael, who has been coming every year for a number of years and Astrid who we have already mentioned. We ate together most evenings and really enjoyed one another's company.



Michael, Mareike, Brian, Betsy and Astrid

Brian's Garden yielded an amazing amount of green beans, tomatoes and lots of pumpkins and squashes :



The Cologne group (Ulla & Clements, Fee and Ada, Ines & Rolf, Ricarda & Reinhild as well as Leni & Lothar) also came beginning of October, but unfortunately this year we missed the big meal we usually have together because we went away for a few days...

Adrian and Karen very often come beginning of November with their grand-son Sami who always helps me take care of the cats & chickens.



Sami & Seamus

Villennes and Family

Sean now lives in Villennes with his wife Shannon and his 2 dogs; Cécile and Bianca often visit and so do we and are happy to get to enjoy the house! Cécile still lives and works in London and Bianca is working in Bristol where she lives with her boyfriend Harry.

We had a few parties in Villennes... in particular for Bianca's birthday.



Bianca, Harry, Sean, Elizabeth, Brian & Cécile



Bianca with Sean's dogs



Macdara on the trumpet and shakers, Lucy and Cécile singing and Jeff on the guitar as a memorial for Romily, who passed away 10 years ago and who's birthday it would have been. The Cinemorphers (organised by Carmela & Erik amongst others) put together a small performance re-enacting "The discreet charm of the bourgeoisie" (us) which was how we originally met up with the fantastic Cinemorphers, and have added an injection of vitality into our lives ever since with their numerous avant-garde performances.

For the Christmas week, we rented a large house in St Cast, in Brittany with our family and Brian's brother Mike and family just around the corner from the beach. Brian's brother John and his son Serge had also planned to join us but unfortunately just before Christmas Serge was diagnosed with a serious illness and they were unable to make it. We wish him a speedy recovery. Our good friend Loïc also has a house in St Cast and we shared the Christmas meal with him and his daughter Katell (Loïc cooked some fantastic sea spiders).



From left to right : Bianca, Betsy, Cécile, Johnny, Sean & Shannon

We went on hikes and played endless games of Catan and Werewolf!



Serge



Sean & Cécile at Catan

Yes, it looks like we are at a ski resort but in actual fact we were on a blue run by the sea!



*Mike, Johnny, Cécile, Brian, Betsy, Bianca, Sean & Shannon (photo taken by Christa)
Everyone squinting in the winter sun in Saint-Cast.*



Cécile, John-Robin (Johnny) and Bianca with Mike looking on

Remembering



My mother, Jean, Christopher Johnson and his wife Lois in 2013

Remembering my mother's and her first (and only) cousin, Christopher who left us in November 2024. Christopher was a history professor at Wayne State University and wrote several books of which one was on the industrial revolution in Lodève (Hérault). He spent a lot of time in this area and we became very familiar with him and his family.

My Mom passed away in February 2016, so almost 10 years ago; she is in my thoughts daily.

Bardou animals and nature



Seamus loving the autumn leaves



Nushka as fluffy as ever.



Chicken with her chicks on the ladder



The king of the castle with his cloak of many colours



Sometimes it snows (rarely...); sometimes it rains and a river runs through the village





Winter setting sun

Happy New Year and hopefully see you in 2026!

Betsy, Brian and Seamus