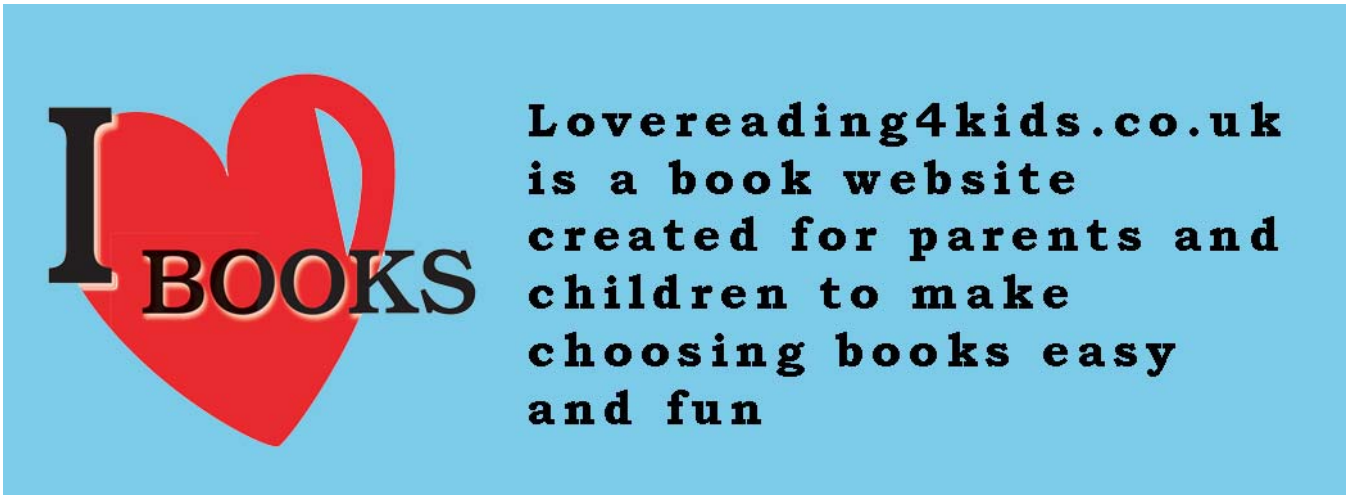


Opening extract from

City Trails – Paris

Written By

Helen Greathead

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PARIS
City Trails

Helen Greathead

BEACH LIFE

PARIS PLAGES

With over 160km (100 miles) to the nearest coast, nobody would visit Paris for its golden sands. However, for a month each summer, the banks of the Seine are transformed into a temporary holiday haven called Paris Plages. Roads are blocked off, sand is imported, and locals and tourists can lounge around in deckchairs, cool off in fountains, lick ice lollies at pop-up cafes, play games, and enter sandcastle competitions. They can even go surfing, but only on the Internet – the beach has free wifi!



search: PARIS PLAGES FACTS

1 MONTH
How long the fake beach lasts.

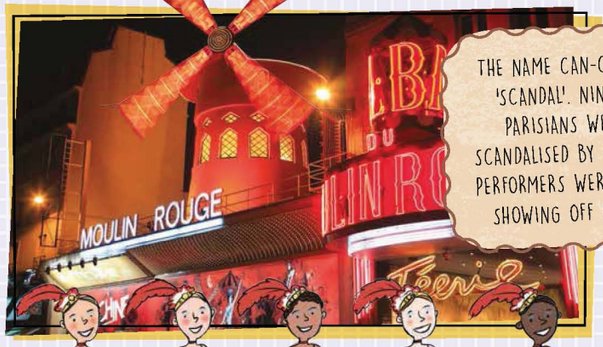
2.8KM
The distance the man-made beach stretches along the Seine.

5,000 TONS
The amount of imported sand.

4 MILLION
The number of visitors each year.

BANKS OF THE RIVER SEINE

MONTMARTRE



THE NAME CAN-CAN ACTUALLY MEANS 'SCANDAL'. NINETEENTH-CENTURY PARISIANS WERE SHOCKED AND SCANDALISED BY THE DANCE AND SOME PERFORMERS WERE EVEN ARRESTED FOR SHOWING OFF FAR TOO MUCH LEG!

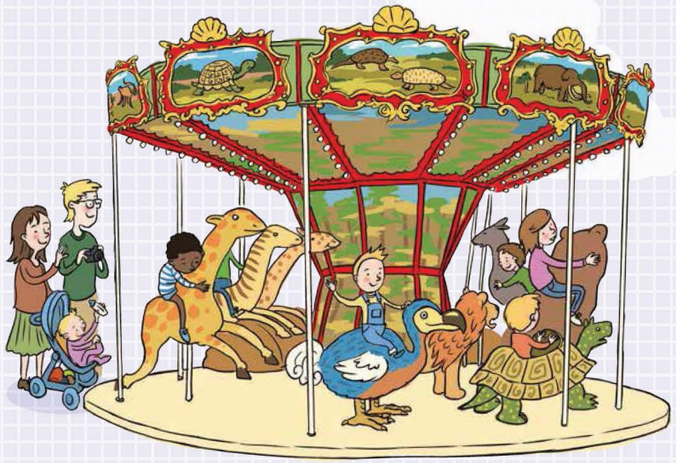


THE WINDMILLS OF OLD PARIS

MOULIN ROUGE

The Paris landscape was once dotted with over 300 windmills (*moulins*). In the past they were essential for grinding wheat and crushing grapes, but only a few remain. The Moulin de la Galette, in Montmartre, is nearly 500 years old and stopped working years ago. Surprisingly, Paris's most famous windmill never worked at all! The sails of the Moulin Rouge (Red Windmill) only turned to draw crowds to the cabaret club beneath it. There, they watched high-kicking girls in swirling skirts dance the can-can.

JARDIN DES PLANTES



DO RIDE A DODO

JARDIN DES PLANTES

Seeing as the dodo died out hundreds of years ago, no one would expect to ride one anywhere in the world... except maybe in Paris! In the corner of the Jardin des Plantes is a very strange carousel. Visitors can whirl round on a dodo, a turtle with horns, a thylacine (aka Tasmanian tiger), a sivatherium (an early ancestor of the giraffe), a panda or gorilla. You've guessed, of course, that there's a theme here – these creatures are all extinct or endangered.

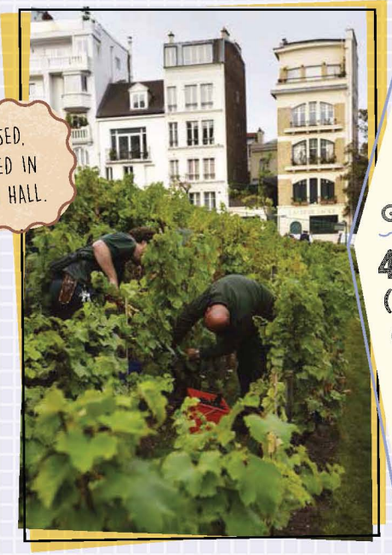
MONTMARTRE

THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

CLOS MONTMARTRE

Back in the 17th century, the Parisian hills were covered with vineyards, but in the 18th century a deadly disease killed them all off. Today, Clos Montmartre is Paris's only working vineyard, but it hasn't been around for long. In the 1920s, plans to build on this land were halted when a group of local artists came up with a cunning plan. By planting a vineyard, they knew the building work could never go ahead. This is because wine is so important in France that it's against the law to build on a vineyard!

THE GRAPES ARE PRESSED, FERMENTED AND BOTTLED IN THE MONTMARTRE TOWN HALL.



1,556 M²
OF VINEYARD

1,726
GRAPEVINES

475 LITRES
(835 PINTS)
OF WINE

950 BOTTLES

ALL SOLD TO FUND COMMUNITY PROJECTS

THE NEW BRIDGE
– THAT'S 400 YEARS OLD!



PONT NEUF

In the 17th century, Pont Neuf was a design sensation. Its name means 'New Bridge', but at over 400 years old, it's now the oldest bridge in Paris! Back in 1607, though, it was thoroughly modern. Who'd ever heard of a bridge with no houses on it? Or one built of stone, not wood... and wider than any city street?



A ROYAL OPENING

In the days when many people paid a boatman to take them from one side of the Seine to the other, the building of a new bridge was a pretty exciting event. And there couldn't be a grander way to open it than for the king, Henry IV, to ride across it on his white stallion.

PUTTING A FOOT DOWN

Horses carried passengers across the bridge in fancy new carriages. Meanwhile, 'people of foot' (the word 'pedestrian' hadn't been invented yet) had their own bit of the bridge to walk on as Pont Neuf had one of the world's first pavements!

BIT OF A JAM



EVERYTHING HAPPENED ON THE BRIDGE: THEATRE SHOWS, MARKET STALLS, FIGHTS. NOT SURPRISING THEN, THAT IT WAS ALSO THE SCENE OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S EARLIEST TRAFFIC JAMS!

THE BRIDGE WAS A MEETING PLACE FOR RICH AND POOR, BUT IT WAS SAID THAT IF YOU STEPPED ON ONE SIDE WEARING YOUR FANCIEST CLOTHES, YOU'D STEP OFF THE OTHER SIDE WITH NOTHING ON AT ALL!



GETTING AHEAD

No fewer than 381 heads gaze out over the water from the sides of Pont Neuf, and they all have weird and wonderful expressions on their faces. The heads show mythical creatures that are meant to scare off evil spirits.



HENRY IV'S STATUE

WRAP IT UP

In 1985, US artists Christo and Jean-Claude used:

41,800sq. m (450,000sq. ft) of fabric

13km (8 miles) of rope

12.1 tons (13.3 sh tons) of steel chains...

to wrap up the bridge!



12 ARCHES WITH ÎLE DE LA CITÉ IN THE MIDDLE

232M (761FT) LONG

22M (72FT) WIDE

PONT NEUF

