

Bulletin !

An informal look at life in this part of France and a selection of things to see and do

Thought for the month:

A day without friendship is like a honey-pot
without a single drop of honey left in it

Winnie the Pooh

Some *Marchés de Noël* (Christmas markets), *vide-greniers*, *braderies* & *brocantes* in this area [\pm = stalls expected '53' = area]:

2 nd to 4 th	Mayenne (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Parc du Château
Sat. 3 rd	La Mezière (35)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Salle Culturelle, 10h-19h, \pm 50
“	La Sauvagère (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , 14h-19h
Sun. 4 th	St Geo. de Chesné (35)	v-g / <i>braderie de Noël</i> , 9h-17h, \pm 50
“	Isigny-le-Buat (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Espace Culturel, rue St Exupéry
“	Montsûrs (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Salle des Oréades, \pm 80
Thurs. 8 th -11 th	Laval (53)	in Square de Boston, \pm 60 (+ see page 2)
Fri. 9 th	La Chap. d'Andaine (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Salle Roland-Flécharde (see p.3)
“	St Mars d'Egrenne (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 17h, with a circuit of the illuminations; hot soup offered at the end.
9 th & 10 th	La Sauvagère (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Place de l'Eglise
Sat. 10 th	Barenton (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 14h in the Salle des Fêtes
W/e 10 th /11 th	Couterne (61)	v-g / <i>brocante de Noël</i> in l'Ancienne Minoterie, \pm 100
”	St Malo (35)	v-g in Mairie-annexe Paramé, 9h30-17h
“	Sourdeval (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Place Ch. de Gaulle
Sun. 11 th	Saint-James (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in l'Espace le Conquérant, \pm 50
“	Ambrières-les-V.(53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 14h
Fri. 16 th	La Baconnière (53)	evening <i>Marché de Noël</i> , from 18h
16 th to 18 th	St Hilaire du Harc.(50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> & <i>ateliers creatifs</i> , \pm 20
Sat. 17 th	Ceaucé (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Place de l'Eglise, 14h-20h
Sun. 18 th	Gavray (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , 14h-19h30 (+ see page 3)
“	Tinchebray (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , Salle de l'Ancienne Mairie, 10-18h
“	Dol de Bretagne (35)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , in centre-ville
Wed. 21 st	La Ferté-Macé (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , 15h-20h, Place Leclerc, \pm 80

Visit www.brocabrac.fr and www.vide-greniers.org which are constantly updated with *brocantes* / *vide-greniers*, also www.ambiance-noel.fr.

Eating out

No restaurant featured this month, as we will all be having enough to eat, methinks!!

Some local customs – Saint Nicholas

On the night of Dec. 5th, the eve of the feast of St Nicholas, young children in the north of France are very well-behaved. Before going to bed they put their shoes and some straw in front of the chimney for their patron saint and for the donkey he always rides on his travels. St Nicholas traditionally leaves behind spiced biscuits shaped in his own image.

Concours des villes et villages illuminés

See the fantastic Christmas illuminations lighting up both homes and local towns & villages from 2nd Dec. to 1st Jan. Tens of thousands of people await this occasion, especially at La Sauvagère, St Mars d'Egrenne, Ceaucé, Beauchêne, La Michaudière, Mantilly and Rouellé. This is the largest circuit of its type in France, attracting over 150,000 visitors each year. www.ot-domfront.com/villages_illumines or www.villagesillumines.fr

Marché de Noël & entertainment in Laval (53)

On Thurs. 8th to Sun. 11th in Square de Boston: 60 chalets with lots of ideas for Christmas - produce and gifts - with entertainment from choirs and musicians. Thurs 8th: 14h-22h30; Fri. 9th: 11h-23h; Sat. 10th: 9h-midnight; Sun. 11th: 10h-19h (+ *Père Noël* at 18h30).

Le Café Gourmand in Gorron – Christmas lunches

Amanda will be serving her popular Christmas lunches in *le Café Gourmand*, 27 rue Magenta, Gorron (53) from Tues. 6th to Fri. 23rd. An *apéritif* and 4 festive courses for 20€. Reservation required, as on several days she is already fully booked - tel: 02 43 00 75 06.

Foire aux dindes & 'village illuminé' in La Chapelle d'Andaine (61)

Pssst – want a turkey? Here on Fri. 9th in Place de l'Eglise you will find hundreds on sale during this annual Turkey Fair (morning only). More info at www.ot-domfront.com. This is followed by the *Marché de Noël* from 14h to 22h in the Salle Roland Fléhard. More info at www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr

Something you didn't know you didn't know

Corsican is now the 101st language to become available to Facebook users. Maltese and Fulani (a language spoken in some 30 African states) have also been added to the social networking site. Translation of the site 'info Corsican' was carried out by volunteers, as with 40 other languages, including Breton.

Christmas market at 'Cadres' in Fougerolles du Plessis (53)

On Sat. 3rd & Sun. 4th, 10h-18h, at this 2-day market at 'Cadres Deco Meubles', 8 & 10 rue Normandie, you will find mince pies, gingerbread men, chutneys & various marmalades (all home-made); Christmas cards and crackers; many gifts at very reasonable prices; hand-made ceramic gifts; beautiful sewn gifts for all occasions; bespoke jewellery; Linbags (patchwork shoulder bags). There will be a large raffle in aid of the SPA in Fougères – plus a visit from Father Christmas! For more info. call Tina on 02 43 05 33 82.

Bar de la Mairie, in Gorrion (53) – Christmas lunch

On Thurs, 15th & Fri. 16th, at 12h–14h30, Melanie at the *Bar de la Mairie* (by the *Mairie* in Gorrion) will be serving a Christmas lunch again this year - ‘French cooking with an English slant’. 3 courses, and not expensive. I went last year and it was very good. (Numbers are limited as the bar is not huge!).

Exhibition : ‘*Saint-Malo à la belle époque*’

From 9th Dec to 31st Jan 2017, in the Salle d’Exposition at the ‘*Archives Municipales de Fougères*’ (35): an exhibition retracing the traditional life of Saint-Malo – the shipbuilding, the inhabitants, carpenters and the merchants of the day. More info at Fougères T/Office

Illuminations at *la Ferme du Cheval de Trait*, La Michaudière

On 21st to 23rd & 25th to 30th at this ‘farm of the draft horse’ near Juvigné-sous-Andaine (61) you can wander freely amongst the wonderful illuminations. There is a stand with *vin chaud* (mulled wine) and a snack. More info from the Domfront Tourist Office (02 33 38 53 97).

Evening mediæval walk in Fougères (35)

Sat. 17th from 17h to 19h30, take part in the *Fête des Lucioles* (fire flies) in Fougères –with an evening stroll to meet many characters from past times. More info from the Tourist Office. (02 99 94 12 20).

Cheese of the Month : *Fourme d’Ambert*

Legend says that *Fourme d’Ambert* was already being made at the time of the Druids and the Gauls. It is certainly one of the oldest cheeses in France, along with *Roquefort*. *Fourme d’Ambert* is made in the Monts de Forez of Auvergne. ‘*Fourme*’ is an old French word for cheese from the Latin name ‘*forma*’ and describes its cylindrical shape. It is made with cow’s milk – 25 litres for one cheese. *Penicillium glaucum* bacteria are added to the cheese which then rests in a cave for at least 2 months. One of the mildest blue cheeses, it is creamy with a delicate, fruity flavour and mushroom overtones. Good in soufflés and salads, and the ideal wine to go with it would be a medium-bodied red from the Cotes de Rhône.

Christmas Market and entertainment in Gavray (50)

On Sun. 18th is a *Marché de Noël*, 14h-19h30, in Place Bascule, and also a *Crèche Vivante* (living Nativity) through the town at 12h15, 15h & 17h. At 18h: a concert of *chants traditionnels* (Christmas carols). www.normandie-tourisme.fr

Les Jardins de la Mansonnière – open on Sundays in December

On Sundays 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th you can wander around these wonderful gardens in St Céneri-le-Gérei (61), classed as one of the most beautiful villages in France (for more info see issue 113) from 14h to 18h. Visits are free and a guided tour can be arranged. A Christmas hot drink is offered to all visitors. More info: www.normandie-tourisme.fr

Christmas Service in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53)

On Sun. 11th at 15h in the church in Fougerolles-du-Plessis there will be a Festival Service of readings and carols, conducted on both English and French. All are welcome.

Entertainment & Concerts

Thurs. 1st at 20h30 in the Salle Polyvalente in Laval (53): 'Irish Celtic Spectacle'. More info from the Laval Tourist Office (www.laval-tourisme.com).

Sat. 3rd at 16h in l'Eglise Sainte-Madeleine in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): '*Noël autour du sapin*' by the vocal quartet '*Entrenotes*', accompanied by piano. Free, with a collection.

Sun. 11th at 15h in Mantilly (61) the choir '*Chant'Saire*, comprising 25 choristers from Quettehou (northern Manche) with Christmas songs – traditional, regional and from abroad.

Fri. 16th at 17h at the Musée Emmanuel de la Villéon in Fougères (35), the pupils at the *Conservatoire de Musique de Fougères* present their Christmas Concert. (More : T/Office)

Sat. 17th at 15h in l'Eglise St-Julien in Domfront (61): *Concert de Noël* with choir 'La Lyre' from Flers; free, with collection towards costs of restoration of the church.

Sun. 18th at 17h30 in l'Eglise in St Mars-d'Egrenne (61): '*Entrenotes*' – a vocal quartet with their *Concert de Noël*. Free, with collection. www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr

Sat 31st at the *Bar du Pecheur* in l'Epinay le Comte (61), CarysMai is performing on New Year's Eve.

. Concert with *La Maitrise Saint-Léonard* in Fougères (35)

On Sun. 4th at 15h in l'Eglise Saint-Léonard in Fougères (35) a '*Concert de Musique Romantique*': Russian pianist Marina Fierain-Belogorodseva with Tchaikovsky's Concerto No.1 Op.23, followed by 'Te Deum Laudamus' by Berlioz. Tickets (25€, 18€ or 8€) on sale at the Tourist Office, 2 rue Nationale in Fougères.

Music Night in *Bar du Marché*, Ceaucé (61)

On Fri. 9th from 19h30, CarysMai (<https://www.facebook.com/CarysMaipageOfficiel/>) will be playing an acoustic set featuring songs by contemporary artists such as Ellie Goulding, James Arthur, Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran, etc., as well as her own material. Entry is free, but contributions (hat on the bar) are very welcome. The pizza/burger van will be outside as usual. For more info you can contact Anthony Miles through the bar's facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BDMCOC/> or on 02 33 30 04 28.

'*Cantamus*' Christmas Concert

On Fri. 16th at 20h30 in the Salle Normande in Dompierre (61), is the *Cantamus* Christmas concert. Entrance is free with a donation in support of the Lions Club in Domfront. *Cantamus*, the all-female singing group, will entertain you with Christmas and Seasonal music featuring well-known favourites, both sacred and secular, with some new pieces, a little jazz, and always a few surprises. Yvonne Moss from Cym Cards will be selling cards and wrapping paper, so go and join them to get your seasonal celebrations off to a good start. Contact Lesley Thomson on 02 33 38 09 44, or les.paul@wanadoo.fr for more information. [Details of their 2 concerts in January – at Menhil Hermei on Sun. 8th and Athis de l'Orne on 15th will be in the next Bulletin.]. www.chorale-cantamus.fr

End of Year *feu artifice* (fireworks) in Domfront (61)

There will be a fireworks display on Sat. 31st from 19h near the Château / Place de la Roirie in Domfront, followed by *vin chaud* (mulled wine) offered by the town. Free

English film night in Gorrion cinema

The next English film to be shown in Gorrion cinema is on Monday 5th: **The Girl on the Train** – a mystery thriller, with Emily Blunt, Justin Theroux. Tickets (5,50€) are on sale from 20h on the night at the cinema. The *Bar de la Mairie* is open at the bottom of the hill for some pre-film refreshment – they do a lovely, warming *vin chaud* (mulled wine)!

Christmas Carol Evening in La Croixille (53)

On Sat. 17th from 20h onwards there will be a Christmas Carol Evening at Sarah MacGilchrist's house in La Croixille. Some nibbles and liquid refreshment will be laid on and there will be a pianist. Contributions towards the nibbles and liquid refreshments would be gratefully received but are not obligatory. Song sheets will be supplied. Sarah lives at 7, route de Fougères in La Croixille, phone no: 02 43 68 56 66 or 06 40 63 38 41; e-mail: s.macgilchrist@yahoo.co.uk. Feel free to take along any friends or family members who might enjoy the evening. If you could let Denise Dealtry (02 43 02 35 16) know if you are intending to come, that would be appreciated. Parking is available in the garden of the hosts and outside the church which is a short walk away.

Alzheimer Awareness and Fund-raising Event:

France Alzheimer & Maladies Apparentées, Orne (61)

This is an Alzheimer's group for the English speakers living in France. On Sun 11th at 15h, a 'Les Poppies', Le Dieuloire, Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) there will be mince pies, coffee/tea, and a Christmas quiz and raffle. More info and directions: thewrightskmt@hotmail.co.uk; or ladieuloire@gmail.com; also on facebook: france.alzheimer.61.

Storm damage at *Le Gué de Selle*, Mézangers (53)

The mini-tornado that swept through this part of France during the night of 13th/14th September caused a lot of damage – in particular the area around the lake of *le Gué de Selle*, near Evron, which is very popular with walkers. 80 oak trees were brought down, with many more oaks and poplars so badly damaged that *etêtage* (pollarding) was needed to reduce their size. Due to many trees still being deemed unsafe, the area was closed to the public during October and part of November. Next to the lake is the popular restaurant *Le Relais du Gué de Selle*.

Something for all the family – *le Roc des Harmonies*

At the Granville (50) *Pointe du Roc* there is a unique experience, both educational and entertaining. The Aquarium (an aquatic world tour with sea-lions, seahorses, piranhas, angel fish, and more), Butterfly Garden (a magical, exotic world), Mineral Palace (the crystals' bright colours and varied shapes are turned into works of art) and Shell Fairyland (magnificent rooms where over 3 tons of shells and coral from around the world are on show). Snacks are available on site at the *Roc des Gourmandises*, with a wonderful view of the port and bay from the terrace. Open all year – 1st Oct. to 31st March: 10h-12h30 & 14h-18h30; from 1st April to 30th Sept.: all day 10h-19h. Guided tours in English are available on request. Tickets: adults: 9€, students & disabled: 7€, 4-14s: 6€, under 4s free. www.aquarium-du-roc.com

Cancer Support France Christmas Concert

On Fri. 16th at 19h15 in the church in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) Cancer Support France are having their Christmas concert, followed by seasonal refreshments in the bar '*le Viking*' opposite. Free, with all donations to Cancer Support very welcome. For more info: e-mail: nord@cancersupportfrance.org, 02 33 69 01 05

Open Days for French and English Kids and Adults

LanguageLinkAnglo offer French and English courses and lessons for adults and children in and around the Gorrion/Ernée area. You and your children are invited to their fun-packed 'Kids Club' Open Days to sample their language courses. Find out how they encourage children to use new language skills, and also their ideas for adult language learning. Open Days: Sun. 11th Dec. and Sun. 8th Jan., at the Salle des Fêtes in Carelles (53) from 14h to 18h. For more details: www.language-link-anglo.com or contact Jeanette on 02 43 13 08 30.

Next 'Open Mic Night' in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50)

The first 'Open Mic Night' at the bar 'Le Viking' in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) was a great success and the next one is on Fri. 9th at 20h. As it is leading up to Christmas, some Christmas music may be included during the evening. Anyone wanting to take part can contact Norrie by email (waters.norman@orange.fr) or turn up at 'Le Viking' on the night.

New business in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53)

Gary Atkinson has opened a new business on the outskirts of Fougerolles-du-Plessis. With 30 years' experience, he offers all car/van servicing, pre-CT checks and all CT repairs; he has diagnostic equipment and offers tyre-fitting and wheel-balancing. He is open Mondays. to Thursdays: 10h-17h, Fridays & Sats. 10h-15h. Gary's contact details are: tel: 06 02 35 85 27; e-mail: garyatkinson10@gmail.com [Siret No: 819755174],

Some events in support of Téléthon - Fri. 2nd & Sat. 3rd

In the Mayenne *département* (53): volunteers will be helping to sell more than 11,000 roses in support of Téléthon at the larger outlets (supermarkets, bricolage, etc) in Mayenne, Evron, Gorrion, Ernée, Ambrières-les-Vallées, Meslay-du-Maine and Martigné-sur-Mayenne. These volunteers will also be present at the *Marché de Noël* in Mayenne.

In La Ferté-Macé (61): on Sat. 3rd, members of the association «*Médailles Jeunesse et Sports*» will be selling *jacinthes* (hyacinths) in the foyers of Intermarché and Leclerc supermarkets. Last year at this location, 900 hyacinths were sold for AFM-Téléthon 2016.

Exhibition by Olivier Daval in Fougerès (35)

1st to 31st Dec., at the Fougères Tourist Office, this is an exhibition of works by Olivier Daval, a designer of many theatre and cinema sets. More info at www.ot-fougeres.fr.

Christmas Eve Quiz at the Bar du Marché in Ceaucé (61)

There will be a Pub Quiz at the Bar du Marche on Sat. 24th at 20h. A Christmas theme, featuring 4 rounds (including music and pictures) plus a silly game or two. Free entry, snacks and prizes. (For contact details, please see page 4).

Sport & Leisure Activities

Randonnée Pédestre de la Sée

On Sat. 3rd this 8km walk is in aid of Téléthon. Open to all, departing Place d'Uchte in Sourdeval (50) at 14h . www.normandie-tourisme.fr

Randonnée Pour le Téléthon

On Sun. 11th - a walk from Saint-James to La Chatellier (35), organised by *St James Randonne*. Depart at 14h from Place du Champ de Foire in Saint-James (50). 1,50€ for non-members. www.saintjamestourisme.fr

[Remember, for all sporting activities, you need a current health certificate from your doctor]

Gorron espace vert and cow

Further to last month's mention of the newly developed *plan d'eau* area in Gorron (53), this will now be called the "Promenade Saint-Laurent" and the cow is called Marguerite! (So now you know!)

'Pages' bookshop in Passais-la-Conception (61)

Suzanne McGregor would like to let her customers know that 'Pages' will be closed for Christmas and New Year - from Tues 20th Dec., until Tues. 3rd Jan 2017.



That's all for this month. A pretty good cross-section of local, seasonal events and activities – hopefully, something for everyone. Please note: the January issue (no. 118) will be with you later than usual – towards the end of the first week in January, as I will be away until the 3rd. But you will get it!!



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Events by the day (not including *vide-greniers*):

December 2016

Date	Event	Place	Page
Thurs. 1 st	'Irish Celtic' spectacle	Laval	4
Sat. 3 rd	'Entrenotes' concert 'Noël autour du sapin'	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4
3 rd & 4 th	Christmas Market at 'Cadres'	Fougerolles-du-Plessis	2
Sun. 4 th	Concert: <i>La Maitrise St-Léonard</i>	Fougères	4
8th – 11 th	Christmas market and entertainment	Laval	2
Fri. 9 th	<i>Foire aux dindes</i>	La Chapelle d'Andaine	2
"	Music Night in the Bar du Marché	Ceaucé	4
"	'Open Mic' Night in 'Le Viking' bar	Notre-Dame du Touchet	6
Sun. 11 th	'France Alzheimers' fund-raising event	near Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
"	Festival Service of readings and carols	Fougerolles-du-Plessis	3
"	Choir: <i>Chant 'Saire</i>	Mantilly	4
"	'LanguageLinkAnglo' Open Day	Carellles	6
Fri 16 th	' <i>Cantamus</i> ' Christmas concert	Dompierre	4
"	<i>Conservatoire</i> Christmas concert	Fougères	4
"	Cancer Support Nord Christmas Concert	Notre-Dame du Touchet	6
Sat. 17 th	<i>Fête des Lucioles</i> & evening walk	Fougères	3
"	<i>Concert de Noël</i> with 'La Lyre'	Domfront	4
"	Christmas Carols Evening	La Croixille	5
Sun 18 th	'Entrenotes' – <i>Concert de Noël</i>	St Mars d'Egrenne	4
"	Christmas market & <i>crèche vivante</i>	Gavray	3
Sat. 24 th	Christmas Eve Quiz	Ceaucé	6
Sat, 31 st	New Year's Eve fireworks	Domfront	6
"	CarysMai in the Bar du Pecheur	l'Epinay-le-Comte	4

Some more Tourist Office contact details to make a note of:-

Mortain (50)	www.mortainais-tourisme.org	02 33 59 19 74
St Hilaire du Harcouët (50)	www.st-hilaire.fr	02 33 79 38 88
La Ferté-Macé (61)	www.lafertemace.fr	02 33 37 10 97
Flers (61)	www.ornetourisme.com	02 33 65 06 75