

# Bulletin !

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

## Thought for the month:

We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give

[Sir Winston Churchill]

Some *vide-greniers/brocantes* in this area [ $\pm$  (+ or -) = stalls expected] '35' = area

W/end 6 <sup>th</sup> /7 <sup>th</sup>	Colleville Mont-gomery (14)	marché, <i>foire à tout</i> , braderie, in Salle Socio-culturelle, rue Saint André, $\pm 150$
Sun. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Picauville (14)	vide-cuisine in Salle polyvalente (plates, small electrical items & units, etc), $\pm 50$
W/end 13 <sup>th</sup> /14 <sup>th</sup>	Couterne (61)	v-g in <i>l'ancienne minoterie</i> ; $\pm 70$
Sun. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g / brocante at La Chevallerie, 7h-18h, $\pm 150$
"	Ouistreham (14)	<i>marché aux puces</i> (flea market) at La Grange aux Dimes, 7h-19h, $\pm 50$
Sun. 21 <sup>st</sup>	La Lande Patry (61)	Salon Multi-collections / brocante, in Complexe Sportif Emile Halbout; $\pm 50$
"	Granville (50)	monthly brocante
Sat. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Deauville (14)	monthly antiquités/brocante in Square de l'Eglise, 7h-18h, $\pm 50$

Also visit [www.brocabrac.fr](http://www.brocabrac.fr) as it is being constantly updated with *brocantes/vidé-greniers*

### Special dates:

Tues. 9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Mardi Gras</i> (Shrove Tuesday – so get tossing those pancakes!)
Sun 14 <sup>th</sup>	St Valentine's Day

### Granville Carnival

This famous carnival in Granville (50), one of the oldest in France - this will be the 142<sup>nd</sup> year - is from Fri. 5<sup>th</sup> to Tues. 9<sup>th</sup> (during the school holidays!). The main carnival procession is at 14h on the Sun. 7<sup>th</sup>, departing from 3 different points - Port, Casino and *haute ville* - with the illuminated cavalcade at 21h30. On Tues. 9<sup>th</sup> will be the final processions, the judging of the floats and other entertainment. The humour and terrific atmosphere is enjoyed by everyone and helps to welcome in the coming year. More info from [www.carnaval-de-granville.fr](http://www.carnaval-de-granville.fr) or at your nearest Tourist Office.

## Eating out

'La Grange' is a delightful restaurant at 2 rue de la Gare, Domfront (61 – at the top of the hill going up from the lower town. With country cooking and attractive decor, you can enjoy a 4 course meal (*entrée, plat, cheeseboard, dessert & coffee*) for 13€. Friendly staff and plenty of parking. Open at lunchtimes only Mon. to Fri.: 11h-14h30. Recommended.

## Walking - *Randonnée GPS*

A reminder that you can enjoy some interesting and pleasurable walks independently in and around Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) by hiring a GPS module which offers several circuits, so you can walk without having to search for route markers (*balisages*), read a map or study a *topoguide*. Available all year from the Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66), the rates are: 3€ for a ½-day, 5€ for a full day. [www.ornetourisme.com](http://www.ornetourisme.com)

## *Le Jardin des Plantes* in Avranches (50)

Famous in particular for its superb views over the Bay of Mont-Saint-Michel, this botanical garden in Avranches welcomes nearly 250,000 visitors every year. Created in 1766 by the department's *Ecole Centrale* as a site for practical lessons, it became a true garden in 1799. Plants have been added regularly by botanists over the years. Open all year, 8h30 to nightfall. Free entry. Visit without guide. More info: [www.manchetourisme.com](http://www.manchetourisme.com)

## Exhibition : '*Corps et âmes – l'homme et les dieux dans l'antiquité*'

Until 3<sup>rd</sup> March at the *Musée Archéologique*, 13 rue de la Libération in Jublains (53), this is an exhibition of art and history - a chance to be able to study and better understand several examples of antique masterpieces, especially sculptures. Entry 4€. For more info go to [www.museedejublains.fr](http://www.museedejublains.fr)

## Something for all the family - *Biotropica*

Biotropica invites you to discover the world which surrounds us. Opened in 2012, it is on the CD110, Base de Loisirs, Bute de la Capoulade, 27100 Val de Reuil (near Evreux – a drive north but worth the journey). This tropical greenhouse is dedicated to biodiversity and is home to many animals - from otters to tree frogs, parrots to piranhas, penguins to alligators! Details of the daily feeding times can be found on their website. Outdoor trails, including a new Asian Garden with pandas; pelicans' lake; a mini-farm with dwarf pigs and comical hens. Something for everyone. Open all year: 9h30-18h. Adults 12,80€, 3-11s: 8,80€, under 3s free. Parking 4€. [www.biotropica.fr](http://www.biotropica.fr)

## The hotel 'Oasis' in Villaines-la-Juhel has attained 3\* rating

The 'Oasis' hotel at la Sourderie, Villaines-la-Juhel (53) was once an 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse and is now a Logis '3-Chimney' restaurant and 3-star rated hotel of character. There are 15 bedrooms, some with jacuzzi, and the hotel is in a pretty park overlooking a lake. Owner Steve Chédor, who took over the reins when his father retired, has worked in prestigious restaurants such as the *Manoir des Lys* in Bagnoles de l'Orne and *La Marjolaine* in Mayenne, as well as in England and Florida. A great venue for that special get-together. More info on [www.oasis.fr](http://www.oasis.fr)

Something you didn't know you didn't know . . . . .

Mont Saint Michel – should it be in Brittany or Normandy? It is understandable that both provinces should fight over the paternity and ownership of such a prestigious frontier monument as this island-abbey. The Bretons claim seniority as the Romans did lump the Cotentin peninsular together with Brittany as ‘Armorica’ and indeed, this rugged region is completely different from the greener, hedged meadows of the Normandy bocage to the east. Under the Franks, as part of the Avranches diocese in the *comté* (county) of Cotentin it was handed over to Brittany in 867 by King Charles the Bald. But the Cotentin was ceded 70 years later to the newly founded Duchy of Normandy and has remained part of Normandy ever since. To make things worse for the Bretons, the river that made a sort of frontier from the Normans changed course in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and placed the Mont firmly in Normandy!

### Exhibition of photographs

From 5<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> Feb., at the *Archives Municipales de Fougères*, photos by Joël Guyard – an architectural tour of the town of Fougères (35). More info at [www.ot-fougeres.fr](http://www.ot-fougeres.fr)

### *Asinerie du Bois Gamats*, Laval (53)

On Thurs. 11<sup>th</sup> at 15h30, and Sats. 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> at 15h30, you can visit this farm on the Chemin du Château du Bois Gamats, near Laval, and learn about the raising and care of donkeys. 3€. Also, on Fridays from 15h30 to 18h you can visit their shop where you can buy locally made products – and even asses milk! More info - and confirmation of the opening days - at [www.asinerieduboisgamats.fr](http://www.asinerieduboisgamats.fr)

### Recognising the cattle breeds in France

This month's breed of cattle is: ‘Tarentaise’ - colour: golden brown

The Tarentaise, also dubbed “Tarine”, descends from the French Savoie which still today is home to the majority of breed-stock numbers. In the Savoie region, Tarentaise cattle are stabled for winter and fed on hay rations, then turned out in spring to use the lower-lying Alpine valleys before climbing to higher Alpine pastureland at over 1,500m altitude where they are farmed almost exclusively on grass. They demonstrate excellent adaptability to tough conditions: they make good use of rough forage, can comfortably withstand strong temperature variation and adjust well to different biotopes (mountain rangeland, arid zones, tropical zones, temperate zones).

This remarkable all-purpose blend of hardiness, milk production and beef production has carried the breed's reputation abroad, as far afield as the USA, Canada, and North Africa (especially Tunisia and Egypt). The Tarentaise produces a distinct-tasting milk used to produce four AOC cheeses (Beaufort, Tomme des Bauges, Reblochon and Abondance) and two IPG cheeses (Tomme and Emmental de Savoie).

### Opening hours for the Bar du Marché in Ceaucé (61)

From February, Anthony and Hannah will be back open on Tuesdays (i.e. closed on Mondays) – but don't worry, they will still be staying open Sunday afternoons for the big Premiership matches. Full details and updates can be found at <http://www.facebook.com> – just search for Bar du Marché–Ceaucé

## Entertainment

Tues. 2<sup>nd</sup> at l'Espace Clair de Lune in Ernée (53): "Made in China" – dance, mime, theatre, music and acrobats – a wonderful display from the China of today. Tickets 11€, children 6€. More info at [www.mayenne-tourisme.com](http://www.mayenne-tourisme.com)

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> at 20h30 in the Centre Culturel Jouvence in Louvigné-du-Désert (35): 'Cock Robin' – an American group with music from the 80s, followed by dancing to music from that era. Tickets: 20€/25€, under 12s free. More info: [www.ot-fougeres.fr](http://www.ot-fougeres.fr)

Fri. 26<sup>th</sup> at 22h in the Casino Lounge Café in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): Pat Fox, with rock and blues. Free. More info from the Bagnoles Tourist Office

## Concerts

Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> at 18h30 in *l'Auditorium du Grand Nord* in Mayenne (53): a piano recital from Hermine Théard. For more info: 02 43 11 19 73 or the Mayenne Tourist Office

Sun. 7<sup>th</sup> at 16h in Domfront (61): a concert with Portuguese singer Isabelle Montembault with her guitarist, Bernard Claudin. For the location go to [www.ot-domfront.com](http://www.ot-domfront.com)

Sun. 21<sup>st</sup> at 16h at the Theatre Municipal in Mayenne (53) a piano recital by Galina Zhukova – classical music. Tickets: 10€ to 15€

Sun 28<sup>th</sup> at 15h in l'Eglise Notre-Dame-du-Touchet (50) – a concert with the 'Cantamus' chorale in support of Cancer Support France Basse-Normandie, followed by tea and cakes in the Day Centre. The Ladies of Cantamus are pleased to support CSF with a concert of seasonal songs "Winter to Spring". The repertoire of Cantamus reflects the wide interest of the members of the choir and the tastes of audiences. The songs range from 16<sup>th</sup> century madrigals to modern classics. Something for everyone. Entry to the concert is free but donations are welcome. For more info please phone Cathy on 02 33 69 01 05, email [csfbassenormandie@gmail.com](mailto:csfbassenormandie@gmail.com) or Lesley Thomson on 02 33 38 09 44.

### Learn to dance the 'flamenco' in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

Lessons begin on Sun, 7<sup>th</sup> from 10h to 12h30 at the Studio de Dance, *Centre d'Animation* in Bagnoles de l'Orne. A lesson is 30€, or 80€ for the term. Contact: 06 08 92 75 91

### *Bar du Pecheur* in l'Epinay-le-Comte (61) re-opens

Jessica has re-opened her bar, and although she will not be providing food just yet, there will be several themed evenings over the coming months. The first one is Fish & Chips on Fri. 5<sup>th</sup> (by reservation only). The opening hours are Mon., Tues. & Thurs.: 12h-20h (closed Weds.); Fri. & Sat.: 12h-23h; Suns. 12h-19h. For more info and bookings: 02 33 38 71 61 or [jessica.wootton@orange.fr](mailto:jessica.wootton@orange.fr)

### Dance lessons in Désertines (53)

Norrie and Sue are still holding their popular weekly dance lessons on Tuesdays at 19h15 (7.15pm) – Ballroom, Latin American and Sequence. They are held in the *Salle Polyvalente* in Désertines, so there is plenty of space. There is no charge for the classes and everyone, from beginners upwards, is welcome to come and enjoy the dancing. From March, on Thursday evenings there will be Line Dancing classes, which are held in the Petite Salle above the *Mairie* in Désertines, as well. For more info you can contact Norrie Waters on [waters.norman@orange.fr](mailto:waters.norman@orange.fr)

## Lest We Forget

[Continuing the local eye-witness accounts from WWII]. Jeannine Henry-Diesnis (née Benoît) was 10 years old when war was declared. Her father had been killed in 1930 during the conflict in Morocco, when she was 9 months old. Jeannine remembers perfectly September 1939 – the whole sky became red “like a brazier”. Her mother took her hand and said it was not good sign – a catastrophe was about to happen. Her town of Cherbourg was often targeted by English and American bombs, as they tried to destroy the German hold there and she still remembers how frightened they were. Throughout the war she had many terrible experiences and now, at the age of 86, she still gives talks to pupils in schools and colleges to impress upon them the atrocities of war.

### *l'Abbaye Bénédictine Notre-Dame* in Lonlay l'Abbaye (61)

This Benedictine Abbey, at Place Saint Sauveur in the town of Lonlay l'Abbaye, was founded at the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century by the Comte de Bellême. You can visit at any time to see this rich architectural heritage. [Note: from 15 June to 15<sup>th</sup> Sept., you can take a guided tour of the Abbey on Weds., at 11h]. For more info, contact the Domfront Tourist Office (02 33 38 53 97) or visit [www.ot-domfront.com](http://www.ot-domfront.com)

### *Grand Frais* supermarket in Laval (53)

These supermarkets sell just food and drink, and have a great choice of spices, vegetables (including bean-sprouts), meat, etc., at very competitive prices. There are 164 in France, and the one in Laval is on rue Henri Batard, ZA Les Alignés (behind the KFC). They are open Mon. to Sat. 9h-19h30 non-stop, Sun. 9-12h30. More info at [www.grandfrais.com](http://www.grandfrais.com)

### New Chalk Paint and upholstery shop and workshops

Michele Moulin White has just taken over Puce and Co., in St Hilaire du Harcouët (50). They are the official re-seller in the area for Annie Sloan Chalk Paint, but Michelle is also an upholsterer, curtain maker (English curtains!) and soft furnisher. As well as offering workshops for the Chalk Paint, she is also holding upholstery workshops. For further info contact Michelle on [puceandco@yahoo.com](mailto:puceandco@yahoo.com)

### Cheeses of the Month : *Pavé d'Auge* and *Pavé Blésois*

[Pavé is the name given to the square cobblestones you see in old French market places]

*Pavé d'Auge*: this Normandy cow's milk cheese, also known as *Pavé de Moyaux*, is a piquant cheese with a long tradition. It is a semi-soft, mild and supple, creamy cheese with a reddish rind and a relatively high fat content. Good with champagne or cider.

*Pavé Blésois*: made with goat's milk, this is produced in the *Blésois* region near Blois on the river Loire. Square or rectangular in shape, its rind has a dry surface covered with a silvery blue mould. The cheese is fine-textured and it tingles on the tongue. Wines to drink with it (both white): Sancerre or Pouilly Fumé

### Exhibition hall in Saint-Hilaire du Harcouët (50)

'La Verrière', at 37 blvd Gambetta in Saint-Hilaire du Harcouët, is an ancient monastery which has been transformed into a venue for numerous temporary exhibitions and events throughout the year. To find out events each month go to [www.st-hilaire.fr](http://www.st-hilaire.fr)

### New business – a *brocante* in Chantrigné (53)

In December 2015 a new *brocante*, called “*Aux bonnes affaires*”, was opened in the centre of Chantrigné, at 81 rue des Vallées. In an area of 100m<sup>2</sup>, Jean-Pierre Polquin sells furniture and diverse items from the 1970s; in another room there are electrical goods (which have been thoroughly checked out), and there is a further room with old & new furniture, books, lighting, pictures and many other items. He is open from Mons. to Sats., 9h30 to 18h (non-stop). Tel: 07 86 00 30 97 (not sure if he speaks any English).

### A new *immobilier* in Gorron (53)

Jean-Christophe Develter is an independent *immobilier* (estate agent), under the ‘umbrella’ of the group Capi France, who already have 100 sites throughout France. Originally from Orleans, he has worked in London so speaks English, and he is confident that there are properties within 20km of Gorron which will be of interest to people from Belgium, Holland and England. He can be contacted by phone: 06 23 43 21 94 and by email at [jc.develter@capiFrance.fr](mailto:jc.develter@capiFrance.fr)

### Health - bananas!

According to the latest Japanese scientific research, a fully ripe banana with dark patches on the yellow skin produces a substance called TNF (Tumour Necrosis Factor) which has the ability to combat abnormal cells. The more darker patches it has, the higher its immunity enhancement quality - hence, the riper the banana, the better the anti-cancer quality. Also, a yellow skin with dark patches is 8 times more effective in enhancing the property of white blood cells. So, eating just 1 banana a day increases immunity.

### Renovations to Laval railway station

In January 2016, renovations to the interior of the *gare* in Laval (53) began and the first part (making better access for the disabled and work on the bridge) is scheduled to be finished by late summer 2016. A Portakabin has been installed on the forecourt for tickets and information. The town has invested 800,000€ into this project.

### Weekly markets in the *Manche* (50)

Day of the week	Location
Mondays	Briquebec, Carentan, Saint-James, Torigni-sur-Vire
Tuesdays	Cherbourg, Ducey, Portbail, Villedieu-les-Poêles
Wednesdays	St Hilaire-du-Harcouët, La Haye Pesnel, La Haye-du-Puits
Thursdays	Cherbourg, Coutances, Sainte-Mère-Eglise
Fridays	Brécey, Les Pieux, Saint-Lô, Valognes
Saturdays	Avranches, Barneville-Carteret, Cherbourg, Granville, Mortain, Saint-Lô, Saint-Saveur-le-Vicomte
Sundays	Pirou, Hauteville-sur-Mer

(It is wise to double check before going, as these can change without notice)

Next month: the weekly markets in the Mayenne (53) *département*.

## Sport & Leisure Activities

### 'Cap au Sport'

During the February school holidays at the *Base de Loisirs de Chenedet* in the Forêt de Fougères (35), several activities are organised (including horse-riding, bike riding, orienteering) for children, teenagers and adults. Tickets: 8€ per activity per day. More info from your Tourist Office or at: [www.fougeres-communaute.bzh](http://www.fougeres-communaute.bzh)

### Walking

Two walks organised by *St James Randonne*. Depart at 14h from the Place du Champ de Foire in Saint James (50), 1,50€ for non-members. More info: [www.saintjamestourisme.fr](http://www.saintjamestourisme.fr):

☞ Sun. 14<sup>th</sup> – walk from Saint James to Louvigné du Désert (35)

☞ Tues. 24<sup>th</sup> – walk from Saint James to Val St Père (50)

### Concours de belote in Saint-Cyr du Bailleul (61)

Organised by the *Comité des Fêtes de Saint-Cyr du Bailleul* - on Sun. 7<sup>th</sup> in the Salle des Fêtes, this popular French 32-card trick-taking game is played with 4 people in teams of 2. Full details can be found on Wikipedia. Inscriptions from 13h30 to 14h; participation: 5,50€ per person.

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### February events at *Le Jardin de Froulay*, Couesmes-Vaucé (53)

- ❖ Thurs. 4<sup>th</sup> : Quiz Night; ❖ Fri. 12<sup>th</sup> : Curry Night; ❖ Thurs. 18<sup>th</sup> : Bingo and Burgers
- ❖ Fri. 19<sup>th</sup> & Sat. 20<sup>th</sup> : Pool Competition – 10€ per entry, winner takes all.
- ❖ Fri. 26<sup>th</sup> : Fish & Chips Night; ❖ Sat 27<sup>th</sup> : Open Mic Night

For more info please go to their Facebook page.

### 'Pages' English bookshop – half-term closure dates

Suzanne McGregor would like to let her customers know that 'Pages' bookshop in Passais-la-Conception (61) will be closed for half-term from Sat. 6<sup>th</sup> until Fri. 19<sup>th</sup> Feb.

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That's all for this month. Plenty still going on at this time of year to tempt us out of doors! Let's keep our fingers crossed for some more mild weather!

*Judy Skinner*

La Croix des 4 Epines

53120 Gorron

tel: 02 43 30 29 06

e-mail: [judithsk@free.fr](mailto:judithsk@free.fr)

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

February 2016

Date	Event	Place	Page
Tues. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	'Made in China' – dance, acrobats	Ernée	4
Wed. 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Piano recital by Hermine Théard	Mayenne	4
Thurs. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Quiz Night at <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
5 <sup>th</sup> to 9 <sup>th</sup>	Granville Carnival	Granville	1
Fri. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Fish & Chip Night (bookings only)	l'Épinay-le-Comté	4
Sat 6 <sup>th</sup>	Concert with the group 'Cock Robin'	Louvigné-du-Désert	4
Sun 7 <sup>th</sup>	Fado concert with Isabelle Montembault	Domfront	4
“	Flamenco lessons begin	Bagnoles de l'Orne	6
“	<i>Concours de belote</i>	St Cyr du Bailleul	7
Fri. 12 <sup>th</sup>	Curry Night at <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
Sun. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Walk to Louvigné du Désert	Saint James	6
Thurs. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Bingo & Burgers at <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
19 <sup>th</sup> & 20 <sup>th</sup>	Pool Competition <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
Sun. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Piano recital by Galina Zhukova	Mayenne	4
Tues. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Walk to Val St Père	Saint James	6
Fri. 26 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly Quiz Night at the <i>Bar du Marché</i>	Ceaucé	-
“	Pat Fox – rock & blues	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4
“	Fish & Chips Night at <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
Sat 27 <sup>th</sup>	Open Mic Night at <i>Le Jardin de Froulay</i>	Couesmes-Vaucé	7
Sun. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Cantamus concert in support of CSF-BN	Notre-Dame-du-Touchet	4