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Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

If we all threw our problems in a pile and saw everyone else's, we'd grab ours back

Some *vide-greniers/brocantes* in this area $[\pm = stalls expected]$ '53' = area

Note: a late addition for the end of May:

W/e 28th/29th St Fraimbault-de-Prières (53) Barn Sale – see page 2 for more info

June:

s and.		
Sun. 5 th	Sainte-Suzanne (53)	Les Puces Suzannaises, ±70
دد	La Ferrières aux Etangs (61)	v-g / brocante, ±150
دد	Avranches (50)	monthly brocante, ±50
دد	Fougères (35)	v-g in pl. Edmond-Herbert, ±300
دد	St Meloir-des-Ondes (35)	v-g in centre-ville, ±150
Sat. 11 th	Dompierre (61)	v-g, ±75
W/e 11 th & 12	th Gorron (53)	vide-maison at 6 Imp. du Pavé (see page7)
Sun. 12 th	Chantrigné (53)	v-g, ±80
.د	La Lande-Patry (61)	v-g in Stade de Foot, ±150
.د	Louvigné (53)	v-g in pl. Saint-Martin, ±150
Sat. 18 th	Gorron (53)	Puces des Couturières, ±50
	Vitré (35)	v-g: sports et loisir, rue de Balazé, ±150
Sun. 19 th	Granville (50)	monthly brocante. ±50
.د	Le Teilleul (50)	v-g, ±50
.د	Changé (53)	v-g in Complexe Auguste-Dalibard, ±200
	St Denis de Gastines (53)	v-g, ±80
۰.	Marcillé-la-Ville (53)	v-g, ±50
Sat. 25 th	Pontorson (50)	brocante Boucey, ±70
W/e 25/26 th	Sourdeval (50)	v-g, ±150
Sun. 26 th	Ernée (53)	v-g in Château de Pannard, ±80
دد	Montjoie-St-Martin (50)	v-g / foire à tout, ±50
دد	St Clair de Halouze (61)	v-g, ±100

Visit www.brocabrac.fr as it is being constantly updated with brocantes / vide-greniers]

Special dates / public holidays:

Sun. 19th *Fête des Pères* (Fathers' Day)

Eating out

[*With thanks to Sandra W for this info]:* The excellent *Auberge de la Source* in St Cyr-du-Bailleul (61) closed a while back (but is in the process of re-opening) and the restaurant '*La Toque aux Vins*', 8 rue de la Mairie in Saint-Martin-des-Champs (50, near Avranches) has the staff, décor and food of the same high quality. Just as with the *Auberge*, this is somewhere to go for those special occasions. The restaurant is open 12h-14h30 on Weds. to Sundays, and 19h30-21h on Weds. to Sats. For more info: *www.latoqueauxvins.fr*.

Barn Sale – <u>end of May</u>

On both Sat. 28th & Sun. 29th May from 10h30 to 17h - a Barn Sale at La Gracière, 53300 St Fraimbault de Prières. Items for sale include household, kitchen, garden, animal, fencing, gates and horse bits & pieces. (If using a SatNav for directions, location <u>may</u> be listed as La Grassière). Any questions or further information or for help with directions please contact Wendy on 02 43 00 24 14 or email *lagraciere@gmail.com* [Note: if coming from St Loup de Gast there is a *route barrée* sign on the D266 - ignore it! The actual roadworks start 5km later, the turn off to the barn sale is only 3km after the sign. The turning is just <u>before</u> Bourgneuf.]

Walking along the towpath

A reminder that alongside the river Mayenne, from north to south (between the towns of Mayenne and Laval) there are 85kms of *chemins de halage* (tow-paths) – ideal for walkers, fishermen, and riders of horses and bicycles. Maps showing walks in the area are available from the Mayenne Tourist Office, *www.hautemayenne-tourisme.com*

8th Fête des Plantes - 'Entre Ville et Jardin'

On the weekend of 4th & 5th, 10h–18h, this popular garden fête, organised by the *Association Entre Ville et Jardin*, is held in the grounds of the château of Bagnoles de l'Orne (61), surrounded by 154 species of magnificent trees. This year's theme at this festive and convivial event is "*La couleur au jardin*" - 60 stands with artisans and expo/sale of plants and garden objects. Entry $2,50 \in$ – but free for under 12s and for ladies whose first name is that of a flower! More info: *www.bagnolesdelorne.com*

Musée de la Bataille de Tilly-sur-Seulles (14)

Situated in a 12th century chapel, this museum recounts the violent struggle from June to July 1944 for the liberation of Tilly-sur-Seulles and the surrounding villages, as well as the suffering of the civilian population. Unique documents & photographs, including numerous accounts from both civilians and soldiers; with models of views of the battlefield that provide an illustration of these events. Open: 30/4 to 30/9 (on weekends & fête days only) 10h-12h & 14h-18h. Entry: 4€, veterans and under 12s free. *www.tilly1944.com*

Something for all the family in the Parc de Vaux

There are many activities to enjoy at the Parc de Vaux near Ambrières-les-Vallées (53) – swimming pool, bike rental, tennis courts, horse-riding, canoeing, picnic area, etc. English is spoken at the *Acceuil*, where you will also find more information.

Guided tour of the Abbey in Lonlay l'Abbaye (61)

Founded around 1020 by Guillaume de Bellême, on Wednesdays at 11h (in summer) you can have a guided tour of this Abbey. Reservation is necessary at the Domfront Tourist Office as a minimum of 4 people is required A live translation can be available – ask at the Tourist Office. This visit can also be a part of a day's programme – "*une journée à Lonlay*" which includes a visit to the famous Biscuiterie de l'Abbaye, a meal in a local restaurant, and discovery of beers and ice creams produced by the commune. *www.ot-domfront.com*

Marché du terroir

On Sun 12th from 9h to 13h in place de Gaulle, Saint-James (50): local produce, artisanal items, musical entertainment, and pony rides with the *Centre Equestre de la Dierge*. More info from the Saint-James Tourist Office, *www.saintjamestourisme.fr*

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

The Pyrénées are linked to the Empire State Building! Marble from the Sarrancolin quarries has been exploited since Roman times and many different types of marble and other stone are found in the Pyrénées. Sarrancolin marble was used far afield: by the masons working under Louis XIV for the Château de Versailles in the early 1700s; in the 1860s by Charles Garnier for the grand staircase in his *Opéra de Paris* (now the *Opéra Garnier*), and in 1931 by architect William Lamb for the hall of the Empire State Building in New York. Although the quarries closed in 1991, locals worked to get them reopened for visits and now have a marble museum.

Grand Daze Rescue Musical BBQ

On Sat. 18th from 19h at *la Grande Gaudinière*, La Bigottière (53, near Chailland), a BBQ with desert and drinks, with live music, open mic' and tombola. Admission by ticket only: $15\in$, children 10 \in . For more info contact Jenny Dew on 02 43 90 75 83 or 02 43 02 96 35

Art exhibition in Saint-James (50)

From 18th to 24th: an art exhibition by *l'Association Pique-fleurs et Arts Passion* at the *Centre Culturel de St-Benoît* in Saint-James

Cheese of the Month : Crottin de Chavignol

Also known as just *Chavignol*, this is probably the most famous cheese of the Loire Valley and has been produced since the 16th century in the village of Chavignol, near Sancerre. It has a natural rind which ranges from pale ivory to almost black. Made exclusively from goats' milk, it can be eaten at various stages of the maturing process – after 8 days it has a strong nutty taste, after 5 weeks it becomes dry with a richer flavour. 16 million cheeses are made annually. Great as a starter (grilled in a salad with wine vinegar) and on the cheeseboard. Recommended accompanying wine: a white Sancerre

Fête de la Cluse du Tertre Sainte-Anne et de la Voie Verte

On Sun. 12th, 9h-17h, this is the 4th edition of this fête near Domfront (61). You can enjoy angling, orienteering, walks, climbing, cycling, pony rides, canoe/kayaking, a nature treasure-hunt, Tai Chi Chu'an, Qi Gong, and giant games for the children. More info from the Domfront Tourist Office: 02 33 38 53 97, email at *info@ot-domfront.com*

Entertainment & Concerts

Sat. 28th May at 20h30 in *l'Eglise* in Désertines (53): concert with the *Lyre Gorronnaise*, *Cantare* of Fougerolles du Plessis and *l'Orchestre Musikverein de Schweikheim*. Free

June:

Wed. 1st from 19h15 to 20h15: a concert '*Violon et Clarinette*' by *l'Ecole de Musique* at the médiathèque in Ambrières-les-Vallées (53). Free

Fri. 3^{rd} at 20h30 in the Théâtre de Laval, 34 rue de la Paix, Laval (53): *Ensemble Instrumental de la Mayenne* with *Comme un air de jazz'* including selections from Stravinsky and Shostokovich. Tickets: 12€, under 18s & students: 6€; *www.laval-tourisme.com*

Sat. 11th in *l'Espace Aumaillerie* in Fougères (35): Nana Mouskouri on her "Happy Birthday" concert tour. [This concert was postponed on 8th Jan. 2016 due to ill-health]. Tickets $55 \in$ or 60 \in on sale at the Fougères Tourist Office; more info at *www.ot-fougeres.fr*

Sat. 18th at 20h30 in *l'Eglise Saint-Julien* in Domfront (61): concert with 'Gospel Fire' in support of Cancer Research. More info from the Tourist Office: *www.ot-domfront.com*

Tues. 21st from 18h in the Parc du Château de Mayenne (53): concert with *l'Orchestre du Conservatoire du Pays de Mayenne* and *l'Orchestre d'Harmonie du Pays de Mayenne*. Free

Sat. 25th at the bar/restaurant *l'Imprevu*, at 2 rue Porte de Chammay, Ambrières-les-Vallées (53): the group "Lost Weekend". For more details contact Sandrine on 09 82 46 86 50

Concert with organ and trumpet

Sun. 26th at 20h30 in *l'Eglise St-Jacques* in Saint-James (50): a concert with organ and trumpet to mark the placing of a plaque by *Les Amis de l'Orgue*. Free, with collection.

Concert at the American War Cemetery

Mon. 6th at 9h30, organised by the Association 'Historic Programs': a concert at the *Cimitière Américaine de Montjoie-Saint-Martin* (50), with a percussion band from the USA. Free admission.

Organ recital and concert in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

This month, a recital and concert, both at 17h in *l'Eglise Sainte-Madeleine*. Free, with a collection. More info: *www.bagnolesdelorne.com*

Sun. 5th: an organ recital with works by Titelouze, Correa de Auroxo, Couperin;

 \square Sun. 26th: with Liesbeth Schlumberger (organ) & Claudia Bec (flute) with sonatas and suites by J. S. Bach.

English film night in Gorron cinema

The next VO (Version Original) film in Gorron cinema is on Monday 6^{th} – it is the actionpacked 'The Huntsman and the Ice Queen (originally titled 'The Huntsman: Winter's War") starring Charlize Theron, Chris Hamsworth, Emily Blunt. Tickets (5.50€) on sale at the cinema from 20h on the night. Film starts at 20h30. The *Bar de la Mairie*, at the bottom of the hill, is open for those (like me!) wanting pre-film refreshment.

Lest We Forget

100-years old this year, Rémy Oger was born in Le Horps (53) and he relates his experiences during WW2. He signed up for military service in 1937 and, after 24 months, joined the infantry on 7 Sept. 1939. Captured in northern France in 1940, he was sent to eastern Prussia where he and others were put to work on a farm - that winter of 1940/41 was one of the harshest of the 20th century with temperature dropping to -35° and they were housed in a basement cold enough to store the milk. Taken by cattle truck to Germany in 1942 they existed by eating dandelions, finally joining a Russian camp. Put to work on farms for the next few years, in 1945 he was taken to an English camp in Norway and finally arrived back in Le Horps in September. Married in 1948, he and his wife raised 2 children and when he retired in 1985 they moved to Lassay-les-Châteaux and are now enjoying spending their remaining years near their family.

'Maréchal Foch' is everywhere in France!

You will be hard put to find a town or city which does not have an avenue or boulevard named after Maréchal Foch, who was born in Tarbes (65) in 1851. He led the French Ninth Army, aided by the smaller British Expeditionary Force, to victory at the Battle of the Marne in 1914 and became Allied Commander-in-Chief on the Western Front during the First World War.

14th Rendez-vous au Jardin de Clivoy

On the weekend of the 4th & 5th, the Jardin de Clivoy in Chailland (53) opens for the 14th *Rendez-vous au jardin'*. Classed a *jardin remarquable* 10 years ago, it evolves each year and you will find a *jardin potager* with fountains, greenhouse and orangerie, the 6 hectare *parc à l'Anglaise*, and the park and gardens of the Château de Clivoy. Open on Sat. 4th: 10h-12h & 14h-18h and Sun. 5th: 14h-18h. Entry: 5€, under 15s free. *www.clivoy.fr*

Guided tour of Domfront (61) in English

On Wednesdays in summer from 14h30, this very informative 2-hour tour begins at the remains of the château - the foundations of which date back 1,000 years – with a walk through the streets of this medieval town. Reservation necessary as a minimum number of people is required. More details from the Domfront Tourist Office at 12 place de la Roirie, *www.ot-domfront.com*, 02 33 38 53 97.

Château de Fontaine-Henry

This sumptuous château, at 3 place du Château, Fontaine-Henry (14, near Bayeux) is a mustsee. A Renaissance masterpiece filled with mystery, with "the highest roofs in France", outstanding stone lacework inside & out and François I staircase. It is still inhabited and with 10 centuries of history it is an introduction to heritage conservation. Do not miss the art collection, furniture, Romanesque chapel, medieval vaulted rooms, wooden play park and 3 gardens; there is also an elegant coffee shop & gift shop. Open only on weekends and fête days, <u>only until 14th June</u>, then from 16th Sept. to 1st Nov., 14h30-18h. Entry: adults: 8,50€; 7s-15s: 5,50€, under 7s free. More info: *www.chateau-de-fontaine-henry.com*

Keeping the names alive

In the cemetery in Champsecret (61), due to the number of tombs and burial vaults that have fallen into disrepair, or whose concessions had not been renewed and their descendents not traceable, the municipality have decided to re-site those in bad condition and put them all together in an ossuary. This will hold the remains of 176 people who were buried there and their names are listed on the remembrance plaque attached so that they leave a visible trace. The oldest person showing in the register of the *mairie* and listed here died in 1842.

Les Jardins des Renaudies

This month there are also 2 special events in these pretty gardens near Colombiers-du-Plessis (53). There is also the new *Salon de Thé Anglais* (English Tea Room) to enjoy, 14h-18h. For opening days and times visit *www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr*.

Sun. 5th : '*Rendez-vous aux jardins*' and '*les Musiques et Couleurs du Maghreb*';

Sun. 26th from 10h-18h: *Peintres aux Jardins* - artists will set up their easels around this lovely floral park to paint in lovely surroundings. Prize-giving will be at 17h.

Summer event in St Cyr du Bailleul (50)

On Sat. 18th, organised by the *Comité des Fêtes*: a meal and dance in the *Salle des Fêtes* at the *mairie* of St-Cyr du Bailleul, with a live band 'the Merrymakers'. Tickets are 14€ for an adult, 6€ for a child. The meal is: *apéritif, entrée* (salad with surimi, *macedoine*, eggs, tomatoes), the *plat* is roast pork with cider and mushroom sauce, baked potatoes and green beans; then camembert, and for dessert – Eton Mess! On the next day, Sunday afternoon, behind the *mairie* they are organising their *concours de pétanque (jeux de boules)* in teams of 2 – inscriptions from 13h30 to 14h. 5€ per person. For more info: 07 87 91 14 82

All British internet radio station - Ex-pat radio

[With thanks to Reinder B. for this info]: This is a new English-speaking internet radio station based in France playing a variety of the best music, comedy and chat, with a wide variety of programs including cookery classes, French lessons, dating and even a religious slot every Monday with an English vicar. Reinder's program is every Sunday, 17h30-19h30 and Monday 17h-18h. *www.ex-patradio.fr*, and on Facebook under Ex-pat radio.

English-speaking help-line numbers

[With thanks to 'the Good Life' and also Sandy W for this]: For new readers, this info might be useful at times when you need help and just don't feel confident to deal with it in French, including emergencies, France Telecom-Orange and EDF:

http://www.thegoodlifefrance.com/useful-english-speaking-helpline-numbers-in-france/

Mistletoe and thistle

A seasonal reminder that the removal and destruction of mistletoe (*le gui*) from all poplars and fruit trees is compulsory. Also, all landowners, especially those absent for part of the year, must remove - and/or arrange to destroy - any thistle (*le chardon*) on their land before it flowers, including any in the areas along the borders.

30th *Fête Médiévale de Bayeux* – the Battle of Hastings

From 27th June until 3rd July in Bayeux (14), the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings is honoured by a reconstruction of a Norman and Saxon encampment of the 11th century, with period *ateliers*. There will also be a concert on the 30th June in the Cathedral de Bayeux. More info from *www.normandie-tourisme.fr* or a Tourist Office near you.

Marché des Producteurs de Pays in Juvigny-sous-Andaine (61)

On Sun. 12th from 10h, this is a festive day with a market, artisanal fabrication & sale of bread, entertainment, demonstrations of sheep shearing and horse-shoeing, pony rides, music and initiation into Norman dances. More info from the Domfront Tourist Office: *www.ot-domfront.com*

Annual *Fête de la Musique*

Each year, in the middle of June, France celebrates music with the *Fête de la Musique*. Traditionally on the Saturday evening, most villages and towns welcome musicians, singers and instrumentalists and everyone can enjoy an evening of music. This year the date is 18^{th} June, but some villages have it on other dates nearby so that musicians can also play at other venues. Here are some planned appearances – look out for local posters for others or ask at your Tourist Office for performances in your area.

Fri. 17th : local group 'Alys' will be performing at the Changé (53) *Fête de la Musique*

Sat. 18th : a second chance to see the group 'Alys' at the Gorron (53) *Fête de la Musique*, and also Carys will be performing solo as Carys Mai at the Bar de Sports. 'Velvet Lips' from Hayling Island will also be playing in Gorron during the evening.

Thurs. 23^{rd} from 19h – as part of the *Fête de la Musique*, a free jazz *apéro-concert* in the gardens of the Hotel de France in Domfront (61), with Betty Jardin, local singer.

La Jardin du Ridrel, La Ferté-Macé (61)

Serge and Maryvonne Fleury welcome visitors to their lovely gardens ay 26, rue des Ridrel on 4 weekends each year (in May and June). In June, this is on Sundays 5th and 12th. Entry is 2€, which goes to the Hospital of Valognes and also helps towards the care of the people there suffering from Alzheimers. 02 33 37 15 73

Stage de pastel (pastel class) in Saint-James (50)

On Sat. 25th & Sun. 26th are classes for pastels on the theme of *'la mer'* at *la Pepinière d'Enterprises de Saint-James*, from 10h-12h30 and 14h-17h30. 50€ for one day, 90€ for 2 days. Contact: *sandrine.berthe@yahoo.fr;* 06 62 55 94 33

Vide-maison in Gorron (53)

On Sat. 11th & Sun 12th, on the occasion of the sale of a house at 6, Impasse du Pavé (near the *Château d'Eau* [water tower] in Gorron: there is over 600 m² of space (using also the house next door!) where you will find furniture for sale at low prices: chairs, tables, cupboards, coffee tables, sofas, armchairs and other small furniture, also beds and some new bedding.

Sport & Leisure Activities

Walking

Two walks organised by *St James Randonne*. $1,50 \in$ for non-members. More info from *www.saintjamestourisme.fr:*

Sun. 12th – walk from Saint James (50) to Pontmain (53): depart at 14h from Place du Champ de Foire in Saint-James;

Tues. 28th – full day's walk to *la Fosse Arthour*, near St Georges de Rouelley (61): depart at 9h from Place du Champ de Foire. Take a picnic and comfortable walking shoes.

Initiation into archery in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

On Weds. 15th, 22nd & 29th from 15h-17h at the *Pas de Tir*, Avenue de la Ferté-Macé in Bagnoles de l'Orne, you can discover the sport of archery. Materials supplied. Rates: $7 \in$ for 1hr; $12 \in$ for 2hrs; $20 \in$ for 1hr for 2 adults & 1 child; $40 \in$ for 2hrs for 2 adults & 2 children. More info from *www.bagnolesdelorne.com*.

Motocross (scrambling) - Championat de France - in Ernée (53)

This is on 11th & 12th at the Circuit Raymond Demy in Ernée - voted one of the nicest circuits in the world, able to hold 40,000 spectators; more info: *www.motoclubernee.com*

Pony riding in Bagnoles-de l'Orne (61)

On Sun. 5th, from 14h to 18h30, near the *Hippodrome*, organised by the *Haras de la Tour*, children can enjoy pony rides led by their parents, $2 \in$ the circuit. More info from the Bagnoles Tourist Office: *www.bagnolesdelorne.com*

And finally . . .

What is the difference between a hippo and a Zippo? One is really heavy, the other a little lighter. (haw haw!)

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That's all for this month. However, just a reminder that the Bulletin is only a rough guide and details of events and places of interest can change without notice. So my advice is to always try and double-check with Tourist Offices or websites before setting off to avoid any disappointments (most contact details are given here).

Feedback is always very welcome, so feel free to let me know of any activities/events that you have enjoyed so I know to look out for them next year!

Judy Skinner

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

June 2016

Date	Event	Place	Page		
Late events in May:					
Sat. 28 th May	Choirs and music in the church	Désertines	4		
$W/e \ 28^{th}/29^{th}$	Barn Sale	St Fraimbault de Prières	2		
June:					
Wed. 1 st	Concert: 'Violon et Clarinette'	Ambrières-les-Vallées	4		
Fri. 3 rd	Concert: 'Comme un air de jazz'	Laval	4		
$W/e 4^{th} \& 5^{th}$	Fête des Plantes 'Entre Ville et Jardin'	Bagnoles de l'Orne	2		
دد	Rendez-vous au Jardin de Clivoy	Chailland	5		
Sun. 5 th	Organ recital	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4		
دد	Rendez-vous aux jardins	Colombiers-du-Plessis	6		
دد	Pony riding	Bagnoles de l'Orne	8		
Mon. 6 th	Concert at the American War Cemetery	Montjoie-St-Martin	4		
دد	VO film 'The Hunter & the Ice Queen'	Gorron	4		
Sat. 11 th	Nana Mouskouri in concert	Fougères	4		
$W/e 11^{th} \& 12^{t}$	^h Motocross – French Championships	Ernée	8		
Sun. 12 th	Fête de la Cluse du Tertre Ste Anne	Domfront	3		
	Marché du terroir	Saint-James	3		
دد	Walk from St James to Pontmain	Saint-James	8		
	Marché du Producteurs de Pays	Juvigny-sous-Andaine	7		
Fri. 17 th	Group 'Alys' in the Fête de la Musique	Changé	7		
Sat. 18 th	'Gospel Fire' concert	Domfront	4		
دد	'Grande Daze Rescue' Musical BBQ	La Bigottière	3		
	Summer event – meal & music	St Cyr du Bailleul	6		
Tues. 21 st	2 Orchestras in the Château park	Mayenne	4		
Thurs. 23 rd	Jazz apéro-concert	Domfront	7		
Sat. 25 th	The band 'Lost Weekend' at <i>l'Imprevu</i>	Ambrières-les-Vallées	4		
W/e $25^{th} \& 26^{tt}$	^a Pastel course	Saint-James	7		
Sun 26 th	Concert with organ and trumpet	Saint-James	4		
دد	Peintres aux jardins (artists in the gardens)	Colombiers-du-Plessis	6		
.دد	Concert with organ and flute	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4		
Tues 28 th	Full day walk to la Fosse Arthur	Saint-James	8		
Thurs. 30 th	Concert in the Cathedral	Bayeux	7		