

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 you can find a path with no obstacles,
it probably doesn't lead anywhere

Frank A Clark

There are a few *vide-greniers* / *brocantes* in this area [\pm = stalls expected; '61' = area]

- W/e 14th/15th Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) *brocante* in the Salle Omnisports, \pm 150
 " Ouistreham (14) *braderie* in the *Grange aux Dimes*; \pm 50
 Sun. 19th Bellou-en-Houlme (61) *v-g* at La Chevallerie, \pm 150
 Sun. 26th Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) *v-g* / *brocante* in the *Marché Couvert*, \pm 75

Visit www.brocabrac.fr and www.vide-greniers.org which are constantly updated with *brocantes* / *vide-greniers*, including any changes.

Special dates / public holidays:

- Tues. 14th St Valentine's Day
 Tues. 28th *Mardi Gras* (Shrove Tuesday – so get tossing those pancakes!)

A crêpe or galette?

Talking of pancakes, what is the difference between *une crêpe* and *une galette*? *Crêpes* are made from *farine de froment* (wheat flour) and are used for sweet pancakes. *Galettes* are made with *farine de blé noir* (also called *farine de sarrasin*) (buckwheat) and are used for savoury pancakes.

Granville Carnival

This famous carnival in Granville (50), one of the oldest in France [this will be the 143rd year] is from Fri. 24th to Tues. 28th Feb. The first procession, with music, is on Sat. 25th departing at 10h from Cours Jonville; the main carnival procession is at 13h30 on the Sun. 26th, setting off from 3 different points - Port, Casino and *haute ville* - with the illuminated cavalcade at 21h. On Tues. 28th at 13h30 will be the final cavalcade, followed by the judging of the floats, and other entertainment – with the Battle of Confetti at 18h! The humour and terrific atmosphere is enjoyed by everyone and helps to welcome in the coming year. More info: www.carnaval-de-granville.fr or your nearest Tourist Office.

Eating out : *L’Giganboul* in Laval (53)

This restaurant “*L’Giganboul*”, at 7 rue des Béliers in Laval, is a little gem and highly recommended: excellent food (French traditional, creative and *gourmande*) and great ambience. They are open Tues. to Fri., 12h-14h30 (when the daily *plat du jour* is 8,70€, and with several *formules* from 12,50€ to 18€, and evenings with also *à la carte* from 25€). Also Sat. evenings (closed Sundays and Mondays, unless by reservation). tel: 02 43 56 94 54.

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

Two dinner dance *soirées* in support of local communities

There will be 2 annual *dîners dansant* in l’Espace Culturel Colmont in Gorrion, in support of our local communities, and you would have a great evening. It is also a chance to get to know a few more French people and experience the traditional French way of life that we are all here to enjoy. These are always lively evenings with a lovely meal, music and dancing, and they are open to all:-

♪ Sat. 11th – starting with an *apéro* served from 19h30 to 20h30. Organised by the Gorrion primary school APE (Parent Teacher Association), the music will be provided by Philippe Garnier. Tickets (to be paid for in advance): adults 16€ – menu: *kir*, *entrée*, a choice of *tartiflette* or *coq au vin* (to be stated on booking), dessert & coffee; children: 7€ or 4€ (a choice of 2 menus). For tickets contact Mireille (who speaks English) on 02 43 03 64 54.

♪ Sat. 18th from 20h30 - organised by the Gorrion–Schweikheim *Jumelage* (Twinning) Committee to raise money for secondary age children for the German exchange trips. Music by the group ‘Holiday’. Tickets (again, to be booked and paid for in advance) - adults 18€ (with a choice of *choucroute* or *sauté de porc*); children under 12: 9€ - available from J. Poirier on 06 01 80 53 26 or from MSAP at the *Mairie* in Gorrion (02 43 30 10 58 or on-site).

See you there!

Cheese of the month – *Bleu d’Auvergne*

This is normally viewed as a simple-style cheese, yet with a little love and care (as in the *affinage*) it becomes a rich, strong-tasting cheese with a velvety texture. The moist, nutty flavour and beautifully melting quality of the cheese also makes it a perfect medium for cooking, crumbling over salads, steaks and vegetable dishes, or stuffing into poultry. An extremely versatile cheese - a ‘must’ for the cheeseboard. Good with full bodied red wines, also champagne and sweeter dessert wines.

Prestige Dog Training

For your dog behaviour and training needs you can contact Phil or Angie Newstead on 02 43 13 17 28 or e-mail phil199@sky.com to discuss requirements.

Photo competition

With the theme “*les champignons - du jaune au rouge*” (“mushrooms – from yellow to red”) this photo competition, organized by the Tourist Office in La Ferté-Macé, is open until 8th Oct. 2017. There are 2 categories: adults, and under 16s. Rules are available from the Tourist Office: 02 33 37 10 97; www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr

A word of warning about tinted car windows

Not all visitors to France may know - so it is good to pre-warn them - that as from 1st January 2017, all tinted car windscreens and front-side car windows are illegal. They must have at least 70% transparency, which allows better vision for the driver (to see motorbike riders, pedestrians, cyclists), particularly at night. It also allows the ‘forces of order’ to check for infractions (use of mobile phones, non-use of seat-belts, etc). Anyone being caught with those tinted windows will be fined 135€ and 3 licence points .

English cards and wrapping, etc.

Zara lives near Saint-Denis de Gastines (53) and she sells a range of English cards: birthday, wedding, get well, and wrapping paper, etc. Also, you can contact Zara if you would like to host a coffee & card party (or wine & cards!) - she is available for parties in the daytime or evenings, and hosts will receive a discount on their order. To contact Zara: tel: 02 43 00 37 72; e-mail: zarascards@yahoo.com; Facebook: www.facebook.com/ZarasEnglishCards/

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, 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 Calvados (14)

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

179.1 million – that's the number of bottles of cognac sold by France for export in 2016, according to the BNIC (Bureau National Inter-professionnel du Cognac). This figure equates to an amount of €2.76 billion and shows an increase of 6% of volume and 6.8% in value for the second year running. It is the sixth year in a row that €2 billion has been exceeded. The main reason for this increase is down to ALENA (North American free-exchange zone) with 77.3 million bottles dispatched, which is an increased volume of 14.2%. The USA takes the lion's share with 74.1 million bottles in 2016.

Entertainment & Concerts

Fri. 3rd & Sat. 4th at 18h30 in l'Espace Aumallerie in Fougères (35): *Soirée Cabaret*, with laughs, songs, music. For more info: www.ot-fougeres.fr

Sat. 4th at 20h in l'Espace Colmont in Gorrion (53) – “l'Hivernale”: music from ‘Elmer Food Beat’, ‘Not A Square’, ‘Los Tick’ and ‘DJ Anonymous’. Tickets: 14€. www.gorrion.fr

Sat. 4th at 20h30 in ‘l'Espace Clair de Lune in Ernée (53): *Coup d'Chœur* : 150 singers - wonderful harmonies, with songs by Aznavour, Zazie, Françoise Hardy, Higelin, Goldman, etc. Tickets, 15€, available at *l'Accueil* in the Ernée Super U.

Sat. 4th at 20h30 in the Théâtre de Mayenne, Place Juhel, Mayenne town (53, centre): ‘*Quatuor Amenecer*’ – 4 musicians paying homage to the Spain of Paco de Lucia. Free

Sat. 11th from 20h30 to 24h – Carys's group ‘Alys’ are performing with Phoebus and The Soft Drug at La Grange de l'Orbière, Forcé (53)

Rest'au ciné– meal & film combination in Gorrion (53)

This new venture started last month: you can enjoy a meal before the film - the cost (15€) includes a 2-course meal & ticket to the film that night. There are 2 participating restaurants in Gorrion: ♦ on Mondays, then Wed. to Sats. (closed Tues.): the brasserie *Bar de la Mairie*, 13 pl Mairie, (02 43 08 04 59), from 18h, and ♦ from Tues. to Sats: from 19h: *La Crêperie du Menhir*, 23 rue Mairie (02 43 03 90 54). It helps to make it more of ‘a night out’! The next VO film in Gorrion is on Mon. 6th Feb.: ‘Paterson’, a drama/fantasy, which was released on 27th December 2016.

In La Ferté-Macé (61) there will be ‘*Ciné-resto*’ evenings, showing English films possibly each 3rd Wed. of the month, with a meal in a nearby restaurant. Organised with the help of the ‘La Ferté-Macé – Ludlow Twinning Association’. www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr

St. Valentine's Dinner Dance

A St. Valentine's Dinner Dance will be held on Tues. 14th in the bar ‘*Le Viking*’ in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50). Starting with *apéritifs* at 19h, the cost is 15€ per person for a 4-course meal, including wine and *apéritif*, and the evening will continue with a dance for those who wish to take to the floor. To reserve a table, please contact Sylvie (who speaks good English) at ‘*Le Viking*’, tel: 02 33 59 20 11.

Join the choir *Voix d'Eté* in Joué-du-Bois (61)

If you would like to be part of a choir, then this small one, based in Joué-du-Bois (midway between La Ferté-Macé and Carrouges) meets every Tuesday from 17h30 to 19h30. They have both French and English singers, men and women, and they particularly need tenors – but everyone is welcome. Contact: Cathy on 06 81 60 09 66

Cancer Support France Nord – fund-raising event

On Thurs. 9th at 19h: “A Top to Toe” – a talk of the British Napoleonic Soldier, by Lord Shaun Fox, to be held at the day centre, route de Buais, Notre-Dame du Touchet (50). The talk is free, but places need to be booked for an idea of numbers. Tel: 02 33 60 01 05. To find out about coming events: nord@cancersupportfrance.org

‘Madame BonBon’ – English sweet shop in Gorrion (53)

For a trip down ‘memory lane’ - Kaye Smith sells sweets and confectionary, many ‘old favourites’ which English residents may not have seen for a while! Having lived in the Deux-Sèvres region since 2008, Kaye re-located to 2 rue de la Montée in Gorrion after being charmed by the area. Kaye worked with chocolates and confectionary in England and is finding her new enterprise almost as popular with the French families as the English. Her shop, at 2 rue de la Montée in Gorrion, is open 10h-14h on Mondays; 9h-14h & 15h-18h on Tues., Weds., Thurs. & Sats.; until 19h30 on Fridays, and 10h-12h on Sundays; facebook: MadameBonBonGorrion.

Carte Vitale V4 scam

I have heard of someone who has received an e-mail from *ameli.fr* offering a new *Carte Vitale V4*. All they needed to do was to send a RIB from their bank and a utility bill, amongst other items, for ID. It looked genuine – but **BE AWARE** – this **IS** a phishing scam. It is known to *Ameli* and you can read more about it on *www.ameli.fr*. If in doubt, contact your CPAM (details in your *Pages Jaunes* [Yellow Pages] under *Sécurité Sociale*).

Garage des Landes - discount on labour charges and some new services

Garry Cross, at the *Garage des Landes* in Mantilly (61), is offering a 15% discount on labour during the months of Feb. & March. Also, he has now invested in dealer level diagnostic equipment for Citroën/Peugeot and Renault to go along with their general diagnostic kit. They have a ramp and full garage facilities for servicing, pre-CT checks & repairs, exhausts, suspension, clutches, head gaskets, timing belts, brakes, etc., along with registration service of foreign cars into France, including supply and fitting of correct headlights. [Many people think that adjusting them to the lowest setting, or if the car has a ‘Europe driving lever’, this will do, which is a dangerous assumption as the lights only shine forward (cutting off the left GB dip) - the lights do not illuminate the ditches, for example].

Garry’s full background is on his website: *www.garagedeslandes.fr*, and his contact details are *info@garagedeslandes.fr*; 02 33 30 83 64. [Siret No: 792 693 160 00014].

‘Trésors de Morgan’ dépôt-vente in Le Teilleul (50)

This *dépôt-vente* is one of very few left in this area (there used to be 6!). It is at 2 route de Domfront, Le Teilleul (on the D976) and it is full of useful bric-a-brac, furniture, clothes, etc. You can also arrange to sell items there, with commission being taken by the owner. They are open Tues. to Fri. 10h-12h & 14h-18h, and Sat. & Sun. 10h-18h non-stop.

More local names for the villagers

More names for the inhabitants of some villages/towns in the area:

If you live in	La Haie-Traversaine (53)	you are	Traversainois
“	Colombiers-du-Plessis (53)	you are	Colombierais
“	La Dorée (53)	you are	Doréens
“	Champfrémont (53)	you are	Campoforméniens

Sport & Leisure Activities

Walk (*randonnée pédestre*)

On Sun. 12th - a walk from Saint-James (50) to Fleurigné (35) organised by *St James Randonne*. Depart at 14h from Place du Champ de Foire in Saint-James. 1,50€ for non-members. www.saintjamestourisme.fr

Le Vélo Francette

One for serious cyclists – this ride goes from Ouistreham (14) via 7 *départements* - through Flers (61), Laval (53), Angers (49), Saumur (49), Niort (79) to La Rochelle (17) – a total of 615 km! It is recommended to allow a period of 10 days for this trip, which passes alongside rivers, past châteaux and through peaceful countryside. www.lavelofrancette.com.

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

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

Suzanne McGregor would like to let her customers know that 'Pages' will be closed on Sat. 4th Feb., and then from Sat. 18th until Tues. 28th due to school holidays.

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Special Note:

Last month, people with BT affiliated email addresses did not receive the Bulletin due to BT not allowing them to be delivered! (something to do with 'bulk sending'?!). Although I am able to send them to everyone else, I would ask anyone with 'bt' addresses to go to Nick Byford's website: www.byfordfrance.com/the-bulletin where you can access them and also find out more about Nick and Penny. Thank you.

Judy Skinner

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

February 2017

Date	Event	Place	Page
W/e 3 rd / 4 th	<i>Soirée Cabaret</i>	Fougères	4
Sat. 4 th	<i>l'Hivernale</i> ' concert, several bands	Gorron	4
“	<i>Coup d'Choeur</i>	Ernée	4
“	<i>Quatuor Amenecer</i> – 4 musicians	Mayenne	4
Mon. 6 th	English film 'Paterson'	Gorron	4
Thurs. 9 th	'Top to Toe' talk	Notre-Dame du Touchet	4
Sat. 11 th	Dinner Dance - PTA	Gorron	2
“	Alys, Phoebus and The Soft Drug	Forcé	4
Sun. 12 th	Walk to Fleurigné	Saint-James	6
Tues. 14 th	St Valentine's Dinner Dance	Notre-Dame du Touchet	4
Sat. 18 th	Dinner Dance – Gorron-Schweikheim	Gorron	2
24 th – 28 th	Granville Carnival	Granville	1
Tues. 28 th	<i>Mardi Gras</i>	All over	1