Issue no. 121 April 2017

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 lie will go round the world while truth is still putting its boots on.

Some *vide-greniers/brocantes* in this area [\pm = stalls expected; '61' = area]

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Sun 2<sup>nd</sup>
            Flers (61)
                                        v-g in Gymnase du Dojo, rue Mont-St-Michel, ±80
 66
            La Haie Traversaine (53) v-g in Ecole; \pm 70
            Louvigné-du-Désert (35) v-g in Complexe Yves Derieux, ±70
            Pleurtuit (35)
                                        v-g in Super U car park, ±150
W/e 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>
            Domfront (61)
                                        v-g within the Foire des Rameaux, ±80
Sun. 9<sup>th</sup>
            Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) v-g / brocante in quartier Château, ±150
  66
            Ferrière-aux-Etangs (61) v-g in Gué-Plat, ±150
            Ernée (53)
                                        v-g in Super U car park; ±150
            St Hilaire du Harc. (50) v-g in marché couvert, ±150
            Sourdeval (50)
                                        v-g in Place du Champ de Foire, ±70
Sun. 16<sup>th</sup>
            Dol de Bretagne (35)
                                        v-g in rue Pierre-Sémard, ±150
Mon. 17<sup>th</sup>
             Champsecret (61)
                                        v-g, \pm 50
            Landéan (35)
                                        v-g in the Salle des Sports, +-50
Sun 23<sup>rd</sup>
                                        v-g by Lions Club, in Leclerc car park; ±150
             Alençon (61)
            Le Teilleul (61)
                                        v-g, \pm 70
Sun. 30^{th}
            Pleurtuit (35)
                                        v-g & braderie nautique, ±150
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As these can change, visit www.brocabrac.fr and www.vide-greniers.org which are constantly updated with brocantes / vide-greniers.

Marché des produits locaux

On Sat. 1st from 10h to 13h in Le Teilleul (50) under the covered *Halle* (in *centre ville*) with locally produced cheese, yoghurt, cider, *poiré*, beer, honey, jewellery and decor items.

'Les Poiriers en Fleurs' in Mantilly (61)

On Sun. 16th from 10h, meet in the *Salle de la Rencontre* to arrange to walk, bike or drive round a circuit to enjoy the loveliest pear trees in their orchards. Free. A road-race is also organised. *www.ornetourisme.com*

Eating out: La Mouette

[With thanks to Sylvia & Terry C. for this recommendation]. There is a little *crêperie* in Granville (50) called *La Mouette* (the Seagull) at 63 rue du Port, which also does fish & chips to die for! It is run by a young French couple who speak very good English and apparently have been to England several times and they love our fish & chips. (In fact, Sylvia says she thinks these are better than most of the ones she has had in England!) Open: Tues. to Fri: 10h-18h; Sat: 10h-22h30; Sun: 10h-19h. Closed Mondays. Take-away is available; access for the handicapped; free wifi. Tel: 02 33 69 43 82.

Le Jardin Retiré in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

On Fri. 28th (10h–11h30) and Sat. 29th (15h-16h30), this small but interesting privately owned garden, full of colour and inspiration, on Avenue Robert Cousin (near the Casino) opens its doors to the public with guided visits. Some English is spoken by the owner, Annie Blanchais. Entry 5€ (under 12s free) or 3€ without guide. www.lejardinretire.fr

69th *Foire des Rameaux* in Domfront (61)

On Sat. 8th & Sun. 9th, 10h - 19h, in the Salle André Rocton & rue du Champ Passais, this *foire/expo* has artisans and companies promoting their local products and services, a *vide-greniers* and *fête foraine*. Also on site: expo and sale of pigeons, rabbits, chickens and guinea pigs, entertainment and fun fair. *www.ot-domfront.com*

The Cotentin Windmill - visit a working mill

Worth a drive up the Cotentin peninsular, this working windmill at Fierville-les-Mines (50, near Portbail) dates from 1744. It is a 'tower' windmill - as the vanes glide on a rail at the top of the tower to bring them into the wind, as opposed to a 'pivot' mill in which the whole body of the mill rotates. Renovated in 1997 it is one of the few working mills in France that still grinds wheat, buckwheat and spelt, and welcomes over 10,000 visitors each year. At an altitude of 120 metres it offers exceptional views over the Normandy *bocage*. You can see the renovated miller's house, the magnificent thatched wooden barn (now a shop selling local produce) and exhibition hall. Open April/May/June/Sept.: Tues. to Sun.: 14h-18h; in July & Aug.: daily, 10-12 & 14-19h. www.moulin-du-cotentin.com

Something for all the family – *Haras National du Pin*

The *Haras National du Pin*, in the town of Le Pin au Haras (14, east of Argentan) is the 'Versailles' of the horse! It will be open during all of April from 10h-18h, and you can admire the horses, tack room, etc. Also, every Thursday at 15h: '*Les Jeudis du Pin'* - a show with a parade of carriages and a one-hour equestrian presentation. Also, on 14th to 17th: *Saut d'obstacles* (Show Jumping) – 4 days of competitions. (see page 7)

'Vivace' English choir in St Siméon (61)

Further to my introducing this choir in the January 2017 issue (no. 118, page 2) they are looking for a keyboard accompanist (they have an electric keyboard) who would be willing to sing with the choir when not accompanying, since some of what they do is *a cappella*. They have a broad range of repertoire. Anyone interested, please contact Lindsay Shrubsole at *lindsay.shrubsole@gmail.com*

Carnaval de Flers (61)

This annual carnival is on Fri. 21st, with the procession gathering at 13h in the Champ de Foire, *centre ville*. The cortège departs at 14h, arriving at the car park of Flers Château around 16h. Musical entertainment from 16h30 to 17h30. *www.orne-tourisme.com*

Salon de l'Automobile in Flers (61)

On 22^{nd} & 23^{rd} April in Place Charleston, Flers, you can admire the vehicles on show and meet the suppliers and exhibitors. More info at *www.ornetourisme.com*

Military History talk in support of Cancer Support France Nord

On Thurs. 13th at the bar/restaurant 'Le Viking' in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50), Superintendent Bruce Malone of the American Cemetery at St-James will give a talk starting at 19h. Anyone attending the talk can eat in 'Le Viking' beforehand but they need to book direct with Sylvie (who does speak English) at 'Le Viking', tel: 02 33 59 20 11. For more events (such as the Quiz on Sat. 29th) go to www.nord@cancersupportfrance.org

Cheese of the Month: Cantal

This is a firm, smooth-textured cheese produced in the Auvergne region of central France. One of the oldest cheeses in France, it came to prominence when Marshal Henri de la Ferte-Senneterre served it at the table of Louis XIV of France. [Senneterre is also responsible for the popularity of Saint-Nectaire cheese]. Made with cow's milk, it is similar to Cheddar, with a strong, tangy butter taste. It is used in soups, *aligot*, fondue and *gratins*. Good with medium-bodied red wines.

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

'Cantal' and 'Banon' cheeses first appeared 2,000 years ago – 'Cantal' in the centre of France and 'Banon' in the south. They were also appreciated in Ancient Rome and were mentioned by Plini the Elder. 'Reblochon' was made in the French Alps in the 13th century. 'Conté', one of the most famous cheeses, was made in the east of France during the 11th century. 'Camembert' was born in secrecy during the French Revolution, around 1789. Each cheese has its own history.

Temporary exhibition: 'La Lumière' in Flers (61)

To mark the re-opening of the Château de Flers, this exhibition is on Sat. 22^{nd} from 10h-18h in the *Musée du Château de Flers*. Free.

'Feel Good Friday' in Gorron (53)

On Fri. 14th in 'La Maison des Beaux Cadeaux' (behind the Mairie), Stephanie and Anne invite you to a day of health and well-being, including Naturally Thinking face, body and hair care and Essential Healing with Diane Creane. Free tea and coffee, and you can buy delicious biscuits and cakes. There will be a 10% discount on items in the gift shop.

Salon gastronomique "Le Printemps des saveurs"

On Sat. 1^{st} & Sun. 2^{nd} from 10h-18h in the *Complexe Sportif Saint-Sauveur* in Flers (61): more than 50 exhibitors with produce from the region, entertainment for adults and children and cookery demonstrations by Michelin-starred chefs from the region. Entry: $2 \in$, under 16s free. Free parking.

Entertainment & Concerts

Sat. 29th at 21h in the *Centre d'Animation* in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): concert by *Knokke-le-Zoute* - 4 musicians with guitars, accordion & bass. Entry 15 \in , unemployed and children aged 4 to 12: 12 \in , www.bagnolesdelorne.com

Sun. 30th at 16h the *Parc de la Mairie* in Meslay-du Maine (53): as part of the 20th *Anniversaire des Ateliers Jazz*: 'BAJKA' - Bohemian and Balkan jazz, gypsy music and traditional songs. Free. For tickets: *www.festivaljazz-meslay.com*

L'Orchestre d'Harmonie d'Ernée (53)

On Sat. 1st at 20h30, *l'Orchestre d'Harmonie d'Ernée* is giving a concert at *l'Espace Clair* de Lune in Ernée. The concert begins at 20h30 and tickets are $6 \in$ (available at the door on the night). The theme of the evening is Music of North America.

Soirée Cabaret in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53)

On Sat 22nd in the Salle Polyvalente, route de Landivy, Fougerolles du Plessis - now in its 3rd year, this is an evening not to be missed if you want to feel you are truly living in France! Wonderful cuisine, spectacular professional entertainers in an atmospheric setting carefully put together by the *Comité des Fêtes*. This year the menu will be: *apéritif pétillant, mélodie de 4 pieces, cocktail de la maison, cassoulet de joue de Sandre au baies de Sancho et ses legumes, suprême de pintadeau au pommeau avec ses garnitures, Camembert & Conté sur son lit de salade, Bavaroise framboise, and café. The ticket price of 39€ reflects the quality and value of this night's entertainment and dinner. Reservations and tickets on 02 43 13 06 72 (note: closing date 10th April 2017).*

'Volcanic' Ash will be playing in Couesmes-Vaucé (53)

On Sat. 15th, 14h-18h, during the annual Spring Fête in Couesmes-Vaucé, our very own rock star Ian 'Volcanic' Ash [who recently played at the Hard Rock Cafe in Singapore, and also in Sydney and Melbourne] will be 'rocking to the rafters' in the *Jardin de Froulay*. Not to be missed! More info on facebook.

Concert by The Keiran McNiff Singers

Sun. 9th at 16h in l'Eglise Saint Gervais in Falaise (14): the Keiran McNiff singers, comprising 90 choristers from France and the UK, present 'Requiem for the Living' by Dan Forrest. Entrance is free, with a collection. A rare opportunity to hear this modern work by a living composer in such a historic setting.

English film night in Gorron cinema

The next English film in Gorron (53) is on Monday 3rd: 'Logan' – a 'super-hero' film (the 10th instalment in the X-Men series) with Hugh Jackman, Patrick Stewart, Richard E Grant.

To make more of an evening of it, you can enjoy a light 2-course meal at the *Bar de la Mairie* (at the bottom of the hill from the church), where 15€ includes the meal and the ticket for the film. For reservations phone Melanie, the French owner, on 02 43 08 04 59.

Lest we forget: local history

The women of the *Résistance* – the unsung heroes. History sometimes forgets the role of the women – staying in the shadow of the men and bravely doing their part, volunteering for actions less spectacular but so necessary. One such heroine was Germaine Bernard:

Born in August 1920, Germaine married René Justin, a telephone operator. When he announced his engagement in the *Résistance* she was in full support. Living at 'Le Chêne Vert' the family grew with 3 boys from 1940 to 1943, and also in an attic room they sheltered POWs who had escaped from the camp at Vautorte. Germaine found ingenious ways to feed all the extra mouths, but with the intensified inspections and searches the Justin family had to leave and found refuge in the HQ at 'La Chatterie' in Montenay. This didn't prevent Germaine continuing to get supplies to the *Résistance* groups, often cycling as far as St Denis-de-Gastines to fetch flour, also providing clothing for those coming to 'La Chatterie' and preparing equipment packs for Rene's 'Group of 8' who joined up with the American forces at Landivy. [Issue 60]

Les Jardins des Renaudies

Between Sun. 16^{th} (Easter) and 1^{st} Nov., in these pretty gardens near Colombiers-du-Plessis (53) you can discover over 3,000 varieties of plants, trees & bushes. Entry is $5 \in (2 \in for)$ people living in the 53 region) and as well as the wonderful colours, there is also a collection of vintage farming equipment and other trades. For opening days and times go to www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr. The Tourist Office for the Bocage Mayennais is also on site with brochures, advice and info. Events at the gardens this month:

- © on Sun. 16th & Mon. 17th, from 14h to 18h, children under 12 can join in the 'chasse aux oeufs de Pâques' (Easter Egg Hunt).
- ⊚ from Sat. 29th to Mon. 1st May, a part of the entry fee will be donated to 'Neurodon' for research into neurological disorders.

Journées Européennes des Métiers d'Art (European Arts & Crafts Days)

From 31st March to 2nd April, you can discover many arts and crafts in towns near you. For more info: *www.journeesdesmetiersdart.fr*. Some places to find events in this area:

In La Ferté-Macé (61) on Sat. 1st & Sun. 2nd from 10h to 19h, many artisans will be in *l'Espace Culturel du Grand Turc* to show their skills and knowledge of their trades. More info from the Tourist Office: 02 33 37 10 97, or *www.orne-tourisme.com*

In Jublains (53) the Jublains Arts and Crafts Forum season begins, and on Sat 1st, 14h–18h, the *Boutique Metiers d'Art* re-opens with new crafts, demos, and exhibition of unique and exceptional works (sculpture, spinning, jewellery, ceramics). *www.arts-crafts-events.com*

In Mortain (50) at *l'Atelier Ryszard Zurek*, La Brocherie: demos of adding gold leaf and different stages of restoration of gilded wood.

'Zone Creative' in Sourdeval (50) - update

Further to the details in the last Bulletin, Jayne Jones has been in the UK looking after her sick mother, and so her shop will only be open on Tuesdays to sell groceries. Hopefully at some time in the future Jayne will be able to return and resume opening the shop and tea room at the original times. She has a huge selection of food, both English and Asian, and she is still doing shopping in the UK for the shop and comes back now and again.

'La Bayette' garden in La Dorée (53)

The owners of 'La Bayette' are opening their garden again on Sat. 8th and Sun. 9th from 10h to 17h each day, in aid of the French charity 'A Chacun son Everest'. Entry: 2€. Refreshments and plants for sale. For more info and directions, contact Shirley Edwards on 02 43 05 10 72. For details of this and other gardens, go to www.opengardens.eu. 'Open Gardens / Jardins Ouverts' is a registered association which encourages owners to open their gardens to the public. The proceeds are donated to charitable organisations in France.

New business in Passais-la-Conception (61)

Michael William Park Hair Studio is at 2 rue Domfrontais (opposite the Pharmacie). With a passion for the artistry of hairdressing, Michael also offers his own range of shampoo, conditioner and treatment and his own perfume called FAMOUS. Many years in the hair industry, trained in the top hair academy which led Michael to work with many internationally renowned stars in and out of the hair industry. Note: For the month of April, anyone booking an appointment will receive a 20% discount on all services on their first visit (products excluded). Further offers and vouchers in store. They are having an official Open Day on Fri. 28th from 19h. Their phone no. is 02 33 14 49 92.

Suzanne offers an art gallery, original canvasses, découpaged items, also hand-crafted candles and lamps/lampshades. Some of these have original artwork on them which cannot be repeated and Suzanne makes everything in her gallery. She hopes to hold craft days with guest crafters or speakers on any subject. Their opening hours are: Tues. to Fri. 9h30 - 12h & 14h - 18h; Sats. 9h30 - 14h.

'Foire Fleurie' in Gorron (53)

Sun. 2nd: a day with a floral theme - as well as florally decorated items around the town, there is a small funfair, music, exhibition of cars, and many shops will be open.

Also, while in Gorron:-

28th Salon des Peintures et Sculptures

From 1st to 16th in *l'Espace Culturel Colmont* (near the Parc de la Colmont) this exhibition, organised by Art'Bo, brings together works from 65 known artists from around France.

Change of ownership of bar/bistro in St Cyr du Bailleul (50)

[With thanks to Fientje V. for this info]: The bar restaurant 'Chez Jannick' in this village (opposite the church) has new owners. They serve a very good mid-day menu ouvrier for 11,50€ comprising a starter, main course [plat unique, but an alternative can be offered], cheese plate, desert, wine/cider & coffee. They will be adding to this a small menu for spring and summer with some salads, a burger maison and fish & chips!

Also, on Sat. 1st April they are organising a 'Tapas Night', and on Fri. 21st a special 'Fish & Chips Night'. For reservations, please phone: 02 33 49 70 07 or 07 85 86 30 11.

Wanted – egg boxes

If anyone has some egg boxes they don't want, Shiona and John Cant need extra ones for when they give their eggs to friends, etc. They can collect them (depending on where you are!) so please contact them on *shiona@free.fr* or 02 43 30 31 20

Sport & Leisure Activities

Tennis tournament

On Sat. 8th to Sun. 16th from 9h in the *Complexe Tennistique Maxime Merlin* in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61). Free. More info from the Tourist Office. (www.bagnolesdelorne.com).

Saut d'obstacles (Show Jumping)

On 14th to 17th at the Haras National du Pin (14, see page 2): *Saut d'obstacles* (Show Jumping) – 4 days of competitions. More info from *www.haras-national-du-pin.com*

Course cycliste (bike race)

On Sun. 23rd in La Ferté-Macé (61) this event is org. by '*Vélo Club Fertois*', and awards the *Prix de la Municipalité*. More info:www.ornetourisme.com or at the Tourist Office

Aquathlon (running and swimming races) in La Ferté-Macé (61)

On Sat. 8th, from 14h-18h, a combination of racing around, and swimming in, the 'plan d'eau' (lake). Open to all, from 6 years (if able to swim at least 25m). More details at the Tourist Office (www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr)

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

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That's all for this month - and Spring is here at last (apparently!). Here are a few ideas to encourage us to enjoy the (hopefully) warmer weather - *foires*, gardens, a carnival and sporting activities – and for those wetter days there are exhibitions and concerts, etc.

Judy Skinner

La Croix des 4 Epines 53120 Gorron tel: 02 43 30 29 06

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr

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

April 2017

Date	Event	Place	Page
Sat. 1 st	l'Orchestre d'Harmonie d'Ernée	Ernée	4
2.2	'Tapas Night'	St Cyr du Bailleul	6
2.2	Marché des produits locaux	Le Teilleul	1
2.2	Arts & Crafts Forum	Jublains	5
W/e 1 st & 2 nd	Exposition d'Artisans d'Art.	La Ferté-Macé	5
2.2	Salon gastronomique	Flers	3
1 st to 16 th	Salon des Peintures et Sculptures	Gorron	6
Sun. 2 nd	Foire Fleuri	Gorron	6
Mon. 3 rd	English film: 'Logan'	Gorron	4
Sat. 8 th	Aquathlon	La Ferté-Macé	7
W/e 8 th & 9 th	Foire des Rameaux	Domfront	2
2.2	La Bayette – open garden	La Dorée	6
Sun. 9 th	The Keiran McNiff Singers	Falaise	4
Thurs. 13 th	Military Talk (CSF Nord)	Notre-Dame-du-Touche	t 3
Fri. 14 th	'Feel Good Friday'	Gorron	3
$14^{th} - 17^{th}$	Show Jumping	Le Pin au Haras	2, 7
Sat. 15 th	'Volcanic' Ash	Couesmes-Vaucé	4
Sun. 16 th	Les poiriers en fleurs	Mantilly	1
16 th & 17 th	Easter Egg Hunt	Colombiers-du-Plessis	5
Fri. 21 st	Flers Carnival	Flers	3
"	'Fish & Chip Night'	St Cyr du Bailleul	6
Sat. 22 nd	Soirée Cabaret	Fougerolles-du-Plessis	4
"	Exhibition: 'La Lumière'	Flers	3
22 nd & 23 rd	Salon de l'Automobile	Flers	3
Sun. 23 rd	Bike Race	La Ferté-Macé	7
Fri. 28 th	Michael William Park Hair Studio open day	Passais-la-Conception	6
W/e 28 th & 29 ^t	^h Visit to 'le Jardin Retiré'	Bagnoles de l'Orne	2
Sat. 29 th	Concert by 'Knokke-le-Zoute'	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4
Sun. 30^{th}	'Bajka' – jazz	Meslay-du-Maine	4