

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

Papers become vital after they demonstrate their vitality
by moving from where you put them to where you can't find them

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

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|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Sun. 1 st | Bellou-en-Houlme (61) | v-g / <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150 |
| ” | Dinard (35) | <i>Foire à la brocante</i> , Esplanade de la Halle, ±50 |
| Mon. 2 nd | Ceaucé (61) | v-g in the town |
| Sun. 8 th | Ernée (53) | v-g in Super U car park, 9h-18h, ±300 |
| “ | Evron (53) | v-g at <i>Foirail</i> , ±150 |
| ” | Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) | v-g in Place du Marché, Bagnoles Château, ±50 |
| ” | St. Hilaire du Harc. (50) | v-g in <i>marché couvert</i> , rue de Marly, ±150 |
| ” | Sourdeval (50) | v-g in Place du Champ de Foire, ±70 |
| ” | Louvigné-du-Désert (35) | v-g in Salle Derieux, ±120 |
| ” | St Jean-sur-Mayenne (53) | v-g in Salle de l'Aquarelle, ±70 |
| Sun. 15 th | Gavray (50) | v-g in <i>Foire de Printemps</i> , ±50 |
| ” | Flers (61) | v-g in Stade du Hazé, 8h – 18h, ±50 |
| ” | Landéan (35) | v-g / <i>brocante</i> in the Salle des Sports, ±70 |
| ” | Dinard (35) | <i>braderie</i> in Salle de COSEC, ±70 |
| ” | Dol de Bretagne (35) | v-g in rue Pierre Sépard, ±150 |
| Sat. 21 st | Betton (35) | v-g / <i>braderie</i> in Place du Marché, ±150 |
| Sun. 22 nd | Granville (50) | monthly <i>antiquites</i> / <i>brocante</i> , ±70 |
| ” | Bellou en Houlme (61) | v-g / <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150 |
| Sun. 29 th | St Fraimbault (61) | v-g in Place de la Mairie, ±50 |

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

Special dates:

Fri. 30th March – *Vendredi Saint* (Good Friday)

Sun. 1st April – *Pâques* (Easter Sunday)

Mon. 2nd April – *Lundi de Pâques* (Easter Monday)

Eating out

Another restaurant for that Special Occasion:

'*La Marjolaine*' Domaine du Bas Mont, Moulay [53, just outside Mayenne, south, on RN162]. A lovely venue, with menus of 18,50€ and 49€. There is also a week-day noon bistro with *plat & dessert* for 13,50€; or *entrée, plat & dessert* for 15,50€. 02 43 00 48 42.

Les Jardins des Renaudies

At this 4 ha. *parc floral à l'anglaise* at 'Les Mézerais', Colombiers-du-Plessis (53) you will also find an *ecomusée*, showing how life used to be in the Mayenne countryside; a *salon de thé anglais* (English tea room), sale of plants and games for children. For opening dates and times go to www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

☼ Sun. 1st and Mon. 2nd: *Chasse aux oeufs* (Easter Egg Hunt) – *Les Amis des Jardins* will have hidden over 2,000 egg clues during the 2 days, for discovery by the children.

Guided visit of the Abbey of Lonlay l'Abbaye (61)

On Weds. 18th & 25th, on a guided (in French) visit organised by the Domfront Tourist Office, you will spend around an hour viewing the original parts, inside and outside, of this Abbey that was founded in 1010-1020 by Guillaume de Bellême. Tickets are 4€, under 10s: free. More info available from the Domfront Tourist Office.

You can also reserve a place on the '*Balade Gourmand à Lonlay*' comprising a visit to the famous *Biscuiterie de l'Abbaye*, followed by the visit to the Abbey, then lunch in a nearby restaurant and a chance to discover the beers and ice creams produced in the commune. More info from the Domfront Tourist Office: 02 33 38 53 97, www.ot-domfront.com.

Marché aux fleurs in Saint-Malo (35)

On Sat. 28th (14h to 18h30) & Sun. 29th (10h to 18h30) in the Parc de la Briantais, Saint-Servan, Saint-Malo, you will find all types of plants, bushes, trees and garden tools & ornaments. Free entry & parking. Accessible for people with reduced mobility.

French Inventors:

André-Jacques Garnerin (1797-1823) : inventor of the parachute

During the French Revolution he was employed as an '*aerostier des fêtes publiques*' dealing with the *montgolfières* (hot air balloons). He took the first jump with his umbrella-shaped parachute over the Parc Monceau in Paris in Oct 1797 in front of an amazed crowd who expected to see him fall to his death. However, he survived with just a broken ankle!

A newly opened tea-room in Mortain (50)

[With thanks to Jane W. for this info]: A little tea-room has opened at 5 Rampe de la Collégiale in Mortain, called '*Délices & Fantaisies*'. The French owner, Emilie, sells a variety of teas (real tea from a great selection – she also sells a variety of loose tea), coffee and snacks, as well as some lovely locally-made gift ideas. They also have a book-swap operating – at the moment with English books, though soon to be French as well, as so many people have asked for French books. Opening hours: Tues. to Fri.: 12h to 19h; Sats.: 10h30 to 19h (but on alternative Sats.: 12h to 19h)

Visit the *Musée de la Pré-histoire* in Rânes (61)

On Sat. 14th from 11h to 12h you can view the collection of flint artefacts discovered in the area dating from around 4,000 years ago. Free. Also, between 14h and 18h there will be music and painting workshops, each of 1h30 duration. More info: www.ornetourisme.com

Exhibition of oil paintings at the restaurant ‘*La Carotte*’

Until 27th April, ‘*La Carotte*’ (on Quai Carnot in Mayenne, 53) welcomes the work of Gilles Renault, known as ‘*PointPlume*’. The exhibition ‘*Univers Vert*’ brings together enchanted forest and the deep blue of the universe. The paintings can be viewed during the opening hours of the restaurant – go to www.lacarotte-bistro.com

Les poiriers en fleurs in Mantilly (61)

It is again the time of year to see the wonderful Normandy *poiriers* (pear trees) in flower. On Sun. 15th from 10h in Mantilly, the capital of *poiré*, there is a circuit for foot, bike or car, to enable us to appreciate the most lovely *poiriers* and to meet the producers of the local drink. Meet at the *Salle de la Rencontre*. Free. At the same time a 10.2 km race will take place, organised by the *Comité des Fêtes*. More info and registration: 02 33 37 65 54.

Something for all the family – the *vélo-rail*

In St Loup de Gast (53, near Ambrières-les-Vallées) the popular *vélo-rail* will be open on Sun. 1st and Mon. 2nd from 11h to 18h. Starting near the old railway station, the 6km circuit runs along the disused railway track, including the impressive *viaduc de la Rosserie*. The *draisines* (platforms) hold 4 people – 2 cycling and 2 seated. Tickets (17€ per *draisine*) can be purchased at the ticket office, and refreshments can also be bought there.

Chapelle Notre Dame de l’Oratoire de Passais

You will notice this small chapel, west of Passais-la-Conception (towards Mantilly, 61). In 1852, a Passais lady fell gravely ill and she made a vow that if she recovered she would build a chapel in honour of Our Lady. She eventually recovered and kept her promise and had a small chapel built. It became well known, and as more and more pilgrims came, another chapel was built in 1857. This also became too small, so in 1927 a third, much larger, chapel was added.

‘*Ecoducs*’ have been built under A81 for the little animals

At Vaiges and Soulgé-sur-Ouette (53) 2 *écoducs* are being built to help small animals pass safely under the motorway. At a cost of 500,000€ each, the little tunnels have been inserted on a trail that was regularly used by animals before the *autoroute* was built. With a diameter of 1,20m, these *écoducs* – the first in the *département* – allow *les hérissons* (hedgehogs), *chauve-souris* (bats) and other small creatures to cross to the other side without harm. It was not necessary to stop the traffic on the A81 during the work as a special machine was used to insert the concrete pipes under the road. A camera has also been installed to take photos of the furry users – and also to prove the efficiency of the scheme.

Emmaüs Special Spring Sale in Fougères (35)

Sat.7th at *la Ferme du Paron*, 9h-12h & 14h-17h. Always bargains to be found.

Entertainment & Concerts

Sun, 1st from 15h to 15h45 at the *Maison du Parc Naturel Regional* in Carrouges (61): ‘*Presque Babel*’ - a concert by Solène Comsa (cello) and Sebastian Rousselet (singer) from the group ‘Babel’. A selection of music and song in this lovely setting. Free

Sun. 8th at 15h in l’Eglise Saint-Martin in Lécousse (near Fougères, 35): *Le Chorale de Lécousse* and *le Choeur de l’Or Bleu* with their Spring concert. Entry: 6€, under 12s free. More info from the Fougères Tourist Office.

Fri. 13th at 20h30 in the Salle Culturelle de la Varenne, rue Jean Dumas in Messei (61, SE of Flers) Alban Darche and *l’Orphicube*: 6 musicians & 3 voices with a contemporary mix. Tickets: 10€, children 5€. www.ornetourisme.com.

Sat. 14th at 20h30 in l’Eglise St François-Xavier, 1 place St François Xavier in Saint-Malo (35): Gospel concert with Emmanuel Pi Djob - Soul Gospel Jazz Afro Pop World Music. Tickets: 15€, under 8s free. For more info: www.emmanuelpidjob.com

Sun. 22nd at 16h in the l’Eglise Notre-Dame-sur-l’Eau (lower Domfront, 61): “*Voix d’Eté*”, the choir of Joué-du-Bois, led by Cathy Pouligny Hardi, the first part being songs from Emma Mory. Free, with voluntary donations.

Soirée Magique de Yann Frisch at the Château de Carrouges (61)

On Thurs. 5th from 19h30 to 20h45, as part of the Spring Festival, you can visit the large apartments of the Château, followed by a magic show (min. age: 14). By reservation only. Entry: 10€, includes the château visit and show. More info: www.ornetourisme.com

‘Event’ - world class contemporary dance in Gorrion (53)

On Wed. 4th April at 20h30 in *l’Espace Colmont* in Gorrion – *le Centre Regional de Danse Contemporain d’Angers* celebrates its 40 years. Each ‘Event’ of Merce Cunningham, American master of contemporary dance, is unique for each venue. Robert Swinston, director of CNDC, gives a selection from his celebrated international choreography. Tickets 13€, students 6€. Reservations : 02 43 30 10 58, or at the Gorrion *Mairie*.

Festival Jazz in Fougères (35) during April

This celebration of jazz takes place in Fougères during the first week of April. For more info contact the Fougères Tourist Office: 02 99 94 12 20, www.ot-fougeres.fr.

Open Mic Nights

🎵 Sat. 7th at 20h at the *Bar du Pecheur*, L’Epinay Le Comte (61). Musicians and singers all welcome.

🎵 Sat. 21st at 20h at *Le Viking* in Notre-Dame du-Touchet (50).

Please contact Norrie Waters for more info: waters.norman@orange.fr. As always, it is good to have an enthusiastic and supportive audience for these events.

Discover the art of making of goat’s cheese

On Sat. 28th between 14h & 17h30, meet at *La Chèvrerie ‘Le Chèvre Bleue’* in Rânes (61) and learn about the farm and the fabrication of goat’s cheese. Reservation necessary at the Argentan Tourist Office (02 33 67 12 48)

Tea Garden and charity shop opening

This Easter weekend, Grande Daze Rescue Animal Companion Centre, at La Grande Gaudinière, La Bigottière (53) are celebrating the opening of their on-site charity shop “*Boite bric-a-brac*” by holding an Open Weekend. The shop will be open on 31st March to 2nd April from 10h to 16h. They have all kinds of bargains - clothing, home-ware, plants, books – something for everyone!

They also have a Tea Garden which will be open on Sat. 31st March and anyone who brings a flyer (which can be found in all the local villages) will get a free cuppa and a piece of cake. All profits from the shop and tea garden go directly to rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing animals. If anyone would like to donate bric-a-brac or their time to help support Grande Daze, they would greatly appreciate it. For more info go to www.grandedaze.com

Annual census of garden birds

Each January, a census is taken of the numbers of birds in the Normandy area. This year was a record involvement with over 1,800 people taking part. *Le merle noir* (blackbird) is the bird most often seen in 93% of the gardens, followed by *le rouge-gorge* (robin), *le mésange bleu* (blue tit), *le moineau* (sparrow) and *la mésange charbonnière* (great tit). The sparrows averaged at least 6 per garden, but *les mésanges* and *les pinsons* (chaffinches) are becoming fewer. However, this year numbers of *les grives* (thrushes) have increased. More info can be found at *le Groupe Ornithologique Normand*.

Advice for travellers

When travelling abroad, we are advised that as well as taking photocopies of our passports, we should also use our smartphone/mobile to take pictures of our car in the airport parking lot, and do the same for the luggage and its contents in case it gets lost.

Weekly markets in the Mayenne department (53)

Day of the week	Location
Mondays	Craon, Mayenne, Villaines-la-Juhel
Tuesdays	Ernée, Laval (centre), Montsûrs
Wednesdays	Bais, Gorrion, Lassay-les-Châteaux, St Pierre-des-Nids
Thursdays	Château-Gontier, Evron, Laval (centre)
Fridays	Fougerolles-du-Plessis, Javron-les-Chapelles, Meslay-du-Maine
Saturdays	Ambrières-les-Vallées, Bazouges, Mayenne
Sundays	Bourgneuf-la-Forêt, Laval (St Nicholas)

(It is wise to double check before going, as these can change without notice). Next month: the weekly markets in the Calvados (14) department

Incorrect opening hours given for “*Manges-tu?*” in Gorrion

The opening hours which I gave for Steve’s *Epicerie Anglaise* at 12 rue des Frères Lumières in Gorrion (53, beyond the AXA office) were not totally correct – on Wednesdays he is open from 10h until 13h - not 12h. Steve looks forward to opening the tea room in the near future. For more info contact Steve at 06 65 60 11 17 or 07 50 22 39 83, manges-tu@orange.fr.

Home-cooked take-away ethnic Chinese food

Jin Barrett, who lives in Passais-la-Conception (61) has started a take-away service for her ethnic Chinese food. Jin cooks at home and operates the business from there, and she needs 24 hours' notice to prepare meals and they can be picked up from her house. She is registered and has her Siret number. For her menu and pictures of her food you can go to her Facebook page: www.facebook.com/imakeyummy/ or contact her by e-mail at livre135@gmail.com.

Electric car charging points in Gorrion (53)

Installed in February 2018 by *Territoire d'Energie Mayenne*, behind the *Mairie* in Gorrion is a charging point for electric cars. It can charge 2 vehicles at the same time. Two possibilities exist – to subscribe by purchasing a *badge* on the site www.alizacharge.com, or to use a smartphone to scan the QR code on the side of the post. To reserve in advance use the Alize application on Appstore or Android.

Château de Lassay – a new portcullis installed

Weighing 900kg, the old *pont-levis* (portcullis) at the château in Lassay-les-Châteaux has been replaced with a newly constructed one, as it had become unsafe – the wooden supports having become rotten. Owner Cécilia de Montalembert explains that the 2 areas of deck work independently - one for pedestrians and one for vehicles (once wagons & horses). As in medieval times, the two *pont-levis* can be raised or lowered as needed, which can be done by 2 men aided by a system of counterweights, and it is an important aspect of this medieval château. A specialist company near Angers completed the work. Sadly, it was not possible to keep any of the original wood as it was too rotten, but now the owners will try to keep the portcullis dry, as the weight of the wood can vary between the seasons by as much as 3kg.

Town of the month – Saint-Céneri-le-Gérei (61)

This is a small village with just 120 inhabitants. In the 7th century an Italian hermit, Céneri (Serenicus) lived here and on his death his disciples built a monastery, which was destroyed in 903 by the Vikings. In 1044, Guillaume Giroie settled in the village and built a château, which was besieged (but not taken) by Guillaume le Conquérant in 1060. The village is classed one of '*les plus beaux villages de France*' and since the 19th century has been an inspiration to artists from all over the world.

On Sun. 22nd from 9h15, as part of the *Fête de la Rando*, is a *balade autour d'un des plus beaux villages de France* (walk around one of the most beautiful villages in France). This is a 3hr, 9-10km guided walk around the town of Saint-Céneri-le-Gérei (61) and nearby. Meet at the *Point Information Touristique* in St Céneri-le-Gérei. Organised by the Alençon Tourist Office, inscription is necessary before 18h on 20th April (02 33 80 66 33). Free

Expo peintures in the gardens

(Still in St Céneri-le-Gérei): from 14th April to 27th May, at *les Jardins de la Mansonnrière*, will be an exhibition of paintings by Marie Leddet. Tickets: 6€ (includes a visit to the gardens); ages 3-12: 3€. This is an atmospheric garden with 12 themed areas – rose garden, lunar garden, Asiatic garden, perfumed garden, neogothic potager, and more. Open: Fridays to Sundays only: 14h30 to 18h30. More info at www.ornetourisme.com

Sport & Leisure Activities

Arboretum de l'Etoile des Andaines, Champsecret (61)

At the heart of a massive forest of 5,400 ha., from this crossroad on the road from Domfront to La Ferté-Macé (by the Bagnoles de l'Orne turn-off) you will find many forest trails and 70 species of both woodland and ornamental trees. Open all year, although certain parts may be restricted. Free parking. Always respect notices posted throughout the forest.

Tennis – 25th International Seniors Tournament

Between 7th and 14th from 9h at the *Complexe Tennistique Maxime Merlin*, rue Plassard in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) you can watch this prestigious tournament for men (50 to 80yrs) and women (50 to 85 years). Free.

Walk: *Les Mines de St Clair de Halouze (61)*

On Sat. 21st from 13h45 is a guided walk in the forest of St Clair-de-Halouze, to discover the remains of the iron mines and their history (in French). Meet at the parking of *Centre Aéré* de St Clair de Halouze. Free.

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



Well, that's all for this month – a mix of Spring events, concerts, outdoor activities, visits to historical sites and bargain hunting. I hope you find something here to interest you.

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

April 2018

Date	Event	Place	Page
Sat. 31st March	Grande Daze Tea Garden open	La Bigottière	5
Sun. 1 st	Concert ' <i>Presque Babel</i> '	Carrouges	4
1st & 2 nd	Easter Egg Hunt	Colombiers-du-Plessis	2
Wed. 4 th	World class contemporary dance	Gorron	4
Thurs. 5 th	<i>Soirée Magique</i> de Yann Frisch	Carrouges	4
Sat. 7 th	Emmaüs Special Spring Sale	Fougères	3
“	Open Mic Night	l'Épinay-le-Comte	4
7 th to 14 th	International tennis tournament	Bagnoles de l'Orne	7
Sun. 8 th	Spring concert with 2 choirs	Lécosse, near Fougères	4
Fri. 13 th	Concert by <i>l'Orphicube</i>	Messei	4
Sat. 14 th	Visit to the <i>Musée de la Pré-histoire</i>	Rânes	3
“	Gospel concert	St Malo	4
Sun. 15 th	Circuit to see the flowering <i>poiriers</i>	Mantilly	3
Wed. 18 th	Guided visit of the Abbey	Lonlay l'Abbaye	2
Sat. 21 st	Open Mic Night	Notre-Dame du Touchet	4
“	Guided visit to ancient iron mines	St Clair-de Halouze	7
Sun. 22 nd	Concert by <i>Voix d'Été</i>	Domfront	4
“	Guided walk around the village and area	St Céneri-le-Gérei	6
Wed. 25 th	Guided visit of the Abbey	Lonlay l'Abbaye	2
W/e 28/29 th	<i>Marché aux fleurs</i>	St Servan, St Malo	2
Sat. 28 th	Fabrication of goat's cheese	Rânes	4