

Bulletin !

Although we are still self-distancing, here is an informal look at life here and a selection of things to see and do in this part of France

Thought for the month:

A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity;
an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

(Sir Winston Churchill)

Some *vide-greniers/brocantes* may be taking place in this area – with all security measures in place (masks to be worn, distancing [limited numbers admitted], hand gel at entry) but double-check beforehand in case of cancellation at www.brocabrac.fr. [‘35’ = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

Sun. 5 th	Dinard (35)	<i>Foire à la brocante</i> , Espl. de la Halle, ±30
Sun. 12 th	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	<i>v-g/brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
Sun. 19 th	Granville (50)	monthly <i>brocante</i> , Cours Jonville, ± 50
Sun. 26 th	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	<i>v-g/brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150

[Go to www.brocabrac.fr for regular updates as to the latest situation].

Special dates / public holidays:

Tues. 14th *Fête Nationale* (‘*Pris de la Bastille 1789*’)

[Normally all towns/villages celebrate with music and fireworks. Your *Mairie* will let you know what events are taking place during these cautious times.]

Les Jardins des Renaudies

This lovely 3.5 ha floral park at Les Mézerais, Colombiers-du-Plessis (53) is re-opening from Thurs. to Sundays, 14h to 18h (social distancing must be observed). As well as 400 rhododendrons & azaleas, 350 hydrangeas and 133 varieties of roses, there are hundreds of varieties of flowering plants along pretty walkways. There is a museum of life on a farm from 1900 to 1920 and vintage farm equipment. You will find plenty of areas for a picnic. The *Salon du Thé* will be opening on Sunday afternoons at the moment from 14h to 18h, with teas, coffees, & home-made cakes. On Tues. 14th will be the popular ‘Garden Party’, with musicians, games and picnic areas. From 14th July until 11th Oct. the 10,000 sq.m. *labyrinthe de maïs* (maize maze) will be open. Entry: 6€ children 3€. More info at www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

Eating out

'*Le Royal*' bar/restaurant in Le Teilleul (61, near the church) has once again opened its doors. However, it will only be serving meals on the outside terrace, as the inside is too small for the current safety measures. So the *municipalité* has organised for that portion of the *rue du Dr Malon* (between the church and the *Champ de Foire*) to be closed to traffic during the lunchtime period, with tables set well apart. Sonia and Christophe Pattyn offer a *menu ouvrier* on Mondays to Fridays (12h-14h30) and the buffet *entrées* are available near the tables, in portions covered in cellophane.

Astuces des grandmères (grandmas' tips)

Here is a good way to unblock drains without using chemicals: pour a glass of soda crystals down the drain and then pour on 2 glasses of white vinegar (the same type that can be used for killing weeds). Add some boiling water and use a plunger (*une ventouse*) to shift the blockage. Keep doing this until the pipes are clear. Worked for me!

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

This pretty 'hidden' private English-style garden at 14 avenue Robert-Cousin (behind a hedge, on the road into Bagnoles, near the Casino) has been awarded the label '*Jardin remarquable*'. It is again open to the public, with safety measures in place, for an 'at liberty' viewing. Entry: 5€. For a guided tour, contact Anne Blanchais (some English spoken) on 02 33 37 92 04. www.lejardinretire.fr

History in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

In May the TV channel *Arte* made a documentary about the assassination near Bagnoles de l'Orne of the Rosselli brothers. In June 1937, a farm worker discovered the bodies of 2 anti-Fascist Italians, the brothers Carlo and Sabatino ('Nello') Rosselli, Carlo was in Bagnoles de l'Orne at the time, taking the cure for phlebitis which he had contracted while working in Spain. This double murder made the local and international papers and after many months of enquiries it was proved to be perpetrated by the members of a French organisation *le CSAR (Comité Secret d'Action Révolutionnaire)* known as *Cagoule*. It was later confirmed that the crime had been ordered by the Italian Fascist Secret Service. 12 years after the murder a marble monument was erected at the place where the bodies were found. Its restoration was organised in 2016 by the Circolo Fratelli Rosselli Foundation. Every year an Italian delegation visits the site.

le Manoir de la Chaslerie in La Haute-Chapelle (61)

This manor, at 28 La Chaslerie, La Haute-Chapelle (near Domfront), built in the 15th century with additions in the 16th and 17th, is once again open to the public. Safety measures are in place for the visits, which can be either a free, at liberty tour of the exterior, or a guided visit of the interior by rendez-vous, by contacting 06 12 96 01 34. For more info contact the Domfront Tourist Office (see page 4 for contact details)

Re-opening of village bar / restaurant

After having been closed for 2 years, the *municipalité* has found a new proprietor for ‘*le Saint-Berth*’ in St-Berthevin-la-Tannière (53), where you will find traditional cooking at lunchtime, also burgers & *frites*, as well as an *épicerie* and *depôt de pain* providing bread from a baker in Levaré. The current distancing ruling allows 3 tables in each of the 3 dining areas as well as 12 covers on the terrace. Open from 7h, with a *midi* served on Mon. to Fri. from 12h to 14h30 (eat there or take-away). The bar and *épicerie* are open from 17h until 20h. Closed on Sundays and Weds. 02 43 05 30 24

5 free outside music evenings in Domfront (61)

Between 15th July and 20th August, *Le Festival Cité en Musique* will be giving free outdoor *soirées musicales* each Wednesday in Domfront: 🎵 Wed. 15th at 20h30 in Place du Général de Gaulle: Jaja (swing/underground); 🎵 Wed. 22nd at 20h30 in Place St Julien: Leila and the Koalas (folk); 🎵 Wed. 29th at 16h in Place Saint-Julien: Captain Parade – *le pogo des marmots* (for young children), and 🎵 at 20h30: Lou Voit & Eric Toulis (humourist duo). In the event of rain these concerts will take place indoors (theatre, Place Burgwedel).

[In August: 🎵 Wed. 5/8 at 20h30 in Pl. du Général de Gaulle: Chanson d’occasion (swing); 🎵 Wed. 12/8 at 22h in the *parc du Château*: La Mélodie – with a shared picnic from 20h. In the event of rain these concerts will take place indoors (theatre, Place Burgwedel).]

Guided tours of the medieval town of Domfront in English

Organised by the Domfront Tourist Office, these very interesting tours will be held on Fri. 17th (and also on Fri. 14th Aug.), starting with the château at 14h30 (3€), the medieval town at 15h30 (3€) and the belltower of *l’église St Julien* at 17h (3€). For confirmation of the details and reservation of tickets contact the Domfront Tourist Office (details on page 4). Masks must be worn for both guide and visitors, and a maximum 6 people.

‘*Le Briccius*’ - change of ownership

The owners of this popular restaurant in Brecé (53) are retiring after 14 years of serving around 80 meals per day! It has taken 4 years to find a successor, but hopefully Florent and Florial, who have great experience in the catering business (having worked in Paris, Australia, Saint-Malo and Mortain) will continue in the great tradition of *Le Briccius* (named after the Latin name for Brecé). Open Mon. to Fri.: 9h to 16h (*midi*: 12h to 14h30); weekends by prior reservation for over 12 people. 02 43 00 59 04.

Concours photos sur les champignons in La Ferté-Macé (61)

From 17th to 19th Oct. 2020 will be a competition for photos on the subject of mushrooms. Photos can be submitted to the Tourist Office up until 13th October. Entry 5€. For more info and competition rules, contact the Tourist Office (details page 4) or otsi.la-ferte-mace@wanadoo.fr

Something you didn't know you didn't know

[From 'The Connexion' June 2020]: "World's oldest cognac still drinkable after 258 years". A 1762 bottle of Gautier cognac, nicknamed *Grand Frère*, is being auctioned by Sothebys and the bids, at the time of going to press, had reached £80,000, although the initial upper estimate was £160,000! *Grand Frère* is especially historic as it is pre-French Revolution and long predates the phylloxera crisis. Another smaller bottle, *Petit Frère*, was sold in New York in 2014 for \$59,500 to a Polish wealth fund, which puts drops of it in a line of watches. *Grand Frère* is the last remaining one.

Le Musée du Cidre de Melleray-la-Vallée (53)

This cider museum, at La Duretière, Melleray-la-Vallée (10kms from Lassay-les-Châteaux) first opened in 1989 and again welcomes visitors (with safety measures in place). You can see the stages of cider-making, from the gathering of the apples (from trees grafted over 100 years ago) to the distillation, with the tools and equipment used, then & now. You can also have a tasting of their apple juice, cider, poiré, pommeau and Calvados. For children – they will enjoy being welcomed by Trognon, *l'hérisson* (the hedgehog). Visit at leisure around the Museum, 14h to 18h30, Mon. to Sats. For more details visit www.museeducidre53.fr

'Save Our Snakes' this summer

An 'SOS Serpents' group of reptile specialists wants people to stay calm if they come across a snake this summer. They say that snakes play a valuable ecosystem role and rarely bite unless attacked. Grass snakes (*couleuvres*) are harmless, and while vipers (*vipères*) - the other kind found in France - are poisonous, the bite is very rarely fatal. If bitten you must go to a hospital for anti-venom. If you find a snake on your property you can ask the *mairie* or a nature body for advice.

Some Tourist Office contact details:

Avranches (50)	www.avranches.fr
Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	www.bagnolesdelorne.com
Domfront (61)	www.ot-domfront.com
Fougères (35)	www.ot-fougeres.fr
Gorron (53)	www.gorron.fr
Laval (53)	www.laval-tourisme.com
La Ferté-Macé (61)	www.lafertemace.fr
Mayenne (53)	www.hautemayenne-tourisme.com
Rennes (35)	www.brittanytourism.com

Sport & Leisure Activities

Randonnées en campagne (walks in the countryside)

There are 3,000 km of itineraries and discoveries that await you in the Vallées de la Mayenne (53) – on foot, bike or horseback. Ask for more details at the Tourist Office (see page 4 for contact details).

Swimming pool in Gorrion closed for repairs

Although many swimming pools in the Mayenne *département* are now opening, the Gorrion pool – built in 1976 and renovated in early 2000 – will remain closed until the end of the year for safety reasons, as cracks have been found around the pool area giving concerns about possible structural issues.

Swimming pool in Ambrières-les-Vallées (53) is open

The open air pool in the Parc des Vaux, outside Ambrières-les-Vallées, will re-open from 6th July, but it is only accessible by prior timed reservation (02 43 00 61 64). Opening times (daily): morning at 9h & 11h, afternoons: 14h, 16h & 18h. A half-hour between periods allows for the area to be completely disinfected. A maximum of 64 people are allowed in each timed section, with a possibility of access if there are unbooked spaces. Swimming lessons will be held from 12h45 to 13h45. Safety measures are in place (one-way circuit, shower soap provided, the swimming aids limited and the slide closed).

And finally,:

Why is your nose in the middle of your face? Because it's the scenter.

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That's all for this month.

Thanks.

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr