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## Bulletin !

A very shortened issue due to Covid-19, as we are unable to see or do much these days, but here are some snippets of info that might be of interest to you.

**Thought for the month:**

Keep smiling. It makes people wonder what you are up to!



### Christmas in Laval (53)

This year the Laval Christmas Market (*marché de Noël*) will not be taking place (28<sup>th</sup> Nov. to 24<sup>th</sup> Dec.) and neither will there be the traditional firework display on the opening date. This is to avoid the huge gathering of people – around 85,000 people attended the display last year. However, the Christmas lights will still be switched on during the last week of November and this year's theme is '*la plume de paon*' (the peacock feather).

### What is 'swin-golf'?

In Gorrion (53) an association has been formed - GSG, the Gorrion Swin-Golf - to help people enjoy this sport. Created in 1982, it is a type of golf, but is played on a smaller course at the Parc Colmont in Gorrion with a single golf club which has 3 faces. The ball is the same weight as a golf ball but larger and made of a soft mousse. For the beginner, the advantages of swin-golf are the costs (the special club costs 80€ and a ball 1,50€ [however, at the Gorrion swin-golf course they are on loan for a game]; the game rates are cheaper – 10€ for the day, or 100€ for a year's subscription, as opposed to 1,000€ per year for a golf course; golfers can play immediately after induction.

There are several swin-golf courses – in Gorrion (53), Laval (53), Rennes (35) and Fougères (35).

### Eating out (when we can!) - ‘*La Petite Auberge*’

‘*La Petite Auberge*’, on the N12 between Ernée (53) and Fougères (35), is a great place to go for something a bit more special but not expensive. Run by husband and wife team Marie and Olivier, the chef, they offer a very tasty 3-course *menu du Marché* for 20€, or 16,50€ for 2 courses, with a comprehensive wine list. Tasteful décor, well spaced apart tables and a relaxing atmosphere with attentive service. Plenty of parking beside the building. For reservations: 02 99 95 27 03. Some English spoken by Marie.

### *Bout’chou* in Gorrion (53) for clothing alterations

Ingrid Desein is once again able to accept clothing items for alteration at *La Maison des Beaux Cadeaux* at 19 rue de la Mairie in Gorrion. Tel: 06 95 82 99 78 (English spoken)

### Return of 90 km/h speed limit

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, 228 km of road in the Mayenne department will revert to 90 km/h (also in Orne, Sarthe and Maine-et-Loire) - although in wet conditions it will still be 80. Many signs will be installed, at a cost of 90,000€. However, this will not apply to all roads – it depends on the individual *départements*, so look out for the signs.

### 12 wartime shells (*obus*) discovered by mushroom pickers

On 20<sup>th</sup> October the *gendarmes* were alerted to a discovery of unexploded shells by mushroom pickers in the Forêt d’Andaines, near La Ferté-Macé (61). Items of explosives from WW2 are often unearthed, and even at their age are still a risk. The mine-clearance squad was called in to de-activate them. During WW2 around 1,000 tons of bombs were dropped in the Domfront area in 1944 and many have been found over the years. The *gendarmes* issued this advice: if coming across one, identify the area with a smartphone if possible and call the *gendarmes* on 17. Do not touch them!

### Domfront (61) – new postal addresses

In order to help identify an actual building, as opposed to a house within a group of the same name, 1,003 inhabitants of rural Domfront will be given house numbers, on a blue plaque, at the end of November. This will help with postal deliveries and emergency services by identifying the exact building. The numbers will relate to the distance of the house from the station crossroads in Domfront (i.e. “No. 7557, route de Mortain, 61700 Domfront” will show that it is 7,557 metres away from the Domfront station crossroads.

### *Disques bleu* (parking disks) in larger towns

A reminder that in many large towns, parking in bays with blue markings (*zones bleues*) needs a *disque bleu* to show the time of arrival. Parking is free but limited to the waiting time shown on a post nearby (1hr or 1½ hrs). This is to enable the rotation of vehicles and help attract customers to shops and businesses, and to stop workers parking there for the whole day. The disks can be bought in the *presses* (newsagents) and are available at many *Mairies*. The fine for not displaying the disk is 35€.

## Regional foods – *Ficelle Picarde*

Although it borrows heavily from a recipe by *La Varenne* (Louis XIV's chef), the *ficelle picarde* was invented in 1950 by chef Marcel Lefèvre from the Hotel du Commerce in Amiens, especially for a food fair in honour of local dignitaries. A ham, cheese, shallot & mushroom crêpe slathered with *crème fraîche* and Gruyère cheese, it is baked in the oven and often served as a very hearty starter! Though an emblematic Picardy dish, variants can also be found in other neighbouring regions.

## Forests in Normandie

In Normandie, forests represent a total surface area of 500,000 hectares - 14% of the territory - with 75% being private forest and 25% open to the public. 85% of the forest is composed of leafy hardwood trees (*les feuillus*).

## Ridley Scott's film 'The Last Duel' was inspired by events at Carrouges castle in 1386

The film 'The Last Duel' relates to one of the last legal duels in France, which happened in 1386 in Carrouges (61). The film, delayed due to Covid-19, stars Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, and 're-enacts' the duel between Jehan de Carrouges (a squire) and Jacques le Gris on behalf of the Duc d'Alençon. Sadly the Château de Carrouges itself could not be used in the film as it no longer has enough medieval features, so one in Sarlat (Dordogne) was used.

## *La Maison des Beaux Cadeaux*

This shop at 19 rue de la Mairie in Gorrion (53) is shop is again open and in line with the latest government advice there will be a limit to the number of people permitted in the shop at any one time. You will find knitting and sewing accessories, embroidery kits, velcro, ribbons, buttons, also hand made gift ideas & cards and second-hand clothing. For more info please go to *La Maison des Beaux Cadeaux* facebook page.

And finally,

Some late traffic news: A juggernaut carrying treacle has overturned on the M4. Drivers are asked to stick to the inside lane.

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That's all for this month. We'll have to see what 2021 brings. Meanwhile, I wish you all, despite the restrictions . . . **a very Merrie Christmas.**

*Judy Skinner*

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