

Bulletin !

An informal look at life in this part of France, with some things to see and do, and snippets of local info and advice.

Thought for the month:

There are 2 excellent theories for arguing with women.
Neither one works.

Some *vide-greniers* and *brocantes* in this area, but not many at this time of year - with all safety measures in place (masks to be worn, social distancing, hand gel) but double-check beforehand, if possible, in case of cancellation at www.brocabrac.fr. ['35' = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

Every Tues.)_ Cancale (35)
and Sat.)

Every Thurs. Rennes (35)

Twice weekly *braderie solidaire* at
rue des Ateliers, 10h-17h, ±50

brocante 'Les Puces du Jeudi' in Blvd de la
Liberté & Place Commeurec, ±50

Sun. 6th Bellou-en-Houlme (61)

v-g / *brocante* at '*La Chevalerie*', ±150

Sun. 13th Sourdeval (50)

v-g at '*A la Belle Epoque*', ±30

Sun. 20th Bellou-en-Houlme (61)

v-g / *brocante* at '*La Chevalerie*', ±150

" Granville (50)

monthly *brocante* in Cour Jonville, ±50

Cancellation of Granville Carnival 2022

The 2022 edition of the popular Granville Carnival (25th Feb. to 1st March) has been cancelled due to the Covid situation. This 5-day event has been held in Granville every February for almost 150 years and is the biggest of its kind in western France. With satirical floats, drummers, dancing, confetti fights and more - the town of Granville goes crazy!! Next year it is programmed for 24th to 28th February (dates to be confirmed).

Chandeleur (Candlemas)

February 2nd is *Chandeleur* in France – known as Candlemas in English. This lesser known Catholic celebration serves as a great opportunity to feast on pancakes, whose round shape and yellow colour are thought to represent the sun, and more daylight after the long, dark month of winter.

However, this year in the UK, 'Pancake Day' (Shrove Tuesday) is on 1st March – the day before Lent and 47 days before Easter Sunday (17th April).

Eating out - *La Brasserie des Flandres*

[With thanks to Sandy W for this recommendation]: This restaurant, at 171 route de Fougères in Laval (53, just before the old *Bricoman* site) is clean and friendly, serving a *midi* (2 or 3 courses, 12€ or 15€) and a 3-course Menu of the Month for 21€ to 27€. It doesn't look much from the outside but it has a lovely atmosphere inside. Open daily (not Tuesdays) at 11h45 to 14h45 & 18h45 to 22h (to 23h on Fri. & Sats.). 02 43 26 30 52.

Exhibition on the Middle Ages in Domfront (61)

Until 26th February at the *mediathèque*, 36 rue du Docteur Barrabé in Domfront-en-Poiraie, there are 2 exhibitions where you can discover life *au Moyen Age* (in the Middle Ages). The first is entitled “*Chateaux et maisons des seigneurs au Moyen Age*” (“Chateaux and manorial houses of the Middle Ages”) describing the functions of the upper class habitations – costs of living, defensive tools, etc. The second: “*Ripailles et rogations*” (“Feasting and supplications”) describing how they ate in this era – the utensils, food conservation, cooking techniques, meals fit for their place in society, etc. Hours of opening of the *mediathèque*: Tues., Wed., Fri., & Sat.: 11h–12h & 14h–17h. (02 33 30 83 49)

New opening hours for *La Poste* in Gorron (53)

Monday, Thursday, Friday:	9h to 12h30 & 14h to 16h30
Tuesday:	9h to 12h & 14h30 to 16h30
Wednesday:	9h to 12h30
Saturday:	9h to 12h.

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

Napoléon knew that an army marches on its stomach, but feeding troops on the move was a challenge – and starvation a real danger. In 1800, he offered a cash prize to whoever could come up with a way to preserve daily rations. Nine years later the award was given to Nicolas François Appert. His method involved sealing a thick glass bottle filled with food, wrapping it in canvas, then dunking it in boiling water to cook. Countryman Pierre Durand made the switch from glass jars to tin cans.

Cheese of the Month - *Coulommiers*

Pronounced ‘koo-lom-yay’ and named after the town of the same name, it belongs to the Brie family and is said to be the ancestor of all Brie cheeses, but it has a nuttier taste and thicker crust, an extra rich & creamy body, with a sweet and melting taste. It has a white rind with some red stains and is best eaten at room temperature. A great *hors d'oeuvre* cheese, or great with apples, pears or fresh berries. Recommended accompanying wines: a red wine from Bordeaux, Côtes de Rhone or Languedoc – or white: a Sauvignon blanc.

Fitness en plain air (open-air fitness) in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

10 modules of fitness equipment are available in the *jardins du lac* and *square de la piscine* for everyone's use. More information is available at the Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66)

Watch your footprint's footprint

While France and the European Union are considering labelling systems to denote the environmental footprint of clothing manufacturers & shoemakers, one French firm has seized the initiative. Footwear firm 'Eram' (based in Cholet, Maine-et-Loire) with its subsidiary 'Bocage', has devised an environmental calculator that measures the carbon footprint of its products. In 200 of its stores, labels on 80 shoe models will feature a QR Code that enables shoppers to see the place of production and the shoe's composition. The company aims to reduce its carbon footprint by 30% by 2030.

Something for you quizzers!

Events in France over the years: It was in February in . . .

- 1763 (10th) Canada was ceded to Britain to the Peace of Paris.
- 1778 (6th) Britain declared war on France.
- 1797 (22nd) Over 1,000 French troops, led by Irish-American General William Tate landed at Fishguard in South Wales, but were quickly taken prisoner.
- 1815 (26^h) Napoleon escaped from exile on the island of Elba
- 1841 (25th) Pierre-Auguste Renoir, French Impressionist painter, was born.
- 1858 (11th) Bernadette Soubirous, a peasant girl, had a vision of the Virgin Mary in a grotto in Lourdes.
- 1919 (3rd) The League of Nations held its first meeting in Paris, with US President Woodrow Wilson presiding.
- 1960 (13th) The French tested their first atomic bomb in the Sahara.
- 1964 (6th) Britain and France reached an agreement on the construction of a Channel Tunnel.
- 1983 (5th) Expelled from Bolivia, Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie flew to France to be tried for crimes against humanity.

Covid - 'le Covid' or 'la Covid' ?

Following on from my mention in the June 2021 Bulletin about whether *Covid* in French should be 'le' or 'la', a decision has been reached. *L'Academie Française* is in favour of 'la covid', but the majority of French people were for 'le covid'. The dictionaries *Larousse* and *Robert* are on the side of the users, so in favour of the masculine – the use of 'la' is for a disease; the use of 'le' is for a virus.

French stamp price rises

It now costs €1.43 for a red *prioritaire* stamp, up from €1.28, or €1.28 for the slower green stamp, up from €1.16. International stamps now start at €1.65.

Entertainment & Concerts

Le Cabaret des Amis d'Al Foncent in Gorron (53)

On Sat 26th (see local posters for the time), this popular event will take place again in *l'Espace Colmont* in Gorron. An evening of thrills, music, songs, humour, with dinner prepared by *Le Grand Cerf* in Ernée. Tickets: 55€ are available from the *Mairie* in Gorron or at the restaurant '*Le Grand Cerf*', 17-19 rue Aristide Briand in Ernée (02 43 05 13 09).

Concert: *Clarinettes urbaines* in Mayenne town (53)

Sat 5th at 20h30 in the *Théâtre Municipal*, 7 Place Juhel in Mayenne (53, near the Château): clarinettist Emilien Véret plays a selection of music, from classical to jazz. Free. For info from the Mayenne Tourist Office (www.mayenne-tourisme.com)

Café-concerts in *La Carotte*, Mayenne (53)

Popular vegetarian restaurant '*La Carotte*', with its unique atmosphere beside the river Mayenne at 14 Quai Carnot, are holding FREE *apéro-concerts*:

Sat. 5th at 18h30 : 'Hope' - guitarist

Sat. 12th at 20h : 'When in Dublin' - English folk duo from Angers.

More info from: www.lacarotte-bistro.com and www.mayenne-tourisme.com

Ciné-opéra direct from Paris: The Marriage of Figaro

On Thurs. 3rd, 19h15 to 23h, the cinema '*Le Vox*' in Mayenne town (near the Château) is showing Mozart's '*Les Noces de Figaro*' (The Marriage of Figaro), filmed direct from the performance at the *Paris Garnier*. Tickets 10€ or 15€. More info: www.levoxmayenne.fr

The next English films in Gorron cinema

Here are the next two 'British Monday' films in Gorron cinema: (www.gorron-cinema.fr)

Monday 7th: Licorice Pizza (comedy/romance - nominated at the Golden Globes 2022)

with Alana Haim, Cooper Hoffman, Bradley Cooper [

Monday 14th: The 355 (action/spy/thriller)

with Jessica Chastain, Penelope Cruz, Bingbing Fan

Something for all the family – *Alligator Bay*

Located 5 mins from Mont-Saint-Michel, Alligator Bay houses the largest group of alligators in Europe. As well as the Alligators, you can visit the Labyrinth of Dragons (reptiles) and also the Turtle Farm, where you can stroll around to discover more than 400 turtles of many species, weighing from ½ kg to 250 kg! Open all year – in Feb. & March: 14h to 18h (but from 10h in school holidays), every day, including Sundays. For all info: www.alligator-bay.com A *pass sanitaire* (or equivalent) will be required for entry.

Sport & Leisure Activities

Randonnée pédestre (walk)

Tues 1st at 14h, this 8 - 9km walk along around the Fougerolles-du-Plessis area (53) is organised by 'Les Randonneurs du Bocage 53'. Depart at 14h from Place de l'Eglise. 2€ for non-members.

Advance Notice: WOW! Craft Workshops

On 7th to 13th March there will be a week of Craft Workshops (WOW!) in Fontaine-Daniel (53, near Mayenne). You can choose from calligraphy, stained-glass making, designs on ceramics, and many more. In a beautiful environment with lots of space, you can enjoy connecting with your crafty side. There will also be a pop-up shop selling crafty items. For full details contact ursula@ursulabenjamin.com, or text (0033) 7 69 77 25 37

Apologies – in the last issue, in the section of items needed in your cars in France, I wrongly put 'GB sticker' instead of 'UK sticker'. In my defence, I copied it from 'The Connexion' without checking that it was up to date!

And finally:

A police recruit was asked during an exam: "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?". His reply: "Call for back-up".

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That's all for this month, but I hope you will find in here a few items to tempt us out and about this month (weather permitting, of course!).

Judy Skinner

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