

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

You must never 'find' time for anything.
If you want time you must make it.

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) subject to current changes, but double-check beforehand, if possible, in case of cancellation at www.brocabrac.fr or www.vide-greniers.org

Sun. 6 th	Rennes (35)	<i>brocante</i> 'The Retro Market' in Halle Martenot & Place des Lices; ±70
“	Avranches (50)	monthly <i>brocante</i> , Place Valhubert, ±50
“	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g at La Chevalerie, ±30
Sun. 13 th	Sourdeval (50)	v-g at 'A la Belle Epoque', ±20
Sun. 20 th	Granville (50)	monthly <i>brocante</i> / <i>Marche d'Antiquités</i> , in Cour Jonville, ±30
“	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g at La Chevalerie, ±30
Sun. 27 th	Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	v-g in <i>marché couvert</i> (covered market), ±30
”	Sourdeval (50)	v-g at 'A la Belle Epoque', ±20
Every Thurs:	Rennes (35)	<i>brocante</i> 'Les Puces du Jeudi' in Blvd de la Liberté & rue Jules Simon, ±50

Special dates

Tues. 1 st	Pancake Day - so get tossing those pancakes!
Tues. 1 st	Saint David's Day (Patron Saint of Wales)
Thurs. 17 th	St Patrick's Day – celebrated in France in many areas. Put on something green and commemorate this patron saint. In Paris there will be music, street theatre, dancing and food trucks. Last year the <i>Moulin Rouge</i> , <i>Sacré Coeur</i> and Paris Disneyland were lit up green at night - a very unique sight!

Eating out

At '*Les Ateliers de la Colmont*' (on the Gorron to Brecé road, behind Gamm Vert) you can enjoy a very good value lunch with delightful décor and nicely laid out tables. It is an enterprise where people with slight disabilities are trained in the restaurant business. A little patience while ordering your meal is all that is needed, and they are all trained very well and are keen to learn. There is a *menu du jour* and also *à la carte*. The manager speaks English and is very welcoming. Open Mon. to Fri. 12h to 14h30. Plenty of parking nearby.

Week of Workshops! - Craft Workshops

On 7th to 13th there will be a week of Craft Workshops 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

Special guided tour of Noviodunum (Jublains, 53)

Sun 27th, 15h to 16h, you can explore the remains of this Roman fort in Jublains (known then as Noviodunum) with a guide from the *Musée Archéologique Départemental*, at 13 rue de la Liberation, Jublains. In French, but some English may be spoken, and there will be leaflets. Tickets: 4€, available from the Museum. More info: www.museedejublains.fr

Bourse aux Plantes in Juvigné (53)

On Sun. 27th, 10h to 18h, this sale of plants & garden items will be held at the *Maison des Associations* in Juvigné (SW of Ernée). Free entry.

La Belle Arrivée in Perrou (61)

This bar/restaurant in the peaceful *forêt d'Andaine* between Bagnoles de l'Orne & Domfront, was closed for over a year and now has new owners. They have developed the site to include vintage camping, themed events and a shop with well-being products, and it is near a well-known walking route. As they are not cooks, they will be turning the bar/restaurant into a large 110 m² salle which can hold up to 60 people, has a professional kitchen and can be hired for receptions, etc. Also outside are picnic tables, games area, mini-golf, *pétanque* course and bike rental. The camping site will have 6 vintage (50s-70s) caravans, all with original features (without bedding), washing facilities nearby, and a Continental-style breakfast can be provided on request.

Introduction to Calligraphy

On Tues. 8th at Jane Bicknell's Studio in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) is 'Introduction to Calligraphy', starting at 10h30 until 16h, with spaced seating, masks optional, hand gel available. Learn how to create beautiful lettering and initials in coloured inks that make lovely personal gifts – a fun day full of creativity. No need to take anything, as supplies (tea, coffee, chat, tuition and lunch) are all included. Cost is 65€ per person for the day. For more info, contact Jane at jane.bicknell.art@gmail.com.

Atelier fabrication d'animaux en chaussettes

On Wed. 9th, 15h to 17h, in the *mediathèque*, Place Georges Morin in Javron-les-Chapelles (53, NE of Mayenne town) is a course & workshop to learn how to make animals with socks! In French, but no doubt easy to follow. Free, but registration needed – phone 02 43 03 62 78. (More info from the Mayenne Tourist Office: 02 43 04 19 37)

Organ repairs in the Pontmain Basilica (53)

The 90-year-old organ in the *Basilique* in Pontmain is to be rejuvenated. After the celebrations in January of 150 years since the Apparition, the dismantling of the organ began – much to the delight of Alain Guérinel, organist there since 1986. The estimated cost is 240,000€, which has been donated since 2012. Since 1930, the original electrics in the organ had copper cabling, insulated by cotton casing, which was possibly a fire hazard! Two keyboards have been removed, leaving just 4 in place; the 40 pipes are a mixture of lead and stainless steel, which all give different resonances. The finished works will be blessed at Ascension, before a concert by Thomas Ospital, head organist of l'Eglise Saint-Eustache in Paris, on Sat. 28 May at 20h30.

Something for all the family – Zoo de Jurques

For the Spring half-term period the Zoo, at La Butte (14, SW of Caen) will be open daily until 6th March, 11h to 17h. Founded in 1960 and moved to its present location in 1977, it has welcomed many endangered animals, including white lions in 2004 and 3 white tigers in 2019. There are 2 walking routes to help you discover the 700 animals from around the world. More info from www.zoodejurques.fr. Also on site is a restaurant, souvenir shop, interactive games area, pushchair rental, baby space & free parking. A *Pass Sanitaire* is required for entry.

Le Jardin de la Perrine in Laval (53)

La Perrine is a 4.5 hectare public park and garden, with botanical gardens, at 10 Allée Adrien Bruneau in the heart of Laval. A harmonious botanical collection, it is divided into a French garden, English garden and a rose garden. It is a haven of peace, with long paths, ponds, animals, a children's play area, a carousel and a picnic area. Open all year – 9h to 18h30. Good accessibility for mobility and visually impaired.

Walks along the river Mayenne (53)

There is an 85km towpath alongside the river Mayenne. This well-maintained path, previously used to tow barges along the river, has been entirely rehabilitated and today it is the river Mayenne's first hiking trail. This green band alongside the river provides a perfect excuse to explore the natural heritage of this area. Hikers, walkers and other nature lovers can explore the river Mayenne from all angles. The guidebook "*A la découverte de 85km de bonheur*" is available from the Laval and Mayenne Tourist Offices, and concentrates all the info presented on the information panels and theme maps, along with some additional info relating to remarkable trees. www.laval-tourisme.com.

Entertainment & Concerts

Sat. 19th at 21h to 22h30 in the *Centre d'Animation et de Congrès*, 8 rue du Professeur Louvel in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) is a concert-show by Carmen Maria Vega. More info from www.culture.orne.fr

Cabaret evening at 'The Red Lion' in Désertines (53)

Sat. 5th at 20h, the Gemini Association presents "Relive The Music – 50's & 60's", featuring songs of the decades, in support of Cancer Support France (donations welcome). Entry is free but by reservation only – contact 'The Red Lion' (02 43 32 14 74) or by email to normandymusic@yahoo.com. Vaccination pass or negative Covid test obligatory.

Events in support of Cancer Support France Nord

Quiz Night: Fri. 4th at 20h in the bar '*Le Viking*', Notre-Dame du Touchet (50). Teams of 6, but if you unable to make up a team, no worries, you can still take part. 3€ per person. Please take your Vaccination Pass or negative Covid test with you.

Cabaret Evening: Sat. 5th (see above)

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

It was on Oct 4th 1971 that the Basque language was first heard on French television, on a show called *Euskal Herria orai eta gero* (The Basque Country Today and Tomorrow). Over 20 years and 300+ episodes, anthropologist and presenter Maite Barnetche explored different aspects of life in the region. Basque is spoken across Soule, Lower Navarre and Labourd in SW France and parts of Spain. Though not officially recognised in France, it is studied in Basque Country schools and used in some public institutions in the area.

Cheese of the Month : *Saint Paulin*

Once made exclusively by Trappist monks in monasteries (such as Entrammes, near Laval), this is a creamy, mild, semi-soft cheese, and around 1930 it was the first cheese to be made with pasteurised milk. It is soft and buttery (but firm enough for slicing) with a sweet, nutty flavour and a thin & moist rind. Both large and small versions are now produced by private companies in Bretagne and Maine et Loire. Ideal with fruit and a young Bordeaux

Salon Gourmand de Mayenne weekend

On 12th & 13th in the Salle Polyvalente, rue Volney, Mayenne (53) this event will be held again, having been cancelled for the past 2 years due to Covid. The *Salon* reunites wine-growers and local producers of all things '*gourmand*'! In 2018 there were 60 *producteurs* and 1,600 visitors. For more info, google '*Salon Gourmand* in Mayenne'.

Exhibition : "*Illustre est mon âme*"

From 8th to 19th in La Ferté-Macé (61) this exhibition by artist Alex Massmedia is at the *mediathèque* (1st floor) during opening hours, and features poems, music, design, paintings and photographs. Free. More info at www.ornetourisme.com/agenda

Lest we forget – *les villages morts pour la France*

Remembered each Armistice Day – six French villages which were reduced to rubble during WWI and never rebuilt, and are today called "*les villages morts pour la France*". These villages - Beaumont-en-Verdunois, Bezonvaux, Cumières-le-Mort-Homme, Fleury-devant-Douaumont, Haumont-près-Samogneux & Louvemont-Côte-du-Poivre – are all in the Meuse *département* (55) and were destroyed during the Battle of Verdun which raged from Feb. 21st to Dec. 18th 1916, costing the lives of around 70,000 soldiers each month.

Local inhabitants were evacuated at the beginning of the battle, but when they returned nothing was left standing. There were no trees, hedges, gardens, fields – nothing. The churches, barns and houses had completely disappeared and the land was so churned into mounds and foxholes it was impossible to know where the buildings and streets had been. There was nothing but heavily polluted mud in all directions and under it lay so much unexploded ordnance that rebuilding was impossible. In 1919, the government bought the land and decided that the 6 villages should become monuments to the sacrifices made during the *Grand Guerre*. Each would have a war memorial with a small chapel built on or near the ruins of its church and would be designated as "*mort pour la France*". Today, the site of each village is covered with grass and trees, and each has a budget of around €22,000 in order to maintain signposts and memorials, cut the lawns, etc.

‘Pages’ Bookshop – *Portes Ouverte* (Open Day)

On Sat. 5th Susanne McGregor is having an open day as it will be twelve years to the day since she opened ‘Pages’ Bookshop [which also sells DVDs, cards & toys, with tea, coffee & cake, and official stockist of Frenchic chalk paint]. It will be from 10h-16h at the Salle des Associations in Passais-la-Conception (61). The theme is Art & Literature and there will be stalls with books, local artists, crafters and a lady painting furniture with Frenchic chalk paint. Tea & coffee is free all day and cake will be available. Contact: 0684.747270 / suzymcg@hotmail.com

Check your driving licence points online

French driving licences do not show the points remaining on them - licences start with 12 points [six for new drivers] with points lost for offences such as speeding or going through red lights. If you are unsure how many points you have left you can easily check this online at [tele7.interieur.gouv.fr / tlp](http://tele7.interieur.gouv.fr/tlp). You can connect to this using the FranceConnect service if you are in the French social security system and have an existing account with a partner site such as ameli.com or impots.gouv.fr.

Watercolours for beginners

Every Monday, 2pm to 4pm, in Jane’s Art Studio, La Hiboudais, Notre-Dame du Touchet (50): tea, coffee, chat and tuition. Cost: 10€ per session, pay as you go. Separate seating, masks optional, hand san available, and a small class. For more info, contact Jane on 02 33 51 03 19; email: jane.bicknell.art@gmail.com

Dates of interest. It was in March

- in 1796 (8th) : Napoléon Bonaparte married Josephine de Beauharnais
- in 1831 (8th) : the French Foreign Legion was founded in Algeria; its HQ moved to France in 1962
- in 1889 (31st) : the Eiffel Tower, built for the Universal Exhibition, was inaugurated
- in 1891 (18th) : the London to Paris telephone link came into operation
- in 1895 (22nd) : French cinema pioneers Auguste and Louis Lumière gave the first demonstration of celluloid film, in Paris
- in 1912 (7th) : French aviator Henri Seimet made the first non-stop flight from Paris to London

New Gorron *gendarmerie* should be ready by mid-2022

Sited on a plot of 3,000 m², opposite *Serap*, this new building is taking form. Built with a budget of 2,733,123€ it will be the first in the *département* with new security systems in place. As well as the main offices, several individual living quarters will be built.

Gorron church spire to be dismantled

In January, a crane that can reach a height of 50 metres from the ground was used to begin the removal of *la fleche* (spire, above the bell-tower) due to serious cracks and badly frost damaged stonework. Also, the cross had begun to lean to one side so it is being taken down – however, the organisers of the removal works hope to be able to put it back in place in the future.

Citizen's arrests – are they legal?

[With thanks to 'The Connexion' for this info]: Yes, a citizen's arrest is allowed under French law under article 73 of the *Code de Procédure Pénale*, which gives rules on criminal law. It says that in the case of 'flagrant serious crimes that would be punished by a prison sentence', if you see this happening 'anyone is allowed to apprehend the person responsible and bring them before the nearest police officer'. This could range from someone smoking a joint or driving without a licence, to snatching a bag, or murder or armed robbery.

The key point is that the crime must be happening, i.e. you must catch them red-handed. It does not apply if you merely suspect someone of having committed a crime.

Découverte cidricole (discovering cider-makers) at *Les Martellières*

On Thurs. 24th, 15h to 17h you can enjoy a 2-hour guided visit (in French) at this farm in Juvigny Val d'Andaine (61) to learn how 4 generations of the same family have produced cider, milk and cereals. They will show you how they make calvados, poiré, poiré-rose, pommeau, poirissimo, apple juice, pear juice, cider vinegar, and also *terrines* and jams. Reservation possible up to 11h30 on the day, at the Domfront Tourist Office (02 33 38 53 97 (some English spoken),

Sport & Leisure Activities

‘Getting to know Gorron’ walk

This walk starts at 2.30pm from outside the *Mairie* on Thurs. 3rd. The walk around the town will last about an hour, taking in a mysterious tower, with a chance to see inside, and ending at the *Bar de La Mairie* for your choice of refreshments. You can reach Sue Baines on Messenger for more information (or simply turn up at 2.30 outside the *Mairie*).

Randonnée: ‘Les Chemins Montées’ near Landivy (53)

On Sun. 27th, 9h to 17h, you can enjoy this nature walk from the *Moulin du Pont* in Landivy. More info at the Mayenne Tourist Office: [www.mayenne-tourisme.com / agenda](http://www.mayenne-tourisme.com/agenda), 02 43 04 19 37, or 06 16 52 69 30.

Cycling - 40th Tour de Normandie

On Fri. 25th the cyclists on Stage 5 of this classic race will be arriving on Boulevard Paul Lemuet in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61) between 15h and 17h, having passed through Champsecret, Perrou, Juvigny Val d’Andaine, Beaulandais, Sept Forges, Rives d’Andaines and Geneslay. [The traffic will be stopped in Bagnoles from 14h to 18h]

And finally:

Marriage Counsellor: Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is this true?

Husband: To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers.

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That’s all for this month. I hope we will be able to get out and about a bit more now - if the weather behaves itself, of course!

Judy Skinner

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Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

March 2022

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Tues. 8 th	Introduction to Calligraphy	Notre-Dame du Touchet	2
Wed. 9 th	Workshop – make sock-animals !	Javron-les-Chapelles	3
12 th & 13 th	<i>Salon Gourmand</i>	Mayenne	4
Sat. 19 th	Concert by Carmen Marie Vega	Bagnoles de l’Orne	4
Thurs. 24 th	Discover cider making	Juvigny-Val d’Andaine	6
Sun. 27 th	Explore a Roman Fort	Jublains	2
”	Plant sale	Juvigné	2