

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

Laughter is the sun that drives winter
from the human face

(Victor Hugo)

Here are some *vide-greniers* (v-g) and *brocantes* in this area, with safety measures in place, but double-check beforehand, if possible, at www.brocabrac.fr in case of cancellation ['50' = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

W/e 2 nd & 3 rd	Granville (50)	<i>Puces Arts Créatifs et Couturières & bourse de collection</i> , in Salle du Herel, 9h-18h
Sun. 3 rd	Moulay (53)	v-g in school car park, 8 rue du Val de l'Aron, ±50
"	La Bigottière (53)	v-g in the Salle des Fêtes (see page 2) ±50
"	Avranches (50)	monthly <i>brocante</i> , Place Valhubert, ±50
"	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g at La Chevalerie, ±30
"	Dol de Bretagne (35)	v-g in Salle Châteaubriand, ±70
"	Ernée (53)	v-g in the Super U car park, 9h to 18h
Sun. 10 th	Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	v-g in <i>marché couvert</i> (nr Tourist Office), 6h–18h
"	St Hil. du Harcouët (50)	v-g in <i>marché couvert</i> , rue de Marly. ±150
"	Pleurduit (35)	<i>braderie de printemps</i> , Salle Omnisports, 9h-17h
Sun. 17 th	Sourdeval (50)	v-g at ' <i>A la Belle Epoque</i> ', ±20
"	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g at La Chevalerie, ±30
"	Granville (50)	monthly <i>brocante/Marche d'Antiquités</i> , in Cour Jonville, ±30
Sun. 27 th	Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	v-g in <i>marché couvert</i> (covered market), ±30
"	Sourdeval (50)	v-g at ' <i>A la Belle Epoque</i> ', ±20

Special dates

Friday 15 th	<i>Vendredi Saint</i> (Good Friday)
Sunday 17 th	<i>Pâques</i> (Easter Sunday)
Monday 18 th	<i>Lundi de Pâques</i> (Easter Monday)

Eating Out - *l'Eveil des Sens* in Mayenne town (53)

Congratulations to Nicolas and Isabelle Nobis, owners of the restaurant *L'Eveil des Sens*, 429 Blvd Paul Lintier, Mayenne (53). They have been awarded a Michelin Star for the 12th year running (the first of which was awarded just 10 months after they opened in 2010) and they are the only restaurant in the Mayenne *département* to have this distinction. To find out more about this restaurant – which is less expensive than you would expect for the exceptional quality of the dishes and service – go to www.leveildessens.fr

Les Jardins des Renaudies - Easter Egg Hunting!

On Sun. 17th & Mon. 18th at these pretty gardens at Les Mézerais, near Colombiers du Plessis (53), 14h to 18h, children are invited to search for Easter pictures around the gardens. They are then given Easter Eggs depending on how many pictures they find! Meanwhile, adults can enjoy daffodils, narcissus, camelias and magnolias in the park. Dogs are welcome on a lead. Entry: 6€; 6-16s: 3€; under 6s free. www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

Foire des Rameaux in Domfront (61)

On 9th & 10th this 72nd edition includes a chance to go up in a hot-air balloon (*Montgolfière*), experience a free-fall simulator, discover crafts and artists, local products; also a fun-fair and food truck on site. On Saturday evening: a dinner-dance, with fireworks at 22h; on Sunday: *vide-greniers* all day. Free entry. Mainly at l'Espace André Rocton, rue du Champ-Passais and look out for local posters.

20th Salon des Peintres et Sculpteurs in Gorron (53)

Until 3rd April, this art exhibition is held in l'Espace Culturel Colmont in Z.A. des Besnardières, Gorron. Open 14h to 19h. Around 200 works are on display from 50 artists, and the public can vote for their favourite exhibit. Free entry.

Event in support of Grande Daze Rescue Centre

Sun. 3rd at 10h to 16h in the Salle des Fêtes in La Bigottière (53): Bric-A-Brac Sale - jams, chutneys, Easter gifts, books, household items, furniture, CDs, DVDs, etc. Coffee, tea & cakes available to purchase. All proceeds to Grande Daze Rescue Centre. For more info, or directions, contact Anita on 02 43 90 75 83.

Something you didn't know you didn't know . . . about Normandy

In Normandy, timber construction was not known for cosy aesthetics but because Normandy has little or no stone suitable for building. In any case, the black and white architecture may be neither British nor French, but one of the many relics of settlement by men from the north, the Vikings, who invaded in the 10th century. Once their leader, Rollo, had extracted from the King of the Franks a dukedom for himself and grants of land for his marauders in return for some sense of peace, the new men of North Man's Land (Normandy) sailed their big-boned cattle from their old Scandinavian homes and started breeding. By careful selection of cow and bull they produced the brown and white, spectacled Normandy breed, prodigious producers of fragrant milk and cream.

Fête Communale – Duathlon

On the weekend of 2nd & 3rd in Juvigné (53, SW of Ernée) is the *fête foraine* (country fête with funfair), with the possibility of a meal on Saturday evening (by reservation: 02 43 68 55 26). At 22h45 on the Saturday night will be fireworks (*feu artificiel*).

Road diversion in Domfront (61)

Between 19th April and 17th June there will be ongoing roadworks in Domfront by the bridge (*Pont du Château*) across the D962 leaving Domfront. The work will strengthen the bridge, making it safe for the public during events taking place there in the summer. A *deviation* (diversion) will be in place when approaching Domfront from the lower town (south) and from the north of the town.

Avon and Retrobelia events

Avon Cosmetics Party – on Sat. 9th, 16h to 19h in ‘*La Renaissance*’ bar, Hercé (53) : free Raffle, nibbles and a few laughs! They have a selection of items for sale and the new April catalogue will be available for you to order from.

Retrobelia and Avon Easter Open Days – Fri. 15th & Sun. 17th, 14h to 16h, at 5 Grappay Charpentier, Brecé (53): 60s and 70s Retro and Vintage items and accessories.

For more info on both these events please contact Ann Taylor: 07 86 81 80 95.

[Siret: 89226781600015]

Beware of toxic caterpillars – recently spotted in this area

Parents and pet owners should beware of dangerous pine processionary caterpillars (*chenilles processionnaires*) as their protective hairs contain a toxin that can cause severe skin irritation and can kill dogs. In Spring, brought out by the warmer weather, the caterpillars have left the trees and are marching nose-to-tail across woods and open lands to find a new nest. Previously confined to the south of France, they are now to be found in the north and can cause severe damage to pine trees. Gardeners can use black sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts and suet to lure predators such as the great tit, coal tit and great spotted cuckoo which will eat hundreds of caterpillars a day. The *Mairies* have requested to be told of any sightings in your local area.

Cheese of the Month – *Abbaye de Belval*

Also known as ‘*La Trappiste de Belval*’ or ‘*Belval*’, this cheese is made in the historical province of Picardy in northern France by Trappist sisters. It is matured for about 60 days in the cellars of the Abbey with great care. This disc-shaped, semi-hard cheese is made from cows’ milk and has a light aroma. Texturally, it has an ivory white paste and a smooth, glossy golden, washed rind.

Made since 1893 by the sisters of the Abbey, the *Belval* cheese makes a perfect pair with a light, fruity red wine, or full-bodied wines such as Beaujolais, Chinon, Champigny and many more.

Entertainment & Concerts

Fri. 1st at 20h30 in the Théâtre Municipal, Domfront (61): concert with the group ‘San Salvador’ – 6 voices, 2 drums, a tambourine and 12 hands! An evening of intensity, dance and warmth. Tickets: 10€ at saisonculturellepartagee@gmail.com or ask at the Domfront Tourist Office (02 33 38 53 97)

Sat. 2nd at 20h30 in the Salle Jean-Gabin in the Casino Joa in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61): a recital will be held in aid of the Ukrainian refugees who have already been welcomed into the area. Organised by Manuela Chevalier, music teacher at *Le Jardin Musical*, the recital will also feature French songs by pupils from nearby schools of music. Tickets: 10€, under 10s free, available from the Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66) or at the door.

Sat. 2nd, 20h to 22h, in l’Espace Clair de Lune in Ernée (53): a festive and happy concert by David Krakauer, clarinetist with his talented musicians. Organised by ‘*Au Foin de la Rue*’, tickets are 12,50€, students/unemployed 7,50€. More info at www.lernee.fr or www.mayenne-tourisme.com.

Sat. 9th, 20h30 to 21h50 in the Salle Polyvalente, Blvd Volney, Mayenne town (53): *Pianistologie Symphonique*’ - a light-hearted mix of works by Bach & Rachmaninov. Organised by *l’Orchestre d’Harmonie du Pays de Mayenne*, tickets are 15€, 11€ for students or unemployed.

Ciné-opéra : Cendrillon (Cinderella)

On Thurs. 7th, 19h15 to 22h30, at the Cinema ‘*Le Vox*’ in Mayenne town (53) you can see Jules Massenet’s opera by direct emission from *Paris Opéra*. Tickets 10€ to 15€. More info at www.levoxmayenne.fr

La Foire Fleuri in Gorron (53)

On the weekend of 2nd & 3rd this annual event offers many activities. Over the whole weekend there is a funfair (near *La Poste*) and many businesses will be open on both days. Also, from 10h to 12h & 14h to 18h is an exhibition “*Les épiceries d’autrefois à Gorron*” (grocer’s shops in times gone by in Gorron) in the old Notaire’s office (behind the Mairie, opposite the *Maison du Bocage*). Free entry.

On Sun. 3rd from 14h, crayons will be available for children to draw pictures on rue Magenta; also from 14h15 is the annual children’s ‘*defile en velos fleuri*’ (procession of florally decorated bikes) departing from the *Mairie*. There will also be a produce market, a grand musical parade and even a demonstration of hula hoops!

Something for all the family – *le base de loisirs*

This outside leisure area at La Ferté-Macé (61) has an overall area of 65 hectares – of which 26 ha. is water, and also 2,400 metres of walking/cycle paths – and is accessible all year. It is dedicated to family activities in the open air. There are children’s games and picnic areas - ask at the Tourist Office (02 33 37 10 97) if the other facilities are available yet (kayak hire, *pétanque* pitch, pedalos, archery, swimming in the lake with a small sandy beach, etc) and for the latest Covid safety restrictions. Access and parking is free.

Emergency contact numbers

18	Emergencies ('Urgences'). This number connects you to the <i>Sapeurs Pompiers</i> (fire brigade) but they deal with medical emergencies and should be the first port of call in life-threatening situations.
15	Samu – for other urgent medical call-outs
17	Police / Gendarmes
112	Universal European Emergency Services – from all phones including mobiles

Exhibition of miniatures in Mayenne (53)

On Sun. 3rd, 9h to 18h in the Salle Polyvalente, Blvd Volney in Mayenne town, this is an exhibition of miniatures in the world of agriculture. There are demonstrations of radio-controlled trucks and agricultural machines, with entertainment and a tombola. Snacks and drinks are available on site. 3€ entry.

Parc de la Colmont in Gorron (53)

From Sat. 9^h a new season of activities is offered in the Parc de la Colmont: tree absailing (*parcours en hauteur*), swin-golf, paintball, laser-game, kayaking, and you can hire bikes for use in the Parc. More info in the *Accueil* hut in the Parc, or at 06 63 63 86 44, or visit www.parcloisirscolmont.wixsite.com

Eco-pâturage (eco-grazing)

In the Mayenne *département*, there are 47 sites where 8 Ouessant sheep and 4 goats are made available to graze on land that can be difficult to keep mown – boggy, steep, narrow verges, etc., and to control the brambles on the borders. Organised by *Etic53* they will be on enclosed land in Gorron for the 6th time. It is also a good way to safeguard rustic breeds

Paris 2024 Olympic flame

As many other *départements* in France, the Orne is finding the bill for the passing through of the Olympic flame too expensive. The organising committee have asked for 180,000€ (150,000€ plus tax) for the passage of the flame which will be carried through the area from April 2024 until the start of the Olympic Games in June 2024. However, many other departments in France have accepted the expense. The Orne department is known as '*Terre de Jeux 2024*', with many communes involved in the Olympic Games (not least of all the famous *Haras du Pin*) – Argentan, Alençon, Bagnoles-de-l'Orne, La Ferté-Macé and L'Aigle.

Sport & Leisure Activities

Pétanque

Sat. 2nd at the *Boulodrome* in Domfront (61), beside the football stadium, is a *Pétanque Doubles* competition. Registration at 13h30, games begin at 14h. 10€ per team. Drinks and snacks are available on site.

Randonnée pédestre (walk)

On Tues 5th at 14h, organised by *Randonneurs du Bocage 53*, this is an 8–9 km walk around St Berthevin–la-Tannière (53). Depart from the Salle Communale car park at 14h. 2€ for non-members.

L'Eco Rando - helping to keep the countryside clean & tidy

Sat. 9th at 14h, under the label “*Eco Agir 2050*”, departing from the *Musée de l'Evolution Agricole* in Juvigné (53) you can join in and help to gather rubbish along the way. Different circuits are offered depending on your level of fitness. Wear waterproof shoes, thick gloves, high-vis jacket – and together you can help to clean up this lovely area.

Walk to discover a ‘*zone humide*’ (wetland)

On Sat. 23rd this walk - “*Sur le chemin de la nature . . .*” is offered by *Mayenne Nature Environnement* and you can discover wetlands and a lake near St Georges Buttavent (53) with amphibians to find! Inscription necessary, contact on 06 43 34 44 81. Wear suitable footwear, waterproof clothing in case of rain, and a drink. Free. More info from the Mayenne Tourist Office (02 43 04 19 37; www.mayenne-tourisme.com)

And finally:

How many people does it take to change a lightbulb?

Just one of the questions you should ask before buying a lighthouse!

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That's all for this month and I hope you have a very Happy Easter.

Judy Skinner

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Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

April 2022

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“	Concert by David Krakauer	Ernée	4
W/e 2 nd & 3 rd	<i>Foire Fleuri</i>	Gorron	4
“	<i>Fête Communale</i>	Juvigné	3
Until Sun. 3 rd	Art exhibition	Gorron	2
Sun. 3 rd	Grande Daze bric-a-brac sale	La Bigottière	2
“	Exhibition of miniature machines	Mayenne	5
Tues. 5 th	8-9 km walk	St Berthevin-la-Tannière	6
Thurs. 7 th	<i>Ciné-opéra</i> : Cendrillon	Mayenne	4
Sat. 9 th	Avon Cosmetics Party	Hercé	3
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“	Retrobelia & Avon Open Day	Brecé	3
“	<i>l'Eco Rando</i> – tidy-up walk	Juvigné	6
W/e 9 th & 10 th	<i>Foire des Rameaux</i>	Domfront	2
Fri. 15 th	Retrobelia and Avon Open Day	Brecé	3
Sun. 17 th	Retrobelia and Avon Open Day	Brecé	3
Sun. 17 th & Mon. 18 th	Easter Egg Hunt	Colombiers-du-Plessis	2
Sun. 23 rd	Wetlands walk	St Georges Buttavent	6