

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

Live as if you were to die tomorrow.
Learn as if you were to live forever

[Mahatma Gandhi]

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 any cancellations ['53' = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Sun. 1 st | Le Pas (53) | v-g by church, Place de 11 Novembre, ±50 |
| “ | St Mars-sur-la-Futaie (53) | <i>vide-maison</i> at 'La Mabilière' |
| “ | Avranches (50) | Monthly <i>brocante</i> , Place Valhubert, ±50 |
| Sun. 8 th | Larchamp (53) | v-g in <i>terrain de foot</i> (see p. 2), ±70 |
| “ | Bellou-en-Houlme (50) | v-g at La Chevalerie, ± 100 |
| “ | Rives d'Andaine (61) | <i>brocante du 8 mai</i> , Place Roland Flèchard, 6h-19h, ±300 |
| “ | Tinchebray (61) | v-g in the <i>Salle des Fêtes</i> , ±70 |
| “ | La Haie-Traversaine (53) | v-g at <i>le base de loisirs</i> (see p. 2) |
| Sat. 14 th | Colombiers-du-Plessis (53) | <i>vide-maison</i> at 2 rue du Lavoir |
| W/e 14 th , 15 th | Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) | The Big One! (3 kms), 6h-18h, ±300 |
| Sun. 15 th | Sourdeval (50) | v-g in ' <i>A la Belle Epoque</i> ', ±30 |
| “ | Mayenne (53) | v-g in the yard of Ecole Jules Ferry, ±50 |
| Sun. 22 nd | Barenton (50) | v-g in the <i>Salle des Fêtes</i> car park, ±120 |
| “ | Bellou-en-Houlme (50) | v-g at La Chevalerie, ± 100 |

Special dates

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Sunday 1 st | <i>Fête du Muguet</i> (see page 2), also <i>Fête du Travail</i> |
| Sunday 8 th | <i>Victoire 1945</i> (Armistice Day) |
| Thursday 26 th | <i>Ascension</i> |

Eating out - *La Carotte – bistro créatif*

This '*restaurant bio et bistro concert*' on Quai Carnot, at the base of the Mayenne château (53), has a varied menu with organic and vegetarian dishes. There is a terrace beside the river for warm days, and a cosy restaurant inside for cooler ones. There are often concerts on Friday nights. Open: Wed. & Thurs.: 12h-14h30; Fri. & Sats.: 12h-14h30 & 18h-23h. For more info go to www.lacarotte-bistro.com

Fête du Muguet (Lily of the Valley)

On 1st May it is traditional to offer friends and family *le muguet* to bring luck and joy. This tradition was started in 1561 by King Charles IX - but some say only the sprigs which have 13 flowers bring luck! *Le muguet* came to France from Japan in the Middle Ages.

May 1st is the only day when people are allowed to sell *le muguet* in the streets without having the authority to operate as a business.

Vide-greniers at La Haie-Traversaine (53)

On Sun. 8th at the *base de loisirs* in La Haie-Traversaine – *vide-greniers* with a view on the *lac de Haute-Mayenne* (between Ambrières-les-Vallées and Mayenne). To book a stall: 1,50€ per linear metre, inscription on site or by phone (06 70 14 98 59). Food available there.

Nuit des Musées in La Ferté-Macé (61)

On Sat. 14th, 18h to 22h, the *Musée du Jouet*, rue de la Victoire, opens its doors for a free visit to discover the collection of toys from between 1860 and 1960.

Troc Plantes (plant sale / exchange)

On Sat. 14th, 14h to 17h, in *l'Espace des Arts*, rue du Château, Lassay-les-Châteaux (53) you can exchange / buy plants, cuttings, and gather gardening inspiration! Free.

Fête de la Nature et du Jeu in Larchamp (53)

Sun. 8th: *Fête de la Nature et du Jeu* at the *terrain de foot* in Larchamp. Organised by *l'Association CBJB53*, there will be *vide-greniers* from 11h, basket-making and a hedgehog hut, fabrication of *cadrans solaire* (sun-dials), a local produce market, gardening, mini-babyfoot tournaments (children at 11h, adults at 14h), magic, local beers and Breton music. A 2-course meal will be available (menu bio: 15€, children's menu 8€) by reservation: 06 14 38 36 70 or 06 73 27 56 77.

'Rallye des Princesses Richard Mille' - female car event

Tues. 17th, 12h10 to 14h15 in the *Jardins du Lac* or Blvd de l'Hippodrome in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): at this 21st edition, organised by Zaniroli Classic Events, will be a procession of cars dated from 1946 to 1985, on its way from Paris to La Baule in Brittany. 90 vehicles will arrive via the route de Saint-Michel des Andaines. Free. More info from the Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66).

La Roseraie (rose garden) in Lassay-les-Châteaux (53)

Lassay-les-Châteaux doesn't just have three châteaux, a medieval garden and pretty streets! In this *petite cité de caractère* you will find an area of 3,000 m² with 350 varieties of ancient & modern roses, both bushes and trees. Open all year and free entry, the roses are very pretty from May onwards, with June being the best month. There are plenty of parking spaces nearby. Look for signposts.

Exhibition of works by Sarah Lück and Lou Roy

Until 22nd May, 14h to 17h daily at the *Centre d'Art Contemporain*, 8 rue de la Grange, Pontmain (53), they create imaginary architecture with recycled objects (wood, glass, concrete, etc). Free.

Les Jardins des Renaudies - Fête du Printemps

On Sun. 8th at these pretty gardens at Les Mézerais, near Colombiers du Plessis (53), 10h to 18h, you can enjoy the vibrant colours of rhododendrons, azaleas and many other plants, and there are gardening workshops, a seasonal produce market (40 stalls), cookery demos, music by David Luka, children's games, pony rides and the *Salon de Thé Anglais*. Dogs are welcome on a lead. Entry: 5€; 6-16s: 3€; under 6s free. www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

Parc and gardens of the *Château de Combourg* (35)

Visit the *Château de Combourg* (between Rennes and Dol-de-Bretagne) to experience a magical combination of history and imagination. This castle was built to protect the frontier territory of the Marches of Brittany, but an intriguing connection also links the site with Lancelot and the legendary forest *Brocéliande* of Arthurian fame. Combourg is best known today as the childhood home of François-René de Châteaubriand, the 'Father of Romanticism'. A guided tour of the castle - described so vividly in his Memoirs - reveals the rich and tragic history of this illustrious family. Restored in 1876 in the Gothic Revival style, it is still the home of his descendants.

Open from April - every weekday, but closed on Sats. & Sunday mornings (unless after a fête), 10h-12h30 & 14h-18h. www.chateau-combourg.com

Cheese of the Month : *Sainte-Maure de Touraine*

Goats have been bred in the Touraine since the Carolingian era (8th & 9th centuries) and this AOC-protected soft goat's cheese is produced by just a handful of local *fromageries* and matured for 10 days. It goes well with a light red local wine such as Chinon or Cabernet d'Anjou, or just a dry Touraine white.

Fête de la Nature - discovery walk near Domfront (61)

On Thurs. 19th, 14h to 16h, during this 2km – 5km walk you can discover the site of *La Fosse Arthour*, with its forests, river, land & rocks, and the bio-diversity in their natural habitat. Meet in the car park of the *Auberge de la Fosse Arthour* (follow the signs to it from St-Georges de Rouelley). Free, but prior registration required - ask at the Domfront Tourist Office (02 33 38 53 97).

Entertainment & Concerts

Sun. 8th, 10h to 18h, in Lassay-les-Châteaux (53): “Y’a d’la joie!” - a day with entertainment to commemorate the 8th May and celebrate the Spring! Exhibition of the town of Lassay-les-Châteaux in 1944, and an ‘artists in the streets’ competition (see below), local produce market, exhibition of tractors and old machinery. Food available on site. Free.

Sun. 15th, 17h to 18h15, at the *Centre d’Animation et Congrès* in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61): “*La vraie vie d’un magicien*” (the true life of a magician). Adrien Wild, a magician for over 20 years, in a humorous and entertaining evening reveals some secrets of his trade. Tickets available from the Bagnoles de l’Orne Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66).

Sat. 21st, 20h30 to 21h, in *l’Espace Culturel Colmont, Parc d’activités des Besnardières*, Gorron (53): “*Rêve d’Orient*” - a concert with music from the islands. *L’Ensemble Instrumental de la Mayenne*, with their 23 musicians, invite you to discover the music of the Far East, Middle East and Asia. Tickets: 10€; students & unemployed: 7€. Reservation advised. www.bocage-mayennais.fr

Sat. 21st, 20h30 to 22h in the *Chapelle de Lignou*, Rives d’Andaine (61): ‘*Choramuse*’ - a concert by the *Chorale de Briouze* (61) with a variety of songs. Free.

Artists in the streets of Lassay-les-Châteaux (53)

On Sun. 8th, 9h30 to 18h, with this popular competition you can discover the artistic talents of your friends – or even take part! More info, and registration details, available from the Mayenne Tourist Office (02 43 04 19 37).

‘Vivace’ choir

On Sat. 14th at the church in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53), the ‘Vivace’ choir will be singing with the choirs of Gorron and Fougerolles-du-Plessis in the evening (the time is yet to be decided).

‘Rock 4 Ukraine’

Sat. 7th, 14h until 02h in the Salle Polyvalente, rue de Bretagne, Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53): a 12-hour live ‘music marathon’ with Lost Weekend, Annie & Jon, Missing Lynx, Halcyon Nights, Tonia, Naja, Nigel G, Leon, etc. Quality catering with Route 66 food truck, bar, ice creams & popcorn stall, raffle, tombola, face painting. Tickets: 10€, available from Mayenne 53 Ukraine Refugee Assistance, the Route 66 food truck and various other outlets.

Organ recital in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61)

On Sun. 15th at 17h–18h15, in the church at 9 Place de l’Eglise, Bagnoles de l’Orne, organised by the association ‘*l’Amis de l’Orgue de Sainte-Madeleine de Bagnoles*’: a recital by Olivier Thuault, head organist of Coutances Cathedral. Works by Dietrich Buxtehude and J S Bach. Free, with a collection. No reservation needed. More info: www.bagnolesdelorne.com

Lest We Forget

A ceremony took place in March at the cemetery in Saint-Fraimbault (61) by the *stèle* (monument) in memory of an unknown soldier who died for France. The *stèle* had become damaged over the years and has been renovated by '*Le Souvenir Français*'. The assembled company, including veterans, were read an excerpt from the book by Dr André Soubiran, army medic at the time, when on 18th June 1940, 500 prisoners captured by the Germans whilst defending the nearby villages— soldiers and civilians – were led into the *champ Saint-Denis*. They were, sadly, massacred at the site. The importance was stressed that another conflict must be avoided at all costs, such as with Russia and the Ukraine.

'*Terrena*' replaces '*Gamm Vert*' in Gorron (53)

In April, the farmers' co-operative *Terrena* opened its shop in Gorron (route de Brecé) on the site of *Gamm Vert*, with many new features, an area increased from 600m² to 900m² and a complete re-look. They will be providing more services and equipment for farming and construction, and have 5 advisors to help with any questions. There will be a range of local products (wine, jams, honey, biscuits, oils, pasta) and also an area for people to meet and discuss their projects over a cup of coffee.

A reminder to carry ID on you at all times

It is the law in France that you must be able to prove your identity at all times – for example, if asked to do so by a *gendarme*. Valid documents include a driving licence or passport, *carte vitale* (showing your photo) or elector's card. A spokesman for the *Préfecture de Police de Paris* said they recommend if you are not French that you carry a photocopy of your passport and leave your passport in a secure place at home.

Discover the river Mayenne

On Sat. 14th & Sun. 15th, 21st & 22nd & 26th, 15h to 17h, on board the boat '*La Meduana*' is a cruise along the river, with *écluses* (locks) Tickets: 8,70€, 3-11s: 6,20€, available at the Mayenne Tourist Office, Quai de Warblingen in Mayenne town. (02 43 0419 37).

Hydromodélisme (model boats) in La Ferté-Macé (61)

On Sun. 15th from 14h at the *base de loisirs* (lake) in La Ferté-Macé, organised by the *Club Hydromodélisme Fertois*, you can watch the model boats being operated by their owners. Free, and free parking. Other leisure activities are also available on the site.

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

There are several Breton dialects, all founded upon the Celtic, and many place names in Brittany resemble those in Wales or Cornwall. Amongst the more common prefixes are 'Lann-' or 'Lan-' (Llan) meaning church place, confirming the grant of land to a church builder; 'Plou-' or 'Ple-': the parish, indicating the settlement of an immigrant clan; 'Tre-': the homestead, around which a hamlet grew; while 'Loc-' is an abbreviation of 'locus penitentiae', a hermitage, and 'Pen-', as in Welsh, signifies a headland.

Sport & Leisure Activities

Randonnée du mois (walk of the month) in Levaré (53)

Tues. 3rd at 09h30, organised by *Les Randonneurs du Bocage 53*, is a 8 - 9 km walk on the roads & lanes in and around Levaré. Depart from Place de l'Eglise at 9h30. 2€ for non-members.

Randonnée fraîcheur ('cool walk') at Montaudin (53)

Thurs. 12th, depart from Place de l'Eglise at 20h for this 8 – 10km evening walk. 50c per person. More info from Mme Michele Rousseau (02 43 05 01 67)

Foulées Brecéennes (Brecé races)

Sun. 15th at 9h30 is the '*Challenge 2022 du Bocage Mayennais*' race at Brecé (53). Watch or take part. There is also a *fête champêtre* with funfair, foot & bike races. Free.

Addendum (that's posh for error!): in April I gave incorrect contact details for the restaurant *l'Eveil des Sens* in Mayenne – it should have read: www.restaurant-leveildessens.fr .

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And finally - my cousin re-labelled all the jars in his wife's spice rack. He's not in trouble yet . . . but the thyme is cumin.

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That's all for this month. You may feel there is sometimes more information in some *département* than others, but it is dependant on what has been organised in each area that month. Next month it may be the Orne that has all the events! Who knows?!

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Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

May 2022

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Location</u> | <u>Page</u> |
|---|---|------------------------|-------------|
| Tues. 3 rd | Walk of the Month | Levaré | 6 |
| Sat. 7 th | ‘Rock 4 Ukraine’ | Fougerolles-du-Plessis | 4 |
| Sun. 8 th | <i>Fête de la Nature et du Jeu</i> | Larchamp | 2 |
| “ | <i>Fête du Printemps</i> | Colombiers-du-Plessis | 3 |
| “ | Celebration of Spring ! | Lassay-les-Châteaux | 4 |
| “ | Artists in the streets | Lassay-les-Châteaux | 4 |
| Thurs. 12 th | ‘Cool’ walk | Montaudin | 6 |
| Sat. 14 th | <i>Nuits des Musées</i> | La Ferté-Macé | 2 |
| “ | <i>Troc Plantes</i> (plant sale/exchange) | Lassay-les-Châteaux | 2 |
| “ | ‘Vivace’ and other choirs | Fougerolles-du-Plessis | 4 |
| W/e 14 th & 15 th | Discover the river Mayenne | Mayenne | 5 |
| Sun. 15 th | Demo of model boats | La Ferté-Macé | 5 |
| “ | ‘The true life of a magician’ | Bagnoles de l’Orne | 4 |
| “ | Organ recital | Bagnoles de l’Orne | 4 |
| “ | Brecé races | Brecé | 6 |
| Tues. 17 th | Car Rally | Bagnoles de l’Orne | 2 |
| Thurs. 19 th | <i>La Fosse Arthour</i> walk | St Georges de Rouelley | 3 |
| Sat. 21 st | ‘Choramuse’ concert | Lignou | 4 |
| “ | ‘Rêve d’Orient’ concert | Gorron | 4 |