

Bulletin !

An informal look at life in this part of France and a selection of things to see and do.

Thought for the month:

Friends are like chocolate –
the best bits are inside

Here are some *vide-greniers* (v-g) and *brocantes* in this area – but double-check beforehand, if possible, at www.brocabrac.fr in case of any cancellations. ['35' = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

Sun. 5 th	Dinard (35)	<i>brocante</i> : Place du Marché/Place Croland ±30
Sat. 11 th	Le Teilleul (50)	<i>vide-maison</i> (house contents sale) at 1 rue des Acacias, 10h to 18h.
Sun. 12 th	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
W/e 18/19 th	La Ferté-Macé (61)	v-g in Salle Guy Rossolin, Blvd André Hamonic, 8h-17h30, ±150. Snacks available
Sun. 26 th	Granville (50)	<i>Marché d'Antiquités / Brocante</i> in Cour Jonville, ±30
“	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
Thursdays	Rennes (35)	Weekly <i>brocante</i> around the <i>Halles Centrales</i> , La Criée, ±30
(2 nd , 9 th , 16 th , 23 rd)		

la Chandeleur (Candlemas)

Feb. 2nd is *la Chandeleur* in France – known as Candlemas in English. This lesser known celebration signifies the day that Jesus was presented to the temple. It also serves as a great opportunity to feast on pancakes (*crêpes*) whose round shape and yellow colour were thought to represent the sun and the return of light & warmth after the dark months of winter. One French tradition states that you should hold a coin in one hand and flip the *crêpe* with the other. If you flip the *crêpe* without it falling to the floor you will receive prosperity during the year!

Also – this year in the UK ‘Pancake Day’ (Shrove Tuesday) is on 21st Feb. – the day before Lent and 47 days before Easter Sunday (9th April). So get cracking those eggs!!

Le Salon Baignoles Gourmand in Baignoles de l'Orne (61)

After a pause of 2 years due to Covid, this year the *Salon Baignoles Gourmand* returns on the weekend of 18th & 19th. Begun in 2018 by the *Rotary-Club du Pays d'Andaine* with the support of *Baignoles-de-l'Orne Tourisme*, this 4th edition will take place at the *Communs du Château*. There will be 42 stands in the field of *gastromony* – wines, *charcuterie*, *fois gras*, *champagne*, *escargots*, table ceramics, saffron from Normandie, etc. The list of exhibitors can be found on www.baignolesdelorne.com. Around 2,000 visitors are expected, and it is also possible to eat on site with several menus. During the weekend there will be demonstrations – with chocolate, floral table decorations – and 4 'starred' chefs will be present, including Lhacen Hafid, *chef de cuisine* at the Ritz in Paris. Entry: 2,50€, under 12s free. Free parking.

Granville Carnival

This year the popular Granville Carnival will be held on 17th to 21st. This 5-day event has been held in Granville every February for almost 150 years (except for the recent break for 2 years due to Covid) and is the biggest of its kind in western France. Parades with satirical floats, drummers, brass bands, dancing, confetti battles and more - the town of Granville goes crazy! Each year over 3,000 revellers, up to 150,000 people, are expected over the 5 days. For more info go to www.carnaval-de-granville.fr and www.normandie-tourisme.fr

Cancer Support France Nord - events

Quiz Night: On Fri. 3rd at the bar '*Le Viking*' in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50). Teams of 6, but if you are unable to make up a team, no problem, do go and take part. Price: 3€ per person. Quiz starts at 20h. They look forward to seeing you.

Monthly Brunches: On Weds. 8th & 22nd at the Salle des Fêtes in Notre-Dame du Touchet. Doors open at 10h, last orders at 12h30.

Cabaret Evening: On Sat. 4th the Gemini Association is holding a Cabaret Evening featuring the music of the Broadway musicals, at the bar '*Le Viking*' in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50). Entry is free, but reservations are essential. To book your place e-mail: normandymusic@yahoo.com. (See also page 4)

"Splurge the Paint"

On Wed. 8th from 10h30 to 16h, in Jane's Studio, *l'Hiboudais*, Notre-Dame du Touchet (50, between Saint-Hilaire du Harcouët and Mortain) join Jane for a Master Class in Paint, Water and Brush Management. All supplies and lunch included. Introductory price: 70€. Places limited. For a detailed schedule email: jane.bicknell.art@gmail.com

Exhibition: "*Vues, visages et vie*"

At the *mediathèque* in Le Teilleul (50), from 1st until 27th, this exhibition comprises 30 paintings – pastels and oils – of landscapes and portraits by Sandra Biddlecombe. The *mediathèque* opening hours are: Mon. 16h-18h30; Wed., 10h-12h & 16h-18h30; Thurs. 10h-14h; Sat. 10h-12h. More info at mediatheque.leteilleul@msm-normandie.fr

Monthly organic market in Lassay-les-Châteaux (53)

This is held on Fri. 3rd (and the 1st Friday of each month) from 16h to 20h in front of the *Mairie* (Town Hall), Place du 8 Mai 1945 – with a range of local and organic produce.

Exhibition of theatrical costumes

At the *mediathèque* on Blvd François Mitterand in Mayenne town (53) you can discover a selection of costumes and theatre accessories which have been lent by the Regional Theatre of the Pays de la Loire, a resource centre for professional and amateur companies in the region. For more info: www.legrandnord.fr. Free entry.

Walks across the *Baie de Mont-Saint-Michel*

There are many guided walks across the sands and rivers near Mont-Saint-Michel. Walk in the steps of the pilgrims! For more details, go to www.cheminsdelabaie.com

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 des 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

Cheese of the Month - *Beaufort*

Beaufort is a large, round mountain cheese produced in the province of Savoie in the French Alps. The ancient mountain breed of mahogany-coloured Beaufort cows originated from the Indo-Asian continent, crossing central Europe before reaching France. In the 10 years of its working life, each cow produces an average of 4,388 kg of milk. In November, 5- or 6-month old Beaufort cheeses appear in markets and are the first *fromages d'alpage*. They have a soft, clear scent of milk, butter, flowers & honey, as well as a hidden acidity & salt. The taste lingers on the palate. Mature Beaufort goes well with white wine (e.g. Chablis).

Le Centre Aquatique in La Ferté-Macé - closed for works

The *Centre Aquatique* (swimming complex) at rue des 5 Frères Robinet in La Ferté-Macé (61), will be closed until 24th Feb. Necessary work will be undertaken – the annual emptying of the pools, maintenance, cleaning of the building and replacement of the air treatment system (which would also make it more energy efficient). Info on the progress can be found on facebook.

Church in La Baconnière to be de-consecrated

The 19th century church of Saint-Corneille et Saint-Cyprien in La Baconnière (53) had been badly in need of renovation for many years and was closed to the public in 2014. Then storm Miguel in June 2019 destroyed the roof and the building has now been declared unsafe. There were 4 choices of action discussed (one being its restoration at a cost of 5,828,400€), with the 4th choice – the demolition of the building – being agreed upon.

Entertainment & Concerts

Cabaret Evening

On Sat. 4th at 20h in '*Le Viking*' bar/restaurant in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50), the Gemini Association presents, in support of Cancer Support France, a Cabaret Evening, featuring the music of the Broadway musicals. Entry is free but reservation is essential. Contact: normandymusic@yahoo.com

'Les Coniques Brass Band'

On Sat. 11th, 18h to 20h in the *Théâtre Municipal*, 7 Place Juhel in Mayenne (53): '*Les Coniques Brass Band*' present "100% Brass Band" with 35 musicians from the Pays de la Loire, Brittany and Normandie. Free, but tickets need to be reserved in advance at the theatre. More info: www.lesconiquesbrassband.fr

A vow made 272 years ago

In 1751 the village of Saint-Cyr-le-Gravelais (53, west of Laval) was ravaged by the plague. Dozens of people and hundreds of animals died, according to the chroniclers of the time. Very few were spared, and they dared not bury the dead in the cemetery next to the little church, but used space on the road to Beaulieu-sur-Oudon. The parish prayed to Saint Sebastian to ask for protection and made a vow to celebrate his fête each year. The plague lessened and eventually disappeared. This is the origin of the special devotion to the martyr of the 3rd century and a Mass is celebrated each year in his memory. When Covid struck, the parishioners were particularly faithful to this ceremony, and 2 years ago the Mass was celebrated by the bishop.

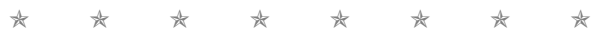


Advance notice - 13th anniversary of the opening of 'Pages'

On Sat. 4th March it will be the 13th anniversary of the opening for 'Pages' bookshop in Passais-la-Conception (61). There will be free tea, coffee & cake from 10h to 16h. Lots of stock of books, DVDs and Frenchic chalk paint in the shop. For further details you can ring 06 84 74 72 70 or message suzymcg@hotmail.com

And finally:

Notice in a cafe: "We do not have Wifi! Talk to each other – pretend it's 1995"



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