
Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

The best way to predict the future
is to create it.

Abraham Lincoln

WISHING YOU ALL A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2025

There are traditionally very few *vide-greniers* (v-g) at this time of year, but they should start again next month. But you can always go to www.brocabrac.fr in case there are any last-minute events planned around the area.

‘La galette des rois’ – a tasty tradition

A seasonal reminder that France celebrates Epiphany each year on the second Sunday after Christmas with the *galette des rois* – a traditional puff pastry cake filled with *frangipane*, a thick almond cream. This tradition traces its roots back to the Middle Ages when the last piece of the cake, often called the ‘piece for the poor’, was reserved and given to the first needy person knocking at the door. Inside is a little surprise – these days *un santon* (figurine) – and the person who gets the slice with the *le santon* is declared ‘king’ and so crowned.

Le Jardin Public in Fougères (35)

Situated at the base of the château you can discover the secrets of these lovely gardens which offer a view on the medieval quarter and the château. There are actually 3 gardens - an English-style garden, a French-style garden with geometric forms, and a botanical garden - each with its own character. The gardens were formed in 1760, originally just a tree-lined walk, and were renovated in 1865 by *la Société d’Horticulture de Fougères*, with the idea of creating a natural, enjoyable space for the people of the town. You will also find picnic areas and there are often exhibitions on site.

Taking photos / videos of your valuables

A reminder that we are advised to take photos of our valuables in case of theft, fire or other damage for insurance identification purposes. However, unless you can prove that the item was actually in the insured house it may not be covered in any claim you make on your insurance policy. So, while taking the individual photos, it is a good idea to make a video showing the items *'in situ'*, and even wearing your jewellery, to use as proof *'au cas où'* (just in case).

Circus family in the Parc de la Colmont, Gorrion (53)

For the past 28 years, the circus troupe Venissia, owned by the Dumas family, have overwintered in Gorrion. It is a family business with a dozen people working there, including 7 circus artists with juggling, rope gymnastics & trapeze, and there are a few domestic animals (performing dogs, miniature horses). Their main aim is to make people laugh. Each year the family invite children and adults to join their initiation classes for circus acts, puppet theatre and applying children's facial make-up. They spend the winter months practising new acts, and in the past have put on a couple of shows in the huge red and yellow circular tent which can hold 300 people.

Cancer Support France Nord event

* Fri. 3rd – Quiz Night at the bar *'Le Viking'* in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50); maximum of 6 people per team – if you are unable to make up a team, no problem, do go and take part. 3€ per person. Quiz starts at 20h (8pm);

* Wed. 8th and Wed. 22nd – Brunch at the *Salle des Fêtes* in Notre-Dame du Touchet. Doors open at 10h, last order 12h30. A vegetarian option is available.

* They will be holding their Annual General Meeting on Fri. 24th at 10h30 in the bar *'Le Viking'*. Coffee will be available from 10h. The AGM is open to all who would like to attend, although only members are eligible to vote.

They look forward to seeing everyone and they wish a Happy New Year to all members, volunteers and supporters.

Illuminations in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

For those of us who could do with being cheered up in January, Bagnoles de l'Orne will still be wearing its best 'lights outfit' until 17th January. The illuminations are still a sight to see - ideal for an outing with family or friends or to immerse yourselves in the festive atmosphere. The shop windows are also deliciously decorated!

'Helianthus' charity

This registered charity, whose aim is to help local animals in need, has a shop at 48 rue du Champ de Foire in Pré-en-Pail (53) selling bric-a-brac, clothes, furniture, books and much more. All donations are very welcome. Open: Weds. 14h-17h and Sats. 9h30 to 12h30. For more info: 02 43 04 97 26, helianthus-asso.org and on facebook

Exhibition

Until 25th January, this exhibition of works (paintings, sculptures & photographs) by French and overseas artists will be held at 151 rue de Saint-Cénére in Montsûrs (53) in the annex of the *Mairie*, and in *La Galerie Majestic* in rue du Pont. Open on Weds. to Sats., 15h to 18h. Free entry. More info at www.majestic-gallery.com

Anniversary in Pontmain (53)

From Sun. 12th to 19th, the 154th anniversary of the Apparition of Pontmain will be celebrated to include 5 days of ceremonies taking place both outside and inside this beautiful Basilica. Free. You can find details of the Apparition and the programme for the *Sanctuaire de Pontmain*: “*Mere de l’Espérance*” at www.sanctuaire-pontmain.com

Trees dressed in knitting!

When you drive by the Place Clemenceau in Mayenne town (where the ‘temporary summer’ garden has been installed) & Place du 9 Juin, you may see 24 trees wrapped in knitted items! The *Maire* and president of the Mayenne Communauté explains “Normally summer is the time when we see colours, but nothing much is done in winter! Thanks to the knitting ladies this loss has been remedied!” The knitting was done throughout the year both at the *mediathèque* and the EHPAD (retirement home) – all wool & needles were donated. It was so popular that the children joined in – making pompoms to be attached to the trees!

English films in Gorron (53) cinema

The first English (VO) film in Gorron cinema in January will be:

- * Monday 6th at 20h: ‘**Heretic**’ – directed by Scott Beck, Bryan Woods,
with Hugh Grant, Sophie Thatcher, Chloe East

The films start at 8pm and tickets (5,50€) are available at the cinema (beside the church) from 7.30pm on the night. As always, the ‘*Bar de la Mairie*’ at the bottom of the hill serves pre-film refreshments, including a platter of cheese and/or meat with a glass of wine/beer, for 8€. [It might be advisable to check on www.gorron-cinemas.fr before setting off in case of any last-minute changes to the films].

English films in Ernée (53) cinema

At the CinéMajestic in Ernée there are two films this month in English (with French subtitles). Tickets are €6 for adults, €4.50 for children.

- * Thurs. 2nd at 20h30: ‘**Wicked**’ – directed by Jon M Chu,
with Ariana Grande, Cynthia Erivo, Jonathan Bailey
- * Thurs. 16th at 20h30: ‘**We Live in Time**’ – directed by John Crowley,
with Andrew Garfield, Florence Pugh.

If you have any suggestions for movies you would like to see in Ernée, please feel free to email the manager Armande Léon. His email address is responsable.cinemajestic@ville-ernee.fr

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

If you are known for your sarcastic sense of humour, you might be putting yourself at risk of a heart attack, according to a University of Tennessee study, published in the *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing*. Cynicism is the foundation of sarcasm and scientists believe being in a constant state of negativity can put a strain on your health. Try puns or a classic joke instead!

Sport & Leisure Activities

16th International Men's Tennis Tournament

This tennis tournament takes place on Sunday 16th to 25th at the *Complexe Tennistique Maxime Merlin*, in Plassard Street, Bagnoles de l'Orne (61). Around 60 professional players complete in a qualifying draw and a final draw to win ATP (Assoc. of Tennis Professionals) points. These tournaments are set up by the International Tennis Federation to allow its young hopefuls to gain experience on the international circuit and improve their professional ranking. Free entry. Catering on site. For more info: www.tc-bagnolais.fr; www.bagnolesdelorne.com

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And finally,

A government is like a baby's alimentary canal – with a happy appetite at one end and no responsibility at the other. (A quote by Ronald Reagan)

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A short issue this month, as I think we are all trying to hibernate! Have fun wherever you are – and keep warm!

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