

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

"Let May be crown'd the best of months
Of all the passing year"

The Rev Daniel Evans: 'To May'

Here are some *vide-greniers* (v-g), *brocantes* & fêtes in this area, but double-check beforehand, if possible, at www.brocabrac.fr in case of any last-minute cancellations ['61' = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

Thurs. 1 st	Joué-du-Bois (61)	v-g in Hameau de la Fouquière, 10h-18h, ±250
"	Le Pas (53)	v-g in Place du 11 novembre, 8h-18h, ±150
Sun. 4 th	Saint-Fraimbault (61)	v-g in the village; food & drink on site. 8h-18h
"	Saint-Jean de Bois (61)	from 8h-17h; food & drink on site. ±70
Thurs. 8 th	Rives d'Andaine (61)	<i>brocante</i> at Place Roland Flechard, ±150
W/e 10 th & 11 th	Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	The Big One! 2,000 stalls! (see page 3)
Sun. 18 th	St Hilaire du Harcouët (50)	v-g in car park of the EHPAD ' <i>le Petit Domaine</i> ', route de Saint James, 8h-18h, ±50
"	Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53)	v-g in the town (see also page 3)
Sat. 24 th	Gorron (53)	Fête de l'Abeille et de la Nature (see p.?)
Sun. 25 th	St Ellier-du-Maine (53)	v-g in the salle des fêtes, 6h30-18h30, ±250
"	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
"	Montsûrs-St-Cénére (53)	v-g near sports complex, 279 rue de Saint-Cénére, 8h-17h, ±150

Vide maisons (house clearances):

W/e 3 rd & 4 th	Flers (61) - <i>v-maison</i> & garage at 12 rue Celestin Moutaint, 9h-18h
Sun. 4 th	Avranches (50) - at 12 bis Allée de la Poisnière, 9h-18h

Special dates / public holidays:

Thurs. 1 st	<i>Fête du Muguet</i> (see page 2), also <i>Fête du Travail</i>
Thurs. 8 th	<i>Victoire 1945</i> (Armistice Day)
Thurs. 29 th	<i>Ascension</i>

Eating out - *Beau Rivage*

The always popular hotel/restaurant '*Le Beau Rivage*' is on the river Mayenne at the southern edge of Mayenne town (53). In a beautiful setting, it also has a covered terrace with lovely views of the river. There is a gourmet menu, using local produce – something for that 'special occasion'! Open: Tues. to Sat.: 12h to 14h & 19h30 to 21h. Suns: 12h-14h only. For reservations (recommended as they get very busy): 02 43 00 49 13

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 the best 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.

Fête des Plantes in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

On 31st May and 1st June, 10h to 18h, in the Bagnoles Château parc, this is a major plant festival organised by the Association "*Entre Ville et Jardin*". There will be more than 70 exhibitors, nursery producers, craftsmen creating garden decorations, also a strolling event, a temporary garden, children's activities and prizes. This year's theme: "*jardin des pots et de bassines*" ("pots and basin gardens").

Sewing and Craft Fayre in Vautorte (53)

This sewing and crafts fayre (*puce de couturières*) will be on Sun. 18th in the Salle de Bluets in Vautorte (53) 9h30 to 18h, organised by the association "*Atelier Couture*", and there is an optional 8km walk where you get a chance to eat local products. There is also an art exhibition with works by the local art class from Sat. 17th to Tues. 20th, 14h to 18h. For more info: 06 20 37 65 26.

Fishing - day ticket at *Etang de Launay*

Anglers looking for a decent coarse fishing day ticket will be pleased to learn about the *Etang de Launay*, which is situated on the D5 route between Gorron (53) and Chatillon-sur-Colmont (53) and is easily visible from the D5. The lake contains carp to 20lbs+, tench, pike & roach, is not deep and the carp respond really well to sweetcorn fished over depth on the bottom.

The fishery is open daily from 8h to 20h and a day ticket is 5€ per rod (4€ per rod for children under 12 who must be accompanied by an adult). A half-day ticket is 4€ per rod. Tickets are available at the lakeside from the fishery owner, who will be there several times during the day. Fishing must be by rod & line with a single barb-less hook. Spinners, lures and treble hooks are not permitted. Further information is available from the fishery owner, Jack PetitHomme, on 06 81 69 88 22 (please note: Jack does not speak English!)

Open Gardens near Lassay-les-Châteaux (61)

These gardens near Lassay-les-Châteaux – at 3, Les Baries and the adjoining garden – are open to the public to raise money for worthy causes, mainly to support sick children. On Sun. 25th from 10h to 18h the 2 gardens will be open for charity. Entry: 5€ for the 2 gardens. The Open Gardens website is opengardens.eu and there are a few other gardens open in the Mayenne area and many more over France.

Annual *vide-grenier* and art exhibition

In Fougerolles du Plessis (53) the annual *vide-grenier* in the centre of the village will take place on Sun. 18th. [Stalls are free up to 5 metres and 2€ per metre after that. Reservations on 07 49 79 70 42 and 07 45 83 20 69 (English spoken)]. At the same time there will be an Art Exhibition of works by local artists who attend Joe Morgan's Art Workshop. It takes place in the Salle des Associations, rue Moroge from 9h until 17h. More info from Joe on the second number above.

The BIG (2.5kms!) *vide-grenier* in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

On Sat. 10th & Sun. 11th this event, as part of the *Foire des Andaines*, has over 2,000 stalls along the D386 between Bagnoles de l'Orne and Saint-Michel-des-Andaines. To book a stall (3€ per linear metre, 5€ for the weekend) tel: 06 71 12 77 47.

Cancer Support France Nord events

Quiz: will be held on Sat. 3rd at the bar *Le Viking*, Notre-Dame du Touchet. maximum of six people per team - if you are unable to make up a team no problem, do go and take part. Price €3 per person. Quiz starts this evening at 19h (new time)

Brunch days: Weds. 14th and 28th at the Salle des Fêtes, Notre-Dame du Touchet. Doors open 10h, last order 12h30 Vegetarian option available.

Coffee Morning: 'Le Patis' tearooms are holding a coffee morning in aid of Cancer Support France Nord on Thurs. 22nd from 10h until 12h. Please go along and enjoy a hot drink and home-made cake from their wide selection; they will also be holding a raffle. Address of the tearooms for those who have not visited before: 'Le Patis', 6 rue du Patis, Landivy (53). They look forward to seeing you.

Cheeses of the Month – *Ossau* and *Ossau Iraty*

Made in the Béarn area (64, SW France) from raw ewes' milk, the firm-textured *Ossau* cheese comes in two kinds: plain *Ossau* or summer pasture *Ossau*, depending on what time of year it was made. To have the AOP quality label, it must be made from milk from producers practising the traditional *transhumance* of the flocks. It should not be confused with the more common Ossau-Iraty, which cannot be considered *fermier* (farm-made, artisanal cheese), because it comes from milk from two neighbouring areas – Ossau from Béarn and Iraty from the Pays Basque. Traditionally, both are consumed with a black cherry compote, or a chutney made of peppers and tomatoes with a touch of Espelette pepper. You can enjoy these exceptional cheeses grated and melted in a gratin or a sandwich.

29th International Vintage Car Tour

On Sun. 25th from 10h30 to 17h30, the Vintage Car Tour (150 teams from around 10 countries and 4 continents) will once again pass through Fougères and gather by the château and Place Aristide Briand – an opportunity to admire some beautiful vehicles, some of which will run on biofuel for the occasion. Made from agricultural waste, it emits 65% - 80% less CO₂ than fossil-based fuel. Of the 150 teams expected around half will be running on this fuel. The cars are all over 55 years old.

Organ recital

Sun. 4th, 17h to 18h15, organised by the *Les Amis de l'orgue de Sainte-Madeleine de Bagnoles de l'Orne* in the church at 9 Place de l'Eglise – a recital by Thibault Bitschené, head organist of the Cathedral of Sées. Programme: Buxtehude, Bach, Handel, Bizet, Vienne. Free, with a collection. No prior booking of seats necessary.

Puces moto (Motorcycle flea market)

Sun 4th from 07h will be the 22nd edition of the *Puces Moto de Saint-Cornier-des-Landes* (61) in the village. On sale will be motorcycles, quads, equipment, helmets – everything related to motorcycles. Free entry, refreshments on site. Free parking – with the possibility to reserve motorcycle parking spaces if necessary. [To exhibit: 2€ per linear metre, 06 89 66 48 06, *stcornierenfete.fr*]

Chinese restaurant in Mayenne closure

The popular Chinese restaurant '*Jardin de Mayenne*' on the roundabout by the old Mayenne hospital, has closed. The huge *O'Ciel Buffet* restaurants in the area [one in Mayenne (next to Aldi by the hospital), one in Flers, and a newly opened one in Fougères] have resulted in a loss of clients and he could not compete. Peter and his family have run their restaurant for about 15 years and they were always welcoming. But life changes!

Fête de l'Abeille et de la Nature (Festival of the Bee and Nature)

On Sat. 24th, 14h to 18h in the centre of Gorron, we celebrate Bees and all they mean to us. There will be music, games, a bee-painting *atelier* (workshop), children's make-up, pony rides and games. If you like, you can dress up in the theme of bees and nature! Free entry.

Spotted in late April or early May – is it a damselfly or dragonfly?

There are some strong visual clues to distinguish between them. While the bodies of damselflies are slender and twig-like, dragonflies are altogether much sturdier and chunkier. In true dragonflies the eyes meet on top of the head, whereas in damselflies the eyes are separate and positioned on either side. On the wing, damselflies flit, flutter and dance: true dragonflies have a stronger, more powerful and purposeful flight. When they settle, damselflies fold their wings along their back (although those of the Emerald damselfly stick out at approx. 45 degrees) while dragonflies hold their wings at right angles to the body. The fore and hind wings of a damselfly are a similar shape and length, but in dragonflies they differ, with the hind wings being broader. So now you know!

English films in Gorron (53) cinema

Here are the first English (VO) films in Gorron cinema in May. [It might be advisable to check on www.gorron-cinemas.fr before setting off in case of any last-minute changes].

Mon. 5th: ‘Locked’ (‘Piégé’ in France) with Bill Skarsgard, Anthony Hopkins, Ashley Cartwright

Mon. 12th: ‘The Amateur’ with Rami Malek. Laurence Fishburne, Rachel Brosnahan

The films start at 20h (8pm) and tickets (5,50€) are available at the cinema (beside the church) from 19h30 (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€.

English films in Ernée (53) CinéMajestic

Thurs. 1st at 20h30: ‘Hard Truths’ (the title in France is ‘*Deux Soeurs*’) with Mariane Jean-Baptiste, Michele Austin, David Webber.

Thurs. 15th at 20h30: ‘The Grill’ with Rooney Mara, Raul Briones

Tickets are 6€ for adults, 4,50€ for children.

Concours de Pétanque (Pétanque competition)

Organised by *La Pétanque Bagnolaise*, this competition (in 4 parts in pairs) will be held on Mon. 5th behind the Bagnoles de l’Orne tennis courts. Open to all. Registration from 13h30 to 14h25 on the day, throw of the jack at 14h30. Entry: 5€. More info available from the Tourist Office.

Well-being activity : *marche afghane* (Afghan walking)

On Wed. 28th, 9h to 11h, this walk demonstrates a technique that synchronises your steps with your breathing. A slow, calming walk in the *Forêt d’Andaines*. Meet at the Bagnoles de l’Orne Tourist Office, avenue de la Ferté-Macé by 9h. Tariff: 8€. More info at the Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66)

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And finally:

The first bottle of Coca-Cola from 1894 contained around 3.5 grams of cocaine. That explains why our parents and grandparents could walk to and from school, uphill, both ways, in the snow, barefoot!

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr

Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

May 2025

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“	International vintage car gathering	Fougères	4
Wed. 28 th	CSF Nord Brunch	Notre-Dame du Touchet	3
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