

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

You're one smile away from making
someone's day

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

Sun. 1 st	Dinard (35)	<i>brocante</i> in Place du Marché & Place Grolard, 9h–17h30
W/e 7 th & 8 th	La Ferté-Macé (61)	v-g in Salle Rossolini, Blvd Hamonic, 6h–18h; ±150. Refreshments available on site.
Sun. 22 nd	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevallerie, 7h–18h, ±150
“	Andouillé (53 SE of Ernée)	v-g in the <i>Marché du Printemps</i> (Spring market), in the Salle des Fêtes, rue Emmanuel Dufour; 9h–17h. ±70

Vide dressing (Second-hand clothes sale):

Sun. 8th Sainte-Marie-du-Bois (61) in the Salle des Fêtes, 10h–17h. Free entry.

Special date:

Chandeleur (Candlemas)

Chandeleur in France – known as Candlemas in English – occurs on 2nd February, 40 days after Christmas, the date of Jesus' birth. The date marks when Jesus was presented at the Temple. According to local customs, candles had to be lit at midnight as a symbol of purification. This lesser known celebration also serves as a great opportunity to feast on pancakes, whose round shape and yellow colour were thought to represent the sun and more daylight after the long, dark month of winter.

Eating out - *La Pommeraie*

'*La Pommeraie*' is at 1 rue des Casinos in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61), overlooking the lake. It is open every day [yes, on Mondays! – but in the evening only] and from 19h to 21h30 on weekdays, but at weekends 12h–13h30 & 19h–21h30. There is a good menu and seating on the first floor beside panoramic windows or outside on the balcony in the summer. Reservations via *thefork.fr* . [I haven't tried it yet, but I will!].

'Pancake Day' & Ash Wednesday

This year 'Pancake Day' is on Tues. 17th, followed by Ash Wednesday (*Cendres*) on the 18th. So get tossing those pancakes!!

Granville Carnival

This popular 5-day event in Granville (50) is from 13th to 17th February. It is the biggest carnival in Western Europe – and is UNESCO listed – with a parade of around 40 floats, brass bands, '*bal à papa*', with children's parade and illuminated cavalcade. Also, near the end, confetti fights! A wind of madness blows through Granville! Up to 150,000 visitors enjoy this each year. While in Granville you can also visit the *Marité* ship. For more info: *carnaval-de-granville.fr*

Visit to the *Fromagerie Vaubernier*

On Tues. 10th at 9h30 to 11h30 at the Vaubernier cheese factory at Le Bois Belleray, Martigné-sur-Mayenne (53, south of Mayenne town) you can discover the traditional skills and expertise of the Mayenne region, organised by the Mayenne Tourist Office. The Vaubernier cheese factory has been producing the famous '*Bons Mayennais*' cheese for over 100 years, following its original recipe. You will discover all the stages of this unique craftsmanship – an iconic brand of this region. Entry: 3€. Info at *mayenne-tourisme.fr*

Les Puces des Couturiers

Sun. 8th from 9h to 17h in the Salle Socio-culturelle in Le Teilleul (50) is this dressmakers' items sale, and **Grande Daze Rescue** have a stall booked there which will be well stocked with material & accessories for very reasonable prices.

Something for all the family

From now until 25th May, at the *mediathèque* Victor Hugo, 7 Grande rue in Gorron (53) there is a Virtual Adventure Interactive Exhibition. Between immersive experiences, interactive artworks and virtual reality, this exhibition will thrill you. (It is mainly in French, but some English may be spoken). Free. For ages 12 and upwards for VR headset. No reservation is required during opening hours:- Mon: 16h–18h; Tues: 16h–18h30; Wed. & Thurs: 10h–12h & 14h–18h; Fri: 15h–18h; Sat: 10h–12h30).

Salon Maison & Déco Laval 2026

From 6th to 8th, 10h–19h, this 5th edition of the ‘Laval Home & Decor Show 2026’ takes place in l’Espace Mayenne, 23 rue Josephine Baker, Laval (53). The Espace Mayenne will be transformed into a true temple of décor and lifestyle - a must-attend event to start the year off right and gather plenty of ideas to enhance your home. With over 170 exhibitors you can discover a wealth of inspiration focussed on construction, renovation, interior design and handcrafted creations. Entry: 5€, under 18s free. Bar & food are available on site. Free parking.

Live music in the Vintage Bar, Perrou (61)

Saturdays 7th, 14th & 21st you can enjoy live music at this popular venue (SE of Domfront). For more info contact at 07 44 70 53 89, vintagebarperrou@outlook.com or on facebook: vintage’barperrou.

Petit Dejeuner Anglais (English breakfast)

Sun. 1st, 9h30 to 13h in the Salle des Fêtes in Saint-Cyr du Bailleul (50, south of Barenton) this English Breakfast is organised by APE. Tickets: 14€, children 8€, available from 06 70 98 19 16 (just French spoken) or apedesecolespubliques50720@gmail.com. Profits will go towards the school. Reservation advised.

Weekly markets - in the Orne *département* (61)

Day of the week	Location
Mondays	Briouze, Remalard, Vimoutiers (afternoon)
Tuesdays	Alençon, Athis de l’Orne, Bagnoles de l’Orne, Couterne, Argentan, Passais-Villages
Wednesdays	Bagnoles de l’Orne, Carrouges, Flers, Le Mêle-sur-Sarthe, Le Theil-sur-Huisne, Lorgny-au-Perche
Thursdays	Alençon, Ceaucé, La Ferté-Macé, Putanges-Pont-Ecrepin, Bellême, Bretoncelles, Trun, La Ferté-Fresnel
Fridays	Argentan, Domfront, Bagnoles de l’Orne, La Chapelle d’Andaine, Ecouché, Condé-sur-Huisne, Courtomer
Saturdays	Bagnoles de l’Orne, Flers, Gacé (afternoon), Tinchebray, Bretoncelles, Mortagne-au-Perche, Rânes
Sundays	Alençon, Argentan, Ceton, Courtomer, Mortrée

Next month: weekly markets in the Manche (50) region

Music at the Château

On Sat. 14th at 15h at the Château de Sainte-Suzanne, rue Fouquet de la Varenne, Sainte-Suzanne (53) you are invited to enjoy a concert exploring the world of medieval music. For one hour, from the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine to the pilgrimage routes of Santiago de Compostela, Cécile Branche offers the audience an immersion into the great medieval traditions of the Middle Ages. Structured around several pieces dedicated to period instruments (harp, bagpipes, citole [a type of fiddle], rebec [precursor to the violin], etc) this concert-encounter is a true journey through time. Tickets: 6€, students/unemployed: 5€, under 18s free. Reservation required at the Mayenne Tourist Office. For more info: patrimoine.lamayenne.fr

Gorron cinema - films & ticket price change

Here are the next 2 English films in Gorron Cinema (you can find info on them at *Allo'ciné*):

- Mon. 2nd “**Song Sung Blue**” [French title: ‘Sur un Air de Blues’
with Hugh Jackman, Kate Hudson, Ella Anderson
- Mon. 9th “**Father Mother Sister Brother**”
with Tom Waits, Adam Driver, Mayim Bialik

[From 1st January the film ticket price will increase by a small amount, from 5,50€ to 5,80€ – the first increase since 2015]. Tickets can be purchased in the foyer of the cinema (which is beside the church) from 19h30 on the night of the film. The films start at 20h (8pm). 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€.

Cheese of the Month - *Roquefort*

This very popular cheese is said to date back to the time of Pliny in ancient Rome and was mentioned in his book of AD79. In 1411, Charles VI granted the people of Roquefort the monopoly of ripening the cheese in their caves as they had done for hundreds of years. With Stilton & Gorgonzola, Roquefort is one of the three greatest blue cheeses in the world. It has a clean, forceful flavour with strong salt, very different from the sweetness of milk. The rind is damp and crumbly and should be cut with a pre-warmed knife. Roquefort goes well with pasta or salad and is ideally accompanied by a bottle of Sauterne (a sweeter wine), or a young Roquefort might be accompanied by Muscat de Rivesaltes, served with raisin bread.

Popular French children's names in 2025

In 2025 there were 525 babies born in the Mayenne area and the list of the most popular names was submitted to the *service de la municipalité*. For the girls, **Jade** was used 20 times, followed by **Louise** (19) and **Léa** (17). (Both were used 18 times in 2024). For boys, the classical **Gabriel** was the most popular, used 17 times (10 in 2024), followed by **Léo**, **Arthur**, **Louis** & **Maël**. The second (double) Christian names were traditional in Mayenne – **Marie** and **Louis** being the most used.

Salon Bagnoles Gourmand (Bagnoles Gourmet Fair)

This ‘food - wine - décor’ event is on the weekend of Sat. 21st & Sun. 22nd, 10h to 19h on both days, at the Communs du Château, Allée Aloïs Monnet in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61). Bagnoles de l’Orne becomes the gourmet capital for a weekend! It is organised by the Rotary Club of Bagnoles de l’Orne to benefit the Orne branch of the *Ligue contre le cancer* (League against cancer). If you have a passion for gastronomy and are looking for a destination to explore the culinary delights of the region, the Bagnoles Gourmet Food Fair is the event for you! It showcases local products as well as the cuisine of Normandy and other regions. There will be 50 exhibitors, cooking workshops, floral workshops, chocolate workshops, demonstrations, gourmet activities and on-site dining. A unique and memorable experience awaits! Entry: 2,50€. More info can be found at bagnolesdelorne.com

Self-guided tour of the famous 'Cité du Lait'

On the Wednesdays. 4th & 11th, 14h – 18h, you can visit this fascinating milk museum at 18 rue Adolphe Beck in Laval (53). Explore at your own pace and take the time to immerse yourself in the working atmosphere of the original dairy. Discover the museum space and stroll among the museum’s collections. Step back in time to the 1950s and discover the old Laval dairy still imbued with the memory and expertise of those dedicated to the world of dairy. You will share in the remarkable adventure of the Lactalis Group – a family business that has witnessed and played a key note in the evolution of the dairy industry. Entry: 7€, children: 5€ . [You can google ‘Cité du Lait, Laval’ for more info]

Discover the history of Champsecret (61)

Sun. 15th at 13h30 to 14h15 – what a lovely village name! Meeting in front of *l’école* (the school) Gérard will explain (in French, but some English may be spoken) the origin of the name, its history and he will reveal some of the village’s hidden treasures. Free.

Initiation into 'la Marche Nordique' (Nordic walking)

Sat. 14th, 10h – 14h, meeting in the Salle des Fêtes ‘La Brigaudière’ in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61, although the venue might change). Looking for a different way to get moving? Try this ‘Nordic walking’. With a qualified instructor you will learn the techniques and tips for practicing this activity safely. Reservations at 06 81 12 77 19. Free.

Sunday hike from Javron-les-Chapelles (53)

Sun. 22nd from 14h, this 12km hike (*randonnée pedestre*) organised by ACT, departs from the Salle Polyvalente, Place Georges Morin in Javron-les-Chapelles (53). Sorry, no dogs on this walk. [If the weather is not good it may not take place]

Leisure and Activities

Randonnée de Dimanche (Sunday walk)

On Sun. 8th, 14h – 17h, organised by the Domfront Hiking Association, you can explore the most beautiful trails of the Domfront area in good company – this week it will be the village and surroundings of Rouellé (61, west of Domfront). Meet at 14h in the centre of the village. Free.

Randonnée de Mercredi (Wednesday walk)

Wed. 18th, 14h – 17h, join the hikers and discover a different area each month. This month it is La Ferrière-aux-Etangs (61, NE of Domfront), departing from the lake car park. More info available at the Domfront Tourist Office (ot-domfront.com)

Randonnée de Lundi - Domfront (Monday Walk - Domfront)

Mon. 23rd, 14h – 17h, organised by *l'Assoc. des Randonneurs de Domfront*, you can explore the trails of Domfront with local enthusiasts. Depart from the Salle André Rocton car park. More info also available from the Domfront Tourist Office.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

And finally:

Husband: “It’s no good - I can’t find it anywhere. It’s like looking for a needle in a mineshaft!

Wife: “Haystack!”

Husband: “Okay, haystack in a mineshaft”.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

That’s all for this month – including a bit of exercise, gourmet experience, a cheese factory and music. Enjoy your month!

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr

Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

February 2026

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Page</u>
Sun. 1st	English breakfast	St Cyr du Bailleul	3
Mon. 2nd	English film: 'Song Sung Blue'	Gorron	4
Wed. 4th	Tour of the <i>Cité du Lait</i>	Laval	5
6th – 8th	Home & Decor Show	Laval	3
Sun. 8th	Dressmakers' items sale	Le Teilleul	2
“	Sunday walk	Rouellé	6
Mon. 9th	English film: 'Father Mother Sister Brother'	Gorron	4
Tues. 10th	Visit to <i>FromagerieVaubernier</i>	Martigné-sur-Mayenne	2
Wed. 11th	Tour of the <i>Cité du Lait</i>	Laval	5
13th – 17th	Granville Carnival	Granville	2
Sat. 14th	Music at the Château	Sainte-Suzanne	4
“	Initiation into <i>Marche Nordique</i>	Bagnoles de l'Orne`	5
Sun. 15th	Discover the village history	Champsecret	5
Wed. 18th	Wednesday walk	La Ferrière-aux-Etangs	6
21st & 22nd	Gourmet Fair	Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
Sun. 22nd	14km hike around the area	Javron-les-Chapelles	5
Sun. 22nd	Interactive Virtual Reality Adventure	Gorron	2
Mon. 23rd	Monday walk	Domfront	6