

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

"History has remembered the kings and warriors because they destroyed; art has remembered the people because they created"

William Morris

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

Sun. 2 nd	Montsûrs-Saint-Cénére (53)	rue Saint-Cénére, 8h-18h, with entertainment & funfair, ±250, food available on site
"	Saint-Cyr-du-Bailleul (50)	annual v-g, Place Jean-Baptiste, 7h-18h; ±70
W/e 8 th & 9 th	Saint-Meloire-des-Ondes (35)	<i>Salon des Antiquites & brocante</i> (deco, vintage & 2nd-hand), rue du Clos Poulet, Terrain des Sports, 10h-18h. Entry: 6€; ±70
Sun. 9 th	Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	<i>Brocante</i> , rue du Docteur Paul Lemuet, 9h-18h; entry: 3€; ±70, food on site (see page 5)
"	Villaines-la-Juhel (53)	v-g in rues Fromentin, Glycines & Merisiers, 8h-18h; ±70, food on site
Sat. 15 th	Rânes (61)	v-g & <i>fête foraine</i> (funfair) in Parc du Château, 6h-18h, ±300. Food on site

Vide-maisons (house clearances):

W/e 1 st & 2 nd	Montsûrs-Saint-Cénére (53)	at 8 rue de la Cité, 9h-18h
"	Sainte-Marie-du-Bois (53)	at 4 La Maison Neuve, 9h-18h
7 th , 8 th & 9 th	Louvigné-du-Désert (35)	at 21 rue la Guinchère des Bois, 9h-19h
+ 21 st , 22 nd , 23 rd		

Special date : public holiday

Sat. 15 th	<i>Assomption</i> – the celebration of the Virgin Mary ascending bodily into Heaven. Traditional parades are held in France, often with dances and fireworks.
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Eating out : '*Le Blue Mary*'

'*Le Blue Mary*' is a friendly, light and airy bar/brasserie at 5 rue Saint-Anne in Pontmain (53) 50 metres from the Basilica, and they offer a traditional 3-course *midi* (with several choices) for 16€ (children: 8,50€), snacks only at evenings and weekends. There is seating for 40 people inside and 10 on the terrace area. Open Mon. to Fri. 12h to 14h (bar alone open in the evenings). Very popular, so booking is recommended (06 80 48 22 18)

Les Jardins des Renaudies

Near Colombiers-du-Plessis (53), these lovely gardens offer a delightful wander through with pretty flowers, shrubs and trees, also a museum showing how farming life was in the 1920s & 1930s and the '*labyrinthe de maïs*' ('maize maze').

Sun. 23rd – *Fête du miel et marché gourmand* (honey festival & food market) – discover bees, their care and learn about honey extraction from the hives around the gardens. There will be a produce market and demonstrations of bread-making in the original bread oven, pony rides and games for young and old. Snacks can be bought on site and there are tables available if you bring a picnic.. Entry 5€, ages 5-16s 3€, under 5s free. For more info and reservations go to jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

Sadly, this season 2026 at Renaudies will be the last under the same format. The Parc is for sale and future owners are being sought.

Le Teilleul Liberation Celebration

On Sat. 1st at '*Le Bar*', Place du Champ de Foire in Le Teilleul (50) is a journey back in time to the 1940s. There will be a farmer's market, vintage and military vehicles, music from 16h to 18h with '*La Crème Anglais*', and much more. Bacon sandwiches are available during the morning, with cakes & traditional cream teas throughout the day. From 19h to 21h swing into the 1940s in the town square with the 'Swing Cats'. Period dress optional.

Bus tour of Châteaux in Mayenne (53)

On Sun. 2nd, 14h to 17h, organised by the Mayenne Tourist Office, you can embark on a heritage bus tour to discover 3 private residences usually closed to the public. Between the châteaux of Brives and Montgiroux – elegant 19th century architectural gems bordering on the river Mayenne – and the Manoir des Essarts, a more intimate retreat inherited from the late Middle Ages, this route will reveal lesser-known sites in the region. A unique opportunity to explore Mayenne's heritage in a new light. Reservation required, as limited to 50 places. 02 43 58 13 00 (French spoken) or email coevrons-mayenne@lamayenne.fr. Tickets: 10€ per person.

Assembly of vintage vehicles

Sat. 1st, 10h to 18h, in the Champ de Foire in Montsûrs (53), this gathering of vehicles includes tractors, 2-wheelers and prestige cars.

Fiesta Colombienne in Ambrières-les-Vallées (53)

The Parc de Vaux campsite, 35 rue des Colverts, near Ambrières-les-Vallées, invites you to a one-night 'journey to Colombia' and its vibrant colours. On Tues. 11th you can enjoy Colombian specialities prepared by Berenice and Julien: empanadas, chili-con-carne & much more. Afterwards, you can dance to Latin rhythm – cumbia, salsa, merengue, bachata & reggaeton! A warm & welcoming evening awaits. Reservations are recommended for the meal (02 43 04 90 25). Payment on site. www.parcdevaux.com

Fête St Louis in Baroche-sous-Lucé (61).

On Sun. 23rd, 9h–18h, go along and enjoy the day with them. There will be meals available all day long, games for the children with a prize every time, a *Salon de Thé & buvette* (drinks stand), singers in the street, dance displays, *panier pesée* (guess the weight of the filled basket), tombola and, on top of all that, a *vide grenier*! They've even put an order in for warm – but not too hot – weather! For reservation of stalls please contact 06 30 82 72 18 or 06 85 81 99 49.

Visit to a cidrerie (cider-makers)

On Tues. 4th and Thurs. 6th, 16h-17h at *La Cidrerie*, route de Loré Melleray, Lassay-les-Châteaux (53) you can join a guided tour (in French, but some English spoken) led by the owners. Aurore and Josselin invite you to visit the production area of their estate – the orchard, distillery, cider press and maturing cellars. Open to all and free of charge. No reservation necessary. www.museeducidre53.fr

Medieval weekend at the Château du Bois Thibault (53)

1st & 2nd at this château in Lassay-les-Châteaux: a grand medieval weekend! The château grounds will be transported back to the Middle Ages for 2 days of festivities – a medieval encampment, many demonstrations of ancient crafts (stone-mason, embroiderer, blacksmith, etc.) and you can try archery and medieval dancing. A medieval meal with roast pig will be available on Sat. at 19h30 and Sun. at noon (reservation required – ask at the Mayenne or Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office).

Fête Communale in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53)

From Sat. 1st to Mon. 3rd, this 3-day fête offers a variety of activities for young and old in a friendly, summery atmosphere! There will be pétanque matches, cycle races, walks, and meals are available, under canvas, by reservation (06 02 28 95 28).

Visit to the Basilique in Pontmain (53)

Every day in August at 14h30, this guided visit (in French) has the theme '*Sur les pas des voyants*' ('in the steps of the visionaries'). Meet by the statue of the Apparition (in front of the Basilica) at 14h30. Free.

Entertainment & Concerts

Fri. 21st, 20h–22h30, at the Camping de Gué Saint-Léonard, 818 rue Saint-Léonard in Mayenne (53), The ‘Caroll Macsana Duo’ offers you a trip back to the 60s – making you want to sing, dance and laugh! Entertainment and a concert are planned for this evening. [Every Friday evening this site is open to campers and the public]. Free admission. Food is available on site.

Sun. 23rd, 17h–19h: a concert by the ‘Hawaian Pistoleros’: western swing hawaian music in the Square de Contades, René Jambon, Bagnoles de l’Orne (61). Steel guitar, ukulele & a retro atmosphere – a musical journey between Texas and the Pacific. Free. More info from the Tourist Office (www.bagnolesdelorne.com)

Mon. 24th, 20h–23h30 in the Parc de Vaux, 35 rue des Colverts, Ambrières-les-Vallées: 80s-90s Dance Party at the campsite snack bar area! A great atmosphere guaranteed. Go sing and dance with them! Food is available on site – burgers, fries, pizzas, ice cream & drinks – reservation recommended (02 43 04 90 25). Free and open to all. www.parcdevaux.com

Fri. 28th, 20h–22h30, at the Camping de Gué Saint-Léonard, 818 rue Saint-Léonard in Mayenne (53): roaring 1920s concert with “The Roaring Sugars”. Let yourself be transported to the warm atmosphere of the old-fashioned open-air cafés with Miss Candy and her jazz trio. An evening with the festive and elegant atmosphere of the 1930s. Catchy rhythms, gentle vocals & period sounds for a real musical journey. Free admission.

Organ concerts in Pontmain (53)

On Sun. 2nd at 18h in the beautiful Basilica of Pontmain, head organist of Notre-Dame des Grèves in Saint-Malo, Veronique Delarod, will give an organ concert. Free admission with voluntary donation. (www.sanctuaire-pontmain.fr)

Flories d'Antan (floral fête) in Saint-Fraimbault (61)

On Sat. 15th, 9h to 19h, this popular annual event gives a journey through time, with demonstrations of ancient trades: washerwomen at the washhouse, blacksmith & farrier at the forge, dance groups, barrel organs, local farmers’ and artisans’ market and rural skills (traditional butter-making, threshing, haymaking, woodworking, potato harvesting), horse-drawn carriages and some farm animals. There will be a procession of vintage tractors, farm machinery and classic cars. Food is available at noon and in the evening. Entry 6€ (under 12s free). Parking nearby (follow the signs). www.saint-fraimbault.com

Terre en fête in Moulay (53)

On the weekend of Sat. 15th (11h–21h) & Sun. 16th (9h–19h) in Moulay (5 mins south of Mayenne town) this is the largest open-air agricultural festival in Mayenne. Friendly, family-oriented & festive, it welcomes nearly 10,000 visitors each year. Combine-harvester & tractor cross races, tractor strength competitions, ploughing competitions, helicopter rides, corn maze, children’s activities, animal area, and fireworks on the Sat. evening. A meal is available under a marquee on the Sunday at 12h. Food is available on site all weekend. Tickets: 6€, under 12s free. (www.ja53.fr)

Medieval encampment in the Château de Mayenne (53)

On the weekend of 15th & 16th, 10h-18h, in the Upper Courtyard and Parc of the Château de Mayenne, this is a timeless weekend filled with games and discovery. Immerse yourself in daily life in the Middle Ages through hands-on workshops and a host of activities. Learn traditional crafts with workshops in leatherwork, dyeing, ink-making, with also archery for children, or discover raw materials used in that era. Camp life comes alive around medieval cuisine with bread making and bakery demos, presentations of weaponry, heraldry, costumes, juggling & fire shows. Entry: 4€

Après-midi bien-être (Wellness afternoon)

Sun. 2nd from 13h30 to 18h at the *base de loisirs* (outside leisure centre) in La Haie-Traversaine (near Mayenne, 53) at Le Bas Lozé. You can discover the benefits of a Shiatzu session – 5€ for 20 minutes. There are other activities here all summer long.

Le Tournoi des Sangles (High-wire tournament)

From 9th to 16th at the Château de Lassay in Lassay-les-Châteaux (53) this is a high-wire tournament between château towers, with final shows on 15th & 16th. In a world first, around 10 international athletes will compete to music on high-wires suspended above the château courtyard in a modern version of medieval jousting! There will be elimination tournaments and performances with 5 high-wires: 3 in the château courtyard, 1 over the pond and 1 at the Mairie rose garden car-park. Also demonstrations. Tickets: 12€ to 20€ depending upon the day (www.chateaudelassay.com). Drinks & snacks available on site.

Festi d'Eté (summer festival)

Sun. 9th at the Esplanade du Château, Allée Alois Monnet in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) there will be dance, music and energy on stage with the '*Bagnol Troupe Dance*' and local artistes. Free. More info from www.bagnolesdelorne.com / *mon sejour* / *agenda*.

Nuit des Etoiles (Night of the stars)

Fri. 7th from 20h30 at the Laval Planetarium, 17 rue d'Hilard, Laval (53): you can look at the moon, planets and our galaxy through telescopes with short illustrative films (in French). Tickets 5€ (under 4s free). Reservation required: planetarium@oplastronomie.org or 06 81 87 40 10.

36th *Foire à la Brocante* (antiques & flea market)

Sun. 9th, 8h30 to 19h30 on Avenue Paul Lemuët in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): around 50 professional antiques dealers and second-hand goods sellers will be selling furniture, mirrors, paintings, lighting, vintage records, rugs, garden furniture, trinkets, tableware, antique laces, earthenware & other collections. Entry: 2,50€ (under 16s free). Food and drinks are available on site.

Sport & Leisure Activities

A vos pagaies! (Grab your paddles!)

Wed. 19th, 8h30–11h30: canoeing on the river Varenne in Ambrières-les-Vallées! Explore the river Varenne by canoe, enjoy the morning calm & discover nature in a new way. Accessible to the hearing impaired. In partnership with the *Centre Permanent d'Initiatives pour l'Environnement Mayenne* (the Ambrières Canoe Kayak Club) For more info & registration: 02 43 03 79 62. Free.

A vélo au fil de l'eau! (Bike ride alongside the water)

Thurs. 27th, 11h–14h in Moulay (53): hop on your bike and follow the course of the Mayenne river to discover (or re-discover) this magnificent waterway. Don't forget your picnic for a refreshing break in Montgiroux. A 22km round trip. Just a bike and helmet required - and a picnic! Free. Registration with the *Centre Permanent d'Initiatives pour l'Environnement Mayenne* (02 43 03 79 62) or the Mayenne Tourist Office (02 43 04 19 37)

Concours de Pétanque (Pétanque competitions)

These mixed doubles and senior doubles competitions take place every second Monday at *La Pétanque Bagnolaise*, Boulevard Lemuet (behind the tennis courts) in Bagnolles de l'Orne (61). This month they are on 10th and 24th, starting at 13h30. Open to all. Registration is from 13h30 to 14h25 with the first throw at 14h30. Tickets: 10€. More info from the Bagnolles de l'Orne Tourist Office (02 33 37 85 66).

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And finally:

He was told that after a vasectomy he wouldn't have kids any more. Imagine his shock when he got home and they were still there.

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That's all for this month. Plenty to see and do around this area in August, and there will be many more ideas available at your nearest Tourist Office.

Judy Skinner

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Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

August 2026

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Tues. 4th	Visit to a Cidrerie	Lassay-les-Châteaux	3
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Sun. 9th	<i>Foire à la brocante</i>	Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
“	<i>Festi d'Eté</i> (summer festival)	Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
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