

Bulletin !

An informal look at life in this part of France, with some snippets of local info and advice.

Thought for the month:

A person is a success if he gets up in the morning
and goes to bed at night and in between
does what he wants to do.

(Bob Dylan)

Special dates:

Mon. 1st: St David's Day

Wed. 17th: St Patrick's Day – celebrated in many towns and villages in France.

W/e 28th 'Spring forward' - clock go FORWARD (so one hour less sleep!)

Town of the month – Mortain (50)

William the Conqueror gave the fiefdom of Mortain to his brother, Robert, who developed the castle on its unique peak where the river Cance descends from the hills to the wooded lowlands. In 1106 after the Battle of Tinchebray, the *comté* came under English domination until 1204. Mortain was the site of many battles during the Hundred Years' War and in 1418 the British seized the whole of Normandy (apart from Mont-Saint-Michel). It was then re-taken by the French in 1449, and in 1562 repeated attacks by the Huguenots left the town and the castle badly damaged.

Fast forward many years and battles – after being reduced to rubble in the fighting of August 1944 Mortain has again risen from the ruins. Among the notable sights are the *Grande Cascade*, a great waterfall over 20m in height, and the *Petit Cascade*, both of which are well signposted, with lovely walks alongside and steps that take you to a wonderful viewpoint overlooking the falls (but recently under repair). The most notable building in the town is *l'Eglise St Evroult*, a former collegiate church founded in 1082 and rebuilt in the 13th century in red sandstone in strictly Gothic style. The impressive belfry has 2 lancet windows on each side and a fine decorated Romanesque door.

Eating out - 'Route 66' food truck

The 'Route 66' food truck (which is very popular with its visits to Fougerolles-du-Plessis and Le Teilleul) has teamed up with Anglo Auto and Gary's Automotive Services, and from 3rd March it will be coming on Wednesdays, 12h to 14h, to rue Denis Pepin in Gorrion (near Maine Ateliers) providing a great selection of take-away food, including burgers, pizzas, curries, kebabs, Thai green chicken (or vege) curry, hot dogs, and also chips, onion rings & curry sauce. More details on facebook or tel: 07 80 43 04 44.

Ongoing renovations to *Eglise St Julien* in Domfront (61)

Works on the first of 3 parts of the second phase of the restoration will be taking place over the next 12 months. It will be in 3 *tranches* (sections) – the north, south and east facades; the woodwork; the roofing. The church is not expected to be closed during this work, but the parking places nearby will not be available. This part will be costing 951,420€ [financed 40% by *la Région Normande*, 40% by the DRAC (*Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles*) and 20% by the commune]. Two other phases are programmed – one for the exterior (2024-2025) for 950,340€ and the other in the interior (2027) at 953,700€. The expected total for the 3 phases is 2,855,460€.

New washing machines available near Gorrion Super U

If your washing machine is too small for duvets, pillows, etc., there are 3 newly installed machines here now, capacity 6kg, 7kg and 20kg, plus 2 dryers. Available 7h to 21h, 7/7. Payment can be made by card or change.

Russian soldiers in Laval

During WWI, 1,300 Russian soldiers were garrisoned in Laval (53). These soldiers of the Tsar Nicholas II had been sent to the Western Front in 1916 and then found themselves cut off from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. They remained here until 1920, by which time an orthodox culture had been created especially for them, and when the base of operations was disbanded, many of them stayed here.

New walks along the river Colmont

Q: Will we be able one day to walk from Lesbois to the *Lac de Haute Mayenne* purely along the river Colmont?

A: Yes! In fact, a project is in hand to create 25km of walking route.

Le Colmont is a river that runs in the Manche, Mayenne and Orne *départements*. It appears at *l'Angotière*, north of Fougerolles-du-Plessis and crosses 10 *communes* in the Mayenne. Apart from some sections in Brecé and Oisseau, the river banks are not easily accessible, but this is to change. A study has been taken and the first part, 25km between Lesbois and Oisseau, will pass through the *communes* of Lesbois, Gorrion, Brecé, Chatillon-sur-Colmont, St Mars-sur-Colmont and Oisseau.

‘Brecé Fit’ is on-line

Cardio-fitness and strengthening sessions in the comfort of your own home. A high energy and motivating class for all ages and abilities. Join them on Mondays & Thursdays, 10h30 to 11h30. Classes are 5€ via Zoom, the first class is free to make sure the technology works! More info at www.facebook.com/brecefitt or email Alex: a.beech@me.com.

Where to check for flood alerts

Flood alerts are an increasingly common fact of life in many parts of France and the government’s countrywide flood alert website vigicrues.gouv.fr publishes up-to-date information on the state of the river network using an easily understood four-colour code, while also giving advice on what action to take.

Municipal law

People living in and on the edges of towns & villages are subject to a municipal law that states that in the summer, each householder must clear any weeds from the frontage of their house, and in winter the snow or ice. In the event of elderly neighbours living next door, it is appreciated if you can clear these also if they are unable to do it themselves.

A dragon ! In my garden!

L’Union Régionale des CPIE and la Société Herpétologique de France are launching a participative operation “*Un dragon ! Dans mon jardin!*” and everyone living in the Orne *département* is invited to take part. The dragons in question are amphibians - *tritons* (newts), *salamandres*, *crapauds* (toads), *grenouilles* (frogs) - and reptiles - *lézards* (lizards), *serpents* (snakes). These creatures don’t only inhabit deepest forest or nature reserves - everyone can spot them in their gardens or whilst on walking trails. The societies are hoping to get an idea of the numbers as they are very endangered. This operation has existed for 15 years and helps people get to know these creatures which are particularly fragile. If you come across any creature, alive or even if killed on the road, you can take a photo of it (or several from different angles, which is better) and you can upload your photos to www.undragon.org where a specialist will send you the name of the species photographed.

What and when to feed birds

We are advised to feed birds from mid-November to the end of March. Studies show that extra food in the reproductive season makes birds lay eggs too early for the easy survival of the young. Black sunflower seeds, fresh peanuts and ground maize (*concassé*) are best for small garden birds, which eat seeds and grain in winter. Avoid bread due to salt, gluten and digestion difficulties. Also, please don’t prune your hedges from March to August.

Roadworks near ‘Manges-tu?’ in Gorrion (53)

Steve would like to let his customers know that despite roadworks blocking the road near ‘Manges-tu?’, he is able to open as usual on Fridays & Sats, 10h to 15h. However, ‘*Arielle Brocante*’, further along the road, will not be opening again until mid-April, but at their warehouse in Le Teilleul there will be a *Grande Vente* on the weekend of 5th & 6th.

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

Most countries have one patron saint but France has the Virgin Mary plus 9 'secondary' ones. Joan of Arc is one, as is the Archangel Michael and one of the medieval kings, St Louis. The others are Martin de Tours, Denis, Rémi. Petronilla, Radegund and, of course, Thérèse of Lisieux (a popular French nun who died aged 24 in 1897 and is called 'the Little Flower').

More names of the inhabitants:

People who live in	Villers-Charlemagne (53)	are	Caropolitains
	Champfrémont (53)	are	Campoforméniens
	La Dorée (53)	are	Doreéns
	Landivy (53)	are	Landivysiens
	La Haie-Traversaine (53)	are	Traversainois

And thanks to Chris P for these:

Heussé (50)	are	Heussite
Le Teilleul (50)	are	Teilleullais
Buais (50)	are	Buaisiens

Danièle Plauzet will be missed

Following cancer, Danièle, aged 59, passed away on 8th February. Many people will know her in the tourism area – she was very active at *les Jardins des Renaudies*, always giving helpful advice and suggestions. A member of the association '*Entre Nature et Patrimoine*' she was also involved in the development of the *ecomusée* at *Renaudies*.

No Laval Aéro Show in 2021

After the cancellation of the 2020 Air Show due to the pandemic, the organisers had hoped to stage it in June 2021 - but this will not be happening. At the event in 2019, 15,000 people enjoyed the spectacle, and they hope to be able to welcome the Royal Air Force in the presentation in 2022.

And finally,

A vulture boards an aeroplane, carrying 2 dead racoons. The flight attendant looks at him and says: "I'm sorry, but only one carrion allowed per passenger".

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr