

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

As I've got older, I thought I was starting to get lazy, but it turns out I am just being more energy efficient

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 cancellations [‘35 = area; ± = number of stalls expected]:

Thurs. 1 st	Rennes (35)	Weekly ‘ <i>Puces du Jeudi</i> ’ around les Halles Centrales, ±30
Sun. 18 th	Granville (50)	Monthly <i>Marché d’Antiquités Brocante</i> in Cour Jonville, ±30
Sun. 18 th	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at 215 La Chevalerie, ±120

Some *Marchés de Noël* (Christmas markets) – see page 2 for more

Fougerolles-du-Plessis Christmas Fayre

This will be on Sun. 4th, 9h30–17h in the Salle Polyvalente in Fougerolles-du-Plessis (53). A great trip out – many stalls with hand-made and seasonal gift ideas, Santa Claus, plus pony & trap rides for the children. Hot food and drinks on site; tombola. Free entry.

Marché de Noël in La Baroche-sous-Lucé (61)

On Sat. 10th, 10h–18h in the Salle des Fêtes: café and stalls for Christmas in a festive atmosphere. At 14h there will be sleigh rides for children at *Chez Mimi* in La Baroche-sous-Lucé with festive music and stalls of Christmas delicacies, together with *l’Authentique* crêpe van. For more info contact Sue Crossman on 06 04 15 57 43.

Carol Service and Concert

On Thurs 22nd at 19h30, a carol service and concert with Emma Mory in the church in La Baroche-sous-Lucé. *Vin chaud* (mulled wine), hot apple juice and cakes will be available after the service. For more info, contact Sue Crossman, as above.

Some more *Marchés de Noël* (Christmas markets) in this area:

Fri. 2 nd	Juvigné (53)	<i>Marché de Noël nocturne</i> (evening Christmas market), 16h30–23h in Place de l’Eglise. Also, in the church an expo of old photos and films of Juvigné in the 50s/60s. Concert in the evening. www.juvigne.fr
Sat. 3 rd	Colombiers-du-Plessis (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> & toy sale in Salle des Fêtes, Salle de Restaurant and the village. 13h –19h. ±50. Refreshments available, pony & trap rides.
2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th	Changé (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in <i>centre ville</i> (Fri.: 16h30–21h30; Sat.: 16h–20h; Sun.: 10h–19h).
2 nd , 3 rd & 4 th	Mayenne (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> on Quais Waiblingen & République, with 35 stallholders & associations.
Sat. 3 rd	Montigné-le-Brillant (50)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in car park of Salle des Loisirs, 13 rue de Narbonne; 16h–22h, ±50
Sat. 3 rd	Villaines-la-Juhel (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Foire Saint-Nicholas, from 9h in the Salle Polyvalente, with entertainment in the streets.
”	St Ellier-du-Maine (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in the Salle des Fêtes, 10h–18h
Sun. 4 th	Lassay-les-Châteaux (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , 10h–17h30
“	La Bigottière (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in the Salle des Tilleuls, org. by Grande Daze Animal Companions
Fri. 9 th	Chailland (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Place de la Mairie, from 17h
Sat. 10 th	St Denis de Gastines (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 16h in <i>centre ville</i>
10 th & 11 th	Landivy (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> , 10h–18h30 & 10h30–17h30
Sun. 11 th	Ernée (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Salle du Cosec, 10h–18h, ±30. Refreshments available on site.
”	Ambrières-les-Vallées (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 14h in Place du Marché
Wed. 14 th	La Ferté-Macé (61)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> in Place Leclerc & rue d’Hautvie, + entertainment and choir, ±70
Sat. 17 th	Javron-les-Chapelles (53)	<i>Marché de Noël</i> from 10h. At 18h30: candle-lit procession and fireworks.

This is by no means a complete listing. See local posters & ask at the Tourist Offices for more info.

‘Vivace’ Christmas Concerts

Christmas concerts with the Vivace Chorale will be held at the following locations:

Fri. 9th at 19h15 in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) (see below); Sun. 11th at 15h30 in l’Eglise Saint-Julien in Domfront (61), and Wed. 14th at 18h in the church in Passais-la-Conception (61). A selection of carols will be sung including The Zither Carol, The Cowboy Carol, The Nature Carol, De Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy, Mary Did you Know?, Bidibom, Les cloches de Hameau.

King Scallops – Jewel of Saint-Brieuc Bay (35)

In Brittany, the scallop season runs from October to mid-May. Every year, over 6,500 tonnes are fished from Saint Brieuc Bay. Getting up early in the morning in Saint-Quai-Portrieux is rewarded by an authentic ballet of trawlers returning to Port d’Armor. Brightly coloured boats, the comings & goings of fisherman in yellow waterproofs, the swell of the sea, the seagulls flying around. On 14th & 15th April 2023, the port of Erguy will celebrate king scallops in a major 2-day festival. Save the date!

Cancer Support France Nord events

Sat. 3rd – Christmas Fayre:

From 10h to 16h in the Salle des Fêtes in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) with a variety of stalls: crafts, cakes, gifts. Go along to the ‘pop-up tearoom’ where refreshments are available all day. They are also looking for cake donations – if you can help, please contact nord@cancersupportfrance.org

Fri. 9th – Carol concert:

Vivace Choir will be performing at the Church in Notre-Dame du Touchet (50) in aid of Cancer Support France Nord, commencing at 19h15, followed by drinks in the bar ‘*Le Viking*’ near the church. Entrance is free.

[Note: There will be no CSFN Brunches or Quiz Nights in December – these will recommence in January].

“Voix d’Eté” Christmas concerts

On Fri. 2nd at 19h30, “Voix d’Eté” will be giving a Christmas concert in the Salle Normande, Dompierre (61). There will be seasonal refreshments afterwards. The programme will be a mix of traditional carols and other pieces in French & English to get Christmas off to a good start.

The following Sunday, 4th, the choir will be repeating the programme at Avrilly church (61) starting at 18h. This follows the Christmas market which is being held between 14h & 18h.

Choir members look forward to welcoming you to one, or both, of these concerts. Entry is free to both concerts. For more info please contact Alison Gee on 02 33 16 03 72.

Scottish Country Dancing in Le Teilleul (50)

Katharine Glen, at *Pepinières Lecomte* in Le Teilleul, has started a new association, the main aim of which is to get people (all nationalities) together for a bit of fun, so although they want to get the dances right, they hope to have fun getting there. They are meeting every 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at salle Eugene Durand (at the entrance to Le Teilleul from Mortain). They have only done a few sessions so far, so not too late for people to join in. Most people are complete beginners and all the steps and dances will be explained from basics. Experienced dancers very welcome too.

There is a facebook page «*Association Ecossaise Mortainais*» where Katharine posts the dates and dances - those interested can get in touch via her email kthrn.glen1@gmail.com or mobile: 06 03 03 49 48.

Cheese of the Month : *Fourme d'Ambert*

Legend says that *Fourme d'Ambert* was already being made at the time of the Druids and the Gauls. It is certainly one of the oldest cheeses in France, along with *Roquefort*. *Fourme d'Ambert* is made in the *Monts de Forez* of Auvergne. '*Fourme*' is an old French word for cheese from the Latin name '*forma*' and describes its cylindrical shape. It is made with cow's milk – 25 litres for one cheese. *Penicillium glaucum* bacteria are added to the cheese which then rests in a cave for at least 2 months. One of the mildest blue cheeses, it is creamy with a delicate, fruity flavour and mushroom overtones. Good in soufflés and salads, and the ideal wine to go with it would be a medium-bodied red from the Côtes de Rhône.

New stall in Gorrion market – bicycle repairs

Thibault Borla has a bicycle repair workshop at OHM Vélo in Lassay-les-Châteaux (53) and will now be at Gorrion market every 2 weeks. He deals in sales and maintenance of both manual and electric bikes and also sells spare parts. He can also do house visits for repair works. Tel: 02 77 19 26 17.

'MusicNights' Christmas Party with Ann and Les

This is on Sat. 10th, starting at 18h until late (in their Disco Barn at 5 Grappay Charpentier, Brecé, 53). Bingo with prizes at 20h, raffle with prizes, dancing and merriment. Route 66 Xmas Food Menu & Drinks. RSVP Ann Taylor at ann@enchanteffrance.fr and for further info: info@retrobelia.fr; soulrites.fr.

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

The French have plenty of irrational superstitions mired in folklore, just like everyone else. One of many is . . . upside-down baguettes are bad luck! The origin of this superstition is more logical than most – the king's executioners were not popular with bakers back in the day, but the monarch insisted that the *boulangier* served everyone equally. To get their own little revenge, the bakers would keep their worst loaves for the hangman, and place them upside down.

Also – to avoid bad luck, what should you never carry across a stream in France? Answer: A cat.

Cocci Marché in Gorrion is expanding

The town of Gorrion has bought the empty house and garage next door to this handy mini-supermarket at 10 rue de Bretagne (opposite the old Renault Garage). This space will be used to give more parking space for the shop, which is great news. *Cocci Marché* is open on Tuesdays to Saturdays: 08h30–13h & 14h30–19h30, Sundays: 08h30–13h. Closed on Mondays.

Christmas Concert in Mayenne (53)

On Sat. 17th at 16h30 and 20h30 in the Salle Polyvalente, rue Volney, Mayenne: *l'Orchestre Symphonique de Haute-Mayenne* will be giving their Christmas concert with the theme 'stories, myths and legends in music'. Tickets: in advance 5€, at the door 7€, free for under 12s. Reservation advised. More info & tickets from the Mayenne Tourist Office: 02 43 04 19 37.

The delicious facts & figures of chocolate

Chocolate is said to have been introduced to France in 1615 when Anne of Austria (daughter of Louis Philippe II of Spain) married Louis XIII and employed her very own *chocolatier* to mix her morning hot chocolate.

In 2020, 354,935 tonnes of chocolate were sold at a total price of €3,329 million, an increase of 2.3% compared with 2019 (180,000 tonnes of which professionals used in bars, restaurants & *boulangeries*). Chocolate bars accounted for 38% and chocolate spreads 24.5% of the market. The French spend €665 million on Christmas chocolates and €205 million at Easter. Around a third of consumption was dark chocolate (compared with an average of 5% in the rest of Europe). Of chocolate products made in France, 62.1% were exported, most of it to the EU. Between them, France's 115 chocolate companies employ around 30,000 people.

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And finally,

Life is short. Make sure you spend as much time as possible on the internet arguing with strangers!

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Plenty of *Marchés de Noël*, and Christmas concerts here for you to enjoy. As always, do visit the Tourist Offices for more info and Christmas ideas. Apologies in advance for any errors – there are just not enough hours in the day!

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