

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

A car's weakest part is the nut behind the steering wheel

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

W/e 2 nd & 3 rd	Château-Gontier (53)	v-g / <i>braderie</i> / <i>brocante</i> (see page 3)
Sun. 3 rd	Avranches (50)	monthly <i>brocante</i> , Place Valhubert, ±30
“	Dinard (35)	<i>brocante professionnel</i> in Place du Marché, 9h-18h, ±70
“	Rennes (35)	' <i>Le retro market vintage</i> ' <i>brocante</i> at 29 Place des Lices, 9h-18h; entry 2.50€; ±70
Sun. 10 th	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g / <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
“	Laval (53)	v-g in the Salle Polyvalente, Place de Hercé, 9h-18h, ±150
“	Sourdeval (50)	v-g at ' <i>A la Belle Epoque</i> ', 7h-18h, ±50
Sun. 17 th	Dinard (35)	' <i>v-g de Printemps</i> ' at C.O.S.E.C, 15 rue Gouyon Matignon, 9h-18h, ±70
Sun. 24 th	Domfront (61)	v-g & clearance sale during the <i>Foire des Rameaux</i> , rue de Champ Passais, with funfair. Also exhibition in Espace André Rocton; ±50
Sun. 24 th	Granville (50)	<i>Marché d'Antiquités Brocante</i> in Cour Jonville, ±30
Sun. 31 st	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150

Eating out: – ‘Aux Saisons’

‘Aux Saisons’ is a bright and welcoming restaurant at 2 place Louis de Hercé in Mayenne (at the top of the hill from the *Basilique*) offering tasty and imaginative home-cooked meals produced by owners François and Rémy. There is a daily 3-course *menu de jour* with 2 or 3 choices. Open: Mon, to Fri. 11h45h to 14h, plus Friday evenings, 19h30 to 23h30, on reservation (06 72 11 58 92). Take-away is available (11h30 to 12h, if ordered before 11h30). More info on facebook: ‘Restaurant Aux Saisons Mayenne’.

Fun Théâtre presents ‘Les Mille et Une Nuits’ (‘1001 Nights’)

On Sun. 24th at 3 pm in Passais (61): *Les Mille et Une Nuits* (1001 Nights) will be brought to you by **Fun Theatre**. Devised and produced in collaboration with *Gorron Danse*, their version of this ancient Arabian story is a variation of the original, told by actors, narrators and poets, together with a programme of dance. It is perhaps a much lighter, less serious version. Most notably, bringing the story of Aladdin to the fore, and making it the 1001st of Sheherazade’s tales with which she fascinates the Sultan. As usual in their bilingual productions, the actors’ lines are a carefully blended mix of French and English. With narration in French and English accompanied by projected sub-titles in the alternate language. Tickets: Adults 10€, children 5€

More information and a link to their ticketing system can be found on www.funtheatre.fr

Foire Fleuri in Gorron (53)

On Sat. 16th & Sun. 17th, 9h to 21h45, this annual fun weekend includes: on Sat., 14h-18h, 5 races for all ages (a medical certificate is needed) departing from Place Barrabé; on Sun., a musical procession with flower-decorated vehicles leaving from the church at 14h30, with newly-elected Miss Mayenne and her *dauphines*; a produce market in rue Magenta with artisans (metal work, ceramics, engraving, paintings); a mini-farm in Place de la Houssaie, and the *fête foraine* (fun-fair) near *la Poste*. Free entry.

Salon Gourmand de Mayenne

Discover a range of produce, including wines from around France and its territories. Sat. 16th (10h to 20h) and Sun. 17th (20h to 18h) in the Salle Polyvalente, rue Volmey, Mayenne. Entry: 2€

Garden bird counting – follow-up

Some good results this year – in *Le Jardin Bluenn* in La Ferté-Macé on Sat. 27th Jan., 10h30 to 11h30 they counted: 22 *mésanges charbonnières* (great tits), 1 *rouge-gorge* (robin); 1 *bouvreuil* (bullfinch); 18 *moineaux* (sparrows); 11 *pinsons* (finches); a pair of *merles* (blackbirds); on Sun. 28th between 15h & 16h30: 15 *moineaux*; 17 *mésanges charbonnière*, 1 *rouge-gorge*; 9 *pinsons*, 2 *tourterelles turques* (turtle-doves); 2 *choucas* (jackdaws); 1 *grive* (thrush). They are all dependent upon the presence of hedges & trees. Sadly, no *verdières* (greenfinches) were spotted this year.

The most beautiful areas to explore – in Brittany

You can wander along the trails through unspoiled natural surroundings - go with the flow on a stand-up paddle-board, or on a boat or canoe; walk, cycle or ride along greenways and footpaths. From Mont-Saint-Michel to the Brière National Park, from the Brocéliande Forest to the Crozon Peninsula – explore Brittany’s loveliest scenery. For more info go to: www.brittanytourism.com

41st *Salon des Antiquités et de la Brocante*

On Sat. 2nd & Sun. 3rd, 10h to 18h in Espace Saint-Fiacre at Quai Docteur Georges Lefèvre in Château-Gontier (53, south of Laval) this *vide-grenier / braderie / brocante* is one of the best in this area for finding furniture, carpets, lighting, old paintings, etc. in over 20,000 sq.m of space. Around 50 stalls are expected. Entry 5€. More info: www.salon-antiquites-ouest.fr

A taxi service for animal companions

Not widely known in this area, Fanny Cheron has begun a taxi service, “Taxi Maly’s”, that can safely transport animals. Installed in Landivy (53), her specially adapted car – black with red wheels – also has a special set of steps for animals to enter and leave the rear of the car, and a harness for the older ones to be securely held inside. She can take animals to the vet, grooming, picking up of dogs on holiday lets, etc. There are only 150 animal taxis in France. Fanny is licensed for short or long (up to 600km) journeys. Contact details: 07 89 58 22 121, or on facebook Taxi Maly’s.

Led by the Moon

This year, Easter Sunday will be observed on 31st March. Unlike other holidays, such as Christmas or Valentine’s Day, the date varies from year to year, which also means that the beginning of Lent and Ash Wednesday change too. This is because Easter coincides with the First Sunday following the Spring equinox. Therefore, the date can fall on any Sunday between 22nd March and 25th April. Most Orthodox Christians still follow the Julian calendar, resulting in the holiday falling slightly later. In 2025, both Churches will celebrate Easter on Sunday 20th April. In England, if Easter should fall on Lady Day (25th March) it is said that some disaster will shortly follow: “When my Lord falls in my Lady’s lap, England beware of some mishap”.

Cheese of the Month - *Bethmale*

Bethmale is made from a unique mix of cow and goat’s milk. It is well known in the Pyrénées, with its history dating back to the time of Louis VI in the 12th century. The milk is heated to 33°C and the cheese is left to ripen on pine boards for 3 to 4 months in a humid cellar. Fairly soft and aerated in texture, it is mild tasting with touches of sweetness and sour notes, as well as hazelnut and a distinct note of hay. As well as being a good addition to the cheeseboard, it is also great for cooking – try using it in tartiflette or quiche-style tarts. It goes well with Loire wines or a local Ariège rouge.

Entertainment & Concerts

Wed. 6th at 20h at l’Espace Mayenne, 2 rue Joséphine Baker in Laval (53): the ballet ‘*Lac des Cygnes*’ (Swan Lake). For ticket info, see below.

Thurs. 7th at 20h in l’Espace Mayenne, 2 rue Joséphine Baker in Laval (53): award-winning Patrick Bruel in concert. For tickets - 38€ - go to www.espace-mayenne.fr .

Fri. 8th at 20h30 in l’Espace Mayenne (as above): “The World of Queen” – tribute to Freddie Mercury. 2 hours of quality entertainment. Tickets 39€, available as above.

Fri. 15th at 20h30 in the *Théâtre de Mayenne*, Place Juhel, Mayenne (53): the Rotary Club presents the 3rd edition of ‘*Printemps Jazz*’. All proceeds will be going to PolioPlus (world programme to eradicate poliomyelitis by vaccination). Tickets 15€ (under 12s free) at the venue or on HelloAsso. www.mayenne-tourisme.com; 02 43 04 19 37.

Wed. 27th at 20h at l’Espace Mayenne (see above): ‘Irish Celtic – Spirit of Ireland’. Tickets: 49€; Doors open: 18h45, concert at 20h. www.espace-mayenne.fr

Samba Carnaval at Haras du Pin

Until Sun. 10th – this colourful horse show at the Haras National du Pin, in Le Pin du Haras (61) is full of rhythm and joy to help warm our hearts at the end of winter. A great time to enjoy with the family. You can have a guided tour of this National Stud Farm: horse and buggy rides, activities with ponies and there is a gift shop. Open in March at 15h on Wed. 6th, Thurs. 7th, Fri. 8th, Sat. 9th & Sun 10th . More info: www.haras-national-du-pin.com

Ballet by direct transmission from Paris

At the cinema *Le Vox*, 16 Place Juhel in Mayenne town, on Tues. 12th at 14h: the ballet ‘*Casse Noisette*’ (Nutcracker) will be shown. Tickets: www.levoxmayenne.fr

The ‘seasonal garden’ in Mayenne is to return

This amazing temporary garden in the centre of Mayenne town, at Place Clemenceau, will be installed again this year with a few changes in size and duration. To address the complaints of nearby businesses, the *Mairie* distributed a questionnaire resulting in a different form of garden. It will be there for longer this year, from Easter until the end of August – almost 5 months. The installation will cost less this year as the flower containers, etc., are already in storage. The plants will cost 20,000€, which is the annual budget allotted to plants. When the plants are removed they are re-planted in other areas. The *Mairie* assures that there will be more parking spaces this year, but of limited stopping time. Also, the speed limit in *centre-ville* will be reduced to 20 km/h.

Visit to the *Toiles de Mayenne* in Fontaine-Daniel (53)

On Thurs. 7th, 9h to 11h30, you can discover this site of the famous manufacture of fabrics and the history of this village (in French and possibly some English). A 2-hour visit, tickets 13€. However, disabled access is not possible at this site. Reservations at the Mayenne Tourist Office (www.mayenne-tourisme.com). For more info go to www.toiles-de-mayenne.com

Marché du terroir et de l'artisanat in Brecé (53)

On Sun. 10th from 10h to 17h in Brecé, this event is in support of the Association '*Le Sourire d'Eglantine*' of Lassay-les-Châteaux. The aim is to help fund the specific needs of Eglantine – a wheelchair-bound, poly-handicapped 18-year old – with things such as accessibility equipment, etc. There will also be a procession of vintage cars and tractors, and giant wooden games, and a free tombola at the end of the day. Snacks are available on site (*galettes, saucisse, frites*) and the possibility of a mid-day meal for 13€. For more info: 06 79 25 82 62.

Les Jardins des Renaudies: chasse aux oeufs (Easter egg hunt)

On Sun. 31st March and Monday 1st April at these pretty gardens at Les Mézerais, Colombiers-du-Plessis (53), 14h to 18h, children are invited to search for Easter pictures around the gardens, where 2,000 pictures are hidden. They are then given Easter Eggs depending on how many pictures they find! Also, all children under 12 will be given a sachet of chocolate. Meanwhile, adults can enjoy the daffodils, narcissus, camellias, magnolias and other plants in the park. There is also children's face-painting, and sale of crêpes, hot chocolate and other drinks. Dogs are welcome on a lead. Entry: 6€; 6-16s: 3€; under 6s free. www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

Road works near Vieuvy (53)

Re-surfacing of the RD5 between Gorron and Vieuvy will be taking place from 19th February until November, and no vehicles will be allowed through in either direction. A diversion is in place. For all info, the interactive map "*inforoutes53*" is available on www.lamayenne.fr

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

On 4th August 1921 the first written transatlantic document was sent across the Atlantic Ocean between New York and Paris by wireless technology – a fax. The message was sent by a Belinograph, a machine invented by French engineer Edouard Belin. It was written by C. V. Van Anda of *The New York Times* and addressed to *Le Matin* newspaper. It read: "The *New York Times* congratulates *Le Matin* upon this new method of wireless transmission". It took about seven minutes to arrive and was described as an "epoch-making achievement".

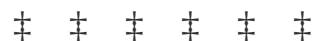
La Foire des Rameaux in Domfront (61)

On 23rd & 24th, at l'Espace André-Rocton, the 74th edition of this annual event offers traditional stands, a *fête-foraine* (fun-fair), *vide-greniers* and some novelties – including chef Gaetan Crespin from the restaurant '*Au Bon Accueil*' in Juvigny-Val-d'Andaine (61) giving a cookery demonstration, also a video games tournament for fans of Mario Kart and Fifa, and a quiz. A food truck and drinks stand will be on site. Free entry.

Sport & Leisure Activities

‘RACE Together’ in Laval (53)

On Sun. 24th, 10h to 18h, in Place de la Trémouille (behind the Vieux Château) you can see a gathering of vintage vehicles organised by ‘RACE’ (*Restauration d’Automobiles de Collection à l’Estaca*) . Free entry, and for 5€ (all proceeds to go to the charity Geist Mayenne) you can try out, for 30 minutes, a vintage car. Food truck on site. More info: www.instagram.com or race@estaca.eu



And finally:

I think it’s disgraceful that after 50 years people don’t know who Neil Armstrong is, or the type of trumpet he played.



That’s all for this month. Have a great Easter at the end of the month

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr

Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

March 2024

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