

Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

The two most important days of your life are
the day you are born and the day you find out why

[Mark Twain]

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

Mon. 1 st	Champsecret (61)	v-g in the football stadium
Sun. 7 th	Ernée (53)	v-g in Super U car park, 9h-18h, ±250
“	Mayenne (53)	v-g in Leclerc car park, 7h-18h, ±250
“	St Hilaire-du-Harcouët (50)	v-g in <i>Marché Couvert</i> , rue de Marly, 9h-17h
Sun. 14 th	La Ferté-Macé (61)	v-g de l'APEPS, 10 rue de Versailles (in school courtyard), 8h-17h; ±150
“	Sourdeval (61)	v-g at La Belle Epoque, Moulin Foulon, ±70
Sun. 21 st	Bellou-en-Houlme (61)	v-g/ <i>brocante</i> at La Chevalerie, ±150
”	Granville (50)	<i>Marché d'Antiquités Brocante</i> in Cour Jonville, ± 30
Sun. 28 th	Pleutuit (35, near Dinard)	<i>Puces des coutouriers et loisirs creatifs</i> & v-g in Espace Delta, 10h-18h, +50

Special date / public holiday:

Mon. 1st *Lundi de Pâques* (Easter Monday)

Open Gardens in La Dorée (53)

At the weekend of 27th and 28th, Shirley and Paul Edwards will be opening their garden at La Bayette, La Dorée for the French charity 'Open Gardens / *Jardins Ouvert*'. They will be open from 10h to 17h on both days. Entry is 5€, children free. There will be a Tea Room and also a Book Sale. For directions or further info: 02 43 05 10 72

Eating out - *Le Gué des Gênes*

'*Le Gué des Gênes*' at 27 rue Notre-Dame in Ambrières-les-Vallées (53) – just up the road from the river on the church side – is a very welcoming hotel-restaurant. There are 4 *formules* for lunch, with a 3-course *Menu du Jour* at 12,50€, or a *Menu du Chef* for a more special occasion. Open Monday to Thursday: 9h to 14h & 18h to 20h30; Fridays & Sundays: 7h to 14h; closed on Saturdays. For reservations: 02 43 00 16 98.

Les Jardins des Renaudies

At this lovely 3.5 ha floral park at Les Mézerais, Colombiers-du-Plessis (53), as well as 400 rhododendrons & azaleas, 350 hydrangeas, 133 varieties of roses and many other plants & flowers, there is a museum showing life on a farm in the 1920s and vintage farm equipment. Plenty of areas for a picnic.

On Sun. 31st and Mon. 1st will be the *chasse aux oeufs (Easter egg hunt)*, 14h to 18h, where children can hunt for Easter pictures hidden in around the gardens and they are given Easter eggs depending on how many pictures they find. A sachet of chocolate will be given to all children under 12. There will be face-painting, and sale of crêpes, hot chocolate & other drinks. Dogs are welcome on a lead. A special opening day entry price: 4€, children 6–16s: 3€, under 6s free. More info at: www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr

You can find out about other Easter egg hunts from your nearest Tourist Office.

31st Art Exhibition in Gorron (53)

This popular '*Salon d'Art Contemporain*' will be at l'Espace Colmont in Gorron for 15 days – from 23rd March until 7th April. On weekdays: 14h to 18h; at the weekends: 10h to 12h & 14h to 18h. Free entry.

Crafts and local produce market

On Tuesdays 2nd & 23rd, 14h to 17h, this artisanal market will be held in the large room at the Residence des Thermes, Avenue des Thermes, Bagnoles de l'Orne (61). Many crafts on sale – jewellery, table & room decorations, paintings, beauty products, clothes. With local products: poiré, cider, jams, biscuits and chocolates. www.bagnolesdelorne.com

Market in support of research in Parkinsons

On Sat. 6th at 14h in Place de la Mairie, St-Hilaire-du-Harcouët (50), this market has local produce and artisans, together with food and household goods. All profits will go towards this critical research.

Enlargement of the *Bar de la Plage* in La Ferté-Macé (53)

This popular bar-brasserie beside the *plan d'eau* (lake) now has a large terrace, bordered by a glass wind-break and covered by umbrellas. It can seat up to 80 people and was entirely financed by the new owners who took over the business 2 years ago. They offer a completely new menu with regular themed evenings. They will be open daily in July and August, but between now and November they will be closed on Mondays. Hours: 10h to 21h until the end of May, then 10h to 22h/23h in June, July and August.

Le Petit Train de Saint-Malo (35)

From 1st April until 3rd November, you can discover the walled town, the harbour and the Bay of Saint-Malo aboard 'The Little Train' with a commentary in English and/or French. Re-live the bygone days of famous privateers and the French East India Company as you travel through the historic walled town. Learn about the destruction of Saint-Malo in August 1944 and the amazing phenomenon of the biggest tides in Europe. Tours leave from the Esplanade St-Vincent (near the Tourist Office). For parties of over 20 people, booking is necessary. Tickets: 8€, children 6€, groups 7€. www.lepetittrain-saintmalo.com

'Cars & Coffee' : exhibition of vintage vehicles

On Sun. 28th, 9h30 to 12h30, at Place du Marché Couvert in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61, by the Tourist Office) organised by *l'Assoc. Bagnoles Moteurs Classiques*: 'Cars & Coffee' presents a gathering of sports, prestigious and vintage vehicles. Free entry.

Christian Dior – visionary designer .

Christian Dior's childhood home at 1 rue d'Estouteville, Granville (50) is now a museum dedicated to the fashion designer's life and work – from Granville to Paris, London and America, he left his mark wherever he went. Over the villa's 3 floors, the pieces on display are mostly from the Christian Dior museum's collections. Entry: 10€, students & unemployed: 7€, under 12s free. Open: 6th April to 3rd November 2024, daily: 10h-18h30. For more info: www.musee-dior-granville.com

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

Louis XIV (14th) was king for 72 years. the longest French reign. Who had the shortest? Answer: Louis XIX (19th) ruled for 20 minutes in 1830 after his father, Charles X (10th) abdicated. He was king while writing a letter renouncing his succession in favour of his nephew, Henri V. Henri abdicated a week later in favour of Louis-Philippe, the last king.

We say, they say

The English equivalent to '*on ne peut faire d'une buse un épervier*' (lit. you can't turn a buzzard into a sparrowhawk) is 'you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear'.

Musée de Préhistoire et Grottes de Saulges

This very interesting subterranean museum, at 650 Chemin de la Roche-Brault in Saulges (53) has re-opened after being closed for several months to let the resident bats over-winter in peace. The *Grotte Margot* is the only upper palæolithic cave that is open to the public north of the river Loire. Nearby, in the *Grotte Rochefort* several pre-historic human remains were discovered and also a 15 metres deep abyss comprises stalagmites, stalagmites and subterranean water. New lighting has recently been installed. For more information: www.grottes-musee-de-saulges.com .

Entertainment & Concerts

On Sat. 20th at 20h30 in Fougerolles-du-Plessis church : a concert by the ‘*Chorale du Bocage*’ (an amalgamation of the 3 choirs of Gorron, Chatillon-sur-Colmont and Fougerolles). A mixed programme including traditional French, a canon from Beethoven in German and Italian, a Congolese folk song and an English hymn. Free, with a retiring collection. [Wrap up warm, it might be chilly!]

‘*Soirée Cabaret*’ in Ernée (53)

On Sat. 20th at 20h30 in l’Espace Clair de Lune in Ernée, the *Association Ernée Jazz Danse* celebrates its 20 years with a cabaret evening, organised by Jim Even Spectacles. There will be singers, dancers, a comedian, magician with a sparkling show. Tickets, 20€ (ages 7 to 12: 12€) are available from erneejazzdanse@gmail.com or 06 82 56 76 56

Grande Soirée Dansant avec repas (dinner dance)

On Sat. 6th from 19h30 in the Salle des Fêtes, rue Waldeck Rousseau, Saint-Hilaire-du-Harcouët (50) this is a dinner dance with a meal and music by ‘*Etincelles*’. For reservations, tel: 07 88 36 22 25; email: joubin.jean@wanadoo.fr [Sorry, no ticket prices given]

Organ recital in Bagnoles de l’Orne (61)

Organised by *Les Amis de l’Orgue de Sainte Madeleine de Bagnoles de l’Orne*, this recital at 9 Place de l’Eglise in Bagnoles de l’Orne is on Sun. 21st, 17h to 18h15, by François Moreau, organist at l’Eglise Saint-Pierre in Coutances (Manche). Free, with collection.

Beware of toxic caterpillars

A reminder that parents and pet owners should beware of dangerous pine processionary caterpillars (*chenilles processionnaires*) as their protective hairs contain a toxin that can cause severe skin irritation and can kill animals. In Spring, brought out by the warmer weather, the caterpillars have left the pine trees and are marching nose-to-tail across woods and open lands to find a new nest. Previously confined to the south of France, they are now to be found in the north and can cause severe damage to pine trees. Gardeners can use black sunflower seeds, sunflower hearts and suet to lure predators such as the great tit, coal tit and great spotted cuckoo which will eat hundreds of caterpillars a day. The *Mairies* have requested to be told of any sightings in your local area.

Something for all the family – *le base de loisirs*

A reminder about this outside leisure area at La Ferté-Macé (61) which has an overall area of 65 hectares – of which 26ha. is water, and also 2,400 metres of walking/cycle paths – and it is accessible all year. Dedicated to family activities in the open air, there are children’s games, activities, picnic area. Also kayak hire, *pétanque* pitch, pedalos, archery, swimming in the lake with a small sandy beach, etc., but ask at the Tourist Office (02 33 37 10 97) if these and other seasonal facilities are available yet. Access and parking is free.

Sport & Leisure Activities

29th International Senior Plus Tennis Tournament

Daily until 6th April at the *Complexe Tennistique Maxime Merlin*, rue Plassard in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61), this prestigious tournament is for ages 50 to 85. 170 players will be competing for the trophy.

Pétanque competitions

On Mondays 8th and 22nd at *La Pétanque Bagnolaise*, Boulevard Lemuet (behind the tennis courts) – doubles, in 4 parts. Registration on the day between 13h30 and 14h25. First games start at 14h30. Open to all. 5€ per person.

'*Marcher ou courir*' ('walk or run')

Organised by the Rotary Club, this 9th edition will be held on Sun. 28th, starting at 9h at the *marché couvert* in St Hilaire-du-Harcouët (50). All profits will go towards research into Alzheimers. For more info contact Eric Granger on 06 33 90 67 69.

Parc de la Colmont in Gorrion (53)

A new season of activities is offered in the Parc de la Colmont: tree absailing (*parcours en hauteur*), swin-golf, paintball, laser-game, kayaking, and you can hire bikes for use in the Parc. More info in the *Accueil* hut in the Parc, at 06 63 63 86 44, or visit www.parcloisirscolmont.wixsite.com

Art class: HOW. TO. PAINT. TREES. LIKE. A. PRO . . . !

With Structure, Technique and Texture - on Friday 5th 1pm to 4pm in Jane's Studio, Notre Dame-du-Touchet (50). Cost 25€ p/p: work sheets 'n materials supplied, tea, coffee, chat 'n tuition. All welcome. e-mail. jane.bicknell.art@gmail.com

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And finally: 'The Hare and the Tortoise' (an oldie but a goodie):

"A rabbit raced a turtle – you know the turtle won,
And Mr Rabbit came in late – a little Hot Cross Bun"

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That's all for this month. Not as many events as usual at this time of year, but still many lovely places to visit. Have a great Easter and April.

Judy Skinner

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Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

April 2024

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Page</u>
31/3 & 1/4	Easter egg hunt	Colombiers-du-Plessis	2
Tues. 2 nd	Crafts & local produce market	Bagnoles de l'Orne	2
Fri. 5 th	Art class	Notre-Dame du Touchet	5
Sat. 6 th	Market in aid of research into Parkinsons	St-Hilaire du Harcouët	2
“	<i>Grande Soirée Dansante</i> (dinner dance)	St Hilaire du Harcouët	4
Until 7 th	31st <i>Salon d'Art</i> (art exhibition)	Gorron	2
Mon. 8 th	<i>Pétanque</i> competitions	Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
Sat. 20 th	<i>Ernée Jazz Dance</i> cabaret evening	Ernée	4
“	Concert by ' <i>Chorale du Bocage</i> '	Fougerolles-du-Plessis	4
“	<i>Soirée Cabaret</i> (dinner dance)	Ernée	4
Sun. 21 st	Organ recital	Bagnoles de l'Orne	4
Mon. 22 nd	<i>Pétanque</i> competitions	Bagnoles de l'Orne	5
Tues. 23 rd	Crafts & local produce market	Bagnoles de l'Orne	2
W/e 27/28 th	Open Garden	La Dorée	1
Sun. 28 th	' <i>Marcher ou courir</i> ' (walk or run)	St Hilaire du Harcouët	5
“	'Cars & Coffee' vintage vehicles	Bagnoles de l'Orne	3