
Bulletin !

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

Thought for the month:

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your
balance you must keep moving

[Albert Einstein]

Here are some *vide-greniers/marchés* (which may be cancelled due to current safety measures). Dates and details can change without notice)

Sun. 6th: Lassay-les-Châteaux (53) *marché d'artisanat*, 10h-18h. Artisans present their skills: paintings, woodwork, etc. Free entry.

Sun 13th:Bagnoles de l'Orne (61) *brocante/vidé-greniers*, Place du Marché, 8h to 18h, organised by *Avenir Espoir 2000*. Free entry.
(for a table: 3€/m, info: 06 71 12 77 47)

Fêtes:

Fête de la Saint Médard - St Mars-sur-Colmont on 5th & 6th: a communal fête, with bread and pastries cooked in an original bread oven. Free entry

Fête de la Musique - this is celebrated all over France, [e.g. in Gorrion it is on 19th June]. Musicians around the streets and outside the bars.

Tour de France 2021 will arrive in Fougères (35)

On Tuesday 29th, Fougères welcomes the arrival of the 108th edition of the *Tour de France*. For details of the whole route, go to www.letour.fr

The French language

Le Petit Larousse' has included a record-breaking 170 new words in its latest edition, plus a debate on whether it should be '*le Covid*' or '*la Covid*' !

* * * * *

Useful information: to find a *Pharmacie* in an emergency: www.3237.fr gives you a listing of pharmacies open closest to you, by department.

New opening of *Le Patis Salon de Thé* in Landivy (53)

Le Patis Salon de Thé is a new tearoom located in Landivy which will hopefully be opening in June, where they will be welcoming you for tea, coffee and home-made cakes. Until they fully open, they are taking online orders, which can be collected from the tearoom. Please see their facebook page for more information: www.facebook.com/LePatisLandivy. They look forward to seeing you all soon.

Les Jardins des Renaudies has re-opened

This lovely floral park at Les Mézerais, Colombiers-du-Plessis (53) has re-opened. There are over 3,000 species of flowers, plants and trees. You can take a picnic, and there are also vintage farm vehicles & equipment, an *écomusée*, and the *Salon de Thé Anglais*. Times of opening from now until the summer holidays: Weds to Sundays: 14h-18h. Entry: 5€; 6-16 years: 2€; under 6s free. Dogs are welcome on a lead. www.jardinsdesrenaudies.fr (and please check there before setting off, in case of any changes).

Events in June:-

Sunday 6th: *Rendez-vous aux Jardins en Musique* – live music in and around the gardens.

Sunday 20th: *Peintres aux Jardins* – you can watch artists, both professional and amateur, create their masterpieces (or take part yourself) between 9h & 18h. Prizes awarded. Registration details on the website (as above)

Day ticket at *Etang de Launay*

Anglers looking for a decent coarse fishing day ticket will be pleased to learn about the *Etang de Launay*, which is situated on the D5 route between Gorrion (53) and Chatillon-sur-Colmont (53) and is easily visible from the D5. The lake contains carp to 20lbs+, tench, pike & roach, is not deep and the carp respond really well to sweetcorn fished over depth on the bottom.

The Fishery is open daily from 8h to 20h and a day ticket is 5€ per rod (4€ per rod for children under 12 – who must be accompanied by an adult). A half-day ticket is 4€ per rod. Tickets are available at the lakeside from the Fishery owner, who will be there several times during the day. Fishing must be by rod & line with a single barb-less hook. Spinners, lures and treble hooks are not permitted. Further information is available from the Fishery owner, Jack PetitHomme, on 06 81 69 88 22 (please note: Jack does not speak English!)

La Vache Qui Rit cheese celebrates its 100th Year

This popular spreadable cheese went from quirky beginnings in the Jura mountains to international fame and still-soaring sales. ‘The Laughing Cow’ is a soft, spreadable cheese with a mild flavour, and one of the major cheeses of its kind in France. It is produced by the Bel Group (known for its BabyBel products) who now produces more than 20 million packs of the cheese every year – the equivalent of 5 billion little triangle portions.

Food available 7/7 in Désertines (53)

At the '*Jolie Pâtisserie*' in Désertines, automatic food dispensers have arrived with 40 sections selling regional cheeses, bread, cakes, pastries, eggs, etc. The shop is open from 7h30 to 19h30 and is re-stocked daily at 16h.

Swimming pool in Ambrières-les-Vallées is open again

After major works on the pool in the *Parc de Vaux*, this pool will re-open on 6th June. Closed due to the Covid pandemic, in 2020 they had a deficit of 59,106€ as only 6,000 people were admitted, as opposed to 15,000 in 2019. Due to continued safety measures, until 25th August the pool will only be open on Wednesday afternoons and weekends - however, last year's time limit of 45 minutes will be extended. There is a new slide, new heating pump and new entry door - at a total cost of 100,000€. Visitors staying in the camping site of the *Parc de Vaux* will always have access to the pool.

Arielle Brocante - opening again

The *brocante* at Le Teilleul (4 route de Domfront) is now open every afternoon, 14h30 to 19h30. The *brocante* in Gorrion will continue to be open one or two weekends a month. You can contact Arielle & Pascal via their facebook page.

Demonstration of *hydromodélisme* (model boats)

On Sun. 20th and Sat. 26th from 14h at the *base de loisirs* (lake) in La Ferté-Macé (61), organised by the *Club Hydromodélisme Fertois*. You can watch the owners showing the agility of their boats. Picnic and games areas. Free, plenty of parking nearby.

The French Foreign Legion

Set up in 1831 for foreign recruits to fight for France, the Foreign Legion is still going strong, although it is probably not what you think it is. In literature and films it is made out to be a rag-bag unit willing to take any tough guy on the run, no questions asked. In reality it is an elite corps with a rigorous selection procedure.

Visit to Saint Fraimbault (61)

On Wed. 9th, 14h30 to 15h30, organised by the Domfront Tourist Office, this one-hour long guided visit (in easy-to-follow French) will help to explain the past life in this floral village. The guide will show you the floral areas, the lake, *lavoir* (communal wash-house), old school house and some gardens. Reservation required at the Tourist Office. 4€ per person. The visit follows strict safety measures.

IKEA pick-up point in Evron (53)

There is already a IKEA pick-up point in Laval, but another one has opened at the Super U in Evron (53), route de Laval. Delivery will be 4 to 5 days, cost: 29€, and is on Monday to Sat., 9h to 19h. www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/a-evron-en-mayenne-un-nouveau-point-de-retrait-ikea-rennes-est-ouvert-1607806404

Entertainment & Concerts

Thurs. 10th & Fri. 11th at the Forum, rue de Collège, Flers (61): *Festival des Chorales des Collèges de l'Orne*". More info from the Flers Tourist Office (see contact info page 7)

Sat. 12th, 20h30 to 22h at the Château de Carrouges (61): a recital by celebrated pianist Jean-Michel Kim: as part of the "*Concerts des Grands Diplomes*". A selection from Schubert, Liszt, Ravel, Schumann, Chopin. More info from the Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office (contact details on page 7).

Wed. 23rd, 17h to 18h15 in 9 Place de l'Eglise, Bagnoles de l'Orne (61): an organ solo by Alain Bouvet, head organist at l'Abbatiale St Etienne in Caen. Works by Buxtehude, Bach, Bartok. Free, with a collection. More info from the Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office (contact details on page 7)

Le Jardin Retiré in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

On Friday 25th at 10h-11h30 & 14h-16h30: on this guided walk (in French, but some English spoken) you can discover this small garden (2,500 m²) at 14 Ave Robert Cousin (along from the Casino) and its decorative objects (arches, statues, fountains). Awarded a '*Jardin Remarquable*'. Duration of visit: 1h-1h30. Tickets 6€, students: 4€ - reservation necessary at the Bagnoles de l'Orne Tourist Office by 17h30 the day before, as only a limited number of people are allowed in at a time. Open in July and August also.

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

The first official highway code was published in France on May 27th 1921. It cemented the law that means that traffic should drive on the right hand side of the road – but this was nearly not the case.

The debate on road safety began in 1903 following a fatal accident on the road between Paris and Madrid in which 8 people were killed and 20 more injured. In 1909, a national commission was set up and tasked with creating a highway code and determining the side of the road on which vehicles should drive. Until that point, vehicles in France had mostly driven on the right but it was not official. There was a proposal, which had majority backing, in the 1912/13 draft version of the code that supported driving on the left, in the 'English manner'.

Exhibitions:

Until 9th July: "*Les Ardoises de Sophie*" at l'Espace Culturel Le Grand Turc, Salle Rousseau, in La Ferté-Macé (61). Sophie has gathered together 200 items on *ardoises d'école* (school slates) with artists from both French and overseas. Open during the hours of the *mediathèque* (every afternoon, except Mondays).

Until 2nd November: '*Les Couleurs de l'Eau*' at the *Musée de Flers*, Avenue du Château, Flers (61). A presentation of works by Marion Zylberman, Violaine Vielleford and Antoine Milian. Free.

Lest We Forget

8th May 1945 – France and Europe were delivered from several years of war. At the Armistice commemoration in May, Jean-Marc Alain, *maire* of Gorrion, recalls the history. The *mairie* (town hall) was requisitioned to become a military hospital where Germans and Americans were looked after, without distinction of nationality. The deceased soldiers, especially from the Battle of Mortain, were buried on the route de Couesmes. For several years after the end of the war, the bodies of 2,200 Germans and 752 American soldiers remained in Gorrion before either being repatriated to their families, or re-buried at the German ossuary at Mont d’Huisnes or the US cemetery at Saint -James.

Leclerc supermarkets now selling jute/hemp bags

Leclerc have stopped selling the large plastic carrier bags and now sell them in jute/hemp. This is good for both the shopping and the planet. Like the large plastic bags before them, these are exchangeable when no longer useable.

Companion planting and marigolds

Companion planting is once again *de rigueur* in all the ‘best’ gardening circles. We know that the colours and scents of plants can attract both pests and beneficial beasties. You may already use the scent of onion family members (from leeks to actual onions) planted close to rows of carrots to confuse the senses of pesky carrot flies. Garlic planted in rings, for example, keeps *campagnols* (voles) away from precious plants. But try also pot marigold (*Calendula Officinalis*, not to be confused with *Tagetes*, the French marigold) – it repels white fly and flea beetle and can tempt aphids away from nearby vegetables, as well as attracting beneficial insects like ladybirds, lacewings and hoverflies that predate on some of the nasties. The scent of pot marigold foliage deters rabbits, whilst underground the roots produce a chemical to which nematodes and asparagus beetle are averse.

Café-concert bar ‘Le Decibel’ in Montenay (53) to re-open

Although the owner of this bar at 1 rue de la Vigne in Montenay (SE of Ernée) was able to continue selling tobacco, newspapers and bread during last year, he was not able to continue the *soirée-concerts*. Strictly adhering to sanitary measures he was able to provide music on a few occasions, but not since last October. However, since then he has been updating the décor and facilities and hopes to open the bar from 9th June. He has, though, decided to wait until 2022 to re-start the *soirée-concerts*. Open: Mondays to Sundays 8h to 13h & 17h to 20h (but closed on Wednesdays).

Eco-trains set for 2025

An order for 12 hydrogen-fuelled trains has been placed by SNCF – a first for France. Trials will be from late 2023 in Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Grand Est and Occitanie. They should be used commercially from 2025. The Coradia Polyvalent trains will be from French firm Alstom and cost €190million. They will mix onboard hydrogen with air from the atmosphere to make electricity via a battery in the roof. The only emission is water vapour.

Something for all the family – *le Petit Train* in Fougères (35)

You can take this 40-minute little train ride around the town of Fougères, with a commentary (in 3 languages (French, English & Spanish) and you will learn a lot about Fougères with its many surprises. You board the train at the foot of the château, Place Raoul II, and buy the tickets from the driver. If you miss one, the time of the next one will be shown on the board. Open from Easter to the end of September. More info: www.petit-train-fougères.com.

Re-opening of the museum of the *Château de Mayenne* (53)

From 8th June, the *Musée du Château* (overlooking the river Mayenne in the centre of the town) can welcome a maximum of 50 people at a time, with only 10 in each room. During the period of closure, the museum team have prepared a new *plan de visite* and the info cards for each room, and you can request an audioguide. Open: 10h-12h30 & 14h-18h (closed Mondays). Tickets: 4€; 18s to 25s: 3€; under 18s free. More info available at www.museeduchateaudemayenne.fr

Astuces du jardin (crafty ideas for the garden)

Save the peel of any lemons that you squeeze, if you have a *potager* (kitchen-garden). Cut them up into very small pieces and bury them in the garden - they will decompose very quickly and make very good fertilizer. Your plants and vegetables also like lemons!

La Grande Boucle de la Road 53 – Harley Davidson Rally

On Sat. 26th the 9th edition of this motorbike rally takes place in Mayenne (53). Organised by *Le Trait d'Union*, the *maire* of Evron and the Association Wind and Fire, the Road 53 (assembly of Harley-Davidsons) takes a 230 km ride between 9h and 17h30, leaving Evron, going through Bais, Villaines-la-Juhel, Pré-en-Pail, Bagnoles de l'Orne (with a stop), Lassay-les-Châteaux, Aron, La Haie-Traversaine (2hr picnic stop with entertainment), Ambrières-les-Vallées, Gorrion, Ernée, Chailland, Montflours, and returns via Louverné, Argentré, Montsûrs, Vaiges and Sainte-Suzanne. To keep together, the riders will keep to an average speed of 50/60 kph. To take part: 5€ per helmet, 10€ with a passenger. Info and registration from Bruno Beuneux, tel: 06 79 21 89 71, before 18th June.

Geoparc in Carrouges (61)

For the second year, many objects recently discovered in the Carrouges area are on display, and they help to relate how, who and where our ancestors of the *Paléolithique* and *Néolithique* periods lived. The exhibition is at the *Maison du Parc, Le Chapitre*, until Wed. 30th June, 10h-13h & 14h-18h. Free. Ticket reservations: 02 33 81 13 33.

Eiffel Tower goes gold for the Olympics

New paintwork for the *Tour Eiffel* will give it a golden hue for the 2024 Paris Olympics. Workers are scraping off 19 coats of old paint to get rid of today's Eiffel Tower brown and replace it with yellow brown. When built in 1889, it was red.

Sport & Leisure Activities

Balade nature (Nature walk)

On 2nd June, 14h30 to 16h, at Le Tertre Sainte Anne, this is a guided walk (in French) organised by the Domfront Tourist Office. The wooded hill at Le Tertre Sainte Anne will surprise you, with its many secrets, its viewpoint 80m overlooking the river 'La Varenne' and its flora and history. Meet in front of the church Notre Dame-sur-l'Eau (lower part of Domfront). Further details and obligatory reservation at the Domfront Tourist Office (see contact details below) The visit follows all safety measures. Wear strong shoes as there are uneven parts. 4€ per person.

Swimming pool in Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)

This popular open-air swimming pool will not be re-opening in 2021 for sanitary and economic reasons. However, while it is closed important restoration work will be done on the pool. It will re-open in 2022.

Hens are the new top pet in France

The French have a new favourite pet – chickens, with thousands of people buying them during the pandemic. Pet stores recorded a 9% increase in sales of chickens and related products, such as food and runs, as the domestic animal market – worth an annual €5billion – increased by 6%.

Some Tourist Office contact details:

Bagnoles de l'Orne (61)	02 33 37 85 66	www.bagnolesdelorne.com
Domfront (61)	02 33 38 53 97	www.ot-domfront.com
Flers	02 33 65 06 75	www.ornetourisme.com
Fougères	02 99 94 12 20	www.ot-fougeres.fr

And finally: A thief broke into Hetton-le-Hole police station and stole all the officers' spectacles. Police wish to interview a dark grey blur.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

That's all for this month. A few outside visits and ideas here for you to enjoy now that the weather is getting better.

Judy Skinner

e-mail: judithsk@free.fr

Events by the day (not including vide-greniers)

June 2021

Date	Event	Location	Page
Wed. 2nd	<i>Le Tertre Sainte Anne</i> guided walk	near Domfront	7
5th & 6th	<i>Fête de la Saint Médard</i>	St Mars-sur-Colmont	1
Sun. 6th	<i>Rendez-vous aux Jardins en musique</i>	Colombiers-du-Plessis	2
Wed. 9th	Visit to the floral village	Saint-Fraimbault	3
Thurs. 10th	<i>Festival des Chorales</i>	Flers	4
Sat. 12th	Piano recital	Carrouges	4
Sun. 20th	Artists in the gardens	Colombiers-du-Plessis	2
”	Demonstrations of model boats	La Ferté-Macé	3
Wed. 23rd	Organ recital	Bagnoles de l’Orne	4
Fri. 25th	<i>Le Jardin Retiré</i> guided walk	Bagnoles de l’Orne	4
Sat. 26th	Demonstrations of model boats	La Ferté-Macé	3
”	Harley Davidson Rally	230km through Mayenne	6
Tues. 29th	<i>Tour de France</i> arrival	Fougères	1