

NEWS · EVENTS · LEISURE · PROPERTY · TOURISM · FOOD · BUSINESS

## New waste and recycling projects in the Mayenne

The EU has set targets to improve recycling in Europe. By 2025, 55% of municipal waste should be reused or recycled, with a 65% recycling target for packaging waste. However, in a report published in June 2023, the European Commission found that only nine member states are on track to meet the targets including Austria, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic.

According to the Commission, France risks not meeting the general target for municipal waste, with a recycling rate of just 42.7% in 2020. But it's better news for the recycling of wood, cardboard, paper, glass, aluminum, and ferrous metals; France recycled 60% of packaging waste in 2020, close to the 65% EU target.

In 2021, France passed a law on waste that calls for a 100% recycling rate for single-use plastic by 2025. The new law also states that by 1 January 2024, all households must have a practical solution for sorting their bio-waste. France is still paying the EU a so-called "plastic tax" for every kilogram of plastic waste that is not recycled. In 2021, this amounted to more than €1.2 billion.



An app is available to download ([CITEO](#)) that will allow you to scan product barcodes to find out which bin to sort them in. "e-reparation.eco" is a website (in French) to diagnose faults with domestic items and to find where you can have them repaired locally.

**Laval:** On Sunday 15 October 2023, a major repair and reuse event will be held at the Espace Bernard Legodais in St Berthevin. Local craftspeople will be on hand to explain their work and give advice on maintaining objects. Repair vouchers will be up for grabs to help visitors pay for estimates or repairs (provided you live in the Laval Agglo).

**Coevrons:** From January 1, 2024, the drums for household waste will be accessed by presenting a badge, provided beforehand by the Community of communes during sessions organized in the town halls between September and December 2023. Any person not presenting their badge from this date will not be able to deposit their waste in the containers.....more on pages 2 & 3....

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## British Butchers expand with new premises



Elliott's Butchers in Gorrion is well known throughout the department. The first premises opened in March 2014 at 23 rue de Bretagne moving to 8 Place de la Houssaie at the end of 2015. Now, due to the success of their online orders, they have moved to bigger premises: Zone Industrielle des Sapinettes in Gorrion. The official opening day was Tuesday 5th September with all their normal products available as well as a café area. They also have a British grocery selection, with vegan/vegetarian items as well as frozen items such as Aunt Bessie's, Warburtons, McCain products, etc.

You can order online from their website:  
[www.elliottsbocherie.com](http://www.elliottsbocherie.com)



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Email: [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com)  
Printed by Bishops, Walton Rd, Drayton,  
Portsmouth PO6 1TR Angleterre



ISSN 2268-5278 (en ligne) ISSN (Imprimé) en  
attente. Dépôt légal: Octobre 2023 Ne pas jeter  
sur la voie publique/Do not discard on the  
public highway

**The Mayenne 53 Magazine is a FREE  
publication distributed throughout the  
department and aimed at English  
speakers living in or visiting the  
Mayenne.**

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## Rubbish & Recycling News

.....continued from Page 1

The fee for this service will consist of :

A fixed portion/subscription, corresponding to the  
fixed costs of the service (operation of the waste  
collection centres, staff, charges, vehicle  
maintenance, fuel, etc.).

PLUS:

A variable amount based on the number of times  
the containers are opened to deposit a bin bag. A  
minimum number will be systematically invoiced  
per year in order to avoid illegal dumping and the  
use of household waste disposal units in other  
areas. In order to calculate this variable  
component, all households will be issued with a  
badge giving them access to the household waste  
containers and the waste collection centres. Only  
unoccupied dwellings (with proof) will not receive a  
bill as no waste is produced.

Sorting containers for packaging, glass, paper and  
cardboard will remain freely accessible, with no  
deposit limit.

**EDITORIAL:** There were times when it felt like this was never going to happen but, thanks to the support of our advertisers, stockists, readers, and visitors to our website and Facebook page, I'm pleased to introduce you to the second edition of the Mayenne 53 Magazine! Following on from the success of the first edition (thanks to all of you who have contacted me with your lovely comments and feedback), we've managed to double the print run to 4000 for this edition which makes the distribution of the magazine a lot easier. Whilst our Spring/Summer edition introduced you to a variety of attractions and events in the department, our Autumn/Winter edition contains more helpful information about the practicalities of living (full or part-time) in the Mayenne, as well as hints and tips for anyone house-hunting in the department. There's a French Vocabulary word search to get your brain cells working on page 15 and on Page 14 we've introduced a new, regular feature about local history in the Mayenne. If you know an interesting story about the history of your town or village, we'd love to print it in the next issue. Email: [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com) and we'll contact you for more details. Over the next few issues, we'll also be following the renovation story of Guy & Andrea in Juvigné. Another regular feature is our restaurant review courtesy of our incognito trio of food critics: The Three Mousseketeers on page 4. Although this is the last printed issue for 2023, we will publish a special online edition for Christmas and New Year, and next year there will be 3 editions: Spring, Summer, and Autumn/Winter. In between editions, you can catch up on what's happening in the Mayenne by visiting the website or Facebook page. Finally, as a young magazine, we need your help to reach more people so that we can grow our audience and increase our ad revenue to ensure the long-term viability of the magazine. For that reason, I am asking everyone who reads and appreciates the magazine to use the links/QR codes on the back page to "Like", "Follow" or leave a review on any of our social media channels or on our Google Business page. A few seconds of your time can make a big difference to the long-term viability of this magazine. Thanks for all the support, Hayley GILKS (Editor).



Hayley Gilks  
Editor

The 4 recycling centres will also be equipped with access control: Bais, Evron, Sainte-Suzanne-et-Chammes and Montsûrs. You will only be able to enter by presenting your badge, the same as the one allowing you to open the household waste containers. However, there will be no access restrictions or over-billing for households.

**Craon:** The collection of bins is carried out door-to-door. Only the chipped regulatory bins will be collected. Do not put bags next to your bins as they will not be collected.

In the event of a public holiday, the users concerned by this day will be automatically collected the following Saturday (bin to be dropped off on Friday evening). There is currently a project being planned to control access to the waste collection centres using number plate recognition.

**Château-Gontier:** The Communauté de communes will pay 50% of the cost, when you reserve your individual composter at the preferential rate of €35. Visit this page to reserve your composter: <https://forms.office.com/e/eBgGu0GATr>

**Bocage Mayennais:** The installation of equipment to improve the management of waste collection centres is currently underway at the 4 déchetterie sites of the Communauté de Communes du Bocage Mayennais. The new scheme will require you to present a card to a reader located at the entrance to the sites to trigger the opening of the barrier. In the autumn, an explanatory letter accompanied by an access card will be sent by post to all fee-paying users (private individuals and businesses).

**Ernée:** The déchetteries should only be used by residents of the Communautés de Communes of Ernée, see this site for more info:

<https://www.lerneer.fr/au-quotidien/dechets/dechetteries/reglementation/> For composting, you can buy a composter subsidised by the CCE for 20€. Contact Communauté de communes de l'Ernée, Parc d'activités de la Querminais 53500 ERNEE Tel : 02.43.05.98.80 Email : [dechets@lernee.fr](mailto:dechets@lernee.fr)

**Mont des Avaloirs:** To use the déchetteries at La Pallu, Javron-les-Chapelles, Pré-en-Pail, St Pierre des Nids & Villaines-la-Juhel you may need to provide proof of residence in the area. As of the date of going to press, the déchetteries at La Pallu, Javron and St Pierre des Nids are under threat of closure. A decision is expected by the end of September.

You can register to receive a free composter (+ 1-hour introductory session "How to compost") by filling in the form here: <https://forms.office.com/e/uWLM68DFPN>

From January 2024, the CC of Mont des Avaloirs will be introducing a badge system for accessing the containers for household waste. This will be included in the annual 'Ordures' bill until January 2025 when it will become a "pay as you go" system and residents will be charged for the amount of waste that they dispose of.

Contact: [accueil@cc-montdesavaloirs.fr](mailto:accueil@cc-montdesavaloirs.fr) for more information about this scheme.

**Meslay-Grez:** To reserve your free compost bin, send an email with your contact details to: [prevention.dechets@paysmeslaygrez.fr](mailto:prevention.dechets@paysmeslaygrez.fr)

**Mayenne:** A guide to rubbish and recycling in CC Mayenne (in French) is available here: <https://www.calameo.com/books/0065785977b1bb81ead6>



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# NEWS IN THE MAYENNE

## Héritage Mayenne 2024

As part of the national sports program to celebrate the 2024 Olympics in France; the Mayenne Departmental Council is investing 8 million euros in developing the department's sports facilities. Another 1.5 million euros in funding is coming from the National Sports Agency.

The ambitious project plans to build 33 basketball courts (3 x 3), 23 "5-a-side" football pitches, 22 "Short Tennis" courts, 2 "Pumptracks", and one rollerskate course. There will also be investment to improve existing sports facilities.

**3 x 3 Basketball** was created in 2011; each team consists of 4 players (3 on the court and 1 substitute). Matches last 10 minutes or until one team scores 21 points.

**5-a-side Football** is played on a 25m x 15m pitch (indoor or outside). The match is played over 2 halves of 25 minutes with the winning team scoring the most goals at the end. It is a non-contact sport so all contact, attacks from behind, and tackles are considered fouls.

**"Padel"** (Short Tennis/Mini Tennis) is played between 2 teams of 2. In general, games follow the rules and scoring of tennis and are played over 3 sets. The rackets have shorter handles than traditional tennis rackets and the balls can be softer (lower bounce) depending on participants' ages.

**"Pumptracks"** are off-road circuits. The track is made up of alternating small bumps, banked turns, and larger bumps allowing jumps. It is generally used by mountain bikes and BMX but can also be used by skateboards, rollerblades, and scooters.

**"Piste de Roller"** is an oval course for roller skating although other wheeled devices can be permitted to use it (such as scooters, skateboards, etc.).

**For more information, visit: <https://bit.ly/heritagemayenne2024>**



The EuroMayenne Association was the brainchild of Elisabeth de Quenétain in 1991. A year earlier she had travelled to London to take part in The French Property Exhibition organised by the Daily Telegraph and promote the Mayenne department.

The association aims to welcome new English-speaking residents to the department and provide them with local information about living and working in the Mayenne. The association also organises events and activities where French & and English speakers can meet and get to know each other.

In April 1995 the association held the first EuroMayenne Fair at Brecé, the event proved so popular it became an annual fixture. In 1996 it was held in Ambrières-les-Vallées, and in 1997 Chatillon-sur-Colmont. In 1998 the event was held in Mayenne as part of "British Week" (a tourism initiative by the town council). Due to the success of that year, the event has been held in Mayenne every year until 2019 when the Hall des Expositions was destroyed in a fire.

### Dates to remember!

#### Monthly Teas:

Patrimoine du Pays de Mayenne,  
130 Rue de la Visitation,  
53100 Mayenne  
3.30pm - 4.30pm  
Thursday October 5th  
Thursday November 2nd  
Thursday December 7th  
Thursday January 4th (2024)

#### Monthly Walks:

Wednesday 18th October:  
Gesnes  
Wednesday 15th November:  
Ambrières

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
UPCOMING EVENTS, SEE WEBSITE.**

Membership numbers have waxed and waned over the years and currently stand at 202. About two-thirds are British/Anglophone with a mix of those still working and those who have retired. The other third are French people who enjoy being able to socialise internationally whilst on home territory.

There are various regular events such as the monthly Afternoon Teas at the Maison des Association in Mayenne, informal English & and French conversational workshops in Mayenne and Laval, and an Assistance Volunteer Group to help any members in their hour of need. Once a month, an outing to local places of interest is organised as well as an annual program of events such as BBQs, a dinner/dance, plant swaps, etc. Annual membership fees for an individual are 15€ and 25€ for a family. To find out more about the association or to join, please visit the website:

**[www.euromayenne.org](http://www.euromayenne.org)**

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(Please note that services are available in English for our British community in France.)



Executive Members (from left) Paul PUNCHARD, Georges PLESSIS, Nicole DEVEL-LAIGLE (President), & Ian WATSON



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# EATING OUT IN THE MAYENNE

## *The Three Mousseketeers review*

**Aux Saisons, 2 Place de Hercé, 53100 Mayenne**

**Date of review: 25th August 2023**



Finding a restaurant to review in France during the month of August is no easy feat! Many are closed for their annual holiday. The ones that are open are heavily oversubscribed and you must book well in advance, no spur-of-the-moment lunch outings! And so, we happened across the "Aux Saisons" restaurant, Place de Hercé, Mayenne.

François Beaugars, a 54-year-old from Mayenne, and Remy Saudrais, a 56-year-old from Changé, opened their restaurant in May 2023 after re-training at the Ferrandi Culinary School. The former banking executives have known each other for around thirty years.

The ethos of the restaurant is to offer local, seasonal produce, freshly prepared in an ever-changing menu (no 2 days are the same). Logistically, this means your tastebuds can have vastly different experiences if you go on different days. What will always stay the same, we suspect, is the welcome and service you will receive.

Myself and "Aramis" arrived early and opted to have an aperitif (Kir Cassis) on the terrace whilst we waited for "Porthos"; this set the tone for the rest of our experience.... Clearly, nothing was too much trouble for our hosts. As soon as our friend arrived, we were shown to our table and perused the menu while "Porthos" caught up on the aperitifs with a mellow, single malt whiskey.

Messrs Beaugars & Saudrais alternate between kitchen and table duties; no haughty chefs here, simply 2 enthusiasts keen to share the finest details of their menu. They have also chosen some delightful wines to accompany your meal and the Sauvignon Blanc was top-notch! What the menu lacked in choice, it gained in flavour. There was no choice for the entrée but the delicately flavoured tomato salad was a resounding success with all in our party. The "plat du jour" was either Salade Auvergnate or Salade Norvégienne.

As our hosts explained, the recent heatwave had encouraged them to include more salads, but to have 2 salads on the same day was atypical. Both salads were delicious but perhaps a little lacking in bells and whistles for those with an undeserving palette. Dessert was a polenta and peach affair which didn't hold any surprises but "Aramis" was pleased to find a gluten-free dessert. "Chef" is more than happy to cater to specific dietary needs so don't hesitate to mention these when booking.

Coffees all around to finish off and a promise to return to chart the evolution of this Mayenne eatery! No pretensions at "Aux Saisons" but plenty of ambition from 2 chefs who aren't afraid to ask, and listen to, feedback from their clients.

**Ratings: Food: 7 Service: 9 Décor: 8 Ambiance: 9 Hygiene: 10 Value: 7**

The restaurant is open Monday to Friday for Lunch (11.45 am-2 pm) and Friday Evenings. At the time of going to press, prices are: Lunch - Entrée, Plat & Dessert 18€, Dinner - Entrée, Plat & Dessert 23€

**Quote: A good restaurant is like a vacation; it transports you, and it becomes a lot more than just about the food. Philip Rosenthal**



**Restaurant Aux Saisons**  
2 Place de Hercé, 53100 Mayenne  
Reservations by phone/SMS: 06 72 11 58 92  
<https://www.instagram.com/auxsaisons.mayenne>



*La Joie*

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4.8 ★★★★★ Google Reviews

1 rue Corbeau Paris  
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is

A quaint teashop serving light lunches, homemade cakes and treats alongside a selection of hot & cold drinks



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This traditional teashop in the centre of Gorrion offers a range of light lunches and desserts all through the day. From traditional Full English Breakfasts (made with sausages and bacon from Bacon by the Box) to High Tea, there's a large choice of classic British food and drink suitable for all the family. Steph and her team are happy to cater to specific dietary needs such as vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free.

As well as providing food for the soul, they also organise regular events celebrating British and French occasions. From a Jubilee Street Party to Craft Fairs, the local French people have embraced the ex-pat community

around Gorrion (one of the most popular areas of the Mayenne for British property owners in the department).

Steph also makes special occasion cakes to order for Weddings, Birthdays, Anniversaries etc.

On Sunday the 10th of December Une Tasse De Bonheur will be holding a Christmas Street Fayre, with food, music, dancing, roasted chestnuts, mulled wine and stalls selling lots of gifts and cards.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE TEAROOM:  
PHONE/SMS: 33 6 28 23 26 86**

# HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## Massage du Bien-Être 53370 Gesvres\*

Philip, 42 and originally from Leominster in Herefordshire, moved to the Mayenne with his partner Pablo in 2020, in the middle of the Covid crisis. Having visited Brittany for many years and after staying with friends in the Mayenne they came across a house for sale in Gesvres and bought it as a holiday home project. As the implications of Brexit became clear, they decided to jump in with both feet and sell their home in UK and moved to Gesvres, in search of a more relaxed lifestyle in warmer weather.

In the UK, Philip has worked in the care industry and in London's West End theatre sector.

Several years ago, he retrained as a massage therapist (CMT) and has now opened his own treatment room in the grounds of their home in Gesvres. Like many people setting up a business in

France, Philip used the services of a "Hand-Holder": SOS Anglo (see the article on Page 6) who made his transition to full-time resident and business owner so easy. Now Philip is concentrating on improving his French by watching French TV and listening to the radio in his car. In fact, he already has several regular French clients as well as English-speaking ones. Although habitable, the house was in need of updating and Philip's biggest challenge was trying to complete a renovation and open a massage salon without destroying his hands! Building work is hard on the skin, but thankfully the renovation is complete now and Philip stocks an excellent selection of oils to nourish the skin! In fact, before he starts any massage treatment, he will talk to his clients about their lifestyle and health and select the best combination of oils with aromatherapy properties for each individual.

### Deep Tissue Massage

It targets chronic tension in muscles that lie far below the body's surface. Deep muscle techniques involve slow strokes, direct pressure, or friction movements that go across the muscle grain. The aim of deep tissue massage is not to leave you feeling relaxed and full of bliss; but to tackle particular physical, and muscular problems.

### Swedish Massage with Facial Cleanse

A classic massage, it aims to promote relaxation by releasing muscle tension. Swedish massage is gentler than deep tissue massage and better suited for people interested in relaxation and tension relief. Includes a three-stage facial cleanse with Dermalogica professional products.

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## The benefits of massage

One of the immediate benefits of massage is a feeling of deep relaxation and calmness. This is thought to occur because massage prompts the release of endorphins, the brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that produce feelings of well-being and relaxation. It is also thought that levels of stress hormones, such as adrenalin, cortisol, and norepinephrine, are also reduced.

Some of the physical benefits of massage may include:

- **Muscles** – Reduces and releases tension, increase oxygen, increase blood flow, and relieve pain
- **Skeletal System** – Improves posture, and eases joint pain and mobility.
- **Blood circulation** – Increases oxygen levels, and blood flow, and removes CO2.
- **Lymphatic circulation** – Helps remove toxins and waste, can aid the production of antibodies, could improve the immune system, and reduce water retention.
- **Skin** – Stimulates the release of collagen.
- **Metabolism** – Can help with cellular renewal.
- **Urinary System** – Helps to remove toxins from the kidneys and bladder.
- **Nervous System** – This can stimulate and soothe the nervous system and could improve brain function.
- **Digestive System** – Can increase digestive ability, and aid constipation, IBS, and bloating.
- **Respiratory System** – Increases oxygen levels, helps to break down mucous, improves gaseous exchange, increases lung capacity, and regulates breathing.
- **Endocrine and Reproductive System** – Can aid regulation and production of hormones for fertility, emotional well-being, and self-esteem.

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### Hot Stone Massage

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To make an appointment,  
contact Philip  
by phone: 07 57 06 39 45  
Email: philip\_symonds@me.com  
or via Facebook & Instagram

[https://www.instagram.com/massage\\_du\\_bienetre/](https://www.instagram.com/massage_du_bienetre/)  
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(please note the term 'massage' is not a therapeutic act)

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## VILLAGE FOCUS:

### Chailland 53420



Total Area of Commune: 35.86 km<sup>2</sup>

Population: 1,144

Density: 32 people/km<sup>2</sup>

Chailland is a small village located 25 km north of Laval surrounded by rolling hills, forests, and farmland. The Ernée River winds its way through the historic centre, watched over by the "Vierge du Rocher" (Virgin of the Rock). This statue of the Virgin Mary was financed by public subscription. The bronzed, cast-iron statue weighs 630kg and was created in the Tusey foundry in the Meuse region. It was carried up to the rocky outcrop, to the North of the village, in 1913.

The church of Notre Dame de l'Assomption was built in 1892 on the same site as the old church. The new building, designed by Eugène Hawke, features a set of listed stained glass windows by Auguste Alleaume of Laval.

Local commerce includes 2 Restaurants, a bakery, a hairdresser, a bar-tabac, an Estate Agency and a small supermarket. The Mairie also acts as the local post office. There are 2 primary schools, 1 catholic and 1 state school. The town of Ernée is 10km to the north where you will find several supermarkets, secondary schools, a swimming pool, a cinema and other leisure facilities.

Chailland also has a bus service to Laval where you can catch a non-stop TGV train to Paris (travel time 1 hour 12 minutes). Property prices are generally higher south of Ernée due to being "commuter distance" from Laval, but you can still buy a small house in the village centre for under 100,000€. New houses being built to the North-West of the village are priced at 170,000€.

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# PROPERTY

Thinking about buying a house in France? Post-Brexit restrictions may affect you. Speak to an expert first!

If you ask anyone "What's the worst thing about living in France?" you'll most likely get the same answer: the bureaucracy and paperwork. Even the French complain about it!

Sometimes it feels like the civil service devise new ways every week to make life more complicated. And if you're not a native speaker, the paperwork can feel insurmountable.



**Valérie Roger, SOS Anglo**

That's why you'll hear many ex-pats talking about "Hand-Holders". These are administrative experts who will help you navigate the most complicated French systems of income tax, health care, pensions, benefits, driving licenses, etc.

In Chatillon-sur-Colmont, in the north of the department, Valerie Roger has been helping all nationalities since 2006 when she set up her business SOS Anglo. With 17 years of experience under her belt, she has handled just about every administrative crisis you can think of. And since Brexit, she has also dealt with a whole host of new admin hoops that ex-pats have to jump through.

Moving to a country where English is not widely spoken can cause all sorts of problems. Things that you found easy in your home country will seem to take forever and many people are not prepared for the culture shock of dealing with French bureaucracy. The French government will not provide translators when you make a claim for child benefit. Neither will they be particularly sympathetic towards any misunderstandings due to language issues. The onus is on you to make sure you fully comply with French law and practices.

Recently the French government has made a significant investment to move towards online applications and procedures. Even the French struggle, so a nationwide network of help centres has been created. "France Services" offices are a free service where you can go to get help with the many online processes. Your local advisor may speak some English but a smartphone with a translation app will help a lot! See page 9 for more info.

For those who want the peace of mind of getting it all right the first time, a hand-holder like Valerie can be a lifesaver! From the moment you have the idea to move to the Mayenne (or anywhere in France), Valerie can save you time and money by sourcing a shortlist of properties that meet your criteria as well as visiting them on your behalf. With the price of cross-channel travel and the post-Brexit travel limits (only 90 out of every 180 days can be spent in Europe), it can make sense to get Valerie and her team to coordinate your property search. Depending on your situation, you may need to start your visa application before you find your dream home. You may also need to provide a business plan or start a business to validate your visa application, all of which SOS Anglo can help with.

One of the biggest concerns for new arrivals is how to register in the health care system. Whilst the French Health Service is extremely good, it too has a generous supply of forms, procedures, and administrative hoops. SOS Anglo can coordinate a smooth transition for retirees leaving the UK and coming to France with an S1 certificate so that your medical care won't be interrupted. And if you are of working age then they can help you set up a business or register you with "Pole Emploi" to help you find work.

Having seasoned professionals like the SOS Anglo team on your side can really make a difference in your first year. Not only can Valerie help everything go smoothly, but she can also advise you on how to avoid costly mistakes. Many of her clients retain her services even after they've learned French and are well-established here, keeping their stress levels low and the French civil service at bay!

**SOS**  
**ANGLO**

Contact SOS Anglo TODAY:

email: [valerie@sosanglo.com](mailto:valerie@sosanglo.com) Phone: +33 (0) 971 429 051  
Mobile: +33 (0) 667 536 447 or Skype: [valerieforsosanglo](https://www.skype.com/people/valerieforsosanglo)

# FOR SALE

## Average house prices in the Mayenne per m<sup>2</sup> (Aug 2023)

Land Area (m <sup>2</sup> ) ↓	Habitable Area (m <sup>2</sup> )			
	Less than 80	80 - 99	100 - 139	140+
500	1341€	1639€	1530€	1200€
500 - 999	1624€	1759€	1734€	1530€
1000+	1351€	1516€	1503€	1471€

Figures provided by <https://www.ouestfrance-immobilier.com/evolution-prix-immobilier-vente/maison-mayenne/>

## Mayenne Property Update

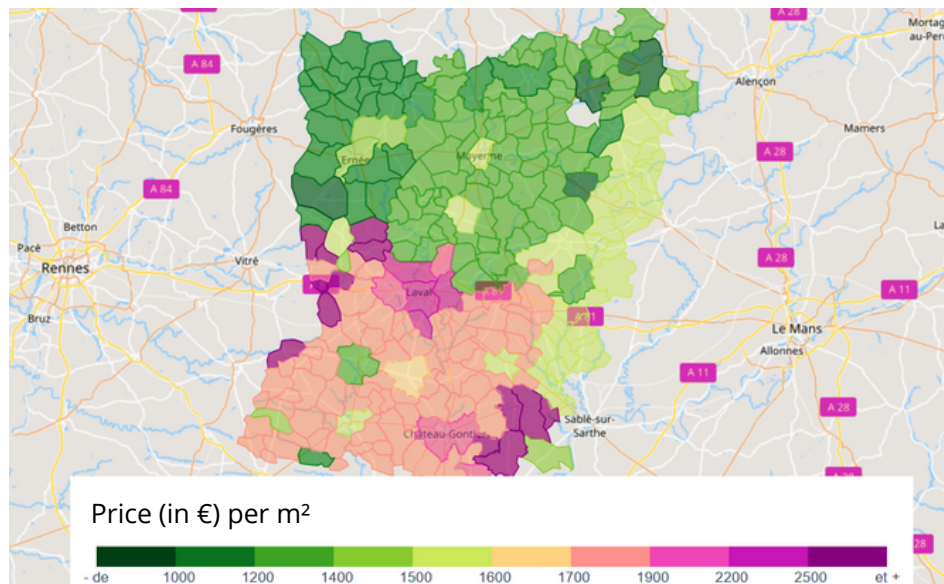
The local housing market has remained buoyant in 2023 with demand outstripping supply. The average house price per m<sup>2</sup> of houses put up for sale in August 2023 was €1,544, a significant rise of 9.2% over the previous 12 months. Prices in the north of the department have seen a slower increase compared to properties south of Ernée. The introduction of new PLUs (Plan Local d'Urbanisme) has seen a reduction in agricultural buildings available for conversion into habitation so cheap renovation projects in the countryside are getting harder to find. The post-COVID boom continues with buyers still coming from Paris, Belgium, Holland, Germany, America, and of course the UK. The project to supply high-speed internet to every home in the department continues to boost the attractiveness of the Mayenne to prospective buyers. According to a report in April 2023, 97% of the department can now access Fibre Optic Internet with the goal of 100% availability set for the end of the year. To find out if your property can be connected, visit: <https://www.mayenne-fibre.fr>

## The French Property Market 2023

Nationally, the sales of new houses fell by more than 31.3% last year, according to Pôle Habitat. This is mainly due to the huge increases in the price of construction materials in the wake of the war in Ukraine and the surge in energy prices. There has also been a drop in the number of building permit authorizations issued by mayors. At the end of June, this figure was down 19.6% over one year, according to figures from the Ministry of Ecological Transition.

The amount of property transactions in total over the last 12 months has dropped by 15% compared to 2022, equating to 150,000 fewer transactions nationwide.

An added complication is the introduction of new rules for properties with high energy consumption and high emission levels, with many owners preferring to put their F and G-classified properties up for sale rather than renovating them. This has led to a shortage of rental properties, particularly in bigger towns and cities.



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[daniela.weiss@safti.fr](mailto:daniela.weiss@safti.fr)

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Email: [contact@bj-immobilier.fr](mailto:contact@bj-immobilier.fr)

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Estate Agency

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**Maia Malpas**

Tel: 06.42.39.31.42

[maia.malpas@iadfrance.fr](mailto:maia.malpas@iadfrance.fr)



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# MOVING TO

Franklins  
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## How to benefit from the customs exemption for importing your personal property into France.

Removals to France is our most popular service and destination. We regularly transport to/from Normandy, Brittany, Pays de la Loire, Poitou-Charente, Limousin, Aquitaine, Midi-Pyrénées, Auvergne, and other areas of France. We offer a bespoke service to each client, including packing services and dismantling/reassembly services. We are able to transport vehicles, including small tractors, mini-diggers, sit-on mowers, and trailers.

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We offer a dedicated load services or a part load service, so if you only have one or two items to transport this can be arranged. If you wish to purchase items in the UK, we can accept delivery directly into our storage facility for you, for later delivery to your overseas home. For the most complete removals to France from the UK service, choose Franklins Removals!

Planning your move, with or without our help

Numerous crucial factors come into play in planning for the UK to Europe removals. Among these is the selection of the right removal company. Thorough research is essential, examining the company's experience in dealing with international removals, its reputation, and the services it provides.

Preparing a comprehensive inventory of your belongings is paramount. This facilitates smoother customs procedures and helps track your items during the move. Accurate labeling of the boxes is another key element for easy identification. Legalities and regulations for UK to Europe removals also play a pivotal role. Every country has unique import restrictions and duties. Familiarise yourself with these, liaising with your chosen removal company or a legal professional as needed.

Lastly, consider the cost. It's good to aim for affordable services, you should look to choose a removal company that cares about quality of service and security. Seek multiple quotes, make comparisons, and select the most appropriate package for your move.

Embarking on a move from the UK to Europe can be a monumental task. However, with careful planning and consideration of the factors mentioned, the process can be simplified and less daunting.

**Thinking of choosing Franklins Removals to help with your move?**

**Contact us today: Telephone: +44 121 353 7263**

**WhatsApp: +44 753 852 0193**

**Email: [sales@franklinsremovals.co.uk](mailto:sales@franklinsremovals.co.uk)**

**[www.franklinsremovals.co.uk](http://www.franklinsremovals.co.uk)**

To benefit from the exemption from customs duties for goods entering France, you must meet the following conditions :

- You have been living in a non-EU country for at least 1 year
- You are transferring your main residence (called "normal" by customs) to France. Your goods must not enter France to furnish a secondary residence.
- You have owned these assets for at least 6 months
- You import your goods within 12 months of settling in France
- You agree not to sell or rent your goods for 1 year after their entry into France

When going through customs on entering France, you must present the following documents :

- A detailed inventory, including estimated values, of the property and movable objects that you plan to transfer to France.
- If you import your personal vehicle, the registration certificate, or any other equivalent document.
- Any document proving that you have your main residence in a country outside the EU and that you are settling in France (invoices, property tax declaration or notice, etc.). Before your departure from abroad, you can request a change of residence certificate from the French consulate in your country.
- You must provide customs with a document proving that you have a property in France to move to (electricity bill, gas bill, lease contract, rent receipt, property tax notice, housing tax).

## GETTING A VISA FOR FRANCE:

by Sarah MacGILCHRIST  
from France Expat Assistance

In the post-Brexit era, long-term residence in France now requires a visa and some planning. I have been told France has over 200 types of visas, many of them specific to certain treaties with other countries (Russia, Australia, Canada, etc.). For the purposes of this article, I shall be just dealing with visas likely to concern the English-speaking world.

For Short Stay Visas UK is part of a group of countries that enjoy a visa waiver with the Schengen Zone. That is, there is no obligation for a formal visa application, but the conditions of the visa are the same as those countries that do have this obligation.

There are rules. In particular, you cannot stay more than 90 days out of 180 at any one time. Long Stay Visas – Beyond the 90/180 stay scenario, you are going to need to make a visa application for a Long Stay Visa. Basically, for the usual requirements of UK passport holders, these visas can be divided up into two groups, visas for staying permanently in France and visas for staying in France temporarily from 90 days to a year.

For second homeowners who wish to come and go without too many constraints relating to the 90-day rule, the optimal solution is to get a 6-month Long Stay Temporary Visa, and then use your 90-day allowance which gives you 9 months freedom to come and go and, for your health care, you can use your EHIC card for the visa and the 90 days, instead of incurring the expense of private health care.

For people wishing to settle in France for a long period or permanently, they will need to apply for a Permanent Long Stay Visa. For retirees or early retirees, a Permanent Long Stay Visitor's visa is the usual solution. For people receiving a UK state pension, you can use your S1 to cover your health care obligations. If you want to have a professional activity, things are a bit more complicated.

Visas that allow the pursuit of professional activities are divided into two groups, visas for salaried work and visas for self-employment. And both groups have several different options depending on how you intend to pursue this activity.

For employment, you will in many cases have to find an employer who is willing to sponsor you and apply for a work permit. For a basic salaried worker's visa, the employer will very probably have to advertise the job for three weeks to see if a suitable French or EU candidate is available before they can offer a UK citizen the job. There are nevertheless situations where this is not always the case. For self-employment, you have to have your business plan approved by a government body before you apply for your visa.

It is possible to change from a visitor's visa to a working visa, but it takes some forethought and planning.

**For more advice on visa applications, contact Sarah by email:**

**[france.expat.assistance@gmail.com](mailto:france.expat.assistance@gmail.com) [www.fepa.fr](http://www.fepa.fr) [www.facebook.com/franceexpatassistance](https://www.facebook.com/franceexpatassistance)**





# THE MAYENNE?

## New arrivals.....

Historically, the Mayor of a town or village has been a very important figure and responsible for most of the amenities, taxes, and day-to-day life. Since 1992, 992 Communauté de Communes have been created in France to oversee certain governmental responsibilities. The Mayenne department has 9 "Communautés", with just one commune in the south-east of the department (Bouessay) included in the Communauté de communes du Pays Sabolien (Dept 72). Typically the "Communautés" exercise powers in the following areas:

- development of areas for carrying out actions of community interest;
- economic development;
- management of aquatic environments and flood prevention;
- creation, development, maintenance, and management of reception areas for Travelers;
- collection and treatment of household waste;
- wastewater treatment;
- water supplies.

The community of municipalities may also be responsible for:

- protection and enhancement of the environment;
- housing and living environment policy;
- Town planning;
- creation, development, and maintenance of roads;
- construction, maintenance, and operation of cultural and sports facilities for education;



That's not to say that the local Mayor has no real power, he is responsible for policing his town or village and is expected to mediate in neighbour disputes amongst many other civic duties. Not so long ago, it was expected of newcomers to go and introduce themselves to the local Mayor. Now it is usual to present yourselves to the Mayor's secretary to make sure you are registered as living in the commune. And if you only live here part-time it's a good idea to make sure that the Mayor's office have your contact details in case of any issues with your property while you are absent.

## Communautés de Communes of the Mayenne

Communauté d'agglomération Laval	Communauté de communes du Bocage Mayennais
Agglomération	Communauté de communes de l'Ernée
Communauté de communes du Pays de Craon	Communauté de communes des Coëvrons
Communauté de communes du Pays de Château-Gontier	Communauté de communes du Mont des Avaloirs
Communauté de communes du Pays de Meslay-Grez	Communauté de communes du Pays Sabolien
Communauté de communes Mayenne	Communauté de communes du Pays Sabolien
Communauté de communes du Pays Sabolien	Communauté de communes du Pays Sabolien

(1 commune en Mayenne)



**France services**

"France Services" centres have been set up across the

department to support you in all your daily administrative procedures within a one-stop shop. The objective is to offer a wide range of services to the public, in particular in rural areas.

Their aims are:

- to provide information (answers to questions, support for day-to-day administrative procedures such as benefit applications, tax forms, renewal of identity papers, driving license and car registration document, etc.)
- help people use the internet/technology (creation of an e-mail address, printing or scanning of documents necessary for the compiling of administrative files, etc.)
- assistance with online procedures (browsing websites, simulation of benefits, requesting documents online, etc.)
- advisory services for the resolution of certain problems by referring to partner networks.

To find your nearest office, check out our website: <https://mayenne53.com/directory/france-services/>

## Attending primary school in the Mayenne

From the age of 3, a child must be enrolled in school, except in the case of Home-schooling which has been approved by the Education Authority.

This applies from the start of the school year in the calendar year in which the child reaches the age of 3. For example, if your child was born in December 2020 then school would be compulsory from the beginning of September 2023.

Children aged 2 can also be admitted to nursery school under certain conditions (toilet-trained and able to communicate clearly and understand basic instructions, etc.) and subject to availability.

If you live near 2 public schools, you can enroll your child in one or the other of these schools, even if you don't live in that commune. In some sectors, catchment areas have been introduced so you should check at your local Mairie. But even if you don't live in the catchment zone you can still ask the Mairie for a certificate of exemption to enable your child to attend your school of choice.

Normally, your child should be registered no later than the month of June preceding the start of the school year. Registrations are generally accepted from the beginning of March.

You will need to provide the following documents:

Document proving your identity and that of your child (family record book, identity card, passport, copy of birth certificate or sworn certificate)

Recent proof of address. (e.g. copy of a utility bill or an "Attestation de Domicile" from the Mairie).

Once the registration has been completed, the town hall will issue you a certificate indicating the school where the child is registered.

If you encounter difficulties registering your child, you can contact the national education services in the Mayenne: DSDEN de Mayenne, Cité administrative - rue Mac Donald - BP 3851, 53030 Laval Cedex. Tel : 02 43 67 30 00 - fax : 02 43 67 30 57 Email: [ce.ia49@ac-nantes.fr](mailto:ce.ia49@ac-nantes.fr)

To complete the registration process, you must go to the school indicated on the registration certificate as soon as you obtain it. The school will also require proof that your child has received the compulsory vaccinations for their age or a medical certificate exempting them from a vaccination on medical grounds.

The maximum fine for non-attendance is 1500€.

## Here are some tips for helping your child adjust to French school:

**1.** Read books or watch movies about children who have moved to new countries. This can help your child to feel less alone and more prepared for what they are about to experience.

**2.** Help your child to learn some French phrases. Teach them to count to ten in French, how to say "I don't understand" and how to say "Yes please" and "No thank you".

**3.** Visit the school before the first day. This will help your child get familiar with the school and the surroundings. It will also give them a chance to meet some of their new teachers and classmates.

**4.** Put post-it notes on everyday items in your house with the French translation written on them and try to use these words in your daily conversations.

**5.** Help your child to make friends: visit local places where they can mix with French children such as swimming pools, parks, libraries, and even fast-food restaurants!

Most importantly, celebrate your child's successes, no matter how small. This will help them to stay motivated and positive during this challenging time.

To connect with other families in the area, join the Mayenne Group for English Speakers Facebook group or contact EuroMayenne (see the article on Page 3). The association is presently looking for native English-speaking families with young children living in the Mayenne Dept. to create a new group with the aim of meeting other families, having linguistic interactions and to organise appropriate activities.

For more information, please phone: 06 73 71 96 52 or email: [contact@euromayenne.org](mailto:contact@euromayenne.org)

# RENOVATING.....

## Drainage inspections and regulations

When you buy a property in France, you will sign 2 contracts:

- The Compromis or Promesse
- The Acte de Vente

At (or before) the signing of the first contract, you will receive all the diagnostics reports for the property including the drainage system report. You will have a 10-day cooling-off period to withdraw from the purchase (without penalty) during which you should carefully examine all the diagnostic reports.

### The drainage report:

If the property is connected to the main drainage, the report will show the conformity of the connection to the main drainage system and the rainwater disposal system.

If the property has a septic tank the SPANC (Public Service for Non-Collective Sanitation) will check the proper functioning of the sanitation system and the risk of harm to the environment.

### Main Drainage/Assainissement Collectif

Most village/town houses will receive a positive report, with all houses connected to the main sewer systems in the 1970s/80s. But occasionally, if a house has not changed ownership for decades, it is possible that it still has an old cesspit system. In this case, you will need to investigate the costs involved in connecting it to the main sewer system.

The report will also investigate what happens to the rainwater. Village/town sewage treatment plants often get inundated with water during rainstorms due to domestic rainwater being collected into a house's "main drains" connection. Downpipes from all guttering should be connected to the storm drains on the public highway. In the event of an anomaly, the correction is usually inexpensive and should be the responsibility of the vendor.

Local Mairies take this matter very seriously and will expect the work to be carried out promptly. In some cases, a reduction in the price of the property can be negotiated to allow the buyer to finance the work.

### Individual drainage systems(Septic Tanks)/Assainissement Non-Collectif

If the property you are buying does not have a conforming system, you will have 12 months from signing the Acte de Vente to install a new system. In the Mayenne, there has been a delay in inspections for many years but the SPANC has recruited more staff and is catching up with the backlog. If you do not follow the recommendations of SPANC, you risk a fine of around twice the sanitation inspection fee.

If you still don't replace or repair the drainage system and the SPANC deems your installation dangerous for humans during the inspection visit, it can refer the issue to the Mairie and it will then become a legal matter. If significant pollution is proven you could incur a fine of up to 75,000 euros as well as a two-year prison sentence.

### Traditional septic tank system:

This involves the collection of all household wastewater into a tank. The solids sink to the bottom and the liquids pass through a filter and then into a large underground filter bed. The size of the tank will depend on the total estimated waste produced by the house, based on the maximum number of inhabitants.

### Micro stations

Microsystems are designed to fully treat all waste. The liquid produced after filtration is around 99% devoid of pollutants. A permanent electrical connection is required and a micro-station is not suitable for a holiday home. The advantage is that there is generally no requirement for an additional filter bed, so these are the most space-saving of all the systems.

### Other systems

There are other types of waste treatment, including compost systems and reed beds, but some SPANC branches don't accept these alternatives. Speak to your local SPANC branch who will put you in touch with approved professionals who can design the best system for your situation.

### Funding aid

Several schemes are available to allow property owners to finance the upgrading of their individual drainage systems. You can apply for a grant from the ANAH (National Housing Agency) or an interest-free loan from the CAF (Child/Family Benefit organisation)

### Installation of a new system

You can do the work yourself. However, you will need to contact your local SPANC office to get a list of experts who will do a soil test (étude du sol) and create a plan for the new installation.

**Before starting the work, you must present your project to the SPANC who will approve or make recommendations for amending your project. The SPANC will then provide a certificate of compliance with the relevant regulations for you to attach to your building permit application at the Mairie.**

**After the system has been installed SPANC will return to make a 2nd inspection of the installation BEFORE you can start backfilling and landscaping.**

## For more information about water and drainage issues, contact your local office:

Syndicat D'eau Du Nord Ouest Mayennais  
5 Pl. de la Mairie, 53120 Gorrion  
Tel : 0243051329 [spanc53@gmail.com](mailto:spanc53@gmail.com)

SIAEP de Colmont Mayenne et Varenne (Syndicat Intercommunal d'Alimentation en Eau Potable)  
2 Pl. du Château, 53300 Ambrières-les-Vallées  
Tel : 0243082704

Service des Eaux  
Hôtel communautaire  
1 place du Général Ferrière  
CS 60809  
53000, LAVAL  
Tel: 02 43 49 43 11

Service Eau et Assainissement de la Communauté de Communes Pays de Craon  
1 Rue de Buchenberg  
BP 71  
53400 Craon  
Tel : 02 43 06 14 03 [eau@paysdecraon.fr](mailto:eau@paysdecraon.fr)

Le Syndicat de Gestion de l'Eau, de l'Assainissement et de l'Urbanisme (Azé, Château-Gontier Bazouges et Saint-Fort) Tel: 02 43 09 55 71

Meslay Grez Service Public d'Assainissement Non-Collectif (SPANC)  
Tel : 02 43 90 53 48 [spanc@paysmeslaygrez.fr](mailto:spanc@paysmeslaygrez.fr)

Mayenne : Communauté de communes  
Tel : 02 43 30 21 48  
[spanc@mayennecommunaute.fr](mailto:spanc@mayennecommunaute.fr)

Service Eau et Assainissement  
69 rue de la Querminais, Parc d'activités de la Querminais  
53500 ERNEE  
Tel : 0249661000

Régie des Eaux des Coëvrons  
8 Boulevard du Maréchal Leclerc,  
53600 Évron  
Tel : 0243016135 [contact@eau-coevrons.fr](mailto:contact@eau-coevrons.fr)

Secrétariat du Service Technique de la Communauté de Communes du Mont des Avaloirs  
Tel : 0243301111 [service-eau@cc-montdesavaloirs.fr](mailto:service-eau@cc-montdesavaloirs.fr)

Céline Talineau, services techniques de la Communauté de communes du Pays sabolien  
Tel : 0243625040

# DIGGER MAN

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# IN THE MAYENNE

## \*Installing a septic tank drainage system?

Looking after your fosse septique is crucial to prevent contamination, health risks, and costly repairs, while also maintaining property value and adhering to regulations. Regular maintenance safeguards both your well-being and the environment.

Here are 5 things you should never put in your fosse septique (septic system) to protect both the system and the surrounding ecosystem:

- **Grease and Cooking Oil:** These substances can clog pipes and hinder bacterial activity, leading to system failure and potential harm to the local ecosystem.
- **Chemicals and Harsh Cleaners:** Chemicals can disrupt the natural balance of bacteria in the tank, impairing the treatment process and affecting the delicate ecosystem.
- **Non-Biodegradable Items:** Items like nappies, feminine hygiene products, and paper towels don't break down and can cause blockages, impacting the system and potentially polluting the ecosystem.
- **Medications and Pharmaceuticals:** These can harm the beneficial bacteria, seep into the environment, and have detrimental effects on the local ecosystem and water sources.
- **Excessive Water:** Overloading the system with excessive water usage, such as running multiple appliances simultaneously, can strain the septic system, reducing its effectiveness and potentially affecting the local ecosystem's water quality.

By avoiding these items, you not only ensure the proper functioning of your fosse septique but also contribute to the preservation and health of the surrounding ecosystem.

## DIGGER MAN DIGGING 4 U

Do you need a new septic tank? Is your septic tank compliant and functioning properly? Our team specialises in installing and assessing/repairing individual septic tank systems, including locating your filter bed with pinpoint accuracy, and implementing necessary modifications to ensure they meet current standards. Our advanced inspection camera system allows us to provide a comprehensive assessment of your system's condition, revealing potential issues with unmatched clarity. With real-time visuals, we can precisely pinpoint problems and recommend accurate solutions. We can even assist in the approval process by ensuring your septic tank meets the requirements set by SPANC.

As an added convenience, we can supply an SD card with a full visual viewing of your system, enabling you to have a clear understanding of its status. Plus, our team is fluent in both French and English, ensuring seamless communication. Contact us today to discuss a new installation, for help in achieving compliance, and optimal functionality, and to gain unparalleled insights through our state-of-the-art inspection camera system. Fully registered and insured.

Contact us today  
to discuss your  
drainage needs!

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## A Renovation Story....

Over the next few editions, we'll be following Guy & Andrea's "Renovation Story" in Juvigné (53380). Originally from London, Guy lived in New Zealand for 34 years before moving back to the UK and meeting Andrea. They moved to France (Ain) in 2016 for work and loved it so much that they decided to look for a house to buy.

With no specific area in mind, they stumbled across an English-speaking Estate Agency who found them their ideal property in the Mayenne: a collection of houses and outbuildings in a small hamlet near Juvigné. Their renovation project got off to a rocky start when half of the rear wall came crashing down during a storm just after they had bought it!



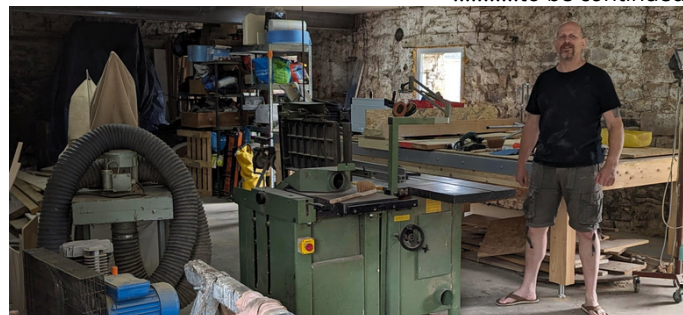
Once that was repaired, Guy prioritised putting in a kitchen, bathroom, and lounge so that they could live comfortably while they continued with the renovations.

Another priority was equipping the workshop with tools and equipment. Guy is an electrician by trade but he is also pretty handy with wood (equipping his kitchen with a solid cherrywood worktop and building a staircase for example!) Andrea's son (Octavio) also lives with them so Guy is working on making the cottage next to the main house a self-contained apartment for him.

To finance the renovation Guy opened his own business, working as an electrician. Despite his self-confessed struggle to learn French, Guy has attended French training courses on installing electric car charging stations and solar energy. They plan to make all the properties as "eco-friendly" and economical as possible.

There will be a more in-depth article about the project and Guy & Andrea's future plans in the next edition of the magazine.

.....to be continued



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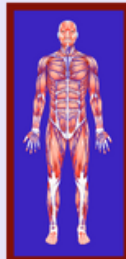
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Some of Mayenne's museums are open free of charge on the 1st Sunday of each month. It's a great opportunity to discover exhibitions and collections with the kids, and to enjoy a nice family outing. Take advantage of this great offer!

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# LOCAL HISTORY

## Fontaine Daniel: Sensitive Armfield and Toiles de Mayenne

On 21 July 1806, two Parisian entrepreneurs, Jean-Pierre Horem and Sophie Aimée Josèphe Lewille, acquired the Cistercian abbey of Notre-Dame de Fontaine-Daniel. These pioneers set up the first spinning mill and then a weaving workshop. By 1809, they had 325 looms. By 1814, there were 470 workers (40 spinning and 430 weaving) in the mill, and 450 home weavers.

In 1814, a young English woman called Sensitive Armfield married Jean-Pierre Horem and she joined him in running the business. In 1828, aged 35, she became a widow and took over the reins of the company alone for nearly 40 years. In 1832 she hired Martin Denis, an engineer by profession and her nephew by marriage, as director of the business. He was the first director from the Denis family, who, six generations later, still run Toiles de Mayenne.

By all accounts, Sensitive Armfield was quite a woman! For several decades, every week she crossed through fields, armed with two pistols in her belt, to go to the bank 5 km away to collect the wages of some five hundred workers. In 1858 Gustave Denis, Martin's son, became the new director. Gustave trained at the École Centrale in 1854 and gained experience working in a cotton mill near Montargis. In 1862, he modernized the weaving rooms. Two hundred new looms were installed. He was also President of the General Council of Mayenne (1883-1925). He was appointed Knight of the Legion of Honour on 28 December 1889 and was also mayor of Saint-Georges-Buttavent from 1874 to 1904 and president of the Mayenne Chamber of Commerce from 1871 to 1910.

His work on child labour and night work was particularly noteworthy. Gustave's sons, Georges Denis, and Paul Denis, had new buildings built in local stone between 1898-1900. By 1924, Jean Denis (grandson of Gustave) took over the management of the company. He was a pragmatic engineer, trained at the Ecole Centrale de Paris. Like his grandfather Gustave, he was passionate about social issues. He ran the company with his brother Bertrand. Shortly after his arrival, he asked the family shareholders to waive their dividends, arguing that the profits of the company must finance the common good. Instead of using the money for industrial investments, the money was spent on the development of the village, where working families could live with dignity. In 1925, the first detached houses appeared, built in local stone and designed by Jean Denis, then later by Bruno Denis, his son. A Catholic chapel, also designed by Jean Denis (a Protestant) and dedicated to Saint-Michel, was built in 1939 on the rock, overlooking the village lake. The detached houses and apartment blocks designed by the company's successive directors from the outset until 1975 all have their own gardens and the streets have names of flowers, trees, or animals. A fountain on the edge of the village square, fed by a spring in the Salair forest, has long provided water for the villagers. The water gushes out of a stone frame, through the mouth of a bronze nereid (sea nymph) sculpted by Jean Denis.

In a political booklet published in 1945, Jean Denis also showed his interest in ecology: "A nation is healthy only if it relies on a vigorous peasantry, and this peasantry remains strong only if, living in contact with nature, it does not violate it by chemical means and industrial techniques but bends to its rhythms and knows how to love them".

In the 1960s, Toiles de Mayenne continued its transformation from clothing fabrics to decorative fabrics. For two decades and until the opening of its first store, the company sold its productions by mail order across France.

In 1968, the first store under the Toiles de Mayenne brand opened in Montfort-l'Amaury (45kms west of Paris). By 2016, the company had opened 15 stores in France. Its fabrics are also available in Europe and around the world.

In 1996 Raphaël and Grégoire Denis took the reins of the company. The manufacture of clothing fabrics was closed down and the company focused on fabrics for the home. In 2014 Toiles de Mayenne was awarded the French Living Heritage Company label. This label, issued by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, distinguishes French companies with excellent craftsmanship and industrial know-how that maintain their production activity in France.

At the end of 2018, Jérôme Couason took over the management of the company, and stylist Clotilde Boutrolle was appointed Head of Creation. In 2019 - The new showroom at 5 Place des Victoires in Paris became the "Flag Ship" Toiles de Mayenne. By coincidence, a few months after the opening, the new team realized that the address of 5 Place des Victoires was once the residence of Martin Denis, (the first of the line of Denis in the history of the brand) just before he left Paris to assist his aunt and take over at the head of Toiles de Mayenne.

Recently, the Toile de Mayenne showroom in Fontaine-Daniel has been redesigned. The front part of the building is devoted to the presentation of the 600 fabric samples and displays the latest sofas and seats as well as the new collections of cushions and curtains. Upstairs, two rooms bring together "end of series" and bargain items.

The village of Fontaine Daniel is picturesque, to say the least, and is home to one of the best restaurants in the department: La Forge [www.laforge.restaurant](http://www.laforge.restaurant). Every year there is an ecological fête: "Fête de la Terre" where you can enjoy guided tours of the abbey, listen to live music, attend lectures and debates (in French) about the environment, and much more. The village shop is run as a cooperative with all profits invested back into the business. Snacks and drinks are available, and, in keeping with the environmental ethos of the village, they only sell organic fruit and vegetables. The association in charge of the shop organises regular cooking workshops, craft activities, meetings with producers, tastings, and concerts throughout the year.



English woman: Sensitive Armfield, widowed at the age of 35, ran the Toile de Mayenne company for nearly 40 years.

### La Pellerine: Flight Lieutenant Geoffrey Austen Harrison

During the Second World War Flight Lieutenant Geoffrey Austen Harrison served with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. He was 24 when he died on active service in France on 12 June 1944. Mr. Austen was killed when his Supermarine Spitfire Mark VII aircraft collided with a Messerschmitt Bf 109 aircraft and crashed near La Pellerine in NW Mayenne.



© Colin Mowl

Two local men Gabriel Cheul and Constant Coutard, working nearby, attempted to rescue the pilot from the burning wreckage of his Spitfire but were unable to save him. Flight Lieutenant Geoffrey Austin Harrison is buried in the cemetery in La Pellerine.

Geoffrey's brother, Hugh Harrison (the pilot of a Lancaster bomber of 625 squadron), died 42 days

later after he and his crew of six failed to return from a mission to bomb Kiel in Germany. A commemorative plaque was unveiled in the village church on 9 June 2022 in the presence of Mr. Geoffrey Hall, nephew of the two pilot brothers, thanks to the efforts of Mr. Colin Mowl and Claude Foisnet, president of Aero-Memoire 39-45.



Flight Lieutenant  
Geoffrey Austen Harrison  
Photo courtesy of  
Mr Geoffrey Hall & family

# Learning French

## French Vocabulary Wordsearch: La Cuisine



Solve the english clue to find the french words hidden in the grid!

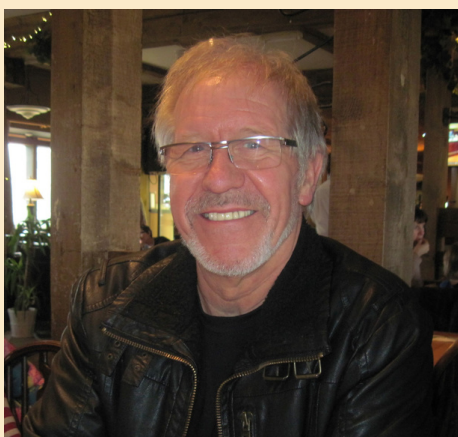
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## Poet's Corner

Toby Wren (the nom-de-plume of Geoff Evans) and his wife Nancy have lived in France since their retirement 16 years ago.

P.A.G.E.(Poetry Appreciation Group Experience) was formed in 2010 and publishes a free monthly internet magazine of illustrated poetry.

Membership is free, for further information contact Geoff – geoffevans129@gmail.com



## AUTUMN EN FRANCE

In the golden glow of Autumn, misty mornings having started. Memories of happy moments... sunny summer days departed. Distant fields of maize seen swaying – gentle breezes passing slowly. Mayenne moments we remember, touched by beauty... soft and holy. Family and friends who visit, spending time here “en vacances”. Having come to see and share the life that we have found “en France”. Busy weekly market mornings, local produce on display. “Vin et fromage” and with time for coffee in the street café. Thoughts of England far behind us – English still... and through and through, yet lost “en france”, our chosen lifestyle, shown by all we find to do. Changing colours in the woodlands – winter days that wait ahead. “Joie d’une nouvelle vie” discovered seeing where our path has led. Autumn now... the soft leaves falling, touched by beauty we will see. Starry nights and frosty mornings – living life contentedly.

by Toby Wren

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# Life in the Mayenne

Sat around a pool in Greece in September 2018 whilst on holiday at a resort where there was very little to do, David and Brian started talking about life ambitions and discovered they both had a long-held desire to live abroad with some land, and animals and to have a quieter pace of life. After a few days of googling houses in Spain and France, they fell upon a run-down property with 3.5 acres of land for €15,000, a week later having returned from Greece they were in France signing on the dotted line and buying the place they'd seen and fell in love with, near Vautorte, Mayenne.

They had never visited the Mayenne before but research showed it wouldn't be too hot for Brian, and had an ideal climate for establishing flower and vegetable gardens, something both David and Brian are very interested in. But they also loved how quiet and laid back life here is, with proper seasons to enjoy. The close proximity to family back in the UK was also appealing with multiple choices of ferry ports and airports.

But then 18 months in, planning issues and renovation costs removed the rose-tinted glasses from their eyes. The reality of what they had bought and the impending introduction of Brexit brought them to the decision to sell it and buy something they could actually move into and live in and possibly earn money from.

Once they understood the implications of post-Brexit visas, they realised that they'd need to make the move to France under the withdrawal agreement as the income requirements for long-term visas would be hard for them to meet. So they decided it was now or never and took the plunge to find a house they could make a permanent move to before the Brexit transition period ended.

Having seen several houses, nothing really grabbed them, and they continued to work with several agents over a few months. Then one day out of the blue, a call came through; one of their agents was going to see a property that was not yet on the market. She called them from the property to tell them they needed to get on a ferry quickly as she'd found them their dream home.

Two days later Brian & David were in Soucé, 53300, and signed the hand-written offer on the back of the agent's car whilst still at the property. It wasn't their original plan to work full-time here but Brian was able to take early retirement from his civil service job and David was made redundant from his job selling cruise holidays due to COVID.

David got a job through a neighbour, working for a large garden nursery, where they produce hundreds of thousands of plants to sell to garden centres and major distributors. It's hard work but it helps to pay bills and keep the renovation works moving forward. It has also meant they have been able to complete enough renovations to recently open their own Bed & Breakfast, La Houllardais in 53300 Soucé



At home, Brian & David can usually be found in the garden with 5.5 acres of grounds including natural woodland, an orchard, and a formal garden to maintain as well as two greenhouses and a large ornamental vegetable garden. It's a full-time job in itself for Brian. But it's their passion and in time they hope to be able to open the grounds to the public and possibly add a camping or glamping site to their business

Brian and David feel that the Mayenne is their home now. They are building a life and business here and have no desire to return to the UK, although of course, they miss their family a lot.

**You can find out more about La Hourlardais B&B here:**  
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For all the latest information about life in the Mayenne at Christmas, look out for our special **Christmas ONLINE edition of the Magazine** in November. We'll be sharing all the best places to shop, eat, and be entertained over the Christmas period. There will be articles about how the French celebrate Christmas in the Mayenne as well as our "Christmas Guest Etiquette Guide" with all the Do's and Don'ts if you get invited to a French house over the festive break. Of course, we'll include all the **Christmas Markets** and a guide to the best **Christmas Lights**. With Christmas falling on a Monday this year, we will be sharing a guide about how to access emergency health and dental care over the long holiday weekend and we'll let you know when your local supermarket will be open! **Join our magazine mailing list** to be notified when it's published! **Visit: [www.mayenne53.com](http://www.mayenne53.com) or email [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com)**

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