

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

## FARMERS PROTESTS CONTINUE

Roads and government buildings continue to be targeted by farmers' unions protesting against EU regulations. Despite France being at the front of the queue for subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy (receiving up to 9 billion euros in aid per year), French farmers have been showing their displeasure for new rules and standards.

Farmers unions are unhappy about Brussels' refusal to extend the exemption allowing the cultivation of fallow fields which was introduced following food shortages due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. They also claim to be the victims of unfair competition courtesy of the Eu-Mercosur trade deal with Argentina, Brazil Paraguay and Uruguay which allows foreign farmers to export to the EU without being tied to the same regulations and standards as EU farmers.

Since October 2023, the Fédération nationale des syndicats d'exploitants agricoles (FNSEA) et du syndicat Jeunes agriculteurs (JA) have been turning village signs upside down in protest at the government's agricultural policies. The campaign, started in the Occitane region, quickly spread throughout France and has resulted in over 10,000 signs being inverted. With over a third of farmers expected to

retire in the next 10 years, unions warn of a growing crisis as government plans to increase taxation on non-road diesel vehicles and glyphosate pesticides make it harder for farmers to earn a living.

At the time of going to press, the Agricultural Orientation Bill was due to be presented to the French Parliament.

Despite the seasonal demands on farmers, you can expect more protests unless Macron's new Prime Minister Gabriel Attal can offer them more concessions.



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## AIRMEN REMEMBERED.....



2 Halifax Bomber crews tasked with bombing Laval aerodrome were shot down by German anti-aircraft guns on 10th June 1944. All 14 airmen are buried in Laval cemetery and 2 memorials were installed at the crash sites in 2014. To mark the 80th anniversary of their deaths we've launched an online fund to raise money to buy flowers to put on their graves and at the memorials.....

See pages 14 & 15 for the full story

With over 70 dogs currently in their care, the SPA animal refuge in Laval has launched an appeal to find them homes.

10 salaried employees and around twenty active volunteers work hard to provide the animals with care and comfort, but nothing beats a real home and a "happy ever after".

If you can't offer a home, there are other ways to help. You can sponsor an animal for 10€ a month. They also have a "Wish List" of items that you can buy and have delivered to the shelter: <https://bit.ly/SPAWishList>. Or you can donate a cash amount online using the following link: <https://bit.ly/SPALaval>.

If you want to be more "hands on", then why not become a volunteer: registration costs 30€ for a year and entitles you to help at the shelter, from grooming to dog walking, repairing, cleaning and general assistance; everyone is welcome. Volunteer hours: Monday to Friday 2 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. Saturday: 2 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.



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## Spring Editorial: Hayley Gilks

Welcome to the 4th  
edition of the Mayenne  
53 Magazine. It's hard  
to believe that just 12  
months ago we were  
yet to produce our  
first edition... What a  
rollercoaster it's been.



We've learned a lot during the last 12  
months and I hope that shows in the  
quality of the content that we have for you  
in this edition, not least the article on  
pages 14 & 15 about the 2 Halifax Bombers  
that crashed near Laval on 10th June 1944.

This article came about after I received  
a letter from a reader in St Mars du Desert  
about the 28 Allied servicemen buried in  
the Mayenne. As we approach the 80th  
anniversary of D-Day we are faced with a  
future containing no living survivors from  
the armed forces of the Second World War  
and it is up to each and every one of us to  
remember and commemorate their service  
to their countries in defence of our  
freedom and democracy. Having  
researched the story of these two Halifax  
crews and visited their graves, it seems the  
least I can do is organise for some flowers  
to be placed on the memorials and their  
graves on the 80th anniversary of their  
deaths; so please take a minute to visit the  
fundraising link (on page 15) to donate a  
euro (or more) to this fund.

As usual, we have our restaurant review  
- this time from Entrammes, at a restaurant  
that offers two very different dining  
experiences. There's a 3-page property  
feature showcasing properties for sale and  
3 local estate agents, and an article about a  
new gîte complex that's just opened in St  
Denis de Gastines. Our new "Health &  
Wealth" page includes a timely reminder  
about Income Tax declarations as well as  
news about the RSV vaccine.

And to finish, we have the "Life in the  
Mayenne" feature where we hear from  
English speakers who have made the  
Mayenne their home. If you'd like to be our  
next "Life in the Mayenne" story then please  
email: [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com).

### IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT THE NEXT EDITION: SUMMER 2024

After much consideration and in order to  
continue providing you with the highest  
quality content and resources, we have  
decided to transition Mayenne 53 Magazine  
from a free publication to a paid subscription  
model from **July 1st 2024**.

This transition will enable us to invest more  
deeply in the creation of higher quality  
content, as well as in the enhancement of our  
overall reader experience by reducing our  
reliance on advertisements. While we  
understand that change can sometimes be  
met with hesitation, we are confident that  
this decision will allow us to better serve you,  
our loyal readers, in the long term.

Furthermore, the online version of Mayenne  
53 Magazine will be available for purchase  
through an annual subscription. From 1st July  
the annual online subscription (including 3  
full editions, a special Christmas edition and  
monthly newsletters) will cost just 3€.

Subscribe to our mailing list here:  
[www.mayenne53.com](http://www.mayenne53.com) to be notified when  
the subscription service is open.

For those who enjoy the tactile experience  
of flipping through the pages of a printed  
magazine, you will have the option to have  
the magazine delivered to your doorstep in  
France, the UK and mainland Europe. Printed  
editions will be available for purchase either  
through an annual subscription (online  
editions & newsletters included) or on a per-  
edition basis, as well as directly from a  
number of businesses in the Mayenne  
department.

For now, everyone who subscribes (or who  
has already subscribed) to our mailing list will  
continue to receive our free monthly  
newsletter as well as updates about the  
subscription service.

If you have a business in the Mayenne and  
would like to become a stockist of the magazine,  
please email: [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com) for  
details of our "sale or return" wholesale  
agreement.

### Answers to the word puzzles on Page 13

#### Flowers

Anagram	French Name	English Name
JELLOQUIN	Jonquille	Daffodil
CHINAJET	Jacinthe	Hyacinthe
GENERICPEE	Perce-neige	Snowdrop
CLIQUECOTO	Coquelicot	Poppy
VIMPEERER	Primevère	Primrose
OVENPII	Pivoine	Peony
VEHICLEREFUEL	Chèvrefeuille	Honeysuckle
MIGRATEEUR	Marguerite	Daisy
ROULSTONE	Tournesol	Sunflower

#### Movie Titles:

Histoire de jouets = Toy Story,  
Le chevalier noir = The Dark Knight,  
Maman j'ai râtée l'avion = Home Alone,  
Certains l'aiment chaud = Some like it Hot,  
Les Dents de la mer = Jaws,  
Mon beau-père et moi = Meet the Parents,  
Comme un taureau sauvage = Raging Bull,  
Coeur vaillant = Braveheart,  
Le pouilleux millionnaire = Slumdog Millionaire,  
Les Filles du docteur March = Little Women.



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# NEWS IN THE MAYENNE

## Plan May'Aînés II: 20 measures for ageing well in Mayenne

With the French population aging (the number of people aged over 85 is set to triple by 2050 to 4.8 million), the Mayenne will be no exception to this demographic trend. To prepare for these changes, the Conseil départemental implemented the "May'Aînés Plan" in 2019, including the roll-out of 12 flagship measures across the département.

A second May'Aînés Plan has now been unveiled, which will continue and/or improve the measures already in place, as well as proposing new initiatives to be rolled out throughout the Mayenne region. This new May'Aînés Plan will be implemented over the next 5 years.

With a budget of 59 million euros, this marks a huge investment in the health care infrastructure dealing with the elderly. The new measures include 185 purpose built housing units, 400 electric cars for SAAD staff (Care in the community), and 20 million euros spent over the next 5 years to improve and modernise the department's EHPADs (Residential care homes for the elderly).



**Plan May'Aînés 2**  
2024-2028  
20 mesures  
pour bien vieillir en Mayenne



Craon has just been voted the "Sportiest Town in the Pays de la Loire" in the category: Towns & villages with 2,001 to 6,000 inhabitants. Coming 1st out of 62, Craon has 25 different sports associations and, with a population of just over 4500, over half (2500) are members of sports clubs.

Don't forget, the Olympic Flame will be passing through the Mayenne on 29th May. 7 different towns and villages have been chosen: Mayenne, Laval, Cossé-le-Vivien, Sainte-Suzanne-et-Chammes, Château-Gontier-sur-Mayenne, Pré-en-Pail-Saint-Samson and Chailland.

## The 49th edition of the Boucles de la Mayenne - Crédit Mutuel will take place from May 23 to 26, 2024

The annual Boucles de la Mayenne cycle race will take place from 23rd to 26th May 2024 on the roads of Mayenne. Attracting teams from all over Europe and beyond, last year's winner was Spaniard Oier Lazkano from the MOVISTAR team.

The cycling event will begin with a prologue, followed by 3 stages covering a distance of around 550 kilometres. This year's event starts with a prologue at L'Espace Mayenne in Laval where there will be an entertainment village set up from 2 p.m. on 23rd May. The advertisers' "caravan" will be there at 4:30 p.m. Spectators will also be able to walk between the team buses to watch the runners prepare before their departures from 6:15 p.m.

A prologue is an individual time trial before the stage races. It's not regarded as a stage, but the rider's times still count towards their



**BOUCLES DE LA MAYENNE**  
Crédit Mutuel

general classification and is primarily used to determine who wears the leader's jersey on the first stage.

The 3 stages will take place over the following 3 days:

- 24th May - Renault, St Berthevin to Ernée
- 25th May - Le Ham to Villaines-la-Juhel
- 26th May - Quelaines-Saint-Gault to Laval



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# EATING OUT...

## A Tale of Two Sitings: Le Par Sécurité, 53260 Entrammes

"On this matter I'm inclined to agree with the French, who gaze upon any personal dietary prohibition as bad manners." Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities.

Restaurant review by: Sydney Cartoon

On the N162 from Laval to Château-Gontier, it's easy to miss this restaurant as you pass Laval airport en route for the sunnier south. But as the clock strikes noon you'll see vehicles queuing to get into the carpark of this popular local eatery.

Unlike many restaurants in the area, you don't need to get here before the twelfth chime of noon, they will happily welcome diners up to 2.30pm. On arrival, you need to inform the waiting staff which culinary experience you are here for: The Brasserie which offers a wide selection of dishes in a "Fine-Dining" setting (20-30€ per person), or the roadside restaurant which provides the popular "Menu Ouvriers" (15€95 per person).

Sébastien, the boss, can speak some English but the majority of the waiting staff don't, so be prepared to practice your French.

### Menu: La Brasserie

**Entrée, Plat, Dessert: 28€90**

**Entrée & Plat/Plat & Dessert: 19€90**

I arrived just after 1pm and the large car park was nearly full. Before I had walked to the entrance, another 2 cars had pulled in - clearly, the word has got out about their flexible approach to the mid-day meal. After a short wait (the staff clearly in the middle of the lunchtime rush) I was seated at my table and promptly invited to order a drink while I perused the menu.

Less than a minute later I was sipping a pleasant glass of Rosé, and giving the waitress my order. First up was the bacon and goat cheese filo parcel, delicately flavoured with a hint of honey and accompanied by a green salad with a balsamic dressing; it looked good, it smelled good and it certainly didn't disappoint in the taste test!



Unfortunately, the bottle of tap water I ordered never arrived; the waiting staff on this side of the restaurant could learn a thing or two from the ultra efficient staff in the roadside restaurant.

The main dishes change on a regular basis, I opted for the "Pièce de Boucher" also known as "Steak and chips". As usual, there is the question of how to cook the steak..... You have 4 options:

**Bleu** (blue) - the least cooked; the flesh remains red and soft throughout.

**Saignant** (rare) - cooked a little longer than blue; the flesh is firmer.

**À point** (medium-rare) - with the juices flowing.

**Bien cuit** (well done) - the heart of the meat should be firm.



In theory, I know I should choose "à point" but this is an unreliable science in some restaurants and my anglo-saxon caution decided on "bien cuit". In the end, I'm not sure it made much difference.... I was neither amazed nor disappointed, the dish was cooked correctly to my order and though the steak wasn't going to win any awards, the taste and texture was acceptable. The sauce, however, was outstanding! With a choice of Pepper, Béarnaise or Gorgonzola sauces I opted for the Gorgonzola. Rich and tasty without being overpowering, it was the perfect accompaniment.



Dessert is usually the toughest menu choice for me as my sweet tooth overrides any thoughts my brain might entertain about "healthy options". And for a coffeeholic, nothing beats a Tiramisu. Caramel tiramisu with salted butter crunch sounded like a winner and, certainly, the salted butter crunch delighted every one of my taste buds but there was a slight lack of substance in the dish as a whole that a little more mascarpone and a heavier hand on the bottle of Marsala could have corrected.

**Le Par Sécurité 53260 Entrammes**

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



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# ...IN THE MAYENNE

## A Tale of Two Sitings, continued: Menu Ouvriers

Entrée, Plat, Dessert + coffee: 15€90



For those with less time or a more modest budget, you can be seated in the roadside restaurant. Here tables are closer together and the ambiance is more rustic. As indicated by the sudden arrival of work vans as we took our seats, this is a popular choice for local artisans looking to grab a quick meal.

The restaurant's policy of staying open beyond the traditional lunchtime hours means you can eat here as late as 2.30pm; but if you arrive at noon expect it to be busy.

The staff are efficient and polite, and service is prompt. The goal on this side of the restaurant is not to waste time. Our starter arrived just minutes after we ordered and the other courses swiftly followed. Whilst this seemed to work well for most of our fellow diners, we did feel a "Fast Food" vibe that resulted in the whole meal being over in

under 50 minutes. So if you're looking to take your time over a long lunch we recommend the Brasserie restaurant instead.

That said, the food in the roadside restaurant was still top notch. For our visit, the choices were:

**Entrées** - Taboulé Merguez, Quiche au Thon, Carottes Rapées Vinaigrette or Salade Mâche avec bacon et noix de cajou.

**Plats** - Cuisse de Poulet or Cochon Confit (both served with pasta and vegetables).

**Dessert** - Tartelette Mangue, Fromage Blanc Poire Confite, Gâteau Choco Blanc Croquant or Creme Vanille.

Both main courses were delicious, the meat falling off the bone and the pasta cooked to perfection. No shortcuts here, just well balanced dishes full of flavour. The Gâteau Choco Blanc dessert is quite possibly the best dessert I've eaten in France!

Finishing off with a great Lavazzo Espresso, we left with our appetites replete and a new entry for the "Highly Recommended" list!

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



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- **Safety first:** We prioritise safety in all aspects of gate installation, including proper clearance and secure hardware.

# RENOVATING in the Mayenne

## Fencing and Boundary changes: What you need to know

Installing a new fence or boundary, or altering existing ones can frequently cause disputes between neighbours. Before making any changes, head down to your local Mairie and check what restrictions apply in your area. Each area is governed by a PLU (Local urban development plan) which may restrict the colour, height and materials that can be used.

Hedges less than 2 metres high should be at least 50cm from the boundary, hedges more than 2 metres high should be 2 metres from the boundary. Farmers are forbidden to cut their hedges between 16th March and 15th August; there is no restriction for the general public but the advice is not to cut hedges between March and August to protect nesting birds and other wildlife.

If the land is not all at the same level then the maximum height is calculated from the lowest ground. If your land borders a public waterway, any boundary should be

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- **Matching your vision:** We work closely with you to choose the right fence style and materials to complement your existing landscaping and architecture.



3.25 metres from the bank to allow public access.

If your land borders a public road then you should ask at the Mairie for a boundary certificate before erecting a boundary.

New fences and hedges should not obstruct the natural flow of rainwater and must not deprive neighbours of a view or sunlight.

In all instances, it's best to check with your neighbour before changing any boundary markers, and if a mutually agreed solution cannot be found you can contact your Mairie to mediate.

## A Renovation Story:

### Spring Update



Here's a quick update from Guy Allan in Juvigné to see what he's been up to in his renovation project that we featured in the Autumn/Winter edition of the magazine:

"As this house has some interesting small features, I wanted to take full advantage of them and add an aesthetic component. The first business that I started was a decorating firm and I have always had a keen eye for colour. In New Zealand the sunlight is strong and so using coloured glass is common.

I love coloured glass so I taught myself to make stained glass windows. The green one is in our guest bathroom and catches the early morning sun. It is my artist's impression of the fields of Juvigné. The other abstract piece is in my office, it is the first piece I ever made. I will say that it is the second attempt, I learned a lot from all the mistakes I made on my first effort.

I found working with the coloured glass very satisfying, I love working with colour and these pieces add a nice touch to the two rooms."

We'll bring you more from Guy and Andrea's Renovation Project in the next issue!

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## The Mayenne property market in 2024...

As a long-established business since 2004 in NW Mayenne, Maxime Lemetayer, and his team at Gorrion Immobilier are considered by many to be the local experts. Maxime took over the business in 2015, with negotiator Donna Atkinson joining in 2017 and office administrator Denis Louvigné in 2018.



Maxime Lemetayer



Donna Atkinson

We spoke to Donna, originally from the NE of England, about the current market trends in the Mayenne and she had this to say:

Across the Mayenne department as a whole you will find a wide variety of properties from tiny cottages to large town houses and depending upon where they are located and what they offer the price per m2 can differ hugely. However, according to a recent report by Le Figaro newspaper the average price is 1652€/m<sup>2</sup>, up 2% from March 2023. In the North of the department this figure is generally closer to 1,000€/m<sup>2</sup> making it extremely affordable.

The Notaires de France reported a decline in the number of property sales in 2023 and simultaneously, there was a drop in prices towards the end of the year across France, marking the first decrease since 2015. This trend is set to continue into 2024 so, this could be a good time to invest.

We may be a small team, but between us we've got over 20 years of experience in helping our clients buy and sell their properties. We pride ourselves on really getting to know our clients and their properties and, with our extensive knowledge of the local property market, we can give each client a personal, honest, competitive, and fully bilingual service.

So, whether you are joining us from the UK, across the rest of Europe, internationally or from the local area we are here to help you realise your property dreams.

There are some wonderful properties in our portfolio currently, from complete renovations through to fully restored and renovated homes and everything in-between.

# PROPERTY FOR SALE in the MAYENNE

Whether your budget is 30,000€ or 500,000€ then why not visit our website to see the choice:

[www.gorrionimmobilier.com](http://www.gorrionimmobilier.com) or pop in and see us. We're conveniently located in the town centre at 29, Rue Magenta, 53190, GORRON.



Ref 4082 - Pontmain, 2 bedrooms,  
107,000

### Thinking of selling your property?

When you are thinking of selling it's easy to be swayed by inflated estimations and sales gimmicks. At Gorrion Immobilier we believe in giving you an honest, achievable market appraisal with no upfront costs. Whilst we do offer exclusive sale contracts, we're also happy to sign multi-agency mandates as we're confident that with our advertising and networks, we'll quickly find the right buyer for your property. We will ensure that all your paperwork is in order and that all the current regulatory and administrative requirements are followed to make sure your sale goes through smoothly.

We know that buying or selling a property in France can be daunting, even for seasoned movers, so be assured we'll be with you every step of the way!



Ref 4094 - Fougerolles du Plessis,  
village location, 1 bed, private  
garden, 69,900



Ref 4093 - Carelles, 6 beds, 2  
properties, 275,000

## Focus on: Laval

According to FNAIM, the average sale price of property in Laval is 2103€/m<sup>2</sup>. Prices have dropped by 1.9% over the last 12 months but if you look at how prices have evolved over the past 3 years there has actually been a 13.3% increase.



Houses cost on average 2359€/m<sup>2</sup> and apartments cost 1952€/m<sup>2</sup>, that's nearly 30% higher than the average price per m<sup>2</sup> for the department as a whole.

Looking at the rental market, which is traditionally very strong in Laval, you can expect to pay on average 14€/m<sup>2</sup> per month. Rents have increased more than 10% over the past 5 years with demand outstripping supply.

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## Why not join our winning team?

I really can't think of any job that could be more rewarding than helping people fulfil their dreams. Buying a home in France can seem a daunting prospect (particularly for those coming from overseas) and helping buyers find and buy a home in the Mayenne never fails to bring a smile to my face.

Leggett agents are self-employed, so it is a chance to be your own boss. They offer a great commission structure, with excellent earnings growth potential and give you unrivalled support.

Leggett offers a brilliant "induction" training as well as continual, customised, training and mentorship in the field. If you would like to know more then you can download a recruitment guide at:

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or contact Amanda Fellows:  
[amanda.fellows@leggett.fr](mailto:amanda.fellows@leggett.fr)  
 Tel: 0033 (0) 659849590

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[amanda.fellows@leggett.fr](mailto:amanda.fellows@leggett.fr) Tel: +33 659849590



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# LEGGETT

## INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

What is in store for the property market in Mayenne this year?



### Amanda Fellows - Leggett Agent

Amanda has lived here for eighteen years, she is also one of the most experienced and successful agents at Leggett Immobilier. She gives us her low-down on the property market here in Mayenne.

### For those looking to sell...

After the last few years of strong demand and rising prices the market has cooled and returned to its usual steady levels. These are the same levels that were pre covid. Last year, a combination of banks tightening their belts and the rising cost of living meant that buyers became more budget conscious.

The good news though is that Leggett attracts buyers from all over the world as well as selling to our local French neighbours. We advertise our properties on major portals throughout Europe and our websites receive around 2.8m visitors a year – last year my team sold properties to buyers from 42 different countries!

This means that appointing me to sell your property will give you the best chance to sell it quickly and at the best possible price. You will be getting 18 years of local knowledge and, with the support of our bilingual award-winning head office team, your sale will progress as smoothly as possible.

Leggett is a family firm, and we believe that customer service is the key to our success. By choosing us you will know that you are in safe hands – "local knowledge you can trust" has been our motto for over 20 years now. We spend over €2m per annum on marketing and we have a database of over 60,000 registered buyers (many of them looking in the Grand Ouest).

As well as advertising your property on our websites and international partner portals (such as Rightmove, SeLoger and A Place in the Sun) we take big stands at property exhibitions throughout Europe and regularly appear on both French and UK TV, as well as in the national and local newspapers – appoint us and your property really will be seen by a huge number of potential buyers!

Best of all, if you give us an exclusive mandate you will stand an even better chance of making a quick sale – if you get in touch then I will be happy to explain why.



### For those looking to buy here....

If you are looking for great value property, in an area of outstanding beauty, full to the brim of "authentic" French markets then this is the place for you. This combination is why I genuinely believe we offer the best value property in all of France!

I have the best of all worlds as I actually live and work in Mayenne (Pays de la Loire) but right on the border with Orne (Normandy) and Ille et Vilaine (Brittany) – how's that for diversity? Property in Mayenne is great value. The average price for a 150m<sup>2</sup> family house in France as a whole is €376,500, whilst here in department 53 it is just €235,500. Indeed, a quick look at my portfolio of properties for sale shows that I have some lovely properties for under €100,000. Great lock up and leaves for the many thousands still looking to spend their precious free time in this country. We also offer something for those with bigger budgets, including manoirs, gîte complexes, châteaux and maison de maitre. At Leggett we work as a team so there will always be the perfect property for you out there that we can show you around.





# PROPERTY FOR SALE in the MAYENNE



Safti is one of the leading estate agents in France. Created in 2010, and with a national network of independent property consultants, they have become a key player in the market due to their successful formula which includes TV adverts across French national and international channels, as well as over 100 French national and international portals.

Safti now have more than 5,500 advisers throughout France and more than 200 employees working at their head office in Toulouse. Each new agent receives full training and support, starting with a comprehensive 4-week course, group video calls, and a local senior agent to offer support. After the first 3 months, on-going training is offered to help keep motivation and performance high.

Daniela Weiss has been a SAFTI agent for 3 years. Based in Oisseau, she knows the area well and covers not only the Mayenne but also departments 35, 50 and 61. Fluent in French, English, Italian, and German and with a good understanding of Spanish - Daniela is a sought-after agent by international buyers delighted to be able to discuss their house purchases in their mother tongue.

Because the national and international approach yields best results for sellers, Daniela doesn't just rely on SAFTI's extensive advertising, she also lists her clients' houses on all the property websites popular in the UK and internationally: RIGHTMOVE, GREEN-ACRES, KYERO, etc., as well as social media such as Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.



### Daniela Weiss, SAFTI AGENT

"For me, it is not merely about getting the mandate and securing a commission, I want an honest and strong relationship with my clients throughout the entire process which gets the best results every single time. It also avoids issues after completion for both sellers and buyers!" says Daniela.

We asked Daniela for her opinion on the current property market in the Mayenne:

"Following the post-COVID run on our beautiful rural properties the local property market has cooled slightly. This is why we continue to spend heavily on advertising. French buyers are on the increase again, as are some international buyers. Some British buyers seem to be waiting for spring weather to venture across, however, we are getting regular enquiries.

In addition to its appeal as a residential destination, Mayenne also presents promising investment opportunities for savvy buyers. The region's growing popularity among tourists and expats has sparked an increase in demand for vacation rentals and holiday homes. Properties with rental potential, such as gites and guesthouses, are popular right now, offering investors the chance to generate income while enjoying the benefits of owning a piece of paradise in Mayenne."

For English speakers interested in purchasing property in Mayenne, navigating the real estate market in France can seem daunting at first. However, selling with Daniela means you have peace of mind during and AFTER the actual sale by following the process.

Whether you are thinking of selling your property or if you're not getting the results you had hoped for from your current agent, Daniela is available for a free, no-obligation chat about how she can help.

**Daniela Weiss**

**T: +33 (0)643578373**

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

**[www.bit.ly/DanielaRealEstate](http://www.bit.ly/DanielaRealEstate)**

**[www.safti.fr/votre-conseiller-safti/daniela-weiss](http://www.safti.fr/votre-conseiller-safti/daniela-weiss)**

SIRET: 852364108



House for sale in OISSEAU (150m<sup>2</sup>)  
168 700 €



160m<sup>2</sup> house for sale in DESERTINES  
185 000 €



233m<sup>2</sup> house for sale in LASSAY-LES-CHATEAUX  
430 000 €

## LAWN MAINTENANCE

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**[davidherbe53@gmail.com](mailto:davidherbe53@gmail.com)**



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# Accommodation in the Mayenne

## Wisteria Gites in St Denis de Gastines 53500



We are Lynne & Graeme, the proud new owners of Wisteria Gites in St Denis de Gastines. After owning a holiday home in the Dordogne for a number of years and countless enjoyable times in France, we decided to relocate here permanently and try our own version of a life in the sun! Our search led us to discover Wisteria Gites and we simply fell in love with it!

We're both seasoned house renovators, working professionally in the field during our lives back in the UK, so after moving in, we were under no illusions as to the amount of work we faced. We have now spent almost two years completely restoring the property to a high standard without losing any of its charm and identity, whilst adding a little luxury along the way. The arrival of high speed internet to the property is an additional bonus.

We do genuinely love Wisteria Gites and hope you will too. We're in a quiet, peaceful area of the Mayenne, where families & children can play in our extensive gardens, enjoying our facilities. The heated outdoor pool is an inviting place on a hot sunny day,

and our covered barn means you can still have fun outdoors, whatever the weather. As we only take one booking of up to 14 guests at a time, you have exclusive use of all the guest facilities.

We know how important holidays are, so our aim is to make sure you have a perfect stay surrounded by French countryside.

Opening the 1st May 2024 and looking forward to receiving our first guests.

We hope to see you soon.

**Wisteria Gites, La Lande au Roullin, 53500, St Denis de Gastines, Mayenne.**

[www.wisteriagites.com](http://www.wisteriagites.com)  
[info@wisteriagites.com](mailto:info@wisteriagites.com)



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**Thurs - 7.30am-2.30pm, 5pm-11pm**

**Fri - 7.30am-2.30pm, 5pm-1am**

**Sat - 8am-2.30pm, 5pm-1am**

**Sun - 8am-2.30pm, 5pm-8pm**

## Holiday Cottage near St Mars sur la Futaie - Sleeps 12



Enjoy the peaceful countryside and disconnect from your busy life whilst enjoying all the comforts of home; including high speed wifi.

The cottage comes with a private pool, fully equipped indoor and outdoor gym, games room with pool table and projector.

The entire property benefits from central heating and there is a woodburning stove in the lounge. We provide everything you need for your holiday: towels, bed linen, logs, etc. The kitchen is fully equipped: Dishwasher, Fridge-Freezer, coffee maker, kettle, blender, slow cooker, raclette, fondue set, etc.



[www.bit.ly/StMarsCottage](http://www.bit.ly/StMarsCottage)

# Health & Wealth in the Mayenne

## Tax declaration deadlines

Income tax declarations in France are an essential annual ritual for individuals and businesses alike. Known as "déclaration de revenus" or simply "déclaration d'impôts," this process involves reporting income, assets, and various financial activities to the French tax authorities.

For private individuals, the income tax declaration typically covers income earned during the previous calendar year (1st January to 31st December). This includes salaries, wages, investment income, rental income, and other sources of revenue.

Mayenne residents can submit their tax declarations between 13th April and Monday 20th May for paper declarations and 13th April to 30th May 2024 for online declarations. It is important that you have your online tax account activated if you want to make the declaration online. This involves not only having the fiscal number but also the password to your account set up.

In addition to reporting income, taxpayers must also declare any assets held outside of France, such as bank accounts, investments, and property. This includes Paypal accounts and currency accounts. There are strict reporting requirements for foreign assets to prevent tax evasion and ensure compliance with international tax standards.

To assist taxpayers in completing their declarations accurately, the French government provides an online portal and a website, some of which is accessible in English. Very importantly, for any questions you may have about how to record your income, you can use the messaging facility inside your online tax account.

Another reason why it is important to set up your tax account before you make your declaration is because tax offices are phasing out email exchanges in favour of the online account messaging service. The online account also keeps a copy of all the documents and messages exchanged between you and the tax office, so if you lose your paper copy you can always download another copy of a document.

Depending on the complexity of your personal finances, you may need assistance. For a list of France Service centres who can help you to access your online tax account, visit:

[www.mayenne53.com/directory/france-services/](http://www.mayenne53.com/directory/france-services/)

For more complex problems you can contact your local tax office through your online account and make an appointment with an advisor; or contact one of the accountants listed in our online business directory:

[www.mayenne53.com/directory/accountants-in-the-mayenne/](http://www.mayenne53.com/directory/accountants-in-the-mayenne/)



Two new fitness centres for the Mayenne

**Basic Fit**, the Dutch fitness chain that already has four gyms in the Laval area and one in Château-Gontier-sur-Mayenne, has opened a new fitness centre in **Mayenne** town, opposite Noz on Boulevard François Mitterrand. Covering an area of 1,000 m<sup>2</sup>, the centre includes six training zones (cardio or weight training areas, free weights, and cycles).

**L'Orange Bleue** has opened its sixth fitness centre in the Mayenne; with **Meslay-du-Maine** joining Laval, Château-Gontier, Ernée, Craon and Mayenne in the Orange-Bleue franchise. The former Maine Meuble shop has been revamped in to a 430m<sup>2</sup> fitness centre.



## RSV Vaccine

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) causes infections of the lungs and respiratory tract. It's so common that most children have been infected with the virus by the age of two.

In adults and older, healthy children, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) symptoms are mild and typically mimic the common cold. Self-care measures are usually all that's needed to relieve any discomfort.

However, RSV can cause severe infection in some people, especially premature infants, older adults, people with heart and lung disease, or anyone with a weak immune system.

Two vaccines have been developed for high-risk patients:

- The Arexvy vaccine against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) will be produced at GSK's factory in Saint-Amand-les-Eaux. This vaccine has been available in the United States since May and in the European Union since June for those over 60. Although it can be prescribed in France, it is not yet reimbursed by the caisse d'assurance maladie although the Haute Autorité de Santé (HAS) is expected to approve it by the Autumn for anyone over 60.
- Abryso vaccine, intended to protect both future infants via their pregnant mothers and seniors, this Pfizer vaccine was authorized at the end of August 2023 by the European Union.

Every year, 25,000 elderly or vulnerable people are hospitalised because of this virus.

## Vicky McLean

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Tel: +33 0256879937

# WHAT'S ON IN THE MAYENNE

## Vide Greniers

### Sunday 24th March:

- Salle des sports  
Route de Livré, 53230 Méral.

### Monday 1st April:

- rue principale  
5 route de Saint-Jean, 53480  
Saint-Léger.

### Sunday 7th April:

- salle des Roseaux et Nymphéas,  
rue christian d'Elva, 53810 Changé  
- Childrens Items Only.
- Parking Super U d'Ernée  
Les Semondières, 53500 Ernée
- Leclerc Mayenne  
582 rue du Prieuré de Berne  
53100 Mayenne

### Sunday 14th April:

- Bourg de Sacé Face Bar la Détente  
Bourg de Sacé, 53470 Sacé
- 53940 Ahuillé
- Salle polyvalente, 9 rue des  
Oiseaux, 53200 Gennes-sur-Glaize
- Salle des fêtes, 53410 Le  
Bourgneuf-la-Forêt
- Rue des écoles, rue le tourneur du  
val, 53970 Nuillé-sur-Vicoin
- Sous le parking de Centre  
Commercial E.Leclerc, 43  
boulevard des Loges, 53940 Saint-  
Berthevin

### Sunday 21st April:

- Dans le bourg, Rue du Maine,  
53220 La Pellerine

### Sunday 28th April:

- Rue de la Gare, 53470 Commer
- 2 rue du Pont, 53170 La Bazouge-  
de-Chemeré
- Port Brillat, Place de la gare,  
53410 Port-Brillat
- Petit Plan d'eau, 39 rue Charles de  
Gaulle, 53170 Villiers-Charlemagne

### Wednesday 1st May:

- Place du 11 Novembre, 53300 Le  
Pas

### Sunday 5th May:

- Rues du centre, 53970 Montigné-  
le-Brillant
- Place du Champs de Foire, Saint-  
Cénére, 53150 Montsûrs-Saint-  
Cénére
- Place de l'Église, 53170 Ruillé-  
Froid-Fonds

### Sunday 26th May:

- Route de Bazougers, 53260 Forcé
- Rue des Sports, 53320 Montjean
- Autour de la salle des fêtes de  
Saint Sulpice, Le bourg, 53360  
Saint-Sulpice

### Sunday 2nd June:

- Stade de foot et lotissement des  
bruyères, 53120 Colombiers-du-  
Plessis
- Clos Princier Salle Commmunale,  
Rue de la Campagnière, 53140  
Pré-en-Pail-Saint-Samson

### Sunday 9th June:

- Site des Francs-Archers, 39  
boulevard Félix Grat, 53000 Laval

### Sunday 16th June:

- Stade Dalibard, Rue Esculape,  
53810 Changé
- Molières, 11 rue de la Forge,  
53200 Chemazé

### Sunday 23rd June:

- Ecole Pierre et Marie Curie, 53 rue  
Lamartine, 53100 Mayenne



# Improve your French

**Garden vocabulary wordsearch:** Translate the English garden words in to French and find the answers in the grid.

C	B	O	I	P	G	R	A	R	B	R	E	F	J
O	E	N	S	H	R	B	I	N	E	T	T	E	A
C	C	P	O	T	A	G	E	R	S	E	V	E	R
C	H	A	B	E	I	L	L	E	A	R	S	Y	D
I	E	O	P	A	N	C	P	O	R	R	W	C	I
N	G	E	E	R	E	B	A	P	B	E	L	S	N
E	R	N	L	R	F	U	P	F	U	A	B	R	E
L	A	G	O	O	L	S	I	O	S	U	R	O	L
L	T	R	U	S	E	E	L	U	T	X	O	C	I
E	E	A	S	O	U	R	L	R	E	T	U	A	M
H	A	I	E	I	R	R	O	C	C	A	E	I	A
A	U	S	T	R	E	E	N	H	Y	U	T	L	C
I	A	C	L	O	T	U	R	E	L	P	T	L	E
E	N	S	T	O	N	D	E	U	S	E	E	E	T

- bee \_\_\_\_\_
- beech \_\_\_\_\_
- butterfly \_\_\_\_\_
- fence \_\_\_\_\_
- fertilizer \_\_\_\_\_
- flower \_\_\_\_\_
- forche \_\_\_\_\_
- garden \_\_\_\_\_
- greenhouse \_\_\_\_\_
- hedge \_\_\_\_\_
- hoe \_\_\_\_\_
- ladybird \_\_\_\_\_
- lawn \_\_\_\_\_
- lawnmower \_\_\_\_\_
- mole \_\_\_\_\_
- potting soils \_\_\_\_\_
- rake \_\_\_\_\_
- rock garden \_\_\_\_\_
- seed \_\_\_\_\_
- shrub \_\_\_\_\_
- slug \_\_\_\_\_
- tree \_\_\_\_\_
- vegetable garden \_\_\_\_\_
- watering can \_\_\_\_\_
- wheelbarrow \_\_\_\_\_
- worm \_\_\_\_\_





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**Flower names in French:**  
 Solve the anagrams to reveal the French names for these common flowers:  
 Poppy, Primrose, Peony, Daffodil, Sunflower, Snowdrop, Daisy, Hyacinth,

JELLOQUIN  
 CHINAJET  
 GENERICPEE  
 CLIQUECOTO  
 VIMPEERER  
 OVENPII  
 VEHICLEREFUEL  
 MIGRATEEUR  
 ROULSTONE

Answers on Page 2

**Can you guess the movie titles from their French equivalents?**

-  Histoire de jouets 
  - Le chevalier noir
  - Maman j'ai râtée l'avion
  - Certains l'aiment chaud
  - Les Dents de la mer
  - Mon beau-père et moi
  - Comme un taureau sauvage
  - Coeur vaillant
  - Le pouilleux millionnaire
  - Les Filles du docteur March
- Answers on Page 2

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# LOCAL HISTORY IN THE MAYENNE

## Halifax MZ532 Laval A  rodrome: 10th June 1944

**Sergeant Hugh Bradbury** - Air Bomber  
Aged 20, from Farnworth, Lancashire.

**Sergeant Leslie Brotherton** - Air Gunner  
aged 24, from Spalding, Lincolnshire.

**Sergeant Philip Gaines** - Wireless Operator  
Aged 22, from Rotherham, Yorkshire.

**P/O Thomas Henderson** - Pilot  
Aged 27, from Perth, Australia.

**F/O Norman Henderson** - Navigator  
Aged 21, from Herne Bay, Kent.

**Sergeant Stanley Peake** - Engineer  
Aged 36, from Banbury, Oxfordshire.

**Sergeant Edward Wicks** - Air Gunner (rear)  
Aged 33, from Romsey, Hampshire.

After completing their team training at 61 Base (RAF Topcliffe in N Yorks) the crew of Halifax MZ532 were posted to 10 Squadron at RAF Melbourne on 26th April 1944.

Pilot Thomas Henderson took part in several training flights and bombing practice whilst the rest of his crew familiarised themselves with their equipment and prepared their plane for it's first mission.

On 19th May, just 3 weeks after they arrived, they set off to attack the marshalling yard at Boulogne with 11 other planes from RAF Melbourne. They took off at 11.37pm, reaching their target at 1.06am. Flying at 11,000ft Sgt Bradbury released their bombs, having identified the red and yellow target indicators. The weather was good, with no cloud and the attack was well concentrated. The flight log shows that opposition was "moderate", returning back to base by 3.01am.

5 nights later, on 24th May, they took part in a bombing attack with 4 other crews from 10 Squadron, this time targeting a gun site at Colline-Beaumont, Pas de Calais. Just 2 weeks before D-Day, this mission would have been part of OPERATION FORTITUDE, convincing the German high command that the Allied invasion was planned for Pas de Calais and not Normandy. MZ532 took off at 10.38pm, reaching the primary target 1 hour and 40 minutes later. Visibility was good and their bombs were dropped on green target indicators, from 10,500ft. No opposition was encountered and they returned safely back to Melbourne at 1.51am.

A mining mission just 3 days later (27th May) was cancelled due to a problem with the port outer engine.

On 1st June, their target was Urville, south of Caen. 23 aircraft, including MZ684 (summary on page 15, 3rd column), left Melbourne just after 11pm. Henderson's crew dropped their bombs from 13,500 feet at 1.11am, landing back at the base in Yorkshire 5 1/2 hours after they had left, at 3.36am.

The next night, they were back in France targeting Trappes, Twelve aircraft left Melbourne that night to join



83 other Halifax's, 19 Lancasters and 4 Mosquitos from other bases in the UK. 15 Halifax and 1 Lancaster were lost during this mission (12.5% of the aircraft taking part).

On 5th June, as part of OPERATION OVERLORD, they joined an armada of 1,012 aircraft (551 Lancaster, 412 Halifax and 49 Mosquito) to bombard the coastal batteries at Fontenay, Houlgate, La Pernelle, Longues, Maisy, Merville, Mont Fleury, Hoc, Ouistreham and Saint-Martin-de-Varreville. MZ532's target was the Gun Battery at Mont Fleury. Just 800 meters inland from Gold Beach and still under construction, the battery had four 122mm Russian Guns although some of these were positioned out in the open as their casemates had not yet been completed. The battery was captured later that morning by D Company of the 6th Green Howards.

Their penultimate sortie was part of a 337-plane mission to bomb railway targets at Ach  res, Juvisy, Massey-Palaiseau and Versailles on the 7th June. 195 Halifaxes, 122 Lancasters, and 20 Mosquitoes took part. 17 Lancasters and 11 Halifaxes were lost that night, 8.3% of the forces involved. On their way back to Melbourne, MZ532 were intercepted by a German Focke-Wolfe 190 fighter plane. Sergeants Wicks and Brotherton opened fire and the FW 190 was destroyed.



## Their Final Mission

With the D-Day invasion underway in Normandy, both crews were tasked with bombing Laval Aerodrome on the night of the 9th June 1944.

In advance of the expected Allied invasion, Laval had become a base for The German Bf 109Gs from Close Reconnaissance Group 13 at the end of April 1944. The 3rd Squadron was also stationed here until mid-June 1944 and at times the group headquarters was also located here. The last unit stationed here was the III. Group of Battle Squadron 4 with their Fw 190F/G, which flew fighter-bomber missions over the advancing allied troops in Normandy.

Thirteen aircraft left RAF Melbourne just after midnight on June 10th, and only 11 returned.

LW716 with F/L LeCudenec at the helm was first away at 00.20am, bombing the target area at 3.06am from 2,800ft due to low cloud at 3000ft and reported moderate to severe flak.

MZ532 took off next, at 00.21am. They arrived at the target site but were hit by Flak before they could drop their bombs. Pilot Henderson, presumably flying at low altitude, headed west and Sergeant Bradbury jettisoned the bombs near to Ch  teau La Blancherie before the Halifax came down close Le Pont Alain, 53940 Saint-Berthevin.

MZ684 were the seventh Halifax to leave the base at 00.30am. Hit by Flak, Pilot Van Stockum flew south before the plane came down near to Les Poiriers, 53260 Entrammes, jettisoning their bombs near La Babini  re farm before crashing.



#### A letter home - 7th June 1944, from Willem Van Stockum:

Officially we did not know it would start on June 5th, but the instructions we got, the mysterious doings, our route and what we could expect while in flight, made us fairly sure that this was The Day. We did our job in difficult circumstances, although there was not a very big opposition. ... I am free tonight and am glad of it, for the strain is great and we had not a moment's rest in the past days. Our kind of job needs hours of preparation, the operation itself takes 6 hours and after that debriefings, etc. Then a meal, to bed, sleep, and again preparations. Of course, we did not know beforehand it would be rather easy, and the nervous strain makes your breathing faster.

Soon it will be worse, when the Germans get more information. But I would not want to miss this time for anything, and I am very thankful that I resisted the temptation to go to the other station, where Bierens de Haanals is, for then I would be now between two squadrons and perhaps have missed all this.

My crew is perfect, calm, matter of fact, and one cannot find any signs of being nervous. I sometimes have the feeling I am the only one who is.... but perhaps they think the same thing of me. I have the feeling there is an enormous energy in everybody. The whole station comes out to see us off when we take off, with their thumbs up and this is a pleasant feeling."

From a letter in Dutch to his mother Olga Boissevain van Stockum by her son Willem; translated by Olga's niece Engelen de Booy. (C) 1944, 2000 by the Estate of Hilda van Stockum. Permission to include here courtesy of the Estate by John Tepper Marlin, Executor.



Dutchman Willem Van Stockum moved to Ireland with his family in the late 1920's. He studied mathematics at Trinity college Dublin and wrote his PHD at the University of Edinburgh, eventually moving to America where he studied at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton.

He also taught at the University of Maryland. In 1941 he enlisted in the Canadian Airforce and initially worked as a test pilot but later transferred to the exiled Dutch Air Force within the RAF.

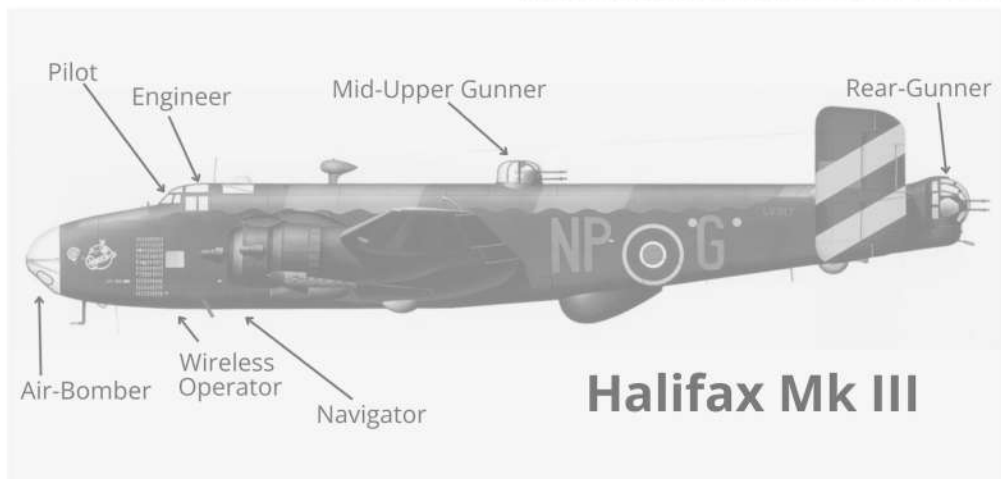


**2 memorials were unveiled in 2014 near to the crash sites, to mark the 70th anniversary.**



**A commemoration service is planned to remember these brave men on the 80th anniversary of their deaths (10th June 2024). If you'd like to contribute to the Flower Fund to buy flowers to lay on the graves and memorials, please visit: <https://bit.ly/alliedgraves>**

**More details will be shared nearer to the date on our website and Facebook page.**



# Halifax MZ684

**Sergeant Frederick Beales** - Air Gunner  
Aged 20, from Hamilton, Canada.

**Flight Officer Gilbert Daniel** - Navigator  
Aged 22, from West Hartlepool.

**Flight Officer John Ellyatt** - Engineer  
Aged 27, from West Hartlepool.

**Flight Officer (Robert) Keith Marshall**  
- Air Bomber  
Aged 29, from Glasgow.

**Sergeant Albert Mason** - Air Gunner  
Aged 28, from Bolton.

**Sergeant Alfred Perkins** - Wireless Operator  
Aged 23, from Islington, London.

**Willem Van Stockum** - Pilot  
Aged 33 from the Netherlands.

After completing their team training at RAF Riccall in the 1658 Heavy Conversion Unit; the crew of Halifax MZ684 were posted to 10 Squadron at RAF Melbourne on 12th May 1944.

Pilot Willem Van Stockum was in the cockpit just 2 days later, with Flight Lieutenant Le Cudenec, practicing circuits, climbs and landings. And on 19th May he accompanied the MZ630 crew as a 2nd pilot

By 1st June, his crew were ready for their first mission: the bombing attack on Urville, south of Caen in Halifax LV825. This was the location of the Abwehr listening station where German troops were able to identify Allied bombers and fighters approaching, and relay warning messages to anti-aircraft defenses. 23 aircraft, including MZ532, left Melbourne just after 11.14pm, joining 78 other Halifaxes and 8 pathfinder Mosquitos to take out this crucial target before the planned Allied invasion. They bombed the primary target from 13,500 feet at 1.12am, landing back at the base at 3.22am.

On 2nd June, they took part in the bombing of Trappes Marshalling Yard. Leaving RAF Melbourne at 10.34pm, they arrived at the primary target at 12.55am, dropping their bombs from 10,500ft and returning to base at 3.17am. By June 6th Bomber Command had helped to destroy nearly 75% of the French railway network; making large scale strategic movement of German troops by rail practically impossible.

5th/6th June: As D-Day dawned, the crew left on a bombing mission to attack the Mont Fleury Battery on Gold Beach. As part of the 1012 strong air fleet tasked with taking out the German defenses, Van Stockum's crew successfully bombed their target at 4.41am from 12,000ft. Later that morning, following a further bombardment from the British naval cruisers HMS Orion and HMS Belfast, the battery was captured by D Company of the 6th Green Howards.

Leaving at 10.24pm on the 6th June, their penultimate mission was to bomb Saint-Lô. They reached their primary target at 00.56am on the 7th June and dropped their bombs from 2,500ft. returning to base at 4.01am. A strategically vital crossroads, more bombing raids were unleashed on Saint-Lô throughout June and July 1944 destroying nearly 95% of the town which was finally liberated by 29th Infantry Division and by the 35th Infantry Division in July 1944 during OPERATION COBRA.

# Life in the Mayenne

## Les & Diane Windeler

On a rainy Monday morning in October 2005, Diane (who had been watching 'A Place in France') asked me if we could go to France as we had never been. "Yes" I said. "Can we go right now" she said. "Ok" says I. This was the first time we had ever thought of visiting France, let alone buying a house there.

So, we packed a case, booked the Eurotunnel, went to Halfords for a GB sticker then W H Smith for a map, a book and a CD on French, then off we set.

We spent the first night in a hotel in Lille before heading down to the Mayenne area the following morning. On the drive down, Diane phoned a UK agent and arranged a couple of house viewings.

We eventually found a Longere near Evron that we liked, but shortly before Xmas we were just about to walk out of the door to return to France and sign the documents when the owner phoned to say that someone else had offered the full asking price and we had lost the house. No worries we thought, we will look again in the new year.

However, on Boxing day, I saw a house advertised on the Internet at Cigny, near Ambrières Les Vallées. The following day, December the 26th, my daughters 14th birthday, we set off for France.

We met the agent and went to view the house. The pictures of the property were

really very poor, as is the norm with French agents, so we didn't really know what to expect.

As we drove down the ¼ mile driveway towards the house, it loomed out of the Fog. It looked like something out of a horror movie, or like Miss Havershams house as Diane would say, but, without even setting foot inside, I said to the agent that I would offer the full asking price. We weren't going to lose this one!

We had a look around the house, it needed a full renovation as it had been uninhabited for 20 years, but we weren't put off. We could see the potential it had. Later that day, we sorted the necessary paperwork at the agents office and the offer was accepted.

So, we had bought a house in France, or, as it turned out, an ancient small Chateau with nearly 1,000 years of history set in 8 acres of land.

Once back in Cheshire, we put our main house on the market, it sold within a few minutes, amazingly. We also put our new-build apartment on the market too; that took a while longer to sell but we did live in it for a few weeks prior to leaving for France.

We moved out to our new home in France on the 26th of March 2006, Diane's birthday, just 5 months after our spontaneous first trip to France.

For the first 2 years, we lived in an 8 berth mobile home, and by the time the renovation was all finished, it had taken us 15 years.

Whilst living in Ambrieres Les Vallees Diane became ill with Cancer, thankfully all now cured. After that we decided to reassess our lives, We decided to downsize so we could have more time to ourselves. It didn't take long to find a buyer, so the search began for our next home.



At home in Fougerolles du Plessis

Diane really wanted a Zen garden that was finished. I just wanted somewhere with a large space for my model railway and room for our cars.

We saw an advert for a house which had just come onto the market in Fougerolles, so a viewing was arranged. Driving through the gates, flanked by mature trees, the drive curved around the small lake to reveal a magnificent garden, like a small park. We were told that one of the previous owners was a gardener at the Palace of Versailles.

Fortunately this house didn't need much doing to it, apart from needing a new kitchen and updating the various bathrooms. We've also created a TV room in the attached workshop and a Gym in the next room; doing the work ourselves. Diane is currently busy renovating the 28 window shutters.





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If you've enjoyed reading the magazine, please leave us a google review by visiting:

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Your reviews help us to improve the range of articles in the magazine and also help to attract new readers and advertisers



## Next Edition: Summer 2024

The deadline for adverts and articles in the next edition of the magazine is **Friday 14th June 2024**.

Let us know what you'd like to see in the Summer Edition by emailing: [contact@mayenne53.com](mailto:contact@mayenne53.com)

or message us through our Facebook page:

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