

Egg-cellent holiday

Pauline Boxall
New Malden, UK
Via email

Dear Mr Lay

I read with interest your monthly articles on having your own chickens pecking around in your own garden and the enjoyment you derive from them – your girls. Last summer

we had a very enjoyable holiday in a gîte in the Limousin and were told by the owners that the children could look every morning to see if the chickens had laid any eggs. This became the highlight of their day as they were allowed to collect said eggs and take them back for eating. You mentioned in a recent article about the color and taste which I do agree is so different from shop bought eggs, the color

being a very strong orange.

I hope your chickens continue to thrive as you so obviously treat them as part of your family. I look forward to reading your next article. ■

PAUL - Many thanks for that Pauline. Glad you enjoy the column, it's a lot of fun to write!

Puy Batard holidays

Chantal and Jean-Pierre Déchoz
Sainte-Feyre, 23
Via email

Hi Bugle,

We run the house "Le Puy Batard", in Sainte Feyre, Creuse, which welcomes the disabled for their vacations. Our house is open for Christmas, June and July. There are around fifteen people at any one time, most of whom have a disability from birth, such as Cerebral Palsy. We also rent the house to handicapped parties on request

(mostly May, beginning of June, September).

Le Puy Batard is a non-profit activity, fully benevolent, and we are looking for volunteers to help out. Without you, we can't do anything. Are you willing...

- To give up some of your spare time?
- To discover the lives of disabled people?
- To enable them to have a holiday too?

There are no special skills required and you can choose your own dates. Volunteers coming from further afield

can stay with us; those living locally may prefer to go home at night. If you have some spare time and would like to get involved please get in touch!

For expats living in the region we offer a place to speak French, meet and mix with the locals. As a thank you we can give you a hand with your French paperwork which we know is very difficult!

To find out more about Le Puy Batard and how you can help, visit our website (www.puy-batard.org), email accueil@puy-batard.org or jean-pierre.dechoz@orange.fr or call 05 55 81 12 05. Thank you! ■

ED - It is an absolute pleasure to be able to help promote initiatives such as this. So please, please, please, anyone who has any time to give, read the article below and get in touch with Chantal and Jean-Pierre if you think you can help.

An update on the neglected horses

Marjorie Morrow
Soumans, 23
Via email

Time for the Bugle to blow its own trumpet... A big thank you! We have had a very generous offer of help with the two rescue horses Solide and Nat. I also had a call from a lady called Vicky with the offer of rugs. I was away in England so if Vicky would be kind enough to phone me again on 05.55.65.16.58 I would appreciate it very much.

Solide has gained 50 kilos and Nat 46 kilos. This should have been more but their teeth are in urgent

need of attention and the charity is not forthcoming with help. Can anyone out there offer help? Solide's teeth are so long that they are touching his jaw bones, causing infection and he is having trouble eating. Please if you can or you are a vet or equine dentist and would offer your services for these two neglected horses it would be received with the utmost gratitude.

Nat has had an infection where his cancer is and is on antibiotics but is making good progress. The cancer seems to be at a standstill so let's hope he makes it to a fantastic summer.

Yesterday we moved them

into a new field; what a beautiful sight it was. Both Nat and Solide were like spring lambs. Off they set at a canter around their new field. Heads up, ears pricked, eyes shining. What a fantastic difference in them.

Solide and Nat adore being stroked and having human contact. If there is any one out there who would like to groom them or just spend time with them please let me know and we can try to arrange something.

Regards and thanks to the Bugle,

Marjorie Morrow
05.55.65.16.58 ■

Good customer service

Alan Whitten
St-Dizier-Leyrenne
Via email

I recently experienced customer service here in France that I still find difficult to believe happened. If any of your readers have a need for repairs to Campingaz

products, or electrical household goods, or if they want to purchase these items, they might like to try Distr-Pro, 7 rue du Crucifix, 87051, in Limoges. Tel 05 55 79 52 05, and on the web:

<http://www.distri-pro.fr>

I went there recently with a

Campingaz appliance. I fully expected to have to leave it, but I was greeted most pleasantly and the work was done immediately whilst I waited. The whole experience was almost surreal not just for France, but anywhere! It also proves that you should never judge a book by its cover, Harrods it ain't but efficient it most certainly is! ■

A typical day at Le Puy Batard

Janet McGenn tells us about her experiences as a volunteer at Le Puy Batard and what you can expect to be doing on a typical day.

My husband and I have been residents in Creuse for the last five years and love the life. We have lots of English friends whom we meet regularly. We are actively involved in the St Jean English Library in La Souterraine, pass the time of day with our French neighbours and being retired still have time to spare. I learned of Le Puy Batard on one of the English forums, and my knowledge of the French language being at something of a standstill, I thought here is a place I can immerse myself in the French life and improve my language skills. Little did I realise how much more I would learn.

The guests who are regulars vary very much in age and disability and love their annual break in the Creuse. Despite my lack

of language skills the guests themselves make me feel most welcome, even attempting a few words of English for my benefit and in return I have introduced them to the joys of Marmite (and yes, they either love it or hate it), apple crumble and mince pies.

How the days are spent depend



on the weather, but are always very busy. Mornings are spent at the gîte, helping shower and dress those who need help. Breakfast is leisurely and the mornings pass pleasantly: reading, painting or playing board games. Afternoons are usually spent discovering



the Creuse: picnicking, visiting churches and villages in the area and the occasional trip to see what the supermarket has to offer.

Volunteers also vary very much in age, from students to retired people, and between us we prepare the meals and accompany the visitors on their daily outings. I can now make mayonnaise, vinaigrette dressing and an authentic quiche from the times I hide in the kitchen and peel vegetables when my head is buzzing and my brain aching

from trying to speak French all the time. Evenings are always enjoyable; we all gather around the large dining table for our evening meal, which in typical French style is not a hurried affair and afterwards there is chat and maybe singing, and gradually people drift off to bed.

When I tell people that I am spending a week helping people with disabilities they think it must be a sombre affair, but far from it, there is laughter and joy and I am looking forward to seeing my French friends again

