

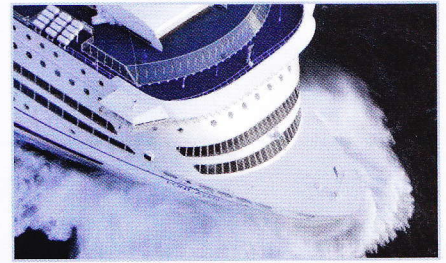
WWI BATTLEFIELDS TOUR

THE LILLE TOURIST OFFICE is running coach tours to nearby cemeteries, memorials and other reminders of the battles of the First World War.

One tour on offer takes visitors to Fromelles, the site of a terrible battle on July 19, 1916. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission inaugurated a new military cemetery here last July, the first cemetery to be created by the commission in 50 years. The tour also pays homage to other nations that fought in the war, with trips to memorials for Indian and Portuguese soldiers.

The tourist office also runs tours into Belgium, to the Tyne Cot Cemetery, one of the largest and most impressive Commonwealth military cemeteries. You can also visit the Essex Farm cemetery, inspiration for the poem *In Flanders Field*.

More info: www.lilletourism.com



ECO-FRIENDLY SUPERFERRY

FRENCH FERRY OPERATOR Brittany Ferries and shipbuilder STX France are embarking on a joint project to develop a new generation of environmentally-friendly passenger ferries.

Powered by dual-fuel engines which will burn liquefied natural gas combined with a high efficiency electric propulsion system, the new vessel will reduce energy consumption and CO₂ emissions by 15-20% compared to current ferries. In addition, pollution by nitrous and sulphurous oxides will be almost eliminated.

The structure will make use of lighter compound materials and high-strength glues, together with advanced hull design.

The new ship will not only be clean but large and fast, being able to accommodate 2,400 passengers, 650 cars and 40 lorries and have a maximum speed of 25 knots.

More info: www.brittanyferries.com

LE MANS 24-HOURS BY BIKE

THE THIRD ANNUAL Le Mans 24-Hours cycling race takes place on the famous Bugatti race track from August 20-21. Around 100 British cyclists are expected to compete in the event, joining more than 1,800 entrants.

Over the 24-Hours cycle race weekend, teams from across Europe will battle it out on the same track where motor-sport champions have made history. As with the petrol-fuelled 24-Hours race, cyclists experience the thrill of competing round-the-clock.

Racing in teams or riding solo, competitors are expected to complete as many laps as possible within 24 hours, pedalling through the night. Spectators line the track with full access to the grounds of the race course.

Those who wish to try their legs out on the track without going the full distance can take part in *La Matinale*, a one-hour cycling session that is open to anyone wishing to pedal around the legendary Bugatti circuit.

More info: www.24heuresvelo.fr, www.tourisme-en-sarthe.com



ARDENNES EVENTS

THE ARDENNES hosts the Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes at Charleville-Mézières on September 16-25 – the 50th anniversary of the World Puppet Festival which is expected to attract 150,000 spectators.

Other events in the *département* include the Cabaret Vert from August 26-28 in Charleville-Mézières, one of the top music events of its kind which also brings together street artists and comedians (www.cabaretvert.com).

Two other leading music events are the annual Douzy'k Rock Festival on July 23-24 (www.myspace.com/douzyfestival) and the Aymon Folk Festival on July 29-30 (www.myspace.com/aymonfolkfestival).

The Tournaments Knights at the castle of Sedan is throughout July and August (www.chateau-fort-sedan.fr) and there's a sound-and-light spectacular at La Cassine during July and August in front of the ruins of a castle. (<http://spectacle-la-cassine.com>).

This year's Festi Meuse (festival of the river Meuse) will be staged from July 16-23 in Fumay, Haybes, Givet and Vireux Wallerand. (www.festimeuse.com).

More info: www.ardennes.com