

Central Brittany

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Journal

Dec. 2006

1€

ISSUE 30



Christmas

2 Recipe: Mince Pies

Recipe of the Month Mince pies



Mincemeat

Ingredients:

1 lb (450 g) mixed currants, sultanas and raisins, chopped finely
4 oz (125 g) grated vegetable suet or melted butter
Zest and juice of one small orange
4 oz (125 g) dried apricots (chopped small) or candied peel (optional)

4 oz (125 g) brown sugar
1 small apple, roughly grated
½ teaspoon mixed spice
¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
3 fl oz (75 ml) brandy

Method:

1. Mix all the above ingredients together in a large bowl. Cover and leave to stand 48 hours to a week, in a cool place (not the refrigerator), stirring every day. It can be potted up after this time (and used in mince pies) and kept for a couple of months in a cool place.

Mince Pies

Ingredients:

8 oz (225 g) plain white flour
pinch of salt
5 oz (150 g) butter or margarine

2 tablespoons sugar
Cold water
Icing sugar

- Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl, and add the butter. Cut into little pieces then rub with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.
- Stir in the sugar, then add enough cold water to make a smooth dough.
- On a floured surface roll out the dough to a 3 mm (¼ inch) thickness and stamp out an equal number of big circles and little circles.
- Put the large circles into greased patty tins, and add a spoonful of mincemeat. Dampen the edges of the pastry and put on the smaller circle as the lid. Make two slits in each lid.
- Bake in the oven at 190 C (375 F) Gas Mark 5 for twenty to twenty-five minutes. Leave in the tins for five minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool. Sprinkle with icing sugar and serve warm.

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Christmas Shopping in St Brieuc

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St. Brieuc, the capital of Côtes d'Armor, is not traditionally regarded as a tourist centre, and perhaps this contributes to making the shops in the city centre particularly interesting. The city is big enough to have branches of many major chains, such as the Body Shop, and small enough for a day spent wandering round the centre to still be an enjoyable experience.

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4 Places to Visit: Pontrieux

Pontrieux

Situated on the Trieux estuary, to the North of Guingamp, Pontrieux was, at one time, an important strategic and commercial centre, as is testified by its wealth of old buildings, and, in particular, the 50 lavoirs (wash houses) which line the banks of the river (below).



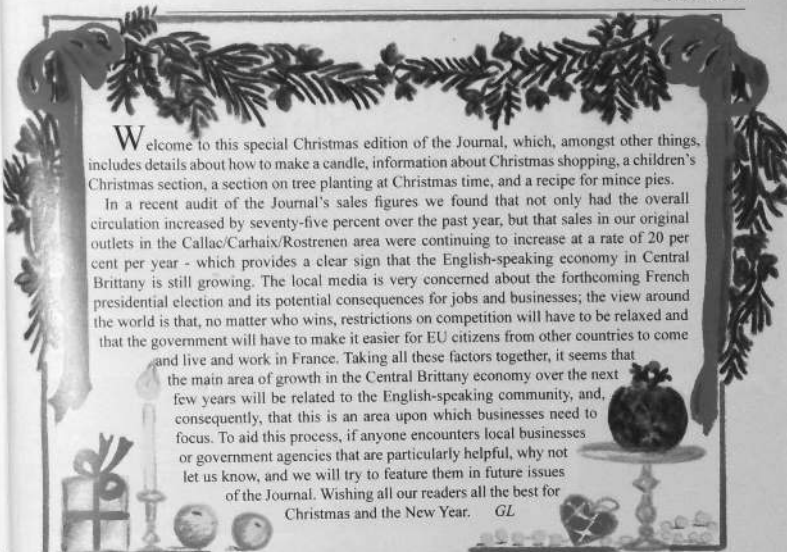
Above: Pontrieux has encouraged craftspeople to set up shop in the town centre, giving the town a more cosmopolitan atmosphere than other towns of the same size in Brittany.

Right top: One of Pontrieux's oldest buildings. 'Le Tour Eiffel' now houses the Tourist Information Office. At one time it was the headquarters of the port authorities, and its name is probably an ironic

reference to the fact that it was used to monitor the traffic on the river.

Right Middle: The centre of the town has escaped re-development and stone buildings still predominate.

Below: Many houses backing onto the river have their own lavoirs.



Welcome to this special Christmas edition of the Journal, which, amongst other things, includes details about how to make a candle, information about Christmas shopping, a children's Christmas section, a section on tree planting at Christmas time, and a recipe for mince pies.

In a recent audit of the Journal's sales figures we found that not only had the overall circulation increased by seventy-five percent over the past year, but that sales in our original outlets in the Callac/Carhaix/Rostrenen area were continuing to increase at a rate of 20 per cent per year - which provides a clear sign that the English-speaking economy in Central Brittany is still growing. The local media is very concerned about the forthcoming French presidential election and its potential consequences for jobs and businesses; the view around the world is that, no matter who wins, restrictions on competition will have to be relaxed and that the government will have to make it easier for EU citizens from other countries to come

and live and work in France. Taking all these factors together, it seems that the main area of growth in the Central Brittany economy over the next few years will be related to the English-speaking community, and, consequently, that this is an area upon which businesses need to focus. To aid this process, if anyone encounters local businesses or government agencies that are particularly helpful, why not let us know, and we will try to feature them in future issues of the Journal. Wishing all our readers all the best for Christmas and the New Year. GL

Central Brittany Journal

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Christmas Toys

Torr-penn is a traditional toy shop on the high street in Carhaix, close to the Maison de la Presse. It stocks a comprehensive range of wooden toys and games, which will appeal to people of all ages. The classic teddy bear pictured on the right is part of the special range of toys stocked by Le Comptoir de Campagne in Callac.



Above & Right: Soft toys, unusual metal toys, dolls prams, rocking horses, etc. line the shelves at Torr-Penn
8 rue des Martyres
Carhaix 02 98 93 78 17



Left: turn the handle and play a tune. Musical boxes.

Above: traditional games in wooden boxes.

Part of a range of unusual toys stocked by Le Comptoir de Campagne, Callac.



Le Comptoir de Campagne, by the traffic lights in Callac, stocks toys that one is unlikely to find elsewhere, including these miniature pots and pans pictured left. The shop also sells modern reproductions of toys that were popular early in the last century and is well worth including on a Christmas shopping expedition.



It is a common complaint that Christmas has become over-commercialised and that children are only interested in the latest, and most expensive, toys available - which they invariably discard on the day after Christmas. If one looks hard enough, however, it is still possible to find examples of the traditional toys that have a proven ability to provide children with years of pleasure.

Above right: Wooden doll, Torr-Penn, Carhaix
Above left: Hungarian Chocolate Father Christmases, Paprika, Carhaix
Left: Traditional Hungarian cloth dolls from Paprika, the Hungarian shop at the lower end of Carhaix high street



Teashop review: Le Pontrieux English Tea Room

This tearoom is close to the Mairie in the pretty little town of Pontrieux. As well as serving Sunday breakfasts and evening meals, the owner, Gary Pepworth, also provides a large selection of speciality teas, home-baked cakes, and light snacks.

Seven tables fill the large rectangular tearoom, and the day's cakes are displayed in the centre of the room. Flapjacks and fruit scones are always on sale, and visitors may also find chocolate sponge cake, Chelsea buns, jam tarts, and shortbread.

We enjoyed a slice of American teabread, a crunchy oat chocolate slice and scones, and the free pats of butter and jams and jellies were most appreciated.

Tea and coffee came attractively served and the large window, exposed beams, and dresser filled with teas, created a cosy atmosphere.

Address: 4 rue de l'Epornerie Tel: 02 96 95 32 07 Opening hours: Tues. - Sat. 12 - 6 Sun. 12 - 4



First Prize Painting

Congratulations to local artist and CBJ reader, Ann Harrison Ray who won first prize at the recent art expo at Carhaix with this watercolour of an Essex barge, entitled 'Le Chaland'. Two more of Anne's paintings are being offered for sale in this issue of the Journal, see page 49.



The Cat's Whiskers

Linda and Geoff Bamford are now open for business at their new cattery in Duault, near Callac.

Linda and Geoff moved to Brittany just over a year ago, to take over the Pennanhaie Kennels in Kergloff, but the purchase fell through. Happily, they have managed to find alternative premises and their business plans are now back on track.

They are able to accommodate up to 5 cats from the start of December and a facility to look after dogs will be added shortly.

More info tel: 02 96 21 56 68

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News & Services

A British Christmas: Lamballe

The Association Franco-Brit in Lamballe is organising a Christmas market with a British theme and are looking for stall holders who can provide the ingredients of a traditional British Christmas - gingerbread, Scottish eggs, Christmas cards, etc. The cost is 5€ per metre of table, the room will be heated, tables are provided, and there will be a buffet and a Salon de Thé with French cakes. 9th and 10th December 1.30pm to 7 pm, 9 rue St. Lazare, Lamballe More info: 02 96 30 39 97 / 06 07 06 67 44

Soirée Française in Carhaix

The first Soirée Française in Carhaix was a great success, attracting almost 60 people. The next meeting will take place on Friday 8th December, starting at 8pm, at the same venue, the Noz Vad Hotel, in the centre of the town. For more information contact George Turnbull: 02 98 99 48 90, ghtturnbull@fastmail.fm

BMW and Mercedes Garage

Dominique Leveillé of Dominique Autos 56 in Pontivy has contacted the CBJ, asking us if we could let our readers know about the specialist service that he offers to the owners of quality cars. He is an expert in the repair and maintenance of cars such as BMWs and Mercedes, and is often able to repair vehicles with spare parts recovered from other cars. A visit to his garage in the industrial estate 'Pontivy Sud' is a must for anyone owning a high-performance or quality make of car: turn right over the river after McDonalds and follow the signs to rue Lavoisier and Dominique Autos 56. Tel: 02 97 25 72 66

Wine Merchant

Jean-Marie Baucher, another Pontivy businessman, has also contacted the CBJ this month. He is the proprietor of 'Pondi-Cave', a wine merchant situated opposite the Lycée J. Loth, just off the High street. Before starting the business Jean-Marie spent several years working as a chef in hotels in restaurants in the North of England and is

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Quote of the Month

"We all came from the same country, and we landed in the same place. But the winds of the world touched us, and we scattered in different directions."

Kabir (1398-1518)

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therefore able to give expert help and advice to English-speaking clients in their native tongue. In addition to a wide range of wines Pondi Cave stocks a range of beers from around the world, and whiskeys from Scotland, Ireland, and, of course, Brittany.

Locarn: Florists Shop

Manoir Loguevel in Locarn is expanding the services that it offers to the public from the beginning of December. A florist's shop will be officially open from 6th December, run by Nicolaia, and there will also be a beauty salon, with in-house beautician Joanne, and the Loguevel boutique with beautiful things for home and personal use. Sophrology and Thai massage will be offered by Gilles. The Salon de Thé is open for snacks, lunch and afternoon teas. Winter opening hours are from 10am to 5pm Tuesday through Saturday. Closed on Sunday and Monday.

To get to Loguevel follow the road to St. Nicodème from Locarn. After 4km take a right turn, marked Manoir & Chapelle, take second left and follow the signs. For more information call Anna on 02 96 36 68 98

Everything English: Ploermel

Everything English, in Ploermel, has moved to a new shop at PLACE DE LAMENNAIS, next door to Thomas Cook, and have extended the range of products sold to include locally produced produce and cakes. They also have a large selection of novels for 2€50 each, videos for 3€ and a wide selection of cards - both commercial and handmade.

New Websites

John and Shirley Ledlie, who are based in Callac, have launched two new websites to supplement their existing site: www.frenchaccommodation.com. One site, www.frenchclassified.com, is a directory of English-speaking business people in France, and the other, www.love247.com, is a new form of online dating agency. Both sites should be online from the start of the month.

English Paints in France

Robert and Amanda Maiden believe that they have solved the problem of making English paints available in France. The couple have a business background in the UK, with Robert having worked for B&Q, and have formed a company called KIS - from the old sales maxim, Keep it Simple. They are now able to supply Leyland paints to tradespeople (with extra discount if you buy by the pallet load) - and the complete range of Dulux paint to private customers. Their first outlet in Brittany will be T. K. Constructions at Le Haut Treguet 56800 Quily, near Josselin, tel: 02 97 74 73 48. Contact Robert and Amanda on 0044 (0)1962 714249 enquiries@kis-uk.com

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Letters

Double Cream

I read, in the November edition, Jackie Bristow's request for ideas for a substitute for double cream. To decorate trifles etc. or to serve with puddings she might like to try Delia Smith's recipe for 'Mascarpone cream' as follows:-
 4 rounded tablespoons mascarpone cheese
 4 rounded tablespoons fromage frais
 2-3 drops pure vanilla extract
 1 dessertspoon caster sugar
 However, I have also found (particularly if it is to be used in a recipe) that by mixing mascarpone, UHT single cream and lemon juice, you can obtain a reasonable substitute. I have used this many times, in quiches, cheesecakes etc. to good effect.
 Hope Jackie (and other readers) find this of some use.
 Jan Keen

In your November edition you asked about buying cream. Veronique Coadou, sells cream, fresh milk, and cheeses, produced on her own farm, on the market in Chateaufeu du Faou, Plonevez du Faou, Carhaix, and Huelgoat.
 Glenda Drummond

Thanks also to Ruth Gordine who also wrote in recommending the products produced by Véronique and Yves Coadou on their dairy farm in Plonevez Du Faou - which is run on sustainable principles.

Breton Courses, in English

I am writing as Head of the Language Centre at Rennes 2 University (Rennes2-Haute-Bretagne). For many years, Rennes University has run a summer "crash course" in Breton (the "Daoulamm"), catering for Breton learners or speakers of all levels. We have now realized that there may be English speakers living in the region who could be interested in learning something about the language and culture (or wanting to actually acquire some basic language skills), and who may not have enough French to be able to follow a course taught in that language. We are therefore contemplating offering a new 2-4 day course, specially taught in English for English speakers, which could take place somewhere in Central Brittany (location still to be decided) in the Spring of next year. We would like to know whether there might be a demand for such an "introductory course" and would be grateful for any comments or feedback from readers.
 Yours sincerely,
 Daniel TOUDIC
 Centre de langues Université Rennes 2
daniel.toudic@uhb.fr

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Kim and Steve
 from P'tite Britain, Châteaufeu du Faou
 wish all their customers
Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year
 and thank them for their custom since opening in October.

New Outlets

We have received several requests from people living in the Jugon les Lacs area asking where they can buy the Journal. The Bar Tabac in the pl. du Marché now stocks it, as does the Super U in Plélin le Petit.

Thank you to readers who let us know that stocks of the Journal ran out early in November in St. Nicolas du Péleim and Guémené sur Scorff. Arrangements have been made to increase supplies to these outlets

Business Opportunity

I am a Bretonne executive working in Germany on a contract which is due to finish at the end of 2006, and plan to settle back in Brittany after being away 20 years. I own a house near Quimper, have 2 grown-up children, and am trilingual.
I have 15 years professional experience in car exporting to Germany (enjoy old, collectable cars), have 8 years experience in gastronomy, and am well-travelled (world-wide); I am now looking for a new challenge in France with a reliable, serious business associate - male or female - would this be of interest to any CBJ readers? Maybe we could start with a market survey into health/tourism/language teaching/house building - maybe in the German style etc.
All serious offers are welcome.
Mme Cotton acotten1@club-internet.fr

Business Courses

The Chambre des Metiers at Dinan are now presenting its business course in English, and tailoring the subject matter specifically so that people from Britain gain the maximum value.
At just over €300, the cost is not that much, and can be reduced for people who have relevant experience.
"I found the course was of real value in helping me understand the way things are here," said Fiona who has just successfully completed the latest course.
Another Englishman was more scathing of things here. "This is the second time I have done a stage," he said. "The first time it was in French and I could have sat at the back and read a newspaper for all the value I got. Complete waste of time. This was much better, really helpful."
If anyone is interested, then why not contact Michele Robin at the Chambre des Metiers in Dinan who speaks very good English. She can be reached by email on m.robin@cm-dinan.fr by telephone on 02 96 39 60 25.
Linden Cole

Christmas Greetings. Rendez-Vous des Celtes

We would like to wish all our customers and readers of the Central Brittany Journal a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2007. We would also like to take this opportunity to say a sincere thank you for your custom and loyalty during 2006, an important year, as it has taken us well into our 4th year of business.
Our restaurant is now closed for our annual winter break but we look forward to seeing you all again in the New Year.
Simon and Annie,
Au Rendez-Vous des Celtes, Plussulien

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Education

I read with interest your article on Education in this month's cbj relating to students from the UK coming to live and continue their education in France.

Because we have also "been there", I thought it might be useful and helpful to know how we coped with these changes. We have two daughters, the eldest started at primary in the UK and continued in primary in France before going onto secondary and her BAC, all within the French educational system. After her BAC she had the choice of university in France or the UK. She opted for the UK for her degree and has gone on to teach UK students French at secondary level to A level.

The younger one started at pre-school in France and continued into primary and secondary, again all with the French system of education. At aged 14, we returned to the UK on my retirement and she transferred to the UK system for the first time, which on reflection was a grave mistake. At first she was pleased to get out of the system here, but now agrees with us that she would have been far happier and would have got better qualifications if she had not changed. She found that the systems were so different and the UK students did not consider her as an equal peer, almost a foreigner.

Having seen both types of education, although some areas might have changed now, the emphasis with the French was on academic ability whereas in the UK there seemed to be more balance between learning and activities. The French way, we saw, made students more competitive and somewhat more self centred, whereas the UK system provided for much more peer support in and out of school where in France this was provided within the family.

Both our girls have always had good French accents, perhaps because they started at a young age in this country and their French friends always thought that they were indeed French. Both, I hope, had much support from us as their parents, and I always remember at the end of term when they were assessed for the next year that we given the same degree of assessment as they were, always in French with no "holds barred". To my mind, to compete in the French educational system, the student really needs to be above average and to start in this system from an early age as they have to cope with many different pressures including language and culture. Parents do really need some French language ability and be able to integrate into their local French social structure. This might all sound controversial, but it is based on real experience.

We have been there.
Yours sincerely, DJ Ray, Mael-Carhaix

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Letters continued page 18

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ST MALO

At the beginning of the sixth century a boy was born in south Wales, who was given the name of Malo. His parents were rich and powerful and, at the age of twelve, they sent their son to the school of Llancarvan. Here he studied the works of sages and philosophers, and he also spent time in the company of the wise men who resided in the college.

After several years at Llancarvan, Malo's parents sent for him to come and take his place as the eldest son, but Malo refused. He explained to them that he wished to follow the example of his masters, and spend his life in contemplation and helping others, and, moved by his sincerity, his mother and father gave him their blessing.

Many of Malo's schoolfriends had already embarked for Brittany, and soon he too set sail, and landed on the little island, where the city of St. Malo stands today. In those times, it was home to an old hermit called Aaron, and he gave Malo a warm welcome. After some days spent in his company, Malo crossed to the mainland, and



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soon came to the city of Aleth, on the mouth of the river Rance.

Here he began speaking to the inhabitants, and his kindness and wisdom, combined with his gift for healing, made a great impression on the people he met.

Before long, he had become the most influential man in the region, and King Hoel II appointed him as one of his chief counsellors.

However, there were people in the city of Aleth who objected to the influence that this newcomer had gained over their countrymen, and they began to do all they could to thwart him.

One day they stole away the man who baked the bread for Malo and his companions, and, binding him hand and foot, left him a long way down the seashore, to be drowned by the incoming tide. The poor man prepared himself for death, but to his wonder, the water rose up around him, and left a space like the opening of a well above his head. When St. Malo finally found him, the tide had receded, and the baker explained to him all that had taken place.

In spite of this failure, Malo's enemies continued to harass him, and to spread false rumours amongst the people. Before long, they had turned almost everyone against him, and, growing weary of the continual persecution, Malo decided to leave the city for a time. He set sail for the port of La Rochelle, and, once landed, joined the old sage, St. Leonce, in his home in the town of Saintes. St. Leonce wished to keep his visitor with him, but Malo asked to be given some quiet place to which he could retire, for he had already attained a great age.

St. Leonce gave him a hermitage close to the village of Brie, and Malo began to spend his days there very happily.

Meanwhile, the town of Aleth, deprived of the benevolent influence that had governed it for so long, began to fall into difficulties. The harvest failed due to a terrible drought, and plague carried off hundreds of the inhabitants.

"Why did we chase away our beloved St. Malo, who was like a father to us?" the people asked each other. "We must send envoys to him, and entreat him to return."

An assembly was called, and messengers were dispatched to Malo's hermitage. When the old man learnt what had befallen the city, he agreed to return for a little while, and, bidding farewell to his friend, St. Leonce, he set off in the company of the envoys.

As he approached the city of Aleth, the trees came into leaf, and flowers appeared in the fields and on the verges. The plague disappeared, and ships loaded with corn and other food sailed into the ports, bringing an end to the famine.

Learning that their benefactor was approaching, the people of Aleth poured out of the town and hurried to welcome them. St. Malo forgave them all, and he re-entered the city on a cart drawn by two bullocks, amidst the rejoicing inhabitants. Once again he began travelling about the region, speaking to people, and doing whatever he could to help them, but he had not come back to settle down. After a while he returned to Saintes and, in the company of a few young people who had accompanied him from Brittany, he built a new hermitage near the village of Archembray, where he lived until his death at the age of a hundred and ten, or, as some reports maintain, a hundred and thirty years old.

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Eco-Shopping: Use a Basket!

Environmentalists are trying to draw our attention to the problem of particles of plastic accumulating in the world's oceans. Packaging, and in particular plastic carrier bags, are considered to be one of the main culprits.

The solution is simple: use a traditional basket for your shopping. Baskets such as those produced by Michel Le Guilcher are made from locally-produced, sustainable materials, they do not involve the exploitation of labour in the third world, and have not been transported half way across the globe, meaning that they genuinely are an eco-friendly product.

At an average cost of thirty or forty euros they fall within the price range of a special present for a loved one, and are good value for money in that they will last for years, can be repaired, and are a pleasure to use.

Baskets represent a technology that has been developed over thousands of years, and it is therefore not surprising that they are so ideally suited to the task that they are designed to perform: they are easy to carry, comfortable to hold, and provide ideal protection for the goods that they contain.



Directions:
Follow signs for Plusquellec from the Callac / Carhaix road (D787). From Plusquellec follow signs for Plourac'h. As you drive out through the village of Plourac'h, you will see a small yellow sign with a picture of a basket and an arrow. Follow these signs for approx 4km and they will lead you to L'Oseraie. Tel: 02 96 45 03 62

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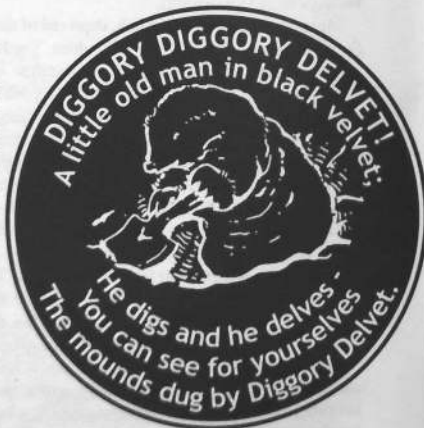
Writers

The Western Writers' Centre is based in Galway, Ireland. Our website can be accessed at: www.twwc.ie or Googled.

Our website pages contain a variety of information on creative writing and literature, but also two sets of pages, one for poetry, the other for prose. We are looking for submissions of short stories in English or French, no more than 3,000 words for prose and no more than six poems per author, for publication on the site. News of us can also be found on Indymedia Nantes.

As a frequent visitor to Brittany, staying most often at Callac and working currently on translations, I would be particularly delighted to hear from writers in the region. Stories and poems can, of course, cover any topic. Submissions should be e-mailed to: westernwriters@eircom.net We can also be contacted at 091 533595. Our address is 34 Nuns Island, Galway, Rep. of Ireland.

Looking forward to hearing from you,
Fred Johnston - Manager



A Mole in the garden: page 30

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L'Oseraie

Above right: Michel Le Guilcher is one of Central Brittany's best-known basket makers. He spent many family holidays visiting gardens in the south-west of England and welcomes English-speaking customers to his workshop, which is not far from Callac.

Above, top: Michel named his business after the willows that he uses in his baskets.

Above: Baskets can be made in all shapes and sizes and serve a multitude of uses, including cribs for dolls.

Right: The Oseraie is in an idyllic setting.

Right: Michel grows, strips and sells bundles of willow rods to other basket makers in the region. He also runs occasional courses in the Spring for people who want to learn how to make their own baskets.

Right bottom: baskets hanging from the rafters.

Below: the willow beds.

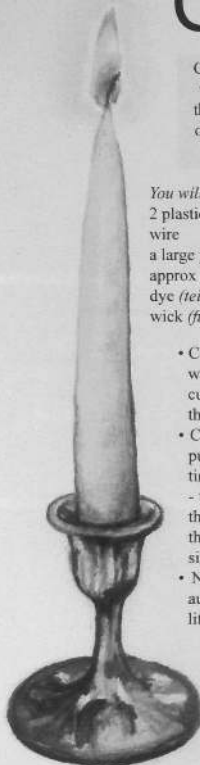


Candle Making

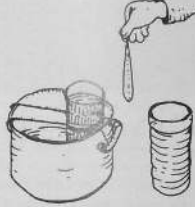
Candle-making is a very old and versatile craft, which can be done in many different ways, but the simplest and most classic technique is to dip them. This is a craft that the beginner should find easy to pick up, and produce results not too inferior to those of an expert. Paraffin wax can be bought from a pharmacy, and special dye and wick from a good art shop. These are instructions for regular dipped candles.

You will need:

- 2 plastic bottles
- wire
- a large pan
- approx 1½ blocks paraffin wax (*bloc de paraffine*)
- dye (*teinte pour cire*)
- wick (*fil en coton pour bougie*)



- Cut the tops off the two plastic bottles, fill one with water, and set aside. Take the other and wire it securely inside a large pan, so that it can't move. Fill the pan about one third full of water, and heat it up.
- Chop the wax into chunks and gradually add to the plastic bottle, putting in a little more whenever the wax has started to melt. Continue this process until the bottle is pretty much full of melted wax - this can take a while, and the wax can be stirred around to hasten the process, with a long utensil such as a chopstick. The water in the pan shouldn't be let to boil too fiercely, but remain on a gentle simmer throughout.
- Now is the time to add the dye - yellow makes very attractive, authentic-looking candles. The colour can be tested by spooning a little onto a plate and letting it cool.
- When the wax is fully melted, cut yourself a 30 cm length of wick, turn off the heat and dip it into the wax. Quickly draw out the wick and dip it into the water which you set aside earlier. Draw out the wick, which will be bent, and straighten with your hands.
- Keep dipping the wick alternatively into the wax and water. At first the wick will keep on kinking, but make sure to straighten it each time, until it becomes brittle.
- When the candle has reached the desired thickness, carefully lay it aside and dip another, following the same process. After a while the wax in the bottle will start to cool, and the water should be heated up again - dipping can continue throughout.



To make a twisted candle, roll out the candle immediately after finishing it, on a smooth surface. You can then twist the flattened candle into a corkscrew shape.



For added speed, two candles can be dipped at once, by using a length of wick twice as long and dipping the two ends together; however, care should be taken that they don't stick together. For a higher-quality candle a little beeswax can be added at the melting stage if desired.

Two candles being dipped at the same time

A MODERN CHRISTMAS

Christmas is regarded as a special time of year by almost everyone, irrespective of their religious or cultural background. There is a feeling that, on this one day, it ought to be possible for us all to be able get on with each other, and for everyone to have a good time.

The origins of this belief go back a long way - long before the Christian era. The Winter Solstice has always been celebrated in Northern climes, and has, for millennia, provided people with an opportunity to cheer themselves up at a time of the year when the days are at their shortest and everything in Nature is at its most dormant.

It is a time of year that has also long been associated with giving and receiving: those who have had a good year, traditionally take the Christmas season as an opportunity to give some of their surplus to the poor and the needy, just when it is most needed.

The association between Christmas and children's toys is also a very long-standing tradition. In the summertime, the children spend much time out of doors, too busy to be worried about toys, but in the winter, long evenings spent round the fire gave people the opportunity to make small items to amuse and entertain their children.

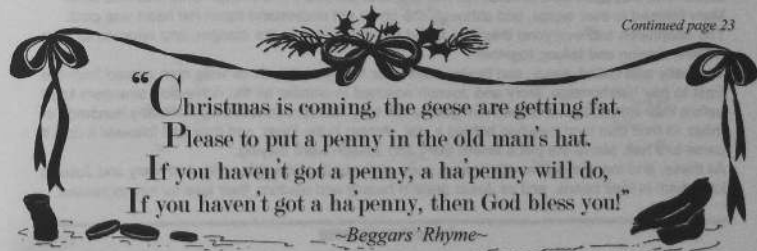
When the new religion of Christianity found its way to the colder countries in the north of

Europe, people naturally enough looked for some aspect of this new set of beliefs that would allow them to continue to celebrate a special day in the middle of winter, and they readily adopted the custom of celebrating the birth of Jesus himself, and marking the celebration by giving each other simple gifts and making the day as wonderful as possible for children.

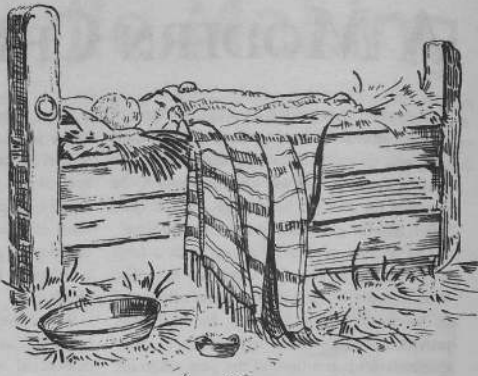
Whilst the Church was strong it continued to determine how the Christmas festival was celebrated and, for many centuries, priests and religious leaders were able to ensure that the festival was almost completely Christian in its character.

As the influence of Christianity has declined, people have re-introduced non-religious customs into the celebration of Christmas: Christmas trees, Christmas lights, Christmas puddings, Christmas cakes, etc. In essence, this is perfectly in keeping with the age-old tradition of Christmas being a time of year when people take a break from what they are doing, and enjoy themselves. However, for many people the theory of Christmas being an especially enjoyable time of the year is not matched by their practical experiences: doctors and health workers have been saying for years that the way that we celebrate Christmas has become a serious threat to our health; it is

Continued page 23



The Birth of Jesus



About two thousand years ago, when the lands about the Mediterranean Sea were governed by the powerful men of Rome, there lived a man called Joseph and a young woman called Mary. They were expecting the birth of their first child and their hearts grew more and more joyful as the day on which he was to be born drew closer.

When Mary was within a few weeks of bringing the child into the world, they received orders to travel to a town called Bethlehem. Everyone was being summoned to pay a tax to the Emperor of Rome, and even though Bethlehem was many miles away, the young couple set out on their journey.

When they came to Bethlehem it was full of people, and there was nowhere for them to stay. They decided to spend the night in a stable, and it was there, amongst the beasts and the straw, that Mary gave birth to a son. She had no cradle to place him in, so she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in one of the mangers, from which the animals fed. The air was filled with calm, and Mary and Joseph gazed on the face of the little sleeping child.

Meanwhile, on the hills outside Bethlehem, a group of shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep. It was dark, and only a few stars twinkled in the sky. Suddenly, a light fell about them, and a glorious being spoke to them in gentle tones.

"Do not be afraid," it said, "I bring you tidings of great joy. One has been born today who will gladden the hearts of the people. You will find him in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

As these words were spoken the skies were filled with rejoicing, and songs of praise were sung, blessing the Almighty, and wishing peace to all the people of the earth.

With eyes full of the brightness they had seen, and ears full of the sweet voices they had heard, the shepherds arose, and walked along the silent roads to Bethlehem. Their feet guided them to the stable, and they knelt down beside the manger, and told Mary and Joseph what they had seen.

Mary listened to their words, and although she could not understand them, her heart was glad.

The shepherds told everyone they met about the baby lying in the manger, and returned to their homes, singing and talking together.

The baby was called Jesus, and twelve days after he was born, three wise men arrived from the East to pay him homage. Mary and Joseph watched in wonder as the richly-clad strangers knelt before their little child and offered him gifts which they had carried with them for many hundreds of miles. In their own land they had beheld a star, shining in the West, and they had followed it until it came to a halt, above the place where Mary and Joseph were staying.

All these, and many more, wonders were seen at the birth of the little child, and Mary and Joseph kept them in their hearts, and as Jesus grew in beauty and wisdom, their love for him increased.

A modern Christmas continued from page 7

acknowledged to be one of the most stressful times of year for many people, is one of the principal triggers of family breakdown and divorce, and, for people who find themselves on their own or who have recently suffered a bereavement, it can be a time of particular unhappiness and loneliness. Overspending on Christmas shopping is also a major cause of indebtedness, and, consequently, poverty.

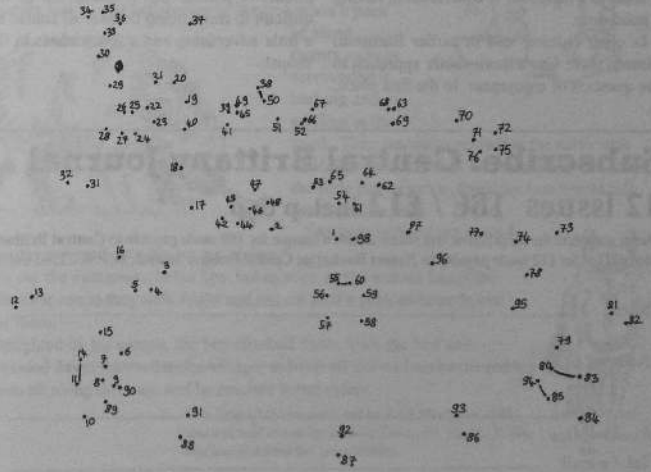
In Brittany, Christmas has traditionally been a fairly simple affair: even just ten years ago there were hardly any Christmas lights to be seen in the streets, an extra aisle of chocolates in December was the only concession that the shops made to Christmas, and one day off work was the only concession that people made to the Christmas holidays.

Even though people could see that in many ways a simple Christmas was preferable to the commercialisation that prevails in other countries, each year there are more plastic

toys in the shops, more Christmas advertising on the television, and more pressure to spend more money; Christmas in Brittany is falling into line with Christmas in the rest of Europe and America.

The reason why this is happening is probably because, in the modern world, there is an assumption that money brings happiness. Christmas is the one day of the year on which everyone wants to be happy - and therefore it is a time when they can be persuaded to spend money - whether they have got any or not. This is a sales opportunity that is simply too good to be missed as far as modern business is concerned, and hence each year, the shops are packed with ever more exotic Christmas goodies.

It is not difficult to see where this leads: one only has to look over the Channel to the UK to see the process taken to its extreme: there, Christmas shopping starts in August, and



people run up so much debt on presents and trying to enjoy themselves, that it still hasn't been paid off by the time that Christmas comes round the following year: which is not what anyone thinks Christmas is meant to be about, no matter what their beliefs.

At the heart of the problem, is the very question of enjoyment; somewhere in our past there arose a belief that there is something inherently wrong about enjoying oneself. In this way of thinking, virtuous people do not enjoy themselves, but receive their rewards later, in heaven; enjoying oneself is therefore something that only bad people do, and, of course, they have to be prepared to suffer unpleasant consequences for their bad behaviour. This might sound ridiculous, but it is actually this peculiar philosophy that allows people to imagine that eating so much that one gets indigestion is still a form of enjoying oneself or that drinking so much that it leads to a hangover is equivalent to having a good time.

In other cultures and in earlier European history, there was a more subtle approach to the question of enjoyment. In the first place,

enjoyment was not seen as something that was wrong, rather it was used as a guide as to what was right: thus if doing something made you feel ill, then it was, if possible, avoided, if something left you with a sense of wellbeing, then it was, if possible, repeated - but only in so far as it continued to be enjoyable. If we today were able to take these simple principles to heart then overeating, overdrinking and overspending would soon cease to be associated with our celebration of Christmas.

Commercial enterprises are often blamed for having corrupted the original spirit of Christmas, but another way of looking at it would be to say that commerce is actually doing an incredibly good job in providing us with products and produce from all around the world at Christmas time. If we kept in mind that the original spirit of Christmas was simply to have an enjoyable day in the middle of winter, then it should not be too difficult to resist being thrown off course by a little advertising and a few trinkets in the shops!

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The Biniou

Once upon a time my grandmother's grandmother had a son. One evening when dusk was falling, she sent him to the village, and to get there he had to walk



through a wood in which there were often wolves. Before leaving, the boy said: "As there are wolves in the wood I will bring my biniou; if the

wolves come to eat me, I will play them a tune before I die."

When the boy entered the wood he heard the wolves, which had smelt him, and he looked round for a tree to climb. However, the trees were all small, and their trunks little more than the width of a man's arm. The boy managed to scramble up the biggest of them, keeping tight hold of his biniou.

Hardly had he reached the top of the tree when a pack



of about twenty wolves surrounded it, barking and sniffing at the trunk. They started to scratch at the earth with their feet and soon they had uncovered the roots; the little boy began to think the tree would fall down and he said:

"At least before I am eaten I will play my prettiest song on my biniou."

He put the instrument to his lips, but as soon as the wolves heard the unfamiliar sound they took fright and ran off as if a pack of hounds was after them.

Delighted by his escape, the boy climbed down from the tree and continued down the road to the village; to keep off the wolves he played his biniou all along the way; and he reached home safely.

This little story was collected by Paul Sébillot in 1880, and was told to him by Bathilde Delasalle, (aged 13) who had learnt it from her grandmother.



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F. A. Q. 27

Q: I've heard that there's a new version of Internet Explorer. Is this correct and should I install it?

A.: Indeed there is a new version of Microsoft's dominant browser. The previous one, I.E.6, has been around for some years, is showing its age and has proved to be notoriously insecure. The newer offering, imaginatively called 'Internet Explorer 7', has been available for several weeks, as a download from Microsoft's web site. The Corporation has now designated this item a 'critical update'. This means that if you use the automatic update feature of WindowsXP you'll get it whether you want it or not.

In fact, everyone who uses WindowsXP should install I.E.7. The browser has been an integral part of the operating system since Windows98. It's what got Mr. Gates into trouble with the U.S. courts. It has also been the cause of most of the security problems that afflict the operating system. Further bad news is that you cannot install it if you have not already installed Service Pack 2. These are big downloads. Anyone who uses a dial-up connection should try to get both of them on CD. Ask a friend who has Broadband to download them for you.

The good news is that there are many new features; the most touted being tabbed browsing and a number of security improvements. Only time will tell if the security matters will prove to be real improvements. In the first two weeks there were several scares but Microsoft claimed they were more to do with Outlook Express. Nobody seems to have noticed them before.

There is a new anti-phishing filter but nobody seems sure whether it works. Another idea is to turn the address bar green when you go to a 'secure and certified site'. It's supposed to replace the good old golden padlock that most people ignore anyway. This one hasn't been implemented yet because it's a lot more politically contentious and a lot less innocuous than it sounds. Maybe next year.

So, the main improvement that everyone will notice is tabbed browsing. 'What's that?' I hear you ask. Well, if you'd been using Mozilla Firefox or Opera for the last few years you'd know! It often happens

that you'll want to visit more than one web page. Previously we were obliged to open other instances of Internet Explorer to be able to display more than one page at a time. With tabbed browsing it's possible to have many pages open all at the same time and switch between them at will; all within the same program.

That Opera, Firefox and others have offered this function for some considerable time is by the way. The simple fact is that they all do it better! Opera 9 even has its own email client that would eliminate the recently exposed security flaws in Microsoft's product.

AOL users may not realise that the browser they use is a crippled version of I.E.6. In other words, it's worse than the real thing! You should install I.E.7 anyway. Either use it separately or use one of the other, arguably better, browsers that I've mentioned.

Always remember that some web sites will only work properly when viewed with Internet Explorer. Microsoft's is a case in point. This is not the fault of those other programs. It is the fault of incompetent and lazy web site designers.

So, get yourselves a present from Bill Gates and have a pleasant and safe Christmas / Yuletide or whatever you celebrate at the turning of the year.

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Mr. Biznuz

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year

Christmas time and the New Year provide an opportunity for business people to take stock and evaluate how things are progressing.

This is not just a matter of working out how much money has been made over the past twelve months - hopefully, this is something that you keep track of right through the year - but a chance to look at the more meaningful aspects of business life.

This is particularly important today because much that is written in the business sections of newspapers and magazines implies that the sole object of business is to generate a financial profit. One must remember that most business pundits have never run a business, and are, in fact, simply paid employees: for them, earning a lot of money may be the closest that they can get to job satisfaction, but for anyone running their own business this is, of course, far from being the case.

The purpose of a business is to provide a product or service, especially to people in the local community. If a business is able to provide a product that people need, and to provide it, on time, with a friendly service and with good after-sales support, then it gains the gratitude and respect of the people that it serves. It is this respect that really improves the quality of life of someone in business. Money on its own cannot buy anything comparable in value to the good will of one's friends and neighbours.

When there are abnormal market conditions (such as an artificial monopoly or state support for a business), it is quite possible for a company to generate large profits even though it is providing a poor service or a second rate product. However, the managers of such a business, far from finding themselves valued members of the community, are generally disliked, especially if they display ostentatious signs of wealth, and may not even feel safe when in the presence of their customers. On a recent trip to Barcelona, I found myself in one of the wealthy suburbs outside of the city. It ought to have been a beautiful place to



live, but every house was surrounded by a high wall, was equipped with closed circuit television cameras, and vicious dogs barked furiously at anyone who approached the gates of the properties. Fortunately, Central Brittany does not suffer from a serious inequality between bosses and workers, and we do not have any of these miserable, rich-people's ghettos.

The sort of things that business people can be looking at at this time of year are therefore:

Maintaining the human touch: customers still like to be able to speak to someone in authority when they contact a business and become very frustrated if forced to deal with anything that is too technological.

Customer relations: remember the old maxim that in business the customer is always right - even when they are wrong.

Generosity: If the company has made a profit, why not explore ways of returning some of that profit to the customers - by reducing prices, increasing investment, or providing extra services for no extra cost. You might be surprised to find that being generous leads to profits increasing rather than the reverse.

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Website Workshop

Buying Online

Last month we looked at browser technology and this month we shall tackle buying online.

Q - What do I need to buy online?

- A - 1. A computer with an Internet connection
- 2. A credit or debit card.

Q - Can't I use my chequebook?

A - It depends on the transaction format demanded by the seller. EBay is a good example as some sellers will accept cheques - but the disadvantage here, is that you will have to wait for the cheque to clear before your item is sent whereas when using your credit or debit card it is debited immediately and delivery times are therefore accelerated. Buy early enough in the day and your item could land on your doormat within 24 hours.

Q - What about PayPal?

A - PayPal is an online money service that enables individuals and businesses to electronically send and receive money, and therefore trade online. EBay recently bought PayPal, which is why it is the most preferred method for buying and selling on their website. Through PayPal you can choose to fund your purchase by credit card, debit card or your bank account. EBay and PayPal now employ a Buyer Protection Scheme that increases security for both the buyer and seller.

Q - How do I know that the website I am buying from is secure?

A - Websites differ in their layout, shopping cart software and checkout systems but the process remains largely the same. Once you move to the checkout or login pages (where you enter personal or payment details), check that you are shopping in a secure environment by looking for either a locked padlock or a key icon in the grey bar at the bottom of your browser. If you cannot see it, ensure that the Status Bar option is ticked. Also, check that the web address begins https://www..... rather than the insecure http://www.....

The locked padlock, key icon or https means that your details are encrypted, helping keep them secure. Encryption creates billions of code combinations to protect each transaction so that your personal or card details cannot be viewed by anyone else using the Internet. You should make sure your browser is kept up to date as the more recent versions support at least 128 bit encryption using Secure Socket Layer (SSL), keeping your details as safe as possible at all times. There are some websites that have dedicated

themselves to help increase the security and confidence of online buyers. Shopsyafe being one (www.shopsyafe.co.uk). Shopsyafe is an online shopping directory that researches, tests and then lists on their website only online shops that are secure to trade with. Online shops that are recommended by Shopsyafe include Boots, Tesco, Amazon, Comet, Curries, Marks & Spencer, etc. Credit card companies now realise that their customers will more readily use their cards if they offer additional protection for buying online. The majority have now implemented varying levels of protection in one form or another.

Q - Have you any other tips for buying safely online?

A - The vast majority of businesses operating on the Internet are honest and legitimate organisations making online buying an extremely safe way to trade. However, security relies on vigilance and you should follow the advice listed below to make ecommerce no more risky than buying by mail order or over the telephone:

- Check you are using a secure server
- NEVER use your children's or pet's names or birth dates as passwords
- Choose a password that is not easily guessable
- Don't use the same username and password at every website
- Preferably use sites you know or that have been recommended to you
- Never disclose your PIN to anyone and never send it over the Internet
- Consider opening a separate credit card account if you regularly buy items over the Internet
- Choose a credit card that offers the best protection for your particular online shopping habits
- Check statements from your credit card company, bank or building society as soon as you receive them
- Check the site's terms and conditions especially the refund and returns policy.

Next month: Website glossary.
Malcolm can be contacted on malcolm@practicalnet.com or see www.practicalnet.com for more information

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December in the Garden

Moles

Moles are often regarded as being serious pests, particularly by people moving to Brittany, and who are not accustomed to having these animals living in the garden.

A knowledge of the mole's mode of life, however, can help the gardener to establish a means of co-existing with their moles which may, in the long run, be preferable to trying to eradicate them.

The first point to take into account is that unless you have an exceptionally large garden you are unlikely to have more than one mole. They are fiercely territorial animals, and each mole will defend a territory much larger than the average sized garden. The implications of this are that, even if your mole is succeeding to breed and raise its young successfully, your garden will never be overrun by moles; the adult mole will chase off its offspring, forcing them to establish new territories elsewhere.

As most readers will have realised, moles are thriving in Brittany, which means that a high proportion of suitable habitat is already occupied, and the young moles have to look for ground where the incumbent occupant has either died or, for some reason, been forced to move. This is where moles come into conflict with farmers and new residents. If a piece of land has recently been ploughed, or rotavated, many of the mole runs will have been destroyed, and probably abandoned, leaving the area open for a young mole to take over. The mole will work hard to establish a complete system of tunnels running back and forth across its new territory, and is often particularly active in doing this at this time of year, with the result that a horrified gardener might find ten or eleven new mole hills in the middle of their lawn every day.



If you respond by trying to trap the mole or to drive it away, you will leave your garden open to being colonised by another mole next year, and the whole process beginning all over again.

A more subtle policy is to try to contain the mole in certain areas of the garden where its presence does little harm and to discourage it from being too active in other areas, such as the vegetable garden, where it is a real nuisance.

Surprisingly perhaps, the part of the garden where the mole is, in the long-term, least annoying, is the lawn. The mole may cause a lot of disturbance over the first year or two but once its runs have been established it has little cause to do much extra work.

It is advisable to spread out the mole hills with a rake and a hoe, so that you are not actually removing soil from your lawn. This helps to reduce the risk of the runs collapsing and holes appearing in the lawn.

The reason why you do not want the mole to be active in the vegetable garden is because mice and voles make use of its runs to gain underground access to your vegetables, and are quite capable of using it to devour entire rows of carrots, parsnips and potatoes, and all the roots of plants in the spinach and beet families.

Tip:
A well-aimed kick can be the most effective way of redistributing the contents of a mole hill.



If you dig over the vegetable garden from time to time in the course of rotating your various crops, the mole runs are being continuously disturbed. With a little luck, the mole may decide that it is better to confine its activity to areas where it is not disturbed, and to leave your vegetable garden alone. Including potatoes in your crop rotation is particularly effective in this respect. If you earth up your potatoes repeatedly in the spring and early summer, it has the effect of totally disrupting the mole runs.

This course of action does not, of course, mean that you never have any mole hills in the garden; the mole will carry out repair work, particularly at this time of year, and in the Spring may create new tunnels, running just below the surface, as it tries to make contact with neighbouring moles of the opposite sex.

In general, however, the gardener's aim should be to try to respect the balance of Nature in the garden and to allow it to be home to as many animals as possible. It is, perhaps, true that, so far, no one has come up with a strong case in favour of moles, but experience shows that everything in Nature has an important role to play, and that when we disturb the balance, unforeseen consequences always follow. Therefore why not let the mole live undisturbed, and be proud of the little mounds of earth that it throws up, regarding them as a sign that all is well in a garden where small creatures are happy to make their home.

It's tree planting time of year.



Tim the Gardener

More Gardening:
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- Paletti - Reiki - a natural energy which can be used for any ailment or state - treatments and classes available.

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36 What's On

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WHAT'S ON? NOTHING!!
Just... Great Beers, Great Atmosphere +
• Conversation, in French & English
• OPEN FROM MIDDAY, Tues. to Sun

LE MADISON BAR / B&B
QUENEQUEN, SCRIGNAC 29640
Tel. 02 98 78 21 96

Cafin and Avril welcome you to LE MADISON BAR and B&B
Bar Meals Served Daily
Fresh Cod & Chips - Friday night
3-course Sunday lunch (please book for Sun. lunch)

Poppies Restaurant
Mael Carhaix. December

1st Chinese evening
8th Tex Mex
15th Mediterranean night
22nd Curry club
24th Full Christmas lunch
- all trimmings, drinks included,
25€. One sitting at 1 pm
All 7 pm start (except Xmas lunch)
Tel: 02 96 24 66 23

Fleur de Bretagne
WHAT'S ON AT FLEUR DE BRETAGNE
IN DECEMBER

BRIC A BRAC SALES
Sundays 3rd, 10th & 17th
For Your Christmas Gifts
Sales Tables Free
• Books
• English Goods
• Christmas Cards Etc
• Coffee & Mince Pie 3.50€

CHRISTMAS DAY
Traditional Christmas lunch 3 courses 35€ (as much wine as you want). Only a few places left - Booking essential

BOXING DAY
Enjoy a walk round the campsite or join in the last fishing competition of 2006. Lunch 2 Courses 10€ 1.30

TEL. 02 96 29 15 45 TO BOOK TABLES & LUNCH
1km past the Lycee Professionel on the D31
Rostrrenen to Silliac road

What's On

From now until December 22nd
Exhibition and Sale of Hand-crafted cribs made by Belgian artist Jean Jacobs, in the main hall of Espace Glenmor, on the ringroad, Carhaix. Tues. to Fri. 2 pm - 6 pm.

Every Wednesday afternoon
Book exchange from 12 - 3.30, plus small, quality items for sale. At Carolann's, Carnoët (22) (diagonally opposite the church). 10 am - 3 p.m. 2€ per table. Tea and coffee available.
Tel: 02 96 21 54 62

Saturday December 2nd
Chez Winnie, Caurel 22530 A special Avon Day - Kathy Lyons will be in all day with a range of Products. All orders will be ready for Christmas. Pop down for a coffee and a chat.

Sunday December 3rd
Christmas Market at the Maison du Patrimoine, Locarn (22). From 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Xmas Crafts & Natural Products Over 20 stalls with: Xmas goodies, Arts and Crafts and Natural products. Refreshments on site - all through the day. In the centre of Locarn - will be signposted.

Sunday December 3rd
Belle-Isle-en-Terre Christmas market - crafts, cards, gifts. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Free entry. Refreshments all day.

Sunday December 3rd
Christmas craft fair in the centre of Graces nr Guingamp. All day - 10 a.m. start. Tables available from Mairie 02 96 40 21 21. (Take passport and Siret number to book table!)

Wednesday December 6th and Thursday December 7th
Open Day at 'Manoir du Loguevel Wellness Centre', Loguevel. Mini treatments, spa and sauna available plus crystals, jewellery and aromatherapy boutique as well as Xmas floral wreaths. 11am and 2.30pm - demonstrations on therapies and beauty. 'Salon de The' open all day for snacks, lunch and afternoon teas. More details or to prebook - contact contact Anna Mandala at loguevel@aol.com or www.manoir-loguevel.com.

Thursday December 7th Soirée Chanson at 8pm. Traditional Breton, French, Celtic and English singing. Come and join in or if you can't sing then come and listen. Le P'tit Bar, Le Bodeo on the D44. 02.96.93.32.21

What's On Continued page 38

Places to Eat see also:

- Le Moulin Blanc p. 2
- La Petite Pêche p. 11
- La Girelle p. 13

What's On / Places to Eat 37

Places to Eat

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Traditional English Sunday roast
12 noon - 2 p.m.
Reservations only
New International menu available soon.
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Kergroix, 56540 Le Croisty
On the D132 between Le Croisty and Piziac
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Poppies
Home-cooked food to eat in or take away.
Plat de Jour served daily 9,50€
Sunday lunches - 2 courses incl. wine 10€
Orders now taken for Christmas cakes and goodies (made to order)
Maël Carhaix 02 96 24 66 23
(closed Mon.) Outside parties catered for

LES FOUS Country Pub & Restaurant
Large terrace & garden
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02 96 21 52 32
Closed all day Wednesday
website: www.les-fous.com
booking advisable email: info@les-fous.com

Christmas Shopping in St Brieuc continued from page 7

LE BALAFON African Crafts

Le Balafon gets its stock direct from West Africa. It sells puppets (left) wooden ornaments (right), a wide selection of traditional African musical instruments, and beautiful sets of the traditional African game, Awale.

Le Balafon, 9 rue de Rohan.
Tel: 02 96 33 72 00
Open: Mon. 2 - 7; Tues. - Sat. 10 - 12.15 & 2 - 7

More shops overleaf

Christmas Shopping in St Brieuc *contd.*

Eurodif in St. Brieuc is one of the largest and most well-stocked department stores in Brittany.

It has a particular good fabric and haberdashery department upstairs which stocks an excellent range of material and accessories for dressmaking and for soft furnishings, including ribbons (top left), threads (top right), and cloth to be bought by the length (right).

Eurodif, 21 rue Charbonnerie Tel: 02 96 33 08 58
Open: Mon. - Sat. 10 am - 7 pm

Below: Terre de Femmes, good quality jewellery and accessories at affordable prices. 3 rue Général Leclerc.
Tel: 02 96 61 90 83

Right & Below right: The St. Brieuc branch of Caroll, one of France's most popular fashion stores.

Caroll, 14 rue Général Leclerc Tel: 02 96 68 48 01
Open: Mon. 2 pm - 7 pm, Tues. - Sat. 10 am - 7 pm.



Above: St. Brieuc has two very good music shops, both in the city centre.

What's On contd. from page 16

Friday December 8th
Soirée Français. Next meeting will start at 8 pm, at the Noz Vad Hotel, Carhaix. For more information, please contact George on 02 98 99 4890, or ghturnbull@fastmail.fm

Saturday December 9th
Annual Carol Service of 9 lessons and carols, at the church of St Hermin, Locarn. 3 pm start.

Sunday December 10th
All tables now booked at the Indoor Car boot sale, Caroiann's, Carnoet (22) (diagonally opposite the church). 10 am - 2 p.m. Refreshments available. Tel Carol or Paul: 02 96 21 54 62

Sunday December 10th
Christmas Fayre at the Salle Municipal St Gelven, 11am-3pm. Traditional atmosphere & Carols, stalls, tombola, mince pies, tea, cakes and gateaux!! Also bar & bar food available. Reservation for stallholders must be made before the end of November. More info: please call Liz on 02 96 24 87 90 or email aikb@wanadoo.fr

Xmas Bazaar

Locarn Maison du Patrimoine
Sunday 3rd Dec. 10am - 6pm

Over 20 stalls with: Xmas goodies, Arts and Crafts and Natural products

Refreshments on site - all through the day

Free Entry Raffle All Welcome

Contact: Anna at Manoir Loguevel 02 96 36 68 98
loguevel@aol.com www.manoir-loguevel.com

What's On contd. from page 38

Sunday December 10th
Telethon Live Auction at Le Chineur, St Thuriau nr. Pontivy. 2.30 p.m. start. Free glass of mulled wine & mince pie to all. All proceeds to Charity. Events will happen all over France. Please donate gifts. Phone 02 97 39 38 93 for more details.

Friday December 15th
The Ragamuffins Jazz group play old-time jazz at L'Homme au Chapeau, town square, Huelgoat. 9 pm - midnight. Admission free. More information call Regis: 02 98 99 78 81

Saturday December 16th
Carol Service at Huelgoat. 2.30 pm start. In French and English languages. Carols and reading for Christmas at the church in the market place. Huelgoat. Come and enjoy a family time. Refreshments afterwards. All very welcome. Followed by hot drinks and cakes. For more details contact Wendy Bishop 02 98 67 66 58 (Christ Church: Anglican church in Brittany)

Saturday December 16th and Sunday December 17th
Christmas market at Lycée St Élan, Languoux (the village is near St Brieuc / Carrefour/Leroy Merlin). Sat: - 2 pm - 6 pm; Sun: 11 am - 6 pm.

Sunday December 17th
The Ichtus Association at Belle-Isle-en-Terre invites you to a Carol service at 8.00 p.m. at the Salle de Cinema, Belle Isle. A warm welcome to all. Refreshments will be served after the meeting. For more information, please call Emmanuel 02 96 43 37 51

Sunday December 17th
Christmas Fayre in Salle des Fêtes in Maël-Pestivien at 2pm. There will be a range of stalls with craft items and ideas for Christmas presents. Barbecue and other refreshments. Tables still available -10€ - all profits going to the Amicale Laique and the Doigts de Fées Craft Group. The Epicerie in the village will be open all afternoon as well. To book a table and for more info call Terry: 02 96 45 79 31

Sunday December 17th (NB 3rd Sunday, not 4th)
10.30 am Christ Church Brittany Bonen Church nr Rostrenen Christmas Eucharist with carols. The Revd Michael Grainger C of E. All welcome Further information from Robin & Laura Hillman 02 97 51 74 26 e-mail: kermoran@wanadoo.fr

Wednesday December 31st
New Year's eve bash at La Délente, (route de Perros 5 km from Callac) Buffet 10€ and music, 8 pm onwards.

Fish, Chips, Pukka Pies & a Pint
from Le Poisson Qui Rit 02 98 99 32 23

Wed. eve. David's Bar/Restaurant, Le Fer à Cheval, Paule **02 96 29 89 66**

Fri. eve. Ben's Tavern, Ty Elise, Ploüy **02 98 99 96 44**

Ring through, or order in advance:
02 98 99 55 23 / 06 19 66 77 73

Tranquility

Sea shop & Restaurant 20 rue du Pont, Pontivy
02 97 07 05 01

December 31st
New Year's Eve party 8pm - midnight
Music, Buffet, Bar, Entry until 10 pm

Saturday 6th January
- Music evening cancelled

Saturday 13th January
Medieval banquet fully booked

Tuesday 25th January
Authentic, traditional Burns night. 3-course, set meal 20€ 8 pm. Bookings now being taken

Saturday February 3rd
Music jamming session 8 pm - 10.30 pm
All musicians welcome

Le Lodge du Croisty, Kergroix, 56540 Le Croisty

02 97 28 27 91

Dec 9th - Jeux pour Jouets - From 2 pm. Kid's Play Day! Children's Charity event in aid of Le Croisty Primary School.

Dec 16th - 'Last Minute' Christmas Market - From 3 pm until 9 pm. A chance to pick up last-minute Artisan gifts, and swap books + biscuits in our festive, holiday atmosphere. Call for details.

Dec 24th - Christmas Eve Lunch - From 1 pm. Please join us for a casual buffet lunch, a glass of mulled wine or hot buttered rum, with homemade mince pies and carols by the Christmas tree.

Dec 25th - Christmas Dinner - From 3pm. Relax, enjoy and let us do the cooking this year! We will feature a choice of Roast Turkey, Standing Rib Roast or Vegetarian Nut Roast with all the traditional trimmings. And crackers!

Dec 31st - New Year's Eve - Open invitation to all musicians to ring and sing in the New Year with us as we enjoy music, food, laughter and fireworks, toasting in 2007. Extended drinks license.
02 97 28 27 91

40 ANIMAL WELFARE

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 Based at Le Ferty, Mael Carhaix (22)
 (on the Trebrivan/Locarn road)
 All enquiries Roger or Nikki 02 96 36 67 53

Health & Beauty contd. from page 35

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Personal
Kiwi male, 44, seeks a female friend in France. Any nationality within 5 years of my age, above or below. My email address: fonsdonshi@hotmail.com (subject: FRANCE) or text 0044 779 - 466 - 7337

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Services continued page 42

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42 Building & Property Services

Services contd. from page 41

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Services contd. from page 42

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Translation & French Courses contd. page 44

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Translation & French Courses contd. from page 44

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Classified contd. page 52

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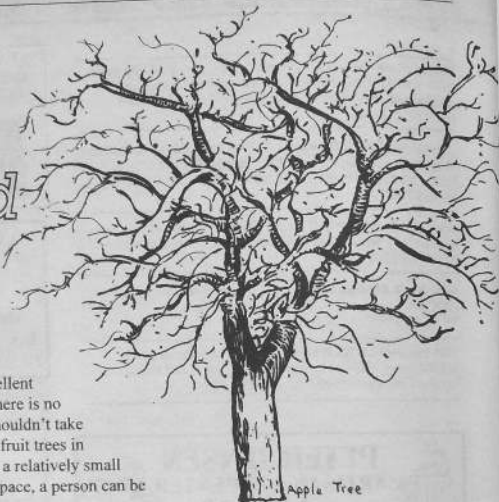
Planting an Orchard

You can't beat the taste of fresh fruit - the crisp texture and sweet flavour of an apple freshly plucked off the tree, the delicate taste of a ripe plum, and the sweet juiciness of fresh pears, are things that can never be enjoyed by those who don't have an orchard. Brittany has an excellent climate for growing fruit trees, and there is no reason why residents of the region shouldn't take advantage of this by including a few fruit trees in their garden - with very little money, a relatively small amount of work, and not that much space, a person can be as rich in fresh fruit as anyone.

For success, a few basic guidelines should be followed:

- Make sure you have a place in mind where the fruit tree can be planted - preferably somewhere sheltered and sunny, and near the house, where it will receive regular attention. Fruit trees are quite tough once they become established but don't like to be crowded out by weeds and other plants in their early years.
- Do not buy your fruit tree from a chain nursery. Although they sell the popular varieties which are marked with attractive labels, the trees themselves tend not to be suited to this region and can be weak and susceptible to diseases such as canker. Try to buy from a local nursery with local stock.
- Don't buy a dwarf tree unless you are a very keen pruner - standard trees are tougher and will require less work as they don't need pruning.

And of course, be excited about the eventual crop; this will keep up your enthusiasm until it finally arrives, which can be a few years.



Apple Tree

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Planting Trees

"A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they shall never sit in."

Greek Proverb



I know what I'm going to be doing this Winter - planting trees. For me, tree-planting is a highlight of this season, and I can't wait to get started. I am not an old man, so, according to the Greek proverb above, I am no indication of a great society; but there aren't so many young men to be seen planting trees these days, so maybe our society is just having to start from a long way back. Anyway, the age is irrelevant - I am going to be planting trees for as long as I can, because for me when I plant a tree the journey is the destination, and it has to be that way. Who, however young they may be, thinks when they plant an oak tree, that they will ever see it looking its most majestic? No - the enjoyment has to come from the planting, and seeing it grow, every year, into something more beautiful. Having lived in Brittany for twelve years I have gradually fallen in love with its trees; although it possesses no huge forests, the amount of trees which are just growing beside the roads, and between the fields must make it one of the most wooded areas of cultivatable Europe. I want to make sure that it stays that way, and on the land which I am responsible for it certainly will. What has really helped me in this has been my policy to move any small trees found growing around the garden to a nursery; soon the nursery gets very full, and one is under great pressure to find a place for all the little trees. As a consequence I have to think hard if there are gaps in any banks, or somewhere where a new bank could be made - is there a space in the lawn or near the house where a tree could possibly be squeezed in? Or maybe I could dedicate an area of my garden to creating a wood...

So, I think I will also be celebrating this festive season with a little tree-planting, and I hope that others won't forget about all the little trees out there and all the space, just waiting to be united, and all the good times that can be had from planting trees.

Samuel Lewis

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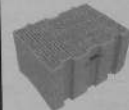
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Winter Evergreens

When the days have reached their shortest, the ground is hard with frost and the weather is very cold, when the flowers of warmer months are dead, and the glorious, lush green leaves of Summer have withered and turned brown; then the world is as if dead, and hope for new life seems vain.

Yet then there are the evergreens, unchanging and green, in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter - unlike the other trees which have gone to sleep and become quite dormant, the evergreens are hanging on for a better time of year.

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) Breton: *Keleenn* French: *Houx*

Far from sleeping quietly throughout the Winter months, holly covers itself in a magnificent array of vivid red berries. The main show is in November, and by the time Christmas comes round it takes a little perseverance to find a sprig of holly bearing red berries. Brittany seems to have an excellent climate for holly, and many fine mature trees are to be found growing across the countryside, as well as in tightly-packed hedges.

Yew (*Taxus baccata*) Breton: *Ivin* French: *If*

For many hundreds of years, before pines were brought to this region, yew trees were celebrated as the traditional trees associated with this time of year. Still today, the yew tree stands as solid and glorious as ever - a promise that life will return.

Bay (*Laurus nobilis*) Breton: *Lore* French: *Laurier-sauce*

The occasional bay tree can be found growing here and there over the Breton countryside, and is easily distinguished from laurel by its thinner, darker green leaves which end in a point rather than being rounded. When brought indoors it can make an attractive addition to other Christmas greenery, and will also dry well.

Pine: Pines became popular Christmas greenery due to their being the traditional evergreen of Central and Northern Europe. Today many pine trees have been planted in Brittany, and pine branches for the house can be easily obtained.

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