

Christmas in Brittany

Christmas in the countryside, 1920
"On Christmas Eve my father finished work at 3 o'clock. Then, before he did anything else, he fed the animals..." *page 10*

Christmas in Carhaix in the 1920s
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Christmas Recipes:
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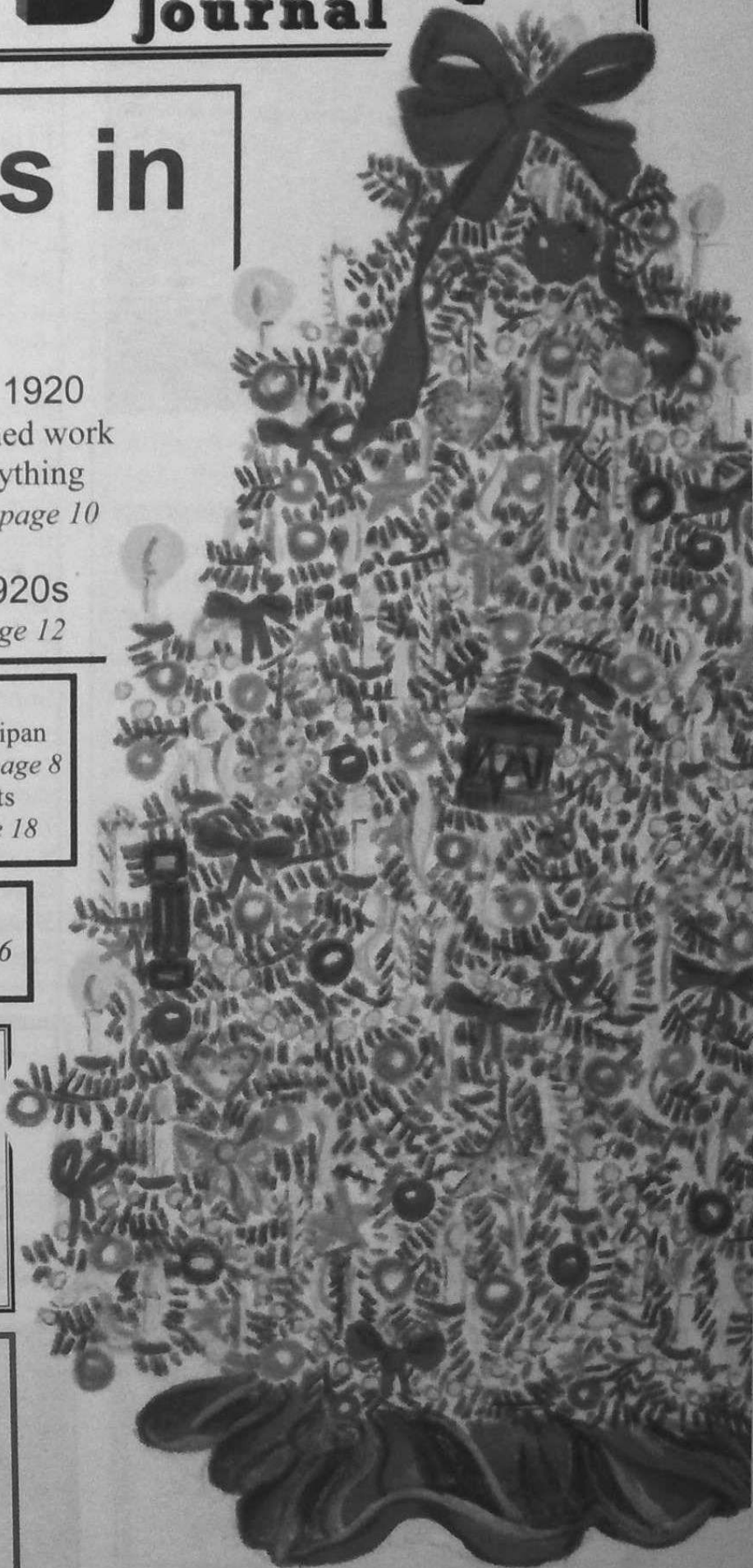


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Tea shop Review
S. Henrio, Lorient



Stéphane Henrio Pâtissier Chocolatier
8, rue Victor Massé, Lorient

This teashop sells very attractive, imaginative cakes, including one topped with rose petals, and the pear tart, which is made from flaky pastry and cut out in the shape of a pear, is the first of its kind, and quite delicious. The coffee is unusually good and the almond croissants superb. Chocolates and pâtes de fruit (fruit jellies) are also sold and the toffees and boxes of chocolates would make ideal Christmas presents. The tearoom consists of three or four small tables in the shop itself, and looks out on a small square, not far from the city centre. 02 97 84 74 30 Closed Tues.

Book Review

Glossary of Medical, Health and Pharmacy Terms French-English English-French

This pocket size (21 cm x 14½ cm) glossary of over 3000 medical and health terms makes an ideal companion for a visit to the doctor or the pharmacist.

The book was first published last year and the author, Alan Lindsey, says that he has already been contacted by more than one grateful reader who says that the book is invaluable in helping them to overcome communication difficulties after they were admitted to hospital.

This is also a useful aid for people wishing to improve their knowledge of French - vocabulary lists make surprisingly interesting reading, enabling one to compare and contrast the two languages.

£12.50 Hadley Pager Info, PO Box 249, Leatherhead KT23 3WX hpinfo@aol.com
Special offer for Central Brittany Journal Readers: Free postage for orders received before 15th Jan 2005



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Editorial

If everything goes according to plan, this issue of the Journal will have been printed by the Imprimerie de Guingamp, and a distributor based in Guingamp will have taken over part of the distribution - trebling the number of shops which stock the Journal in Côtes d'Armor. If all goes well, in future months we will use distributors in Lorient, Quimper and Brest to cover the rest of Central Brittany.

The theme of this month's issue is Christmas, and we would like to offer our special thanks to the contributors to the "Christmas in Brittany" articles, for their generosity in sharing their childhood memories of Christmas with readers of the Journal.

I would also like to thank all our readers for the support that you have given us since we launched the Journal, and to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. *GL*

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Art Exhibition: Pascal Pouchard Huelgoat

David and Rachael O'Brien will be hosting an evening exhibition of the work of a local artist at their Chambres D'Hôte, Huelgoat, Saturday, 11th December.

Pascal Pouchard is based at la Forêt Fouesnant and specializes in oils, wood, bronzing, and marbling. His work includes fireplaces, panels, covering, etc. but this exhibition is a collection of works representing various aspects of Brittany.

Mrs O'Brien says that anyone interested in attending the exhibition, which includes paintings of local scenes, is welcome to come along. Aperitifs will be served from 7.00 pm until 9.00 pm.

Please contact O'Briens for further information: 0298 998273 www.peinture-bretonne.com

The Breizhlanders

Nizon, nr Lorient

The Breizhlanders are a tartan society based in South Finistère. Members have their own Breton tartan (which has been recognised by the Scottish Tartan Society in Edinburgh). It is mainly white and black but also contains some green and blue to represent the forests and the sea.

Six weeks ago members founded a pipe band which is training with the aim of being able to take part in the Interceltic festival in Lorient next year and to tour in Scotland.

Free tuition is available for people interested in joining the band or for more information contact Kenny: 02 98 93 58 05

Samina's Dance School

St Nicholas du Pelem

Samina's dance school is offering a children's hip hop workshop on Sat 4th Dec, 10-12 noon, and fun dance classes for ladies of all ages on Friday 3rd December, 7.30-9.00 pm; both cost 5€ per person. Samina@saminasbellydance.com

The Château de Kerminaouet nr Pont Aven

The Château de Kerminaouet is open during the summer season for Bed and Breakfast, art exhibitions and art courses, and has a tea shop on Sunday afternoon. This winter, for the first time, the ground floor of the Château, plus the grounds, are available for hire for functions and conferences, by the day or by the half day. For more information: www.kerminaouet.com kerminaouet@wanadoo.fr

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MacCormick's - English Delicatessen Glomel

Ewan MacCormick has opened an English delicatessen and food store in Glomel. The venture represents a new way of using skills and contacts that he developed when he lived in the UK, where he had a business supplying restaurants and shops in West London with French food products. MacCormick's of Glomel stocks a mixture of British goods and local Breton products. Items imported from the UK range from baked beans to essentials for Chinese and Indian cooking, and also include such favourites as Walnut Whips and Curly Wurlys.
Opening hours 9 am - 1 pm & 2 -6 pm.

Free Advertising - Holiday Properties

John and Shirley Ledlie have been living in the Callac area for the past five years, but John's job has required him to work away for much of the time. They have decided to use their skills and experience to create a business which will allow him to work from home—and have launched www.frenchaccommodation.co.uk—a website advertising holiday properties.

In order to make the site genuinely attractive to property owners they are offering a free page on the site for people to advertise gites, B&B, holiday cottages, etc.

Property owners will have access to their page twenty four hours a day to make alterations, and there will be no charge between now and Sept 05, and no obligation to renew after that. John and Shirley believe that this offer will give people a chance to find whether the site works, without them having to lay any money out in advance. After September next year it will cost £75 per year to list a property on the site. The site covers properties in the whole of France and will be extended to cover other European countries in due course. More info: info@frenchaccommodation.co.uk

Deuxième Debut Rostrenen

There is now a British-owned second-hand goods shop in Rostrenen. The owner, Chris Mugleston, makes regular trips to the UK, which allows him to sell good quality second-hand goods, including furniture, books, videos, etc. at affordable prices.

Places to Visit: Daoulas Gorge

The Daoulas gorge has spectacular views, remarkable Neolithic remains, and abundant wildlife, and offers a range of walks varying in difficulty and length.

The Daoulas gorge and the hillsides which surround it are a site of such outstanding natural beauty that one cannot help but be surprised to find them in such an unspoilt state. It is a popular place for a Sunday afternoon walk but there is no associated development and you can park your car more or less where you wish.

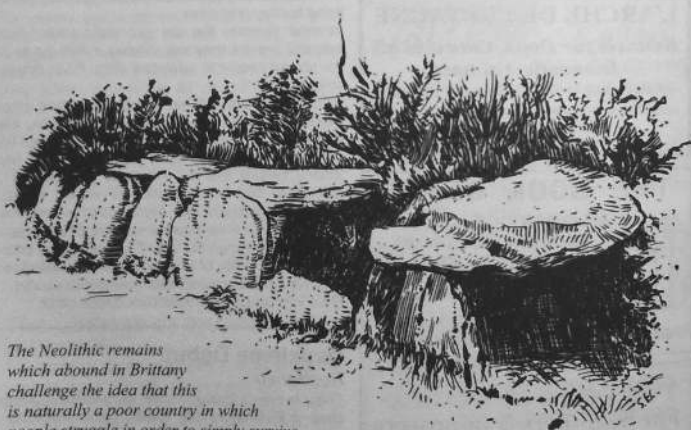
At this time of year, it is advisable to arrive

as early as possible, so as to give oneself time to have a leisurely walk without having to worry about being caught by darkness falling.

The easiest walk is simply up along the road which runs beside the river Daoulas. There is usually not much traffic and there are many paths down to the river itself. The valley is wooded and birdlife is abundant.

A slightly more challenging walk is up the path which leads from the village of the Abbaye de Bon Repos up to the Neolithic covered alleys at the top of the hill. It is a quarter of an hour walk up a beautiful, tree-lined path, which opens out to give spectacular views towards the Lac du Guerliédan.

A third walk involves driving up beside the Daoulas and parking beside the sign for the covered alleys. There is a well-marked

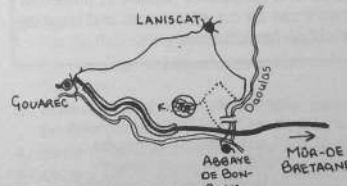


The Neolithic remains which abound in Brittany challenge the idea that this is naturally a poor country in which people struggle in order to simply survive. Clearly our ancestors were able not only to raise sufficient crops to feed themselves, but they also had leisure time to build structures such as the covered alleys above the Daoulas – all without the aid of complex technology.



There are spectacular views from the top of the gorge.

path which leads up the side of the valley and along the top of the cliffs, back towards the village. The first part of the walk is quite steep but well worth the effort. The area around the gorge has been left unfarmed and abounds in heathland plants and wild animals.



The gorge is close to the N164, between Gouarec and Mur de Bretagne. Sites of interest are clearly indicated on maps displayed around the area and walks are well marked

Christmas Shopping in Lorient

Driving into Lorient, one is struck by how new everything is and by the uniformity of the architecture. This is due to the fact that the entire old city of Lorient was destroyed by US and British bombing raids in the Second World War (the port of Lorient was being used as a base for U-boats). It appears that hardly a building was left standing.

In these circumstances, it is remarkable that the city has recovered: it now has a busy and thriving city centre including both large stores on the main boulevards and a grid of narrower streets containing small, specialist shops, selling goods ranging from second-hand books to gifts and quality foods.



The Tartan Shop, 6 rue Georges Gaigneux, being prepared for opening, 1st Dec.

The Tartan Shop: Lorient hosts the Inter-Celtic festival, an annual event that receives 600,000 people through its doors each summer. This, and traditional trading links with Ireland and the UK, is reflected in the presence of Irish bars and pubs in the city centre, and now also by 'The Tartan Shop', an art gallery and shop opened on 1st December by Tail Thersky and David MacCartney, long-term residents of Central Brittany. Their shop stocks not only tartans and goods from Scotland but also clockwork and wooden toys from Germany and Christmas decorations from Scandinavia.

The Tartan Shop

6, rue Georges Gaigneux
near 'Les Halles Saint-Louis'

56100 Lorient

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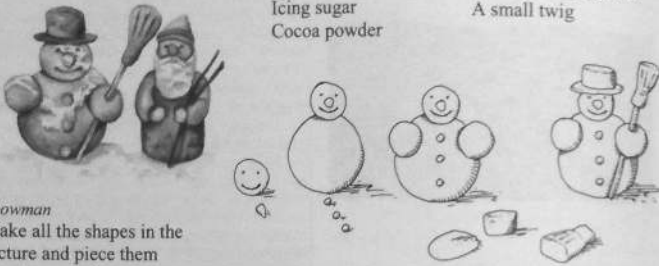
presents all around the colours of Scotland but also

Art Gallery, Arts and Crafts,
Antiques, Confectionery,
Garments, Decoration, Wooden,
Metal and Cuddly Toys

Marzipan Figures

You will need:
Marzipan
Icing sugar
Cocoa powder

A matchstick with the
burnt end cut off
A small twig



Snowman

Make all the shapes in the picture and piece them together to make a snowman.

Before you put the hat on, dab it with a little cocoa powder and sprinkle icing sugar over the snowman.

The eyes and mouth can be made with the end of the matchstick.

The matchstick is used for the handle of the broom.

Gingerbread

Gingerbread is said to be one of the oldest cakes in the world. It is particularly popular at Christmas time, when it can be cut into shapes and hung by pieces of ribbon from the tree.



Ingredients:

10 oz (275 g) flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
1 tablespoon ground ginger
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
4 oz (100 g) sugar
3 oz (75 g) butter or margarine
4 tablespoons water
2¼ fl oz (56 ml) golden syrup
1 tablespoon black treacle or molasses
A few currants

For the icing:

4 tablespoons icing sugar
Water, or juice squeezed from a few slices of raw beetroot, or 2 or 3 spinach leaves.

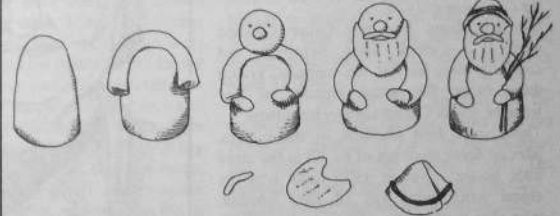
Marzipan Figures contd.



Father Christmas

Make and put together the Father Christmas pieces. Sprinkle the beard and moustache with icing sugar and role the hat band and body in cocoa.

Note: Jam can be used to stick the marzipan pieces together. Alternatively, you can pinch a prong in one piece and make a small hole in the other, then slot the pieces together



Gingerbread contd.

Method:

1. Sift the flour and spices into a large bowl and then stir in the sugar.
2. Cut the butter, or margarine into small pieces and rub them into the flour mixture with your fingertips.
3. In another, smaller, bowl mix together the water, golden syrup and treacle and then pour into the flour mixture. Using your hands, press together to form a smooth, soft dough.
4. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before use.
5. Cover a baking sheet with tin foil, sprinkle with flour and set aside. Sprinkle another baking tray with flour and roll out the dough to ¼" to ½" thickness. Cut out the shapes, and make small holes in the ones you want to hang up. This can be done with a pen top. Decorate with currants if desired. Transfer the shapes to the foil-covered sheet.
6. Place the tray in the oven and cook at 180°C (350°F), Gas Mark 4, for about 15 minutes; until the edges of the gingerbread start to darken. If you do not wish to hang up the shapes, they can be cooked for less time – about 12 minutes, or until golden. Leave on the tray for a minute or so, then remove to cool on a wire rack.

Decorating the cooked gingerbread

1. Mix the icing sugar with enough water to make a thick paste. If you want coloured icing, use beetroot juice (for red icing) or spinach juice (for green icing) instead of the water. Make the juice by blending or grinding the beetroot or spinach and squeezing them in muslin bag. Only about half a teaspoon of juice is required.
2. Use a spoon to put drops of icing on the gingerbread to make a face, buttons, hands, feet, decorations, etc.
3. Thread short lengths of ribbon through the holes in the gingerbread, tie into bows, and hang from the Christmas tree.

Christmas in the Breton Countryside

Marie de Coajou recounts her memories of the Christmas of 1920

'On Christmas Eve my father finished work at 3 o'clock. Then, before he did anything else, he fed the animals, giving them twice the usual amount of hay because it was Christmas day tomorrow.

There were four children in those days, later on there were ten of us, all in the same little house - but in 1920 there was my eldest sister, who was 12, then another, who was 9, then me, who was 6, and my little brother, who was 3. Anyway, next our mother mixed the batter for the galettes and we children were told to break up a faggot and keep feeding the fire with wood while she cooked. They were hazel sticks because they make the fire burn clear and bright. The rest of the year we ate crêpes but at Christmas time Mother cooked galettes - they were about 1/2" thick and had to be cooked a long time before they were ready. They say that a girl is ready to marry when she can cook a galette, so our eldest sister tried her hand at it. I remember that we all



Marie de Coajou

sat round and shouted "She can't turn it - she won't do it - she can't turn it -" and when she failed we all laughed and said, "Ah well, she isn't ready to marry yet."

In the meantime, Father hung up a bunch of holly over the fireplace and when the galettes were cooked they were placed in a stack on a sort of bread board with wooden slats, covered with a tea towel, and left to keep warm.

We children had been told to take off our clogs and polish them until they were as shiny as possible. Then we lined them up in front of the fire - all of us, Mother and Father as well - so that Père Noël would find them when he came.

The older people were going to walk to hear midnight mass in the village - even though it was four kilometres away, and there were no roads, and no electricity in those days - and Grandmother and an old neighbour who had no children were going



to sit by the fire and take care of the house and the little ones till they returned. Our older sister asked if she could go and Father said yes, and began lighting the lamps they were to take with them. There was a hurricane lamp, which burnt paraffin and which usually hung over the door, and a few little lanterns. He also lit some big candles and set them along the mantle piece and on the table. The big Christmas log was put on the fire, and then we went upstairs to bed and the others set off for the village. There were lots of houses along the way - all full of people and children - and by the time they reached the village there were almost fifty of them, walking along with lanterns, and singing Christmas songs. The church was always full, and everyone sang - the same carols as nowadays, but in Breton - then they set off home again.

When my grandmother saw the lamps returning she rang a little bell. That woke us up and we leapt out of bed and put on our best clothes - which we had put out ready - and then we came rushing down from the attic - thump, thump, thump. We ran to our clogs and we found that Père Noël had been and had left Father a packet of tobacco, and each of us an orange and a little sugar baby Jesus in a clog made of marshmallow - the girls had a pink baby, the boys a white. Oh how happy, how excited we were!

Father told us to put on our clogs, or else our feet would get cold - we had earth floors, don't forget - and said that baby Jesus wouldn't mind: we wanted to eat baby Jesus right away, but Father said no, so we nibbled a little, little bit every day after that - a little bit at a time - but the orange we ate there and then. People in the towns had oranges quite often but we in the country only had them once a year, at Christmas - oh, they tasted so good.

After that we all sat round and ate the galettes; we children ate them with honey - there was always lots of honey in those

days - and jam. There was a big, big, yellow bucket of jam at Christmas - 3 kg worth, and there was butter as well.

All night no one had been to see the animals - you mustn't, on Christmas night, because then the animals talk to each other. It's true - once, a long, long, time ago, before I was born, a man didn't believe it, and he went to see them. The horses were talking to each other and when they saw him they said "tomorrow we will take you to the graveyard;" and, you know, that night he died.

We went to visit the animals in the morning, and even though Father had put twice the amount of food in the manger, our white mare had eaten it all! The animals had been awake too, just like us.

The rest of the day we spent visiting our neighbours to drink Christmas coffee.

There was no television in those days, so the old people told us stories and sang songs - we children enjoyed it so much. We drank Christmas coffee with all our neighbours - not just on Christmas day but right on till the 31st - Christmas lasted until the beginning of January and we were all so happy and merry.



Christmas in Carhaix, overleaf

Christmas in the Town

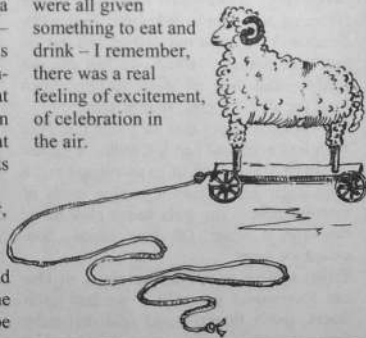
(Recounted by a lady born in Carhaix in 1920)

In the 1920s people didn't have Christmas trees, and I don't think we ate anything particularly special on Christmas day. Still, it was an exciting time. We were told that Père Noël was coming and we had to wax and polish our clogs before we put them out by the fireplace. If we had been good he would leave us sweets, but people said that bad children would only find a cane in their shoe on Christmas morning – I have to say that I don't remember this ever happening to anyone! In the days leading up to Christmas, I learnt carols at school – it wasn't a church school, but they taught us carols – and I still remember them well; there was "Il est né, le divin enfant" and many others. There was always a school holiday at Christmas time and in those days it often snowed. Now we hardly get any snow at all, it is so mild, but back then there was enough snow to make snowmen.

I remember one Christmas in particular, when I was about four years old; I was given a little sheep on wheels. It was made of cloth and stuffed with bran, and it was fastened to a little platform. The platform was on four wheels and could be

pulled along by a string; that was all I had that year, but for me it was a magnificent Christmas.

For us le jour de l'An (New Year's Day) was the big celebration. On the 1st January there was a much larger meal than usual and the children were all given oranges and biscuits and chocolates. People gave each other cards and my elder sister and I would go to see our grandparents and say "Happy New Year Mam goz" (Grandmother) and "Happy New Year Tad coz" (Grandfather). Then they would give us money and we would rush home and show it to our mother. She would always be surprised and say, "oh, they shouldn't have given you so much." Everyone visited their family and their neighbours, and they were all given something to eat and drink – I remember, there was a real feeling of excitement, of celebration in the air.

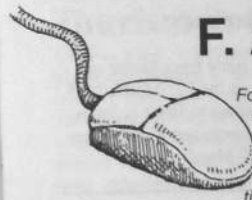


The Yule Log

There is a tradition that a large log should be brought into the house on Christmas Eve and set in the fireplace. This Yule log should be carefully tended and kept alight throughout the night so that by the morning it has been completely burnt up.

Some of the charcoal from the log should be carefully removed from the fire and allowed to cool. It is said that if this charcoal is kept indoors throughout the coming year, it will protect the house from being struck by lightning.

F. A. Q.



Following earlier offerings, here is another "Frequently Asked Question" posed by

English-speaking computer users living in France.

Q: "I want to go on-line. What's the best deal for me?"

A: This is one of the most difficult queries to answer because things change so rapidly.

To access the World Wide Web your computer must be able to contact, usually by telephone, an Internet Service Provider, hence ISP. There are many and they all charge. Their rates are confusing because there is such variety. Here are the main options:

1. "Pay as You Go": This is often called 'free'; Totale Liberté. It isn't, of course. You will pay the telephone call charges and these can quickly add up. For those who need access intermittently or for just a few hours a month this will probably do.
2. "Forfait": You pay a fixed fee for a set number of hours each month. 5, 10, 20 up to 100 hours or more. Yes, some people have nothing else to do. Generally a better option than No.1

3. "Tout Compris"; an all-inclusive option that was offered by several ISPs but only available from Tiscali.fr now. Great for those who have no private life and don't expect to receive any telephone calls.
4. ADSL: This is a different telecoms technology that is available in some larger towns. It provides a faster "Always On" connection as well as allowing other members of the family to use the telephone. It needs special (expensive) equipment to set up. You will hear it referred to as "BroadBand." If you live more than 6 klicks from your telephone exchange don't hold your breath waiting for this.

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Travel Roundup

To the best of our knowledge, the information is accurate, but it is notoriously difficult to make sense of the different options available and we welcome corrections and updates from readers.

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Roscoff/Plymouth

1 crossing per day in Dec., at 10.30 p.m. on the following days:
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 Dec. 3,10,17,24,25,26,27,30,31 1st Jan, 2nd Jan
 Dec. 28th - 2 crossings: 11 a.m. and 11.30 p.m.
 Dec. 29th 1 crossing: 11.30 p.m.

Plymouth/Roscoff

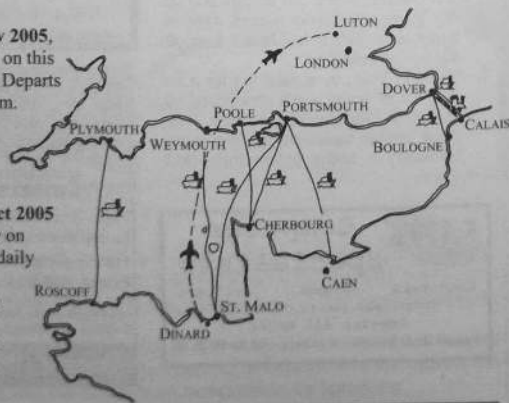
1 crossing per day in Dec. at 12 noon, on the following days:
 1,2,5,6,7,8,9,12,13,14,15,16,21,22,23,28,29
 Jan. 3,4,5,6,7 etc
 No crossings on the following days:
 Dec. 4,11,18,20,24,25,26,30,31, Jan. 1st, 2nd,
 Dec. 3rd, 11th, & 17th - 1 crossing: 11 p.m.
 Dec. 19th - 2 crossings: 12 noon & 11 p.m.
 Dec. 27th - 1 crossing: 11.30 p.m.

Caen/Portsmouth

18th Mar 2005 - 10 Nov 2005,
 there will be a fast ferry on this
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 Fri, Sat & Sun, 12.30 p.m.
 from Caen to arrive at
 Portsmouth 3 pm.

Cherbourg/Poole

23rd May 2005 - 2nd Oct 2005
 there will be a fast ferry on
 this route also, leaving daily
 at 11.30 am from
 Cherbourg and arriving
 at Poole at 12.45 pm,
 making a crossing time
 of 2¼ hours.



Flybe - December

www.flybe.com

In addition to the route from Exeter to Brest due to start on the 27th March 2005, the route Southampton to Brest is due to start on the 23rd March, and Birmingham to Brest on the 24th March.

Sea France

Sea France is due to introduce its new ship, the Berlioz, in March 2005, on the Dover/Calais route. The ship is being built in Brittany, at St. Nazaire, and has now been launched into the water. According to the company's publicity, it is being painted and fitted out by a team of one thousand workers.

Please send information for this page to
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Tourism in Brittany

Tourism plays a different role in different places and Brittany is fortunate in that it receives a relatively benign form of tourism. The unpredictability of its weather means that it has not attracted the highly commercialised tourism industry and instead appeals to the more independently-minded and resourceful traveller.

Tourism is one of the few genuinely profitable industries in Central Brittany (it prospers without being subsidised by grants from central government) and tourist boards are amongst the few pressure groups that have sufficient influence to lobby on behalf of wild life and the countryside.

It is in the interests of the tourist industry to protect trees, hedgerows, country paths, woodland, wildlife habitats, open spaces and old buildings, making it a counterbalance to the pressure for agricultural 'development'. Tourists who visit Central Brittany also tend to patronise local businesses, helping to support the rural economy and allowing many shops and restaurants to prosper, in areas where otherwise they might struggle.

Tourism is a field of enterprise ideally suited to a partnership between people who have always lived in Brittany and people who have chosen to move here: people who have moved to Brittany often have a knowledge of other countries which is invaluable in helping to attract visitors to this region, and it is the older inhabitants of the region who understand the traditions and the culture which have helped to preserve it as an island of calm on the edge of a busy continent.



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Brittany has its own heritage of folk tales – comparable to the stories collected by the Brothers Grimm in Germany. Like all such stories they contain a blend of adventure and wisdom which has captivated children and adults for centuries:

The Little White Hare

Once upon a time there lived a little girl called Annette. She was warm hearted and as good as gold, but her parents were dead, and she worked as a shepherdess on a farm near Théix.

One day she was out grazing her sheep in the gulf of Morbihan. There, salt streams run through the plains, and the animals were feeding on the sea grass that grows beside them. Suddenly Annette saw something moving in a thorn bush. It was a young hare, no bigger than two clenched fists, with fur as white as January snow.

"Don't be afraid, little hare," said Annette. "I won't hurt you."

She knelt down, lifted the hare into her apron, and carried it home with her. She was met by the farmer's wife.

"What have you there?" asked the woman. "It looks like a hare – what fine white fur! Give it to me and I'll make it into the best stew we've ever tasted." Annette drew back in dismay.

"No," she said, "I'd rather die than give you my hare."

"Very well," said the farmer's wife. "Then you can both leave this place. No doubt you'll find some kind soul, who will take you in."

So the little girl left the farm. She walked and walked, but she found no house where she could ask for shelter. At last she saw a castle standing in a forest clearing.

"Perhaps the people here will be kind and give us shelter," she said. She knocked on the door, and it was opened by a serving woman.

"Come in my dear," she said. "You may stay here tonight, and many other nights, if you wish – on condition you give me that white hare in your apron. I will make a tasty dish with it – and I will share it with you."

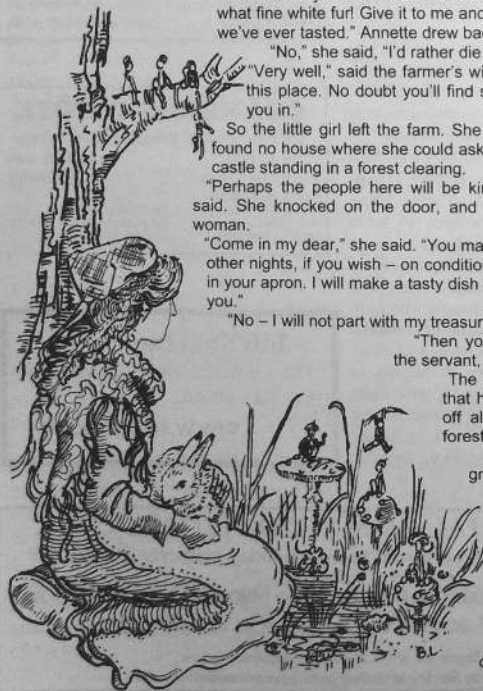
"No – I will not part with my treasure," said Annette.

"Then you can be on your way," said the servant, and slammed the door.

The little girl wiped away the tears that had risen to her eyes, and set off along a path that led into the forest.

After a while she came to a great oak tree. She sat down on the moss at its base, and began to stroke the hare and wonder what she should do.

Suddenly, she noticed a gentle rustling amongst the grass and the branches of the oak. Hundreds and hundreds of tiny figures were coming towards her. They sat down in a circle about the tree,



some on leaves, others on toadstools, and some clinging to the plants. Annette felt frightened, and was about to run away when a voice, as sweet as a nightingale's began to speak.

"Do not be afraid, dear Annette," said the chief of the little people. "We are Korrigans of the forest, and we want to help you. We know all about the troubles you have had, since you found your hare, and we want to help you care for it. Come and live with us and be our housekeeper, and we will look after both of you."

"Thank you," said the little girl. "I will gladly come and live with you – especially as you will also take care of my little hare."

The Korrigans led Annette to an underground cave, hidden beneath some great stones in the deepest part of the forest. Each day they brought the hare wild thyme and garden thyme, and they brought Annette the sweetest honey, and fruits from orchards and gardens.

Five months passed in this happy way. Annette's cheeks grew round and rosy, and the hare's fur became more sparkling white than ever.

One day she noticed a great commotion amongst the Korrigans. They were running hither and thither, forming into ranks, and each one held a dagger and was mounted on a rabbit.

"We are off to the other end of the land," said their chief. "We are going to storm the fortress of the cruel giant, Diaul Bras, and slay him. You will be more pleased than anyone if we succeed. Farewell, and do not fear for us."

The Korrigans set off towards the East. They passed with ease through the gorse bushes on the heath, and the rows of corn in the fields, but they stopped in dismay when they reached a large pond.

"Do not fear," said their chief. He blew a whistle, and the fish who lived in the pond rose to the surface, and formed a silvery bridge across the water.

The Korrigans crossed over and rode on until they reached the giant's castle. It was very tall, and its walls were smooth as glass. All the doors were locked and barred – how were they to get in? Once again their chief blew his whistle. The wood pigeons who live in the forest flew down and took the Korrigans on their backs. They flew with them over the walls and into the giant's castle.

The giant was fast asleep, but he was soon awoken. Little people filled the courtyard, the rooms, the furniture, even the kitchen utensils. Although they were not much bigger than wasps, they marched on the giant from all sides, their daggers held in their hands.

The giant tried to hide, but he could not escape. He rushed to the castle walls but still he was pursued. He grew frightened and, losing his head, leapt from the walls and fell dead on the ground beneath.

Gladdened by their victory, the Korrigans took the shortest way home, humming joyfully as they went.

"You are avenged Annette," they cried. "Your enemy is dead."

"But who is my enemy?" asked the little girl. "I have never harmed anyone, and I did not know anyone was angry with me."

It was the hare who answered this question. It had leapt down from Annette's apron into the midst of the Korrigans, and a young woman had appeared in its place.

She was beautiful and graceful, and was dressed in the most magnificent clothes.

"Thank you," she said to the little folk. "You have saved two helpless creatures. The cruel giant, Diaul Bras, robbed us of our castle, and turned me into a white hare. My daughter, Annette, had to work as a shepherdess for a hard-hearted farmer's wife. Thanks to her kind heart I was protected and taken care of. We can now return to our home. Korrigans of wood and moor, you will always be welcome at the castle of the white hare."

Annette was full of joy to have found her mother and said good bye to her forest friends. They lived together for many years in their beautiful castle, and were loved by all the people round about.

The End

Learning French

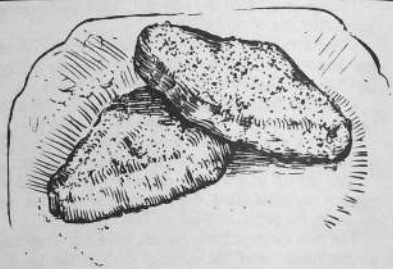
People who enjoy cooking can improve their skill in the French language by exploring the world of French Cuisine through the medium of recipe books. **Almond Christmas Biscuits from Alsace** are usually made during the period of Advent. They taste a little like shortbread:

Biscuits de Noël aux amandes

Préparation: 1 heure
Cuisson: 10-15 min

Ingrédients (pour 30 biscuits):

- 280 g (10 oz) de farine
- 210 g (7 oz) de beurre
- 100 g (3½ oz) d'amandes en poudre
- 70 g (3 oz) de sucre
- du sucre vanillé
- du sucre glace



Préparation:

1. Mélangez du bout des doigts la farine, le sucre, les amandes en poudre et le beurre.
2. Avec la pâte ainsi obtenue, faire des petits cylindres que vous aplatirez et que vous façonnerez en forme de croissants*. Disposez les petits croissants sur une plaque beurrée.
3. Enfourez dans le four préalablement pré-chauffée à 200°C (400°F, Gas mark 6) environ 10 min (les biscuits ne doivent pas colorer).
4. Dès la sortie du four, décollez les biscuits de la plaque et roulez-les dans un mélange sucre vanillé / sucre glace.
5. Laissez complètement refroidir et conservez-les dans une boîte hermétique.

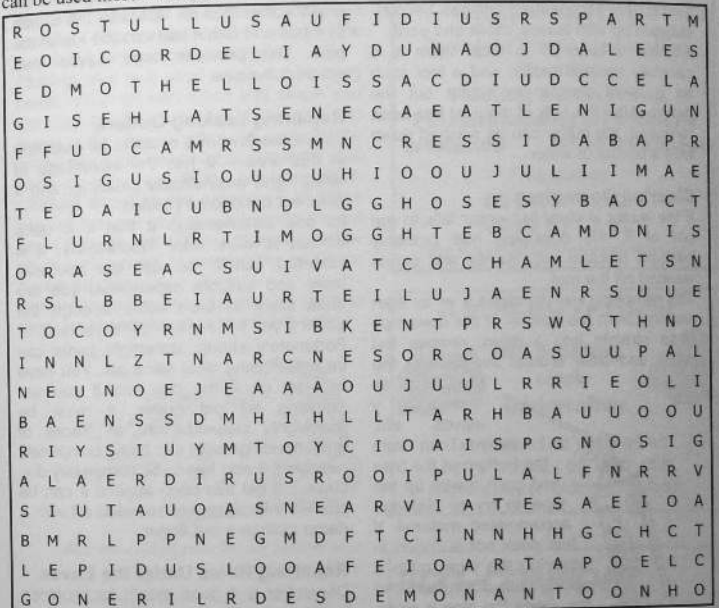
*The biscuits should be straight, with tapering ends - i.e. the shape of butter croissants (usually only croissants containing margarine or vegetable oil are curved).

Glossary:	la farine.....flour	la plaque.....baking tray
les amandes en poudre.....powdered almonds	le sucre vanillé.....vanilla sugar	beurrée.....buttered (greased)
le bout des doigts.....fingertips	la pâte.....dough	enfournez (enfourner).....put in the oven
ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	le four.....the oven
les cylindres.....cylinders	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	préchauffée.....preheated
aplatirez (aplatir).....(will) flatten	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	dès la sortie.....after being taken out
façonnerez (façonner).....(will) shape	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	décollez (décoller).....unstick
disposez (disposer).....place	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	le mélange.....mixture
	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	refroidir.....to cool
	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	conservez-les (conserver).....keep them
	ainsi obtenue.....thus obtained	une boîte hermétique.....an airtight tin

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| BIANCA | EDGAR | JULIUS CAESAR | PORTIA |
| BRUTUS | EDMUND | KENT | REGAN |
| CALPHURNIA | EMILIA | LADY MACBETH | RODERIGO |
| CAPULET | ENOBARBUS | LAERTES | ROMEO |
| CASCA | FOOL | LEAR | ROSENCRANTZ |
| CASSIO | FORTINBRAS | LEPIDUS | TIMON |
| CASSIUS | FRIAR LAWRENCE | MACBETH | TROILUS |
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| CINNA | GHOST | MERCUTIO | TYBALT |
| CLAUDIUS | GLOSTER | MONTAGUE | ULYSSES |
| CLEOPATRA | GONERIL | NURSE | VOLUMNIA |
| CORDELIA | GUILDENSTERN | OCTAVIUS CAESAR | |
| CORIOLANUS | HAMLET | OPHELIA | |
| CRESSIDA | HORATIO | OSRIC | |

Winter Maintenance

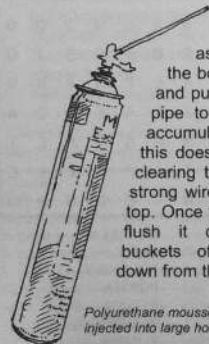
Clearing Gutters

The usual cause of overflowing gutters is simply that the gutter itself has become clogged up with leaves, moss and earth. All that is required to clear them is a carefully-secured ladder and a tool such as a paint scraper to scoop out the debris. After the bulk of material has been removed, the gutter can be washed down with a bucket of water.

Clearing Downpipes

If the gutter is clear but water fails to run out of it, the downpipe has probably become blocked with leaves and debris washed off the roof.

The simplest way to clear it is to start working from the bottom. If the downpipe goes straight into a drain, remove the cover and clear around the base of the pipe. Pull as many leaves, etc. as you can from the bottom of the pipe and push a wire up the pipe to try to dislodge accumulated material. If this does not succeed in clearing the pipe, push a strong wire down from the top. Once the pipe is clear, flush it out with some buckets of water poured down from the top.



Polyurethane mousse can be injected into large holes.

Capping the Downpipe

To prevent downpipes becoming blocked, crush some chicken wire into the shape of a ball and ram it half into the top of the pipe. This prevents large leaves from entering the pipe.

Repairing Leaking Gutters

Zinc is the favoured material for guttering in this area - it has the advantage of being light, aesthetically pleasing, and it does not need to be painted.

Its one disadvantage is that it is quite difficult to work with. Traditionally, it is soldered, but if you lack the specialist tools and suitable experience, you are quite likely to burn holes through the gutter if you try to solder joints yourself.

Fortunately strong, watertight joints can be made using clear silica gel. You have to work on a dry day and if you are repairing an old gutter, it must be thoroughly cleaned, with all traces of dust, moss, grease, etc. being completely removed. It also has to be completely dry. Once the gel has been applied it can be pushed into place and rounded off with a damp cloth or a wet finger.

Repairing Holes Under the Eaves

December is a good month for repairing holes under the eaves: birds generally only live in the roof during the nesting season and most bats leave house roofs during winter. Rats and mice tend to be the only animals living in the roof space at this time of year; they can be very

destructive and can make a disturbing noise as they run along behind the plasterboard or panelling.

They usually have several means of entry and exit: blocking up some of them will hopefully discourage them from living in the roof without trapping them in there.

Chicken wire is a good means of blocking holes. It can be scrunched into shape and will stay in place when it is rammed into even quite large holes. It should be compressed as much as possible so that not even mice can find a way through it. Chicken wire has the advantage of being one of the few things which rats cannot gnaw through, but it does not block the flow of air, which helps to prevent the roof from becoming damp.

Polyurethane mousse can also be used to block up awkward and inaccessible holes.



Rats are seldom seen but are present in or around most homes.

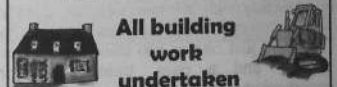
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Tim the Gardener Planting Fruit Trees

One of the tips often given by experienced gardeners is that one should not delay in planting fruit trees. It is a job which has to be done at this time of year, and it is surprising how quickly years can slip by - while you concentrate on other areas of the property - without your fruit trees ever having been planted.

Siting the Trees

When you move into a new property it is often difficult to get a feeling for the best places for large plants, especially plants like fruit trees, each of which has its own specific requirements. It is therefore advisable to walk round the garden, preferably with another person, identifying suitable sites. In the first year it may be best to plant just one or two trees - perhaps an apple and a pear, trees which grow particularly well in this area - and to add to them regularly year by year. If you already have an orchard in the garden, then you have to consider which fruit trees are missing, and how the cropping season can be extended.



Brittany has an almost perfect climate for growing apples and pears, and it makes sense to start with these if you have no fruit trees on your property.

New varieties can be added to your garden each year, and, in addition, over the course of time it may also be possible to find suitable sites for plum trees, cherry trees, quince, fig, medlar, and even peach trees - most local gardeners agree that Central Brittany does not have a suitable climate for apricots, but people living by the coast in large towns, may have success with them.

Hazelnut, walnut and chestnut trees do well here and can be included in and around the orchard.

Peach trees do best when trained against a south-facing wall, and it should be remembered that cherry trees can grow very tall and are probably better not planted close to a house or underneath power lines.

An orchard or a plantation of nut trees may be a more appealing way of using a spare area of land, than simply keeping it as grass.

Preparing the site

If a tree is planted in poorly-prepared soil, it will experience difficulty in getting established and its development may be set back by two or three years.

Prepare the soil by clearing an area, at least three foot square, of weeds and

their roots and dig it over to help aerate the soil.

Selecting the Tree

A fruit tree may remain a permanent feature in a garden for at least twenty or thirty years, and maybe for much longer. It is worth taking the time to visit a nursery where fruit trees are taken seriously, and where they are able to give sound advice about which variety is most suitable for your particular garden and your personal requirements. The nurseryman should be able to advise you on what size the tree will grow to, how it should be pruned, when it crops, what sort of conditions it prefers, what the fruit tastes like, and how long you should expect to have to wait before you can pick your first crop.

Planting

1. Dig a hole. Make it wide enough to take the roots of the tree without bending them, and deep enough for the tree to be the same depth in the ground as it was before it was dug up (in this you can be guided by the earth mark on the stem of the tree.) (diagram 1)



Diagram 1

Continued overleaf

Why Can't Fruit Trees Be Grown From Seed?

Fruit trees can, of course, be grown from seed; the reason that they aren't is that the results are unpredictable - a seed from a Cox's Orange Pippin will not grow into a tree which produces Cox's Orange Pippin. Given the time taken to grow a fruit tree, most gardeners prefer the certainty that comes from grafting a branch of a favourite variety onto a known rootstock, to the gamble of not knowing what sort of fruit you might get, that is inherent in planting a seed.

Not all fruit trees are the same, however; for example, apples are reputed to be particularly unpredictable when planted from seed, but peaches, on the other hand, are supposed to be quite successful.

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- If required, now drive a stake into the hole, close to the centre. The disadvantage of using a stake is that a tree becomes dependent upon it and the stake has to be kept in place for 5 to 20 years (depending upon which authority one believes). The advantage of a stake is that it stops the tree being blown by the wind and the roots being disturbed. A stake might be essential for trees with dwarfing rootstocks, as these roots lack the vigour of normal roots.
- Place the tree in the hole. Let the roots spread out as freely as possible. (Diagram 2)

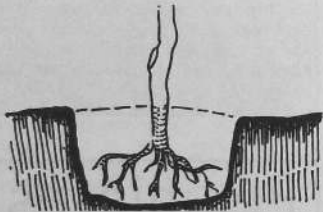


Diagram 2

- Make up a planting mixture of compost and weed-free soil, peat can also be added if you have very heavy soil. Gently work this mixture in around the roots of the tree to avoid large air

Blueberries (Myrtle Berries)

If you have a boggy /acidic area of land which you don't know what to do with, blueberry bushes may be the answer. Styvel nurseries in Poullaouen has made a study of which varieties do well here and is able to recommend, and supply, plants that, between them, can yield a crop of blueberries from mid-summer through to the autumn.

- pockets being formed. Fill the hole with mixture.
- Add more planting mixture to form a ring of soil around the tree which will retain water when the tree is watered. The earth should be slightly domed in the centre to stop water collecting around the trunk itself. (Diagram 3)

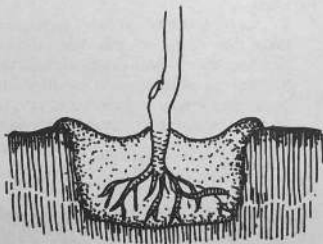


Diagram 3

Jobs in the Vegetable Garden

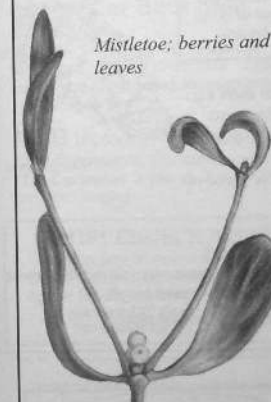
Shallots: Shallot bulbs can be planted at any time from now to March. The earlier you plant the bulbs, the earlier they mature. The ground should be well prepared – you can even dig a trench, fill it with well-rotted compost and then cover it over with a few inches of soil in which you plant the shallots. The tip of the bulb should be just showing above the soil surface. The shallot bed can be covered over with a mulch of bracken, or something similar, particularly in January, when the weather can be cold for several days at a time.

Potatoes: For most people, December is too early to start thinking about next year's potato crop, but if you are planning to grow potatoes in previously uncultivated ground, the earlier you start preparing it, the better the crop will be. Remove all the large weeds and as much of their roots as possible. If you have a strong back, you can dig the ground over. Otherwise break up the surface with a draw hoe, and cover with mulch. It is surprising by how much the weeds can be reduced if this procedure is repeated a few times between now and next spring.

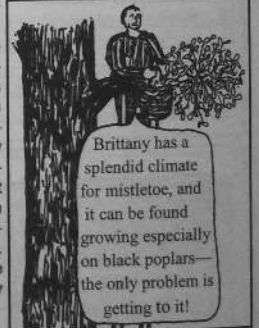
MISTLETOE

French: **le Gui** Breton: **Barr-uhel**

In the depths of winter what a cheering sight it is, to see the great green balls of mistletoe high up in the treetops, for when all the trees have shed their leaves the mistletoe becomes very obvious, because it is an evergreen, which keeps its foliage all year round. Mistletoe is a particularly peculiar plant, as it grows and supports itself on the branches of other trees, sending its roots into the bark and feeding off the sap; and yet the damage that it does to the host tree seems to be inconsequential, as it is able, due to its leaves, to photosynthesize for itself most of the energy it needs. One will tend to find it growing on trees with soft wood such as willow, sycamore, and especially apple trees and the black poplar, but the specimens found on oak have always been regarded as the best. The Druids would go to great pains to search it out, after which they would cut it with much ceremony and put it to use throughout the year in all their medicines. They would send their apprentices round all the villages, also, bearing the cut mistletoe, to bring the glad tidings that the New Year had come, for mistletoe was only ever cut around the time of the winter Solstice. It has been recorded, as well, that at the festival of Saturnalia from the 17th to the 24th of December, the Romans would bring mistletoe indoors and hang it around their houses, in order to do honour to the gods. As with most traditions, it is impossible to say how that of kissing under the mistletoe began, but it seems that the plant has always been regarded as a guardian of love and friendship, under which past grievances could be forgotten, present harmony established and future love contracted.



The mistletoe berries ripen in Midwinter, around Christmas time and, although poisonous to humans, are adored by birds. For the propagation of its species it relies completely on these birds, who transmit its seeds through their droppings onto nearby branches, where they can germinate. Also, being very sticky they will cling to the beak of the bird, which, wiping them off on the branch will thereby give them an excellent place to grow.



LA JARDINERIE HOLLANDAISE

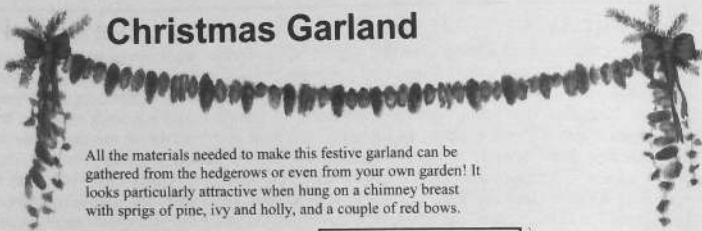
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Christmas Garland



All the materials needed to make this festive garland can be gathered from the hedgerows or even from your own garden! It looks particularly attractive when hung on a chimney breast with sprigs of pine, ivy and holly, and a couple of red bows.

You will need:

- Fir cones
- Oak leaves, fallen from the tree
- Beech leaves, fallen from the tree
- A length of thin string
- A sharp needle big enough to thread the string through

Method:

1. Arrange the leaves and fir cones in the pattern you want them e.g. two big fir cones, one little, two big, then a bunch of leaves, etc.
2. Thread the needle with the string and push it through the top of the first fir cone. (Diagram 1.) When the fir cone is big, this can be quite hard - it is best to work on an old bread board or piece of wood and to wear gloves so as not to hurt your fingers.
3. Pull the thread through, leaving a short end.
4. Wind the end once round the top of the fir cone and make a knot.
5. Push the needle through the next cone, then the next. In the same way, thread the needle through the leaves. Proceed in this way until your garland is the desired length.

Hang the garland over a picture or over nails fixed in the wall or in a mantle piece.

Note: You can make the garland any length you want. 60 fir cones and a length of string about six foot (2 m) will make a garland long enough to decorate a chimney breast.



Diagram 1

What's On

Jazz: Pikey Butler's Jumpin' Five

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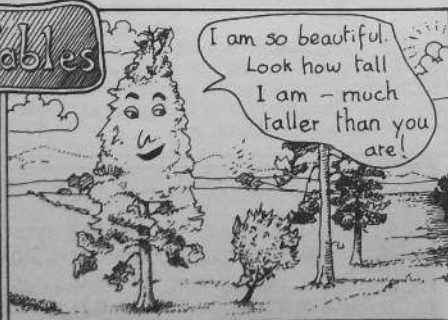
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Contact Ray & Yvonne: tel/fax 02 96 45 79 11

NEW VENUE

Aesop's Fables

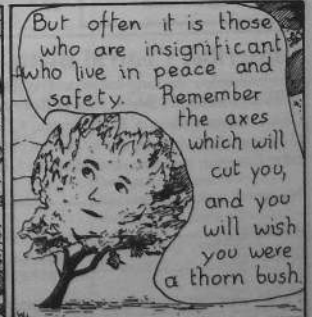
A fir-tree and a thorn bush were arguing with each other, and the fir-tree was praising itself.



I am so beautiful. Look how tall I am - much taller than you are!



And my wood is so useful. Men use me for their temple roofs and for their ships. They could not do without me




But often it is those who are insignificant who live in peace and safety. Remember the axes which will cut you, and you will wish you were a thorn bush.

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The Weasel *French: la Belette* *Breton: Kaerell*

When walking in a wild field or beside a hedge-row, one is not unlikely to hear the rustle of a weasel pouncing on its prey, and one may even catch a glimpse of its long, brown body as it darts forward.



Weasels are so small one can easily mistake them for mice, but their bodies are almost twice the length of a small rodent, and they will invariably be carrying a mouse in their mouth! For such small creatures they make fierce predators, and they have no fear of killing animals much larger than themselves. Birds, rats, even rabbits form part of their diet, and they have been known to boldly attack humans when under threat. In the main, though, their diet consists of mice and voles, making them one of the gardener's best friends.

Weasels make their nest in the tunnels of animals they have killed, and line it with the furs of their catch. They have no real predators, but their numbers are controlled by the amount of prey available. They are believed to only live about two years. Stoats are similar to weasels, but they can be told apart by their larger size and the black tuft at the end of the tail.



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