

Central Brittany

Issue 8 February 2005

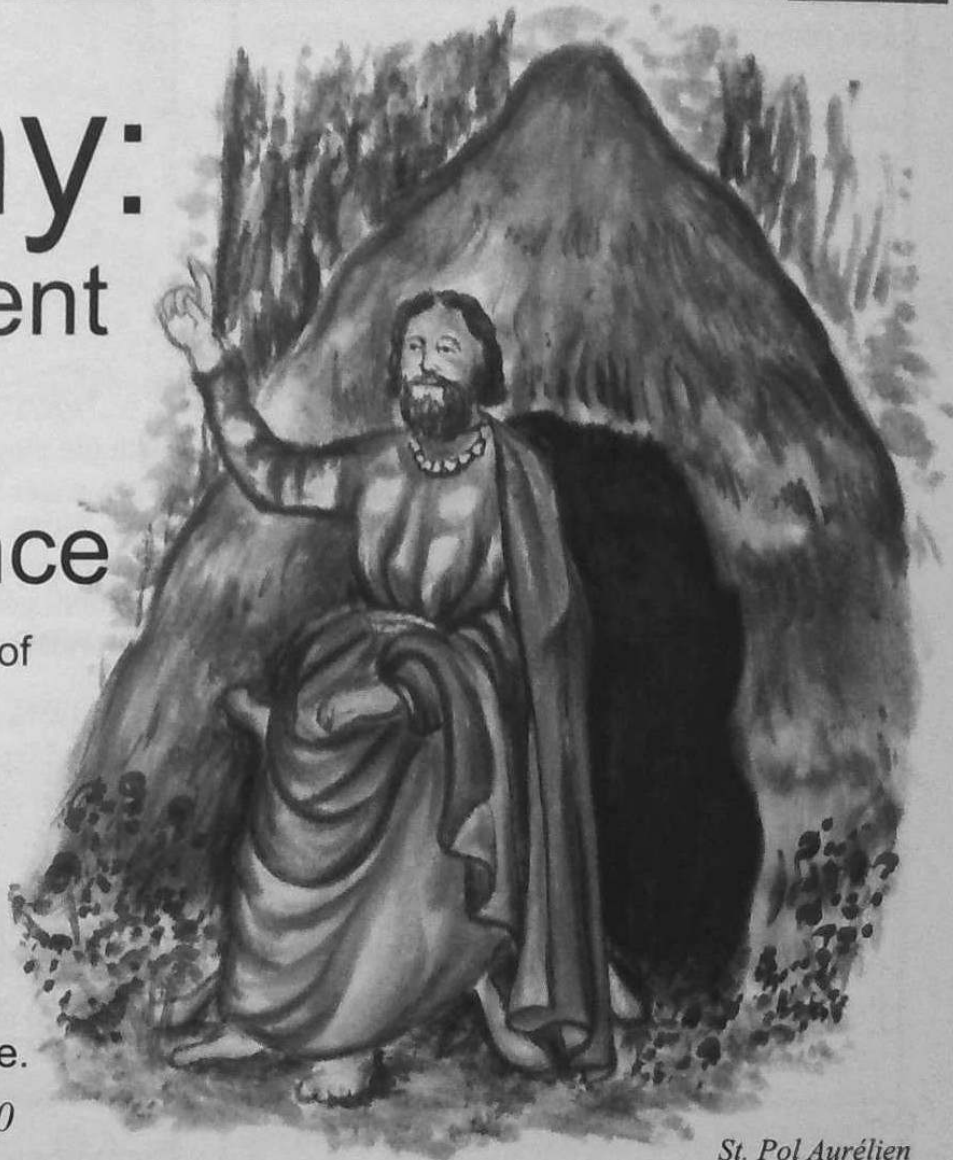
Journal

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Brittany: The Argument for Independence

The overwhelming majority of people living in Brittany instinctively feel this to be a country with its own distinctive culture and traditions, and that it deserves to have a greater degree of political and economic independence.

page 10



St. Pol Aurélien

Pontivy:
The Castle
of Rohan



page 7

**A Year in
Brittany**

page 24



Nature:
The Roe Deer
back page



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2 Recipe

Coconut Pancakes

Ingredients:

- 9 oz (225 g) rice flour*
- 3 oz (175g) fresh coconut, finely grated (or desiccated coconut)
- 1 inch (2½ cm) piece fresh ginger, grated
- 2 medium onions, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh coriander leaves, chopped
- A few curry leaves (optional)
- 1 teaspoon salt

These savoury pancakes come from India. They make a perfect accompaniment to curry and rice, and make a change from traditional pancake day fare.



*available from BioCoops

Method:

1. In a food processor or blender grind the coconut with the ginger into a fine powder. Mix with the flour in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add enough water to make a smooth paste (approx. 350 ml / 12 fl oz).
2. Heat the oil in a small frying pan and cook the onion until golden brown. Stir into the paste with the coriander, curry leaves and salt. Add enough water to make a thick batter (approx. 175 ml / 6 fl oz).
3. Heat a heavy, cast iron pan, or a non-stick frying pan, and lightly grease with a little oil. Pour in a small ladleful of batter, and tip up the pan so the batter spreads out into a round. Make sure it does not reach the edge of the pan.
4. When the pancake looks cooked, gently ease it off the pan with a fish-slice, or spatula, and flip it over. Carry on cooking until both sides are lightly browned.
5. Continue in this way, re-greasing the pan if necessary, until all the pancakes are cooked. Serve immediately.

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Editorial

Welcome to the February issue of the Central Brittany Journal – and an especial welcome to new readers living outside the Journal's original area. I sense that there is a definite feeling of community and shared experience amongst people living throughout Central Brittany – from Châteaulin in the West to Loudéac in the East – and over the next few months I would like to broaden the content of the Journal to reflect the diversity of this community. Following the success of the Christmas Market in November, we are organising a Spring Fayre in March. We would like to hear from anyone interested in helping with this event as soon as possible (*more details page 25*).

Two recurring themes in the correspondence that I received since starting the Journal are, on the one hand, how difficult it is to earn a living in Central Brittany, and, on the other, how much potential there is for developing the area as a destination for tourists who are seeking a change from the hustle and bustle of daily life. I would like to see the Journal participating in the development of this potential and would like to hear from anyone who has ideas about how this could be done. (*page 23*)

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Boot Sales and Book Sales

Carnoët and St Nicodème

Carolann and Paul Thresher have moved their boot and book sale to the first Sunday of the month, starting on the 6th February.

The sale takes place in their home in the centre of Carnoët; tables are free and food is available. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tel: 02 96 21 54 62

The regular book sale in Ty Pykouz continues on the second Sunday of the month. There is live music, a cosmetic demonstration, and an auction planned for the event on the 13th Feb. 10 am. to 1 pm. Call Yvonne and Ray Constable for more details 02 96 45 79 11.

Satellite Dishes

Trevor Dallas has started a business specialising in the installation of satellite dishes. He is based near Guingamp and is happy to travel anywhere in Central Brittany to provide a free survey and quote. He is able to supply and fit a sky digital decoder, a 60 cm dish and all the necessary wiring for 290 euros. This is able to receive all the free to air channels including BBC 1, BBC 2, BBC 3, BBC 4, Sky News, ITV news, etc.

For more information call Trevor on 02 96 43 16 04

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Jean Oberti of Gouarec has specialised in supplying wine from Chateau Daviaud for the past 12 years. He now has a website, www.chateau-daviaud.com, which allows people from different countries to order the wine direct and have it delivered to their doors. English-speaking users of the site should use the French page for ordering, if delivery is to be made to a French address: prices for deliveries to France are considerably cheaper than for the UK because of differences in the level of tax. Jean Oberti still welcomes customers who wish to buy direct from his premises at 7 rue des Ajoncs d'Or, Gouarec. www.chateau-daviaud.com tel: 02 96 24 82 98

The Pet Hotel

Callac

Nicky Burton has opened the Pet Hotel on the site of a former kennels in Callac. At present it caters for up to 8 dogs in individual heated kennels, with spacious exercise area and walks. Visitors welcome.

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New Help for Home Buyers

The days when buyers could arrive in Brittany and purchase a home for a few thousand euros seem to have disappeared for ever, but there is still enormous variation in prices of properties which to the inexperienced eye seem very similar. People new to the area may not be aware of the effect that proximity to farm buildings, access, and space for septic tank installation have on the value of a property. Morgane Barbier is offering a new service in which she represents the interests of the buyer as they search for a suitable property. She is also available to help people settling into the area with administrative problems such as bills, setting up a bank account and car registration. Tel 06 71 13 30 01 contact@brittany-easy.com

Insurance

Guéméné sur Scorff

Henri Brisset runs AGF in Guéméné sur Scorff, an insurance company offering more than just an essential service to the local French and English community: it helps their English-speaking clients to understand the paperwork involved with many of the legal transactions they will encounter when they move to France - such as registering an English car. Two of their agents - Isabelle and Jacqueline - speak English, and the atmosphere in the office is friendly and welcoming.

Saveurs

Carhaix

Mme Christine Briand has run Saveurs at the bottom of rue Brizeux, near Les Halles, for the past 10 years. Inside this blue-shuttered, 18th century building is a wonderfully well-stocked shop, with culinary delights from the four corners of the world - fine wines, jams, jellies, pâtés, French and Belgian chocolates and interesting gifts and gift baskets.

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(See ad page 3)

Places to Visit: Pontivy

By any standards Pontivy is, architecturally, a very unusual town. The town centre has largely escaped modern development, and therefore still reflects the peculiar history of the town which pivots around the events of the French Revolution.

At one end of the main street is the old castle of the 'Ducs de Rohan', which is regarded as one of the finest examples of medieval architecture in Europe. At the other end of the town is the Hotel de Ville and sub-prefecture, completed in the mid-1800s when Pontivy was seen as being the potential capital of Brittany.

Prior to the Revolution, Pontivy was one of the headquarters of the powerful Dukes of Rohan. Clearly the Dukes had become unpopular with the people of the town because once the Revolution commenced the inhabitants of Pontivy supported it strongly, whilst the people in the countryside round about were pro-monarchy and anti-republican. On at least one occasion the townspeople repulsed an attack by a murderous mob of peasants armed with scythes and pitch forks. This won Pontivy the gratitude of the revolutionary government and contributed to its being selected as the main administrative centre on the proposed Nantes / Brest canal. A complete re-development of the town was planned (the name was changed to Napoléonville), but only a cavalry barracks and a few other buildings were completed before the fall of Napoleon. However the plans

Tea shop Review: Pontivy Au Duc de Rohan



*Au Duc de
Rohan
18 rue Nationale
56300 Pontivy
02 97 25 04 26
Open 6 days per
week
Closed Tues. &
lunchtimes*

This pâtisserie is on the main street that runs through the centre of Pontivy. It has a genteel, old-world feel, and is decorated inside with a chandelier, murals, and a large mirror that covers the back wall of the tearoom.

The selection of cakes is small, but they are very well made and taste delicious. The blueberry tart (*tarte aux myrtilles*) in particular is highly recommended. There is a large assortment of chocolates, some of which are quite unusual, and pâtes de fruits (fruit jellies). The pains au chocolat are especially good. The tearoom is at the back of the shop and is large and airy. Tables and chairs are set out under a striped canopy, and for those facing the door, there is an interesting view of customers coming in and out. Drinks are served in attractive china, and those ordering tea or coffee will find a small chocolate on their saucer.

were not forgotten and other buildings, such as the town hall, were completed in the mid-1800s. Most of these buildings are still standing today, positioned around a spacious and grandiose square in the lower part of the town.



Above: The castle, completed in 1485. The original castle was razed to the ground by the English in 1342 during the Hundred Years War.

Below: Close to the castle is the Rue du Fil, a narrow street of medieval timber-framed and stone buildings which contain speciality shops and restaurants.

What's in a Name?

Pontivy has changed its name to Napoléonville on three separate occasions during its history: once when it was originally accorded the honour by Napoléon I, once again when Napoléon returned to power for the 'Hundred Days' and finally during the reign of Napoléon III.

In the long run, however, it has been the name of the town's founder, Saint Ivy, which has proved to be more enduring. Ivy came from Lindisfarne in the North of England and founded a sanctuary on the banks of the river Blavet. He built a bridge over the river – Pont d'Ivy – to aid the passage of travellers, and it is from this that the town is named.



Chocolatier: A. Provost, rue du Fil

On the medieval rue du Fil in Pontivy is the shop of chocolate maker Alain Le Provost and his wife Marie-Claude. As you enter the doorway, behind the glass cases of delicious chocolates you can see the master chocolatier at work. His large range of chocolates features the yellow speciality *la fleur d'ajonc* (gorse flower) and *pavé du Martray* a dark, praline-filled chocolate meant to resemble a cobblestone.

Book Reviews

LA BRETAGNE DANS LA BATAILLE DE L'ATLANTIQUE

A meticulously researched, comprehensive account of the War in the Atlantic and of how German U-boats, based in Brittany, came close to defeating the Allied war effort.

The book's strength lies in its attention to detail and the way in which it recounts almost every known fact about the military operations of the time, giving the reader a chance to form their own judgement about the events that took place.

It starts with a dispassionate but unnerving account of German troops occupying strategic towns in Brittany, and goes on to describe how the German navy established major U-boat bases at Brest, Lorient, and St. Nazaire.

The subsequent bombing raids on Brittany had a devastating effect on the local population – almost every building in Lorient was flattened as is clearly shown in a graphic section of black and white photographs – but was totally ineffective, militarily. The Allies were slow to understand the threat posed



by the German submarines and did not start bombing raids until German engineers had succeeded in constructing enormous, bomb-proof, concrete submarine bunkers in the Breton ports.

The U-boats based in Brittany attacked British and American merchant shipping and threatened America's ability to send troops and supplies to Europe and Russia.

They were eventually defeated by vigilant aerial patrols, and the development of new radar technology.

Reading between the lines of what, on the surface, appears to be a simple reference book of a military campaign, one is able to get a sense of the effect occupation and warfare had on the lives of ordinary people, many of whom are still alive today.

La Bretagne dans la Bataille de l'Atlantique 1940-1945. Roger Huguén.
Published by Coop Breizh, 29540 Spezet
695 pages. **In French**
64 pages of contemporary photographs.
25 euros. (Available from La Louve, Callac)

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La Dame aux Camélias

Alexandre Dumas (Fils)

This short, classic novel is ideal for anyone wishing to improve their knowledge of the French language through a study of literature.

Alexandre Dumas fils was the son of Alexandre Dumas senior (author of the Three Musketeers and the Count of Monte Cristo) and La Dame aux Camélias is his most famous work. It is much shorter than most of his father's novels, but retains the same use of simple, direct prose that is relatively easy to understand.

Its plot encapsulates everything that has come to be associated with 'French' literature: a beautiful young courtesan gives up her lover, even though she knows that she is dying of consumption, to save his family from dishonour. The book provided the inspiration for Verdi's opera La Traviata.

Educational Notes Bilingual Children

Parents should be wary of believing too readily in the myth that all children of English-speaking families become bilingual when sent to school in France.

French schools may be better than English schools in some respects, but, overall, their performance is about the same. There is a growing awareness in both the UK and France that schoolchildren are not gaining basic language skills (including being able to speak properly), even when they are being taught in their first language. It is therefore not realistic to suppose that school attendance on its own will enable English-speaking children to learn French. Children learn best when they have active support from their parents and the best way for a parent to help their child to learn French is, therefore, to learn it themselves!

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English Language Books
Several shops in the area now stock English-language books, including the maisons de la presse in Callac, Carhaix, and Huelgoat, and Intermarché in Rostrenen and Bégard. For more information see: www.madmanacrossthewater.com

Brittany: The Argument for Independence

Independence and national identity are emotive issues, but the arguments in favour of a greater level of autonomy for Brittany are very strong and rest upon historical, geographic, cultural, and economic considerations.

Economic Arguments

The myth that has been taught to schoolchildren for the past one hundred years is that Brittany is an intrinsically poor country, hampered by poor soil and bad weather. The real truth, however, is that for most of its history Brittany has been extremely prosperous, and that it only started to go into economic decline once it became united with France.



During the Middle Ages Brittany was one of the wealthiest areas of Europe: the interior was home to a thriving textile industry, and the coastal areas maintained a merchant fleet that was one of the most successful of the age, trading salt, textiles, fish and agricultural products across Northern Europe and down to Spain and Portugal.

The wealth accumulated by these activities attracted the jealousy of neighbouring countries, which is the reason why the King of France forced Anne of Brittany to marry him in 1491, a marriage which eventually led to a union of the two states. Brittany remained semi-autonomous and reasonably prosperous until the Revolution, when it was finally amalgamated into the rest of France. The next hundred years of its history were marked by famines and widespread destitution – giving rise to the short-sighted idea that Brittany has always been impoverished.

Although outwardly prosperous, the modern Breton economy is now dependent on agricultural subsidies and funding from central government – which, in economic terms, is disastrous.

A clear argument can be made that Brittany would be more successful in diversifying its economy and creating wealth, if its people had a greater level of control over their own affairs.

Cultural Arguments

The Breton language has survived to the present time; there is still a tradition of Breton music; and there is a wealth of stories and traditions which are specific to this part of the world. These are the sorts of cultural ingredients which are required to support the sense of identity and common purpose required for a successful unit of government. The idea of an autonomous Brittany makes a lot more sense than many other administrative regions that have been created in Europe and around the world in recent times.

Geographical Arguments

People disagree as to where the eastern border of Brittany ought to lie – for most of the past thousand years Nantes and the 'Loire Atlantique' have been part of Brittany – but even a cursory glance of a map of Europe marks the Breton peninsular out as a distinctive geographical area, easily distinguished from the rest of France. Many aspects of life in Brittany are dictated by the weather and the sea, which makes it have more in common with places such as Scotland, Ireland, Wales and Cornwall than with mainland Europe.

Historical Arguments

It is, perhaps, history that provides the strongest reasons in favour of a change in the way that Brittany governs itself.

Over the years the people of this region have had many different relationships with the rest of Europe, and there is no reason to suppose that the present arrangement should be regarded as permanent.

In 'pre-historical' times, Brittany was inhabited by people about whom we know very little except that they erected the menhirs, dolmens, and covered alleyways that are so common in the Breton countryside. These monuments are quite distinct from remains found in other parts of mainland Europe, but do bear a resemblance to sites in the UK, in India, and in China. This would suggest that, in those days, Brittany was an outward-looking country, more closely allied to countries across the ocean than to its neighbours on the mainland.

Immediately prior to the Roman occupation, Brittany was inhabited by Gallic tribes, each of which was autonomous but loosely linked to other Gallic people by Druids who travelled freely throughout France, Britain, Belgium, Switzerland and northern Italy. The Druids did not constitute a form of government, (or a religion in today's sense of the word) but

do seem to have provided training and spiritual guidance which knitted the Gauls together into a unified nation: it seems unlikely that a tribal chief could have maintained power without the support of the Druids.

Julius Caesar ruthlessly suppressed this civilisation – in modern parlance his 'campaigns' would be termed genocide – and Brittany, along with the rest of Gaul, was incorporated into the Roman Empire.

All sense of self-determination was lost over the course of the next four centuries, and, when the Western Empire finally collapsed, the people living in this area had no more idea of how to govern themselves than anyone else in Rome's former dominions.

But, whereas most of the continent was overrun by tribes from the east (Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Huns, Franks, etc.) something unusual happened in Brittany. The Romans had left Britain a few years previously, and it had been settled by people from Saxony:



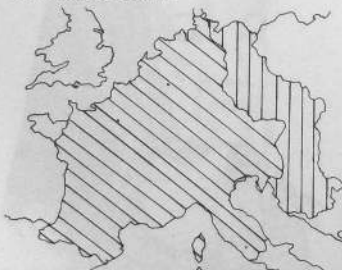
Anne of Brittany

12 Breton Independence

the Saxons. For a time, harmony was established between the native Celts and the newcomers and, consequently, Britain could enjoy a time of peace and prosperity just as chaos was engulfing the rest of Europe. (It is to this period that the legends of King Arthur and Merlin are often dated.)

'Saints', or wise men, crossed over from Britain to Brittany and set up sanctuaries in which they taught and helped the local people. The names of some of these men have become legendary and include the 'Seven Founding Saints' of Brittany – Malo, Samson, Briec, Tugdual, Pol Aurélien, Corentin and Patern.

Towns built up around where they settled (St Briec, St Pol de Leon, St Malo, etc.), composed of local people, plus Britons who came to join them. It is only since this time that this region has been known as Brittany and that its people have spoken Breton. It would seem that it is to these founding saints that Brittany owes its traditional love of freedom and independence: Brittany was the only part of modern France which did not fall under the control of Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire, and subsequently Brittany succeeded in resisting a Norman invasion of the type that overwhelmed Britain.



Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire included the northern half of Italy and parts of Germany that not even the Romans ever managed to conquer but Brittany consistently refused to pay tribute to the Frankish king.

For several centuries Brittany had the status of an independent Duchy, recognised by the Pope in Rome but not allied to any particular kingdom. This independence was lost when Brittany was united with France in 1532. Some modern historians blame this union on the greed of Breton nobles who preferred to accept gifts from the French court than to defending their independence; others have maintained that some form of union was inevitable given the state of European politics at the time. Whatever the case, the young heiress to the Duchy, Anne of Brittany, found herself helpless and besieged by a French army in Rennes and was forced to agree to marry the French king, which signalled the end of Breton independence.

Brittany retained separate institutions (in much the same way as Scotland retained its own legal system after it was united with England), but these were swept away in the French Revolution. Since then Brittany has, administratively, simply been part of France.

The late 1800s and early 1900s were a difficult time for Brittany because the government in Paris had little understanding of the region and no empathy with its history and culture: a legacy with which people are still trying to come to terms today.

The Future

The arguments in favour of Breton devolution are so overwhelming that it is almost inevitable that the region will acquire a greater level of control over its own affairs at some point in the future. The question is when and in what form? Many people are fearful of the phrase 'Breton independence' because it conjures up an image of militancy, but, if it is true that Brittany does need a greater degree of autonomy before it can move forward, then it would be those people who defend the *status quo* that posed the greatest threat to its future.

YS

One of Brittany's most famous legends tells the story of a city called Ys, said to have once stood in the bay of Douarnenez. It was built when King Gradlon and his two wise counsellors, Guénolé and Corentin, ruled over the kingdom of Cornouaille. King Gradlon's daughter, Dahut, had become very wild and she asked her father to build her a city where she could live free from restraints. King Gradlon loved his daughter dearly and, ignoring Corentin's advice, founded Ys. It was beside the ocean, and to protect it from the waves he surrounded it by a high wall.



In the wall was a single door made from bronze, and King Gradlon wore the key about his neck.

Many sailors came to live in Ys and every night Dahut took a new lover. One day a stranger arrived, dressed in red. Dahut chose him to pass the night with her and the stranger persuaded her to steal King Gradlon's key. As soon as he held it in his hand, the city was submerged beneath a mighty wave.

King Gradlon and Guénolé managed to escape, and Gradlon took his daughter up on the back of his magical horse, Morvar'h (sea-horse).

They reached the shore, but before they could ride free of the waves, the horse stopped and would not go on.

"Throw off your daughter!" cried Guénolé to the King. King Gradlon refused, and the waves began to rise higher and higher.

"Throw off your daughter!" cried Guénolé again. This time King Gradlon cast Dahut off into the water, and he and Guénolé escaped onto the land. They founded the city of Quimper and continued to rule for many years.

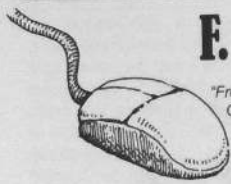
Blinkered News Reporting

The news services have been very efficient in reporting the tragic events that took place around the shores of the Indian Ocean on Boxing day, and also in highlighting the deficiency in information and tsunami warning systems in that part of the world. However, very little has been said about the risk of tsunamis around the shores of the Atlantic.

The story of Ys together with archaeological remains found around the coastline testify to the fact that Brittany was subject to a devastating tidal wave as recently as fourteen hundred years ago. The events of Boxing day demonstrate that science is unable to predict tsunamis, and if one of the lessons to be learnt is that the people living around the Indian Ocean need to be more aware of the danger posed by tidal waves, another must be that communities living around the Atlantic need a to have a similar awareness.

F. A. Q.

"Frequently Asked Questions" posed by English-speaking computer users living in France.



Q. "I've been told that Microsoft Windows isn't secure when I go on the Internet. Is this true and what can I do about it?"

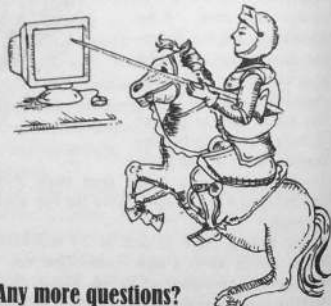
A. Sadly, this is true. There are security flaws in the Operating System that nasty people try to exploit. One authority tested a thousand machines each with a "new" MS Windows XP installation. They reckoned that it took only 20 minutes, on average, before the computers were successfully attacked. You can do one of three things:

1. Buy an Apple Mac. (Expensive)
2. Install Linux, an Open Source Operating System, reputed to be safer than Windows and it's free! Like the Mac, you will have to learn how to use it and some of your Windows programs will not work. Mind you, learning to use a new Operating System is just as hard when you start with Windows, so why not give it a go? You could actually run it on the same machine as Windows and discover a whole new world (safely).
3. The least drastic option is to "patch" your existing version of Windows. Microsoft is aware of the problems caused with their software and they do try to fix

it by offering Updates and Service Packs. However, these tend to be defective too.

It's like buying a new car. When you get it home you realise that a wheel is missing. The dealer promises to send one. When it arrives, the tyre is flat. Back to the garage with it!

Of course, fixing a flat tyre is a lot simpler than fixing Microsoft products but do it you must. You will find detailed information on their website under "Updates."



Any more questions?
graxwarrior@tiscali.fr

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Web Site Reviews:

Second-Hand Books www.abebooks.com

A B books is one of the most useful sites on the web for book lovers living in France. It is a compilation of the catalogues of over 12,000 independent second-hand book-sellers across the world and one simply has to tap the title or author of the book that you are looking for into its search engine and it provides a list of sellers who have a copy of that title, listed by price or alphabetically. It is also possible to limit the search to stockists in Europe or even the UK. Details are provided of the vendor - some of whom are simply private individuals with a few books to sell. You can contact them, discuss the condition of the book concerned and arrange payment and delivery.

Ordering direct from a second-hand book dealer is often the cheapest and fastest way of getting a specific, English-language book, and it has the added advantage that one often gets an unusual edition with a better quality binding than one could afford if ordering a new book.

Silent Computers

James Hoffmeister, an ex-music technology teacher now based near Moncontour, specialises in the supply of 'silent systems' originally designed for recording studios, but useful for any office or home where noise levels are important, for example where someone has an office in the corner of a bedroom or living room, or where several PCs are in operation together.

The silent system uses a high quality vinyl case lined with acoustic foam and a silent fan on the processor. Air to cool the system is drawn from underneath to further reduce noise output.

James is also available for call out and computer repairs in Côtes d'Armor and Morbihan. 02 96 73 46 31

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Letters

This Simple Country Place

I have taken a look at the website and I feel I must congratulate you, on producing what appears to be a very professional, highly informative, and most importantly a simple-to-navigate site which complements your journal perfectly. We, like many that reside in this part of Brittany, chose to come here to escape the 'innovation strangulation', paralysing costs, and the rip off 'I'm alright jack' culture. Your journal represents and informs those of us that have found tranquility in this simple country place, where one can just go about one's business in a peaceful way.

There will be those who bring the chaotic world of disharmony with them and who find no solace in peace, but Brittany, like many other places, has endured much in times gone by, yet the ambling unchanging tranquil ambience remains strong today!

We wish you much success in 2005.
Kind regards Pamela Menzies.
Penanhaie Kergioff.

Better to Make a Mistake than Stay Passive

Your article on The French Revolution and Brittany in the January issue was absolutely perfect. I should like to add to it that we French people have to learn quite a lot from those mountains of mistakes our forefathers made at that time (I am a convinced devolutionist, in clear, and anti-jacobinist!) and also from the idealism, good or bad. My philosophy teacher used to say 'Better to make a mistake than stay passive'.
Régis Garnier

Devolution

We would like to set up some kind of friendly exchanges with Central Brittany Journal. ES-KEMM is a group with very simple aims: to get a kind of home rule for Brittany equivalent to the Welsh devolution in Great Britain.
Very Kindly Yours,
Dr Le Mee, editor, ESKEMM
BP21 22610 Pleuvihan. Bro Dreger

Bilingual Texts

Thank you for mentioning my language initiative in your January issue.

I noticed Dee's suggestions on the letters page and I would like to make some suggestions for the inclusion of practical information:

1. Create a text in English, if possible translated into French.
2. I will put it into the bi-lingual form that I use in my work.

Readers would then not only have a French version of the text but a text in two languages which they could practise reading aloud in both languages.

What sort of practical information? I think that the 'Chèque Emploi Service' would be of interest to your readers. The information is available, in French, on the URSAFF website.
Henry Gueguen

Grand merci pour la parution en très bonne place de l'information sur ma démarche multilingue, dans votre numéro d janvier ! J'ai noté la remarque de Dee, en "courrier des lecteurs" page 9. Je vous suggère ceci : S'agissant d'une brève information pratique,

- 1- établissez un texte en anglais, si possible traduit en français;
 - 2- je vous en élaborerai une mise en forme bilingue, selon mes habitudes de découpage des textes.
- Ainsi les lecteurs anglophones disposeront-ils non seulement de la version française, mais d'un texte en deux langues pouvant servir à un exercice de lecture à haute voix dans les deux langues.*
- Quelle information pratique ? Je crois que le "Chèque Emploi Service" intéressera vos lecteurs. L'info en français est certainement disponible dans un site web de l'URSAFF.*
Henry Gueguen

Please send letters to:
Central Brittany Journal
BP 4 22160 Callac
info@thebcj.com

Best of Brittany Publications

I am writing to you with respect to the latest issue of "Best of Brittany Publications" which says that I was happy to receive a free advertising in their supposed "magazine". I have sent them a message today which I would like you to read.

To Best of Brittany Publications:

"I want to answer to your article "Mon Amis ? Non !!" in which you stated that "Pascal Bodéré, editor of Le Pôher was happy to receive free advertising in our magazine". I want your readers to know that I never said such a thing !!! The fact is the following: I called you to understand what was going on between you and the Central Brittany Journal. Doing my job as a journalist, I clearly explained that I was going to write an article. If you had told me that you wanted to ask me questions for an article in your next magazine, I would have answered that "I disagree with your methods because they are illegal and disdainful. I don't want any advertising in your magazine. At a moment when local people are working to improve integration in Central Brittany, your bad manners give a very bad image of the English community. That's a pity but I remain convinced that the English community is full of well-intentioned people. That's why we will continue our work for a better integration between people in our area. In the respect of our laws."

Pascal Bodéré.

Yew Hedges

I really enjoy your Central Brittany Journal, but could I make just one point about the recent article by Tim the Gardener in the January issue..... planting a hedge is a very eco-friendly thing to do. BUT if you plant a hedge containing yew next door to a field with grazing animals in it, then you may well be in trouble. Yew is poisonous and what is worse, animals like to eat it! Keep yew strictly for places where grazing animals can't access it - the berries are poisonous for children too.

Otherwise, great articles.

Mary Niblett

I have checked this in our gardening books and they seem to agree that animals only eat yew when they are starving. Perhaps readers have direct experience that would clarify this point? GL

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Training / Administration
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Help for English-speaking people with administrative issues such as tax, health, benefits, insurance, etc. plus advice on finding a job.
The scheme is run in association with the local employment offices and is partly funded by the European Union. It is run on a group basis with ten people attending 12 three-hour sessions together. The various topics will be covered by an English-speaking trainer and by invited officials from the relevant departments.
The course will be conducted in English.
Contact Anne-Sophie Oudin: Tel 02 96 29 26 44
Cost per person 96.50€ (for the course plus two individual meetings with the trainer).

18 Traditional Breton Story

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:

How a Shepherd Boy Won the King's Daughter

Once upon a time there lived a king who claimed that he had never told a lie. All day long he heard his courtiers saying "that is not true – you're a liar" and he grew very displeased. One day he called them to him.

"You surprise and displease me," he said. "Any stranger who overheard you would think I ruled over the kingdom of liars. This must cease. You never hear me say 'that is not true' or 'you are a liar': if anyone did I would give him my daughter's hand in marriage."

A young shepherd heard the King's words and said to himself: "Very well, I will wed the king's daughter, if he is a man of his word!"

The old King liked to listen to stories and hear gwerziou and soniou (ballads and songs) being sung; very often after supper he would sit down at the great fireplace in the kitchen and enjoy the songs and tales told by his servants.

"What about you, little one, have you nothing for us?" said the King to the shepherd boy one evening.

"Oh yes, your majesty," said the shepherd boy.

"Let us hear it then," said the King.

"Well, one day I was out walking in the forest when I saw a fine hare," said the shepherd boy. "It ran in front of me and I threw a ball of soot at its forehead. The soot stuck to it but it didn't stop. Soon it ran straight into another hare. The ball of soot stuck their foreheads together, so they could not free themselves and I caught them with the greatest ease. What do you think of that, your Majesty?"

"Strange, but not impossible," said the King. "Have you anything else for us?"

"Before I came to your court, Sire, I worked for my father, the miller. One day I loaded my donkey so heavily that it broke his spine."

"The poor animal!" cried the King. "I went to a nearby hedge and cut myself a hazel stick. I put it in his back in place of



8.L.

Traditional Breton Story 19

a spine, and he leapt up and carried his load to the mill."

"That is very strange," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"The next morning – and it was the month of December – I was surprised to see that branches, leaves and even hazelnuts had grown on the stick left poking out, and when I took my donkey out of the stable the branches kept on growing so fast, and so, so high, that they soon touched the sky.

"That is strange indeed," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"Goodness, when I saw that, I began to climb the branches and soon reached the moon."

"That is strange indeed," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"When I reached the moon I saw some old women winnowing oats and I watched them for a long while, when I wanted to go back to earth I found that my donkey had walked away, and the hazel stick was gone. What was I to do? I started knotting together the oat husks and before long I had a fine rope."

"Very strange," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"Alas, my rope was too short and I had to let go. I fell head first and landed on a rock sticking up out of the ground. I sank down into it up to my shoulders."

"Very strange," said the King, "what happened next?"

"I managed to wrench all but my head free, so I ran off to find an iron lever to prise it out."

"Very, very strange," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"When I got back with the lever I found that a wolf was eating my head. I gave it such a heavy blow that I squashed it flat and out shot a letter."

"Very, very, very strange," said the King, "but what happened next?"

"In this letter, your Majesty, it was written that your grandfather had once worked for my grandfather, the miller."

"You lie through your teeth, son of a dog!" cried the King, and sprang to his feet.

"Look out, your Majesty, I have won your daughter's hand," said the shepherd boy.

"What do you mean?" asked the King.

"Have you forgotten that you promised to give your daughter to the man who caught you saying 'You are a liar'?"

"Very true, and the King must not break his word. I will give you my daughter; you shall be betrothed today and married in a week."

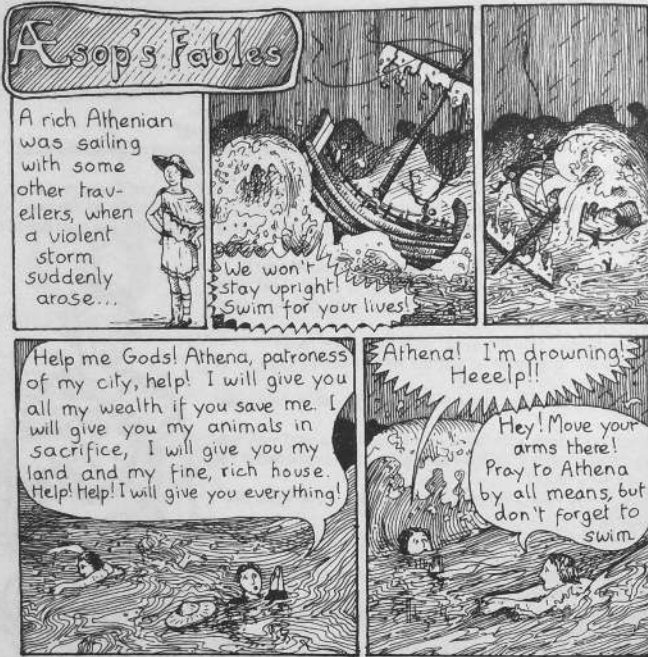
And this is how it was that a shepherd boy won the King's daughter.



BRETON PROVERB

Gand dillad tomm ha bevans mad
Pep miz goanv zo deread.

When one has warm clothes and good food
Winter months are bearable.



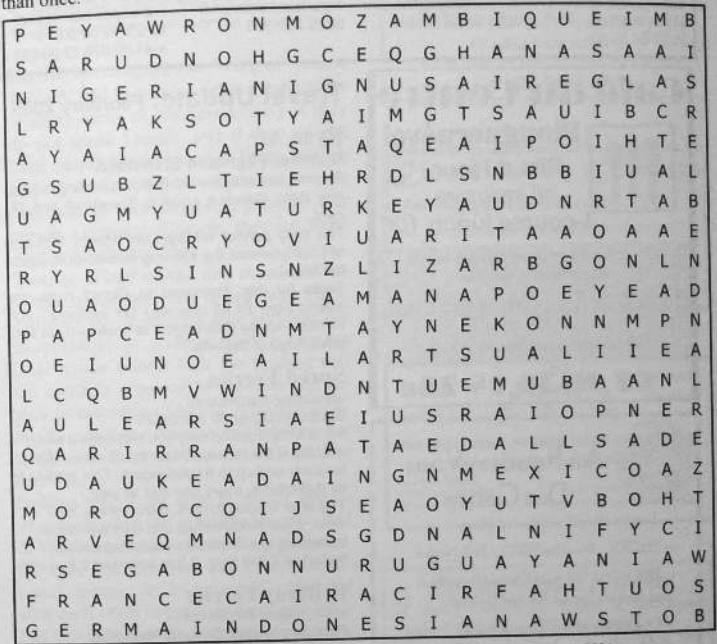
CBJ Quiz

- 1 What was the name of the Celtic tribe which inhabited Central Brittany before the Romans?
- 2 What is the French for an embankment?
- 3 What are the great stone 'tables' called?
- 4 In what town was the first *LeClerc* shop started?
- 5 What is the name for the Breton musical pipe?
- 6 Two languages used to be spoken in Brittany; what were they?
- 7 Which animal is the emblem of Brittany?
- 8 Which town is the capital of Morbihan?
- 9 What is the department number of Côtes d'Armor?
- 10 Which is the least populated department of Brittany?
- 11 What is the large island which lies off Quiberon, in Morbihan?
- 12 Which explorer was the first to navigate the St. Lawrence river in Canada?
- 13 Where was he born, and from what port did he set sail?
- 14 Brittany makes up what per cent of the total French landmass?
- 15 How many different sorts of oak will one find naturally growing in Brittany?

Solution page 33

Word search-68 Countries to be found.

Words can run forwards, backwards, up, down, and diagonally. Letters can be used more than once.



- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|----------------|
| ALGERIA | ETHIOPIA | KENYA | RUSSIA |
| ARGENTINA | FINLAND | LIBYA | SAUDI ARABIA |
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Holidays & Travel

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Travel Update: February 2005

Ryan Air
Summer Flights to Stanstead
Ryanair has announced that it is adding a summer flight between London Stanstead and Dinard.
The daily service will start on March 18th and will complement the existing service from Luton to Dinard.
Seats for this Stanstead to Dinard route are selling from £4.99 one way tax excluded, and Ryanair advise passengers to book early to take advantage of this offer.

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For a limited period only you can book a one way ticket Boulogne / Dover for 38 euros (£25), for a car and up to 6 passengers. This applies to all departures, every day and all year.
The offer is open to cars, motorcycles, mini vans, small motorhomes and cars with small trailers up to a maximum (including car with trailer) of 7,0 m long, 2,0 m wide and 2,9 m high.

Brittany Ferries
www.brittany-ferries.com
February ferries Roscoff/Plymouth:
Sat. 5, 12, 19, 26 at 10.30 p.m.
Thurs. 24, Sun. 27, Mon. 28 at 10.30 p.m.
Daily service restarts in March.
February ferries Plymouth/Roscoff:
Fri. 4, 11, 18, 25 at 11 p.m.
Thurs. 24 at 12 noon
Sun 27, 28 at 12 noon

Au Rendezvous des Celtes
Plussulien
Simon and Annie Hayes, both chefs for the past 15 years, have run the Rendezvous des Celtes in the centre of Plussulien, for the past 2 years. Their menu is a mixture of French and English dishes, and as well as roast beef and gourmet fish and chips, they have a full à la carte menu

Restaurants:
La Renaissance Callac
La Renaissance is a popular bar and restaurant near the lights on the rue des Portes in Callac. The restaurant is at the rear of the building and specialises in pizzas prepared and cooked on the premises using organic products wherever possible. 02 96 45 94 61 (closed part of Feb)

Promoting Tourism in Central Brittany

An offer to help in promoting the area to visitors.

English-speaking people living in Central Brittany find themselves at a disadvantage in many areas of life, particularly if they do not speak French, and if they do not have qualifications awarded by the French authorities. In the field of tourism, and in particular in their ability to promote this area as a tourist destination, they are, however, uniquely qualified.

Tourism is one of the few economic activities of the area that is self-supporting, and does not depend on state subsidy, but its potential is under-exploited because local tourist boards lack the funding and the contacts required to promote the region to discerning tourists, who are looking for a holiday destination that does not involve commercial hotels and packed beaches.

Perhaps this is an area in which people who have taken the initiative to open Bed & Breakfasts, hotels, campsites, gîtes, restaurants, golf courses, and other tourist-based leisure facilities could cooperate with each other to produce their own English-language material for promoting the area. This is an area with which I, as the editor of the Journal, would be interested to help. GL

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A Year in Brittany

WEBB'S OF GLOMEL

It is just over a year ago that we moved into our 'maison' in central Glomel, which we bought through Alioth Properties. The house was totally empty, it had no toilets, no water except for one tap in the kitchen, some very dubious electrics, and 1970s' wallpaper everywhere.

The goal - turn this 9-roomed house into a B&B in 4 months. We had planned this operation since putting in our offer on the house, and booked ourselves into B&B at bar Bonen for the first two weeks. Alioth properties did us proud by organising "Patrick" (Proxi serve) 'the plumber'; and John (from bar Bonen) introduced us to Chris Clark (CJ Electrics). Prices and dates for completion were agreed: they both balked at our tall order that we wanted to be in business by Easter.

Everyone said that the timescale was too short, and bets should have been taken, for we were open and had our first customers through the door on April the 22nd, just after Easter: shower rooms had been built; all the rooms were 'en suite' wired and plumbed, and the services duly boxed in; and the whole building washed, painted & decorated both inside and out.

An oversimplification? Yes, many problems were encountered but our attitude to life is 'there are no problems in life, only solutions'. For the first four months that we were here we worked seven days a week, 10 hours a day and only went out to buy materials and food. After the first two weeks we camped in our house and as the rooms became available moved into them to enable continuous development.

We have been surprised at the different nationalities that have stayed with us: apart from people from all over England, we have had guests from Ireland, Scotland, Japan, Canada, America, Russia and Sweden as well as from many areas of France. Many local people have also called in and, without exception, have all loved the way that this former 'sportif and clarinets' office has been converted into what it is now.

Mid-August came and trade died, the weather was awful (it rained every day in August).



We had arranged for a new roof with Olivier Gautier: on the 1st of September the sun came out and so did the roofer. He put up all his ladders and fenced off the front of the house - and that shut us down for a month. During this time we concentrated our time on converting the garages into a flat and laundry room, and the 'longère' into a games room.

The flat is now rented out - and the games room? Well, almost there!

There is still much to do, the loft is still waiting to be converted into our apartment, the longère and the former garages have to be re-roofed and the garden has to be further modified / organised to suit our needs.

Our French is coming on slowly and is probably the hardest thing that we have done, but we are getting there, and the letters and forms are not so baffling as they were, although we still have to have help with translation.

We have been made to feel most welcome by the local population and have made many new friends, both French and English. We now have quite a social life; we have taken a horse on loan to go with the three dogs, seven chickens and cat; so, what with the business, it should be a busy and exciting 2005.

Happy Days! Cliff and Mary-Ellen Webb
Contact Cliff and Mary-Ellen on 02 96 29 88 44
cliff.webb@wanadoo.fr

Please send contributions for this page to
info@thebj.com or call 02 96 21 52 21

What's On

Book and Boot Sale

Camoët
Sun 6th February
Free tables, hot food
In the centre of the village at 'Caroliannes'.
11 am to 3 pm 02 96 21 60 05

Nearly-new Clothes Swap

Gouarec
Thurs 10th February 2.30 pm-5.30 pm
AIKB are organizing a bring & buy clothes swap at the Pavillon de Rohan. Everyone welcome. Call Lorna for more details.
02 96 26 31 14

Used Book Bargain Sale

Ty Pikouz, Saint Nicodème
Sun 13th February 10.00 am-1.00 pm
Book sale plus live music, cosmetic demonstration and Sunday lunch.
02 96 45 79 11

Fez Noz

Salle Polyvalente de Plélauff
Wed 16th February 8.00 pm
Breton dancing with the association Danerien Bro Pellan. Entry free.
More info: aikb@wanadoo.fr

Organising an event? Let us know and we will include it in the What's On column:
02 96 21 52 21 info@thebj.com

Spring Fayre

25th March Les Halles Carhaix

Following the success of the Christmas Market, Central Brittany Journal is organising a Spring Fayre on Good Friday, 25th March 2005. Suggestions made so far include:

- Gardening stalls in the cobbled area in front of the hall
- Food stalls including traditional Easter cakes, biscuits and chocolates
- A 'starting a business' area in the hall with stands offering advice and help with starting a business in Central Brittany
- A café
- Irish music & dancing
- Art Exhibition & Books

If you are interested in having a stall or would like to help in organising the event, please contact us on 02 96 21 52 21 cbj222956@aol.com

Jardin Tropical Café
Bar Brasserie
Private Functions
Terrace overlooking the Lake
1, rue du Lac - Huelgoat 02 98 99 78 19

La Fourmi Rouge (The Red Ant)
Bar Terrace
Breton Beer
20 rue Portz-en-Haie Le Fauoët

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02 98 93 07 50

Tim the Gardener Voles

Even though voles are amongst the most commonly-occurring mammals of Northern Europe, surprisingly little is known about them. However, most Breton gardeners are of the opinion that damage caused by voles in local gardens is more extensive than that caused by any other animal, including rabbits, deer or birds.

Vole Damage

Voles attack plants from underneath, eating away the roots and leaving the tops intact. Root vegetables such as carrots, parsnips, and celeriac are particularly vulnerable, with the whole of the inside of the vegetable being eaten away and just the outer skin left in the ground. Bulbs, such as tulips, are another favourite amongst voles, and they will also eat the roots of mature spinach, parsley, and beet plants in the autumn. One of the annoying things about voles is that they decimate a crop just when it is mature and ready for picking - after you have nursed it through other hazards such as attack by slugs, frost, drought and bird damage.

What do we know about Voles?

Voles are generally divided into four main species - the bank vole, the common vole, the field vole and the water vole. Water voles are the largest, being about 30 cm from tip to tail, while the others reach about



The field vole, also known as the field mouse or the grass mouse, is called a 'mulot' or a 'campagnol' in French.

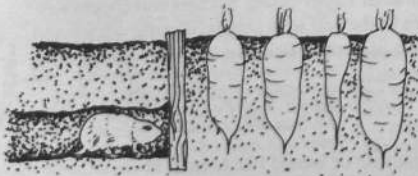
14 cm. It is the field vole which is believed to be responsible for damage in Breton gardens. It lives underground and is rarely seen, but even so may be present in large numbers in any medium-sized garden. Voles breed prolifically and their population levels are believed to go up and down in four year cycles (in a similar way to their close relative, the lemming) - which can be a source of false hope to gardeners who one year believe their vole problem to have been solved only to have voles return in huge numbers a couple of years later.

Controlling the Problem

Natural Predators: Owls, snakes, weasels, kestrels, harriers and foxes are amongst the natural predators of the vole. Unfortunately, they do not seem to have much effect on overall numbers.

Cats: Some gardeners believe that a good 'mouser' is able to clear a garden of voles: in practice you would probably need a few cats living wild in and around the garden for them to be effective. (Cats themselves are regarded by many as a garden pest. If you have a lot of cats you then have to protect seeds and seedlings with netting to prevent them from being scratched up.)

Poison: The amount of poison sold in local shops would suggest that this is the favoured method of control amongst local gardeners.



Physical barriers provide an effective means of protecting plants from vole attack.

However, large quantities of poison spread around the garden will have an effect not only the voles, but also on the creatures living in the soil, on wildlife and possibly on anyone who eats the produce from the garden.

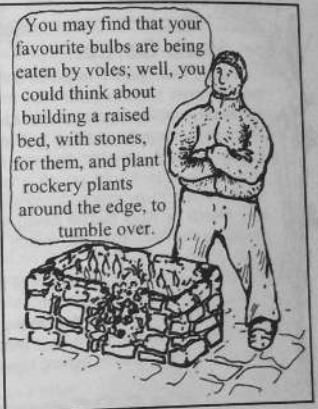
Digging and Rotovating: Deep digging and rotovating destroys the tunnels used by voles and makes it more difficult for them to get round the garden. The disadvantage of this method of control is that it involves disturbing the soil every year, making it impossible to improve soil fertility.

Physical Barriers: Voles usually travel in tunnels just a few inches below the surface of the soil. Thus any barrier that goes down nine to twelve inches can be very effective at keeping them out of selected areas. Vegetable beds can be surrounded by breeze blocks or planks of wood sunk into the ground, and bulbs can be grown in raised beds or in stone troughs.

Physical barriers involve more work than other solutions but they have the advantage of allowing you to continue growing root crops and bulbs without compromising any of the basic principles of good gardening.

Vegetables: Radishes

An early sowing of radishes can be made in February, particularly in a poly-tunnel, or in a sheltered spot. Radishes provide a very welcome crop in late Spring when there is not much else that can be picked from the garden.



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Herb Garden

A good herb garden requires very little work, yet it is the area which makes the gardener most popular with the cook. Herbs that do well in Brittany include coriander, parsley, thyme, sage, marjoram, oregano, basil and rosemary. The main reason for starting to think about the herb garden at this time of year is that it needs to be sited as near to the kitchen door as possible. If necessary, now is the time to dig up an area of lawn, clear an area of weeds, or move shrubs that occupy space designated for herbs (herbaceous plants should be left until March or April before being moved). Use wood, stones or paving slabs to delineate the herb area and mulch it so that it is ready for planting in a few weeks time.

Alternatively, make a collection of pots and window boxes, for growing herbs on a patio, terrace or window sills.

Herb seeds can be started off in a propagator towards the end of February, but if you are sowing them on a window sill or in a greenhouse it is probably best to wait until March, before sowing.

Potatoes

February is the best time to buy seed potatoes. Potatoes bought now can be laid out in trays on a frost-free window sill where they will sprout ready for planting later in the Spring.

Ready-sprouted potatoes can be bought at planting time but, naturally, they are more expensive.

When buying potatoes, consult the shop staff as to which variety is likely to be most suitable for your particular requirements.

Sirtema: A highly-recommended variety of early potato.

Désirée: A red, main crop, potato. It is not always available, possibly because it is not

particularly high-yielding, but it produces a reliable, tasty crop which stores exceptionally well.

Bintje: The most popular variety of the area. High yielding, versatile in cooking and stores well.

Charlotte and Rosabelle: Other popular main crop potatoes, preferred to bintje by some local gardeners for their taste.

Samba: A very high yielding variety that preserves well. Growing in popularity.

Belle de Fontenay: This is one of the most highly prized potatoes amongst cooks, scoring highly for its taste and its ease of cooking.

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Ann heol d'he liv, ann dour d'he flaz,
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The sun recovers its brightness, the water its taste,
And the verge becomes green again.

Primrose *French: Primevère Breton: Bokeol Laezh*

There are few flowers as lovely as the primrose, and none lovelier. In sheltered positions it can start blooming as early as December, and continue well into the summer months, but is seen at its finest in March and April, when the plant is so covered with flowers that it can resemble a great heap of pale yellow.

Anyone who has looked at primroses closely, will have noticed that there are two distinct sorts; one 'pin', and the other 'thrum' eyed. The two sorts are identical, except that in the case of thrum-eyed primroses the anthers – the so-called male part of the flower, which produces the pollen—are in the centre of the flower, at the mouth, and the stigma – the female part, which needs the pollen to make the seed – is further down the central tube. On pin-eyed flowers the positions are reversed, the stigma being at the mouth and the anthers further down. Never are both sorts found on the same plant.

The reason for this seemingly complex arrangement has been explained as follows; on both sorts the nectar is kept at the bottom of the central tube, beneath anthers and stigma, and the bee, when collecting it from the flower will have to stick its proboscis deep down; on thrum-eyed flowers, where the anthers are at the top, it will get its head covered in the pollen, and when it flies to a plant bearing pin-eyed flowers this pollen will be rubbed off on the stigma; however the anthers half way down the tube rub off pollen onto the bee's proboscis, which is then transferred to the stigma, in the same place, on the thrum-eyed flowers.

PLANTING PRIMROSES

Primroses are so beautiful that they definitely deserve a place in one's garden; transplanting a clump of primroses is not too difficult, but the operation does require care; they will thrive best in a moist and shaded area, and will need watering during dry spells for the first few years. Horticulturists have been very ingenious in breeding primroses, and there is a vast selection of *primulas* of every colour and type which can be bought, yet the common primrose still remains the favourite, and it is true that the pale yellow of the blooms, coupled with the bright, green leaves, is a combination which cannot be improved upon.



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Roe Deer

French: Chevreuil *Breton:* Yourc'h

There are few animals more exciting to see than a deer, and when the weather is cold they can often be glimpsed as they roam across the countryside in search of food. If you go for a walk over the fields you are almost guaranteed to see one, especially if you walk through wild areas where brambles grow. The roe deer's natural habitat was once woodland, but they have adapted well to the farmed land which has replaced it. They eat the cereal crops which grow in the fields, and graze on the grass. They go out in search of food in the early morning and late evening, and the rest of the time remain well hidden. It has been noticed that if they are regularly scared away, they will come out to eat only after it is dark, when no one is awake to disturb them. Even when you don't see a deer, you can often find their traces. Their footprints are very distinctive and can easily be seen in ploughed fields. You can also detect the presence of deer by their gnawing teeth marks on the trunks of young trees. This habit can make them a nuisance to gardeners, but a tree can easily be protected by putting a roll of chicken wire round the base.



Deer hoofprint

In Brittany deer were once hunted nearly to extinction. It was only when deer-hunting restrictions were enforced that the numbers recovered, and they have now returned in force. Their biggest threat today is probably the destruction of the bramble thickets which they live in, so if you own a wild field you can always leave it for the deer.



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