

Central Brittany

Issue 9

March 2005

Journal

1€

The Natural Treasures of Brittany

As the days get longer, the countryside once again bursts into life

page 8

Spring Fair

Les Halles

Carhaix

Books, Gardening, Food,
Living in France, Crafts,
Refreshments

page 21



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2 Recipe

Hummus

It is hard to find ready-made hummus in this area, but it is easy to make your own, and it tastes delicious.

Ingredients:
 1 14 oz (400 g) can chickpeas
 2 medium garlic cloves, chopped
 Juice of one lemon
 3 tablespoons tahini (sesame paste)*
 4 tablespoons olive oil
 ¼ teaspoon black pepper
 Salt
 4 fl oz (125 ml) water
 ¼ teaspoon paprika

Method:

1. Drain the chickpeas and mash until they are fairly smooth.
2. Add the garlic, lemon juice, tahini, oil, and seasoning.
3. Blend in a blender or food processor and add enough water to make a smooth paste.
4. Spoon into a serving dish. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with paprika, and serve.

*available from Bio-coops, maisons diététiques, etc.



Teashop Review Loudéac Teashop



The teashop is opposite the church, in the Place de l'Église in Loudéac. It has an unusually large selection of cakes, and a good range of chocolates and pâtes de fruit (fruit jellies) including chocolate mushrooms, a spécialité de la maison. Bread, pizzas, and Breton specialities are also for sale. The owner is very helpful, and the good-sized tearoom can seat quite a few people.



Chocolate mushrooms are a speciality of the teashop in Loudéac

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Central Brittany Journal

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Editorial

Planning is now well advanced for the Spring Fair that we are organising at Les Halles in Carhaix. People who came to our Christmas market may have been aware that I took on a little too much that day, being responsible for the washing up in the café as well as being in charge of the event as a whole. This time, in theory at least, I should have nothing to do on the day, and will be available to talk to anyone who has comments or suggestions for the Journal (more info page 21).

Contributions to the Journal are always welcome. We are particularly grateful for items about local events, local initiatives, and about traditions that are specific to Central Brittany.

At the time of going to press there has been another flurry of interest in the phenomenon of British people moving to Central Brittany. I would say that the success of this Journal is proof that newcomers (not just from Britain, from all over Europe, including other parts of France) are, in general, warmly welcomed and that the contribution that they make to revitalising the local economy is both recognised and appreciated by everyone who wants this area to prosper in the modern world.

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4 News and Services

FrenchEntree-Brittany.com

The website Go-Brittany has joined forces with FrenchEntree.com to become FrenchEntree-Brittany.com.

Caroline Bell, who started the Go-Brittany site last year, decided to make the move and become a franchisee of the FrenchEntree site because the founders of FrenchEntree have expertise in gaining high rankings in the search engine listings. Caroline believes that this will make FrenchEntree-brittany.com more successful in its core businesses of advertising houses for sale and advertising holiday properties, and has already noticed a large increase in traffic through the site.

She is keen, however, for the site to retain its community appeal; it has a forum with 400 members, information about life in Brittany and local towns.

www.frenchentree-brittany.com

Plans & Planning Permission

Mike McCoy is an experienced draughtsman who has been living and working in Central Brittany for 15 years. Over the course of that time he has retrained to get a French qualification, and has worked in a local architect's office. As a result, he has a detailed knowledge of local planning procedures, which he is now making available through his company, 'The Real McCoy'. He specialises in drawing up plans and structural drawings for conversions, extensions, and renovations, but is able to advise on building jobs of any size.

More info 02 96 43 44 23

Hand-Made Furniture

Have you always dreamed of a hand-made piece of kitchen furniture? Andy Jagers designs and builds kitchen furniture, built-in wardrobes, etc. to customer requirements.

He specialises in the use of reclaimed wood in furniture making, and would be interested to hear from anyone who has a supply of reclaimed timber that is in good condition.

More info 02 98 93 47 31

Erratum Boot Sale

Carnoët

The correct phone number for the Carnoët boot and book sale is 02 96 21 54 62. The next sale is on the 6th March from 10-3 at Carolann's in the centre of the village.

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News and Services 5

Underfloor Heating

Paul Bridgen of TLC services is able to offer specialist help and advice with underfloor heating installations. He says that underfloor heating is expensive to install in houses that already have solid floors, but that it is an attractive option when included in the renovation of properties that still have earth floors. TLC services, a newly-registered company, specialises in plumbing, but also offers a full range of property services, including key-holding, etc.

Spanish Property Owner?

Following the success of their website for French holiday properties, Frenchaccommodation.co.uk, John and Shirley Ledlie have launched a sister site for Spanish holiday properties:

www.spanishaccommodation.biz

What's New on the CBJ Website

New features since last month on the CBJ website include pages for Pontivy, Quimper and Rostrenen, the story of Ys, and last month's article on Breton independence.

If you are interested in getting more information about the businesses that advertise in the journal, many of them have pages on the website. Businesses that have been added to the site over the past few weeks include the Killed Gardener, a landscaping company based in the Callac area; the Stradana Stud, and Ray Herrington's garden maintenance and tractor work business, both based in Huelgoat; Jean Oberli, wine merchant and Deuxième Debut, Chris Mugleston's second hand shop, in Rostrenen.

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6 News and Services

Oil-Fired Boilers Serviced

Sean Hendicott has set up a plumbing business in Finistère, specialising in oil-fired boilers. He is a fully-qualified oil boiler technician and installs, services and repairs any make of either French or English oil-fired boiler. He will travel anywhere in Central Brittany and a basic service costs 90.00 euros plus any necessary parts, plus vat. He will also carry out any plumbing, from bathrooms to central heating.

For a free quote or further information call Sean or Karen on 02 98 93 55 89

Pool Hall in Bourbriac

If you fancy a game of pool in a pub atmosphere, with home-cooked food, then La Petite Cave in Bourbriac is the place for you. Franck Viscart, a charming and fluent English speaker, has completely refurbished the bar and restaurant, installing 4 pool tables in the building next to the bar, and one inside the restaurant. There are also regular competition nights, with cash prizes. He has a multinational clientele, and a wide selection of guest beers. Food is always available. Open Thursday - Tuesday from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. and until 1 a.m. on weekends.

Bricomarché

Carhaix
Bricomarché in Carhaix has changed hands and is being given a total makeover and refurbishment by the new owners, Philippe Gautier and his wife Christell.

Changes involve a complete restocking of the store and the return of most of the garden materials, including lawnmowers etc., to the main store.

Jardimarché, over the road, will continue to have a complete range of garden materials but will specialise in flowers and pet supplies.

Philippe says that Bricomarché in Carhaix will retain its identity - value for money on a tried and tested range of products - and that the main change that he plans to introduce is improved customer service and technical support.

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News and Services 7

Tea Shop & Internet Café

Guémené sur Scorff

Sian Powell has run the warm and welcoming tea shop and Internet café on the main street in Guémené sur Scorff for the past 3 years. As well as teas, cakes and sandwiches, she sells greetings cards and gifts. In the summer months there is a sunny courtyard at the back of the shop where customers can browse through books whilst sipping their tea.

Open Tues. - Fri. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Internet rates (broadband) 2 euros for ½ hour.

Celtic Bar

Clédén-Poher

The Celtic bar in Clédén Poher (10 mins from both Carhaix and Huelgoat) is having a grand reopening on Saint Patrick's day, Thursday, March 17th at 7 p.m.

Run as a French bar for several years, Adrian, the original owner, took it over last December and redecorated and refurbished it, with a view to welcoming all Celts (and everyone else!) wherever they be, around Brittany. Free buffet.

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Henry VIII

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The Natural Treasures of Brittany

The Breton Path

Ar Wenojenn

The picture on the cover shows an old pathway in the commune of Duault, near Callac. It is typical of the network of tracks that once crisscrossed the Breton countryside, linking every town and hamlet with each other.

In recent times, these pathways have suffered severe depredations: many have been paved over to make roads, and others have fallen into disuse as people have ceased to walk from place to place. It has become common practice for farmers to flatten paths that have become overgrown with brambles and shrubs in order to amalgamate them into neighbouring fields.

All this is a great shame because these paths represent a rich natural heritage, carefully preserved and passed down to us by the people who have lived in Brittany over previous centuries. No one knows exactly how old these paths are, but they have probably followed the same course for hundreds, and probably thousands of years. They are invariably lined with trees such as yew, beech and oak, which are themselves centuries old and which in all probability are growing on the site of similar trees that have grown in the same spot since time immemorial.

The pathways that remain still provide the best way of seeing the Breton countryside; in summer, the overhanging trees give shelter from the rays of the sun and, in winter, their high banks provide protection from the wind, making them pleasant places to walk on even the wildest days.

Because they have been undisturbed for so many years, the paths now contain an incredible wealth of mosses, lichens and wild flowers, and all the insect life that accompanies them. This makes them an ideal habitat for birds. Thus the pathways still fulfil many functions: wildlife reserves, havens of tranquility, and a route for getting from one place to another.

Trees

Central Brittany has a climate particularly well suited to the broad-leaved trees that are native to Northern Europe: its westerly location ensures that it receives more rain than almost any other part of the mainland, but it is warmer than areas such as Cornwall, Wales and Ireland. Although significantly colder than the coastal areas, Central Brittany has many dips and valleys which provide shelter from the autumn and winter winds which often devastate tree plantations by the coast. These factors have combined to make it one of the greenest and most verdant regions of Europe.

Preserving Breton Paths

Small sections of Breton paths have survived in all sorts of unexpected places, even though they are often overgrown, and you can walk past them every day without noticing them. For example, in places where the original path was particularly boggy, or narrow, the road may have been built beside it rather than through it; or part of a path may have survived between two fields, or alongside a wood. It is possible to get preservation orders on these stretches, but a more practical way to preserve them is to use them. The paths are marked on the detailed maps of the commune which are held in the mairie, and they are, technically, commune land. Consequently, commune residents are at liberty to clear them of weeds, prune overhanging branches, replant gaps, and to use them as much as they like.

Trees in Flower

Breton Trees. Illustrations by Wendy and Samuel Lewis. Watercolour and crayon.



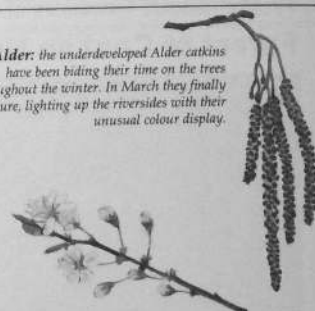
Elm: There are few mature elm trees left in the area, but trees under twenty years old still abound and in March they are covered in a mass of feathery flowers.



Pussy Willow: Pussy willows are the most best known heralds of early spring: at first the downy 'pussy' catkins appear, which develop into the mature female catkins, then the male trees come out, brightening up the hedgerows with their brilliant yellow.



Crack Willow: Crack willow is common in Central Brittany. Despite its name, the branches are extremely flexible and provide excellent material for basket making.



Alder: the underdeveloped Alder catkins have been biding their time on the trees throughout the winter. In March they finally mature, lighting up the riversides with their unusual colour display.

Blackthorn: Blackthorn is the first blossom to come out in the Spring. A wild relative of the plum, it has exquisite white flowers recognizable as those of a fruit tree.



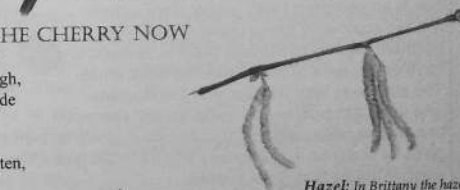
LOVELIEST OF TREES, THE CHERRY NOW

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Now, of my threescore years and ten,
Twenty will not come again,
And take from seventy springs a score,
It only leaves me fifty more.

And since to look at things in bloom
Fifty springs are little room,
About the woodlands I will go
To see the cherry hung with snow.

A. E. Housman



Hazel: In Brittany the hazel catkins are starting to fade by the time March comes round, giving an indication of how much milder the climate is here than in the United Kingdom.



Wild Cherry: For a short time in March, wild cherries burst into breathtaking blossom; the most spectacular flower show of all our native trees.

Forest of Coat an Noz / Coat an Hay



The forest of Coat An Noz is a wood of some 795 hectares, between Plougonver and Belle-Isle-en-Terre. The Romans are said to have planted a plantation of box trees here 2000 years ago and traces of this can still be seen today, in the abundance of box trees throughout the wood. Besides box, there are oaks, silver birch, beech and yew trees, and certain parts of the forest are now a pine plantation.

On the D787, between Callac and Guingamp, turn left on the D336 for Plougonver and Belle-Isle-en-Terre; keep going through Plougonver (direction Belle-Isle-en-Terre), and after about 2 miles you will come into the forest. Look out for the parking area at the turning for the Château of Coat An Noz: there is a path just over the road, but this leads through pines, so the best opportunities for seeing the beauties of a Breton forest tend to be off the path. On the other side of the road, there is a Château, several forest walks, and picnic tables.

Growing a Box Hedge from Cuttings

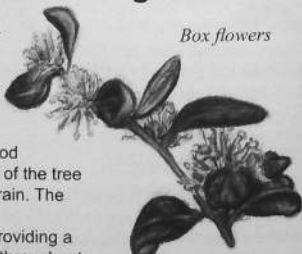
French: **Buis** Breton: **Beuzenn**

Box is an evergreen with glossy, thick leaves.

It is not commonly found growing wild in the Northern regions of Europe, but it is believed to have grown here at least since Neolithic times.

The plant was very popular with the Romans who used it in topiary and hedging, and box wood has always been highly prized; the slow growth of the tree gives its wood an exceptionally fine and hard grain. The wood is dense and sinks in water.

It is as a hedging plant that box really excels, providing a thick, low maintenance hedge that stays green throughout the year. Since the seeds do not often mature in colder climates, cuttings may be taken in the Spring or Autumn; these can be about three inches long and should be snapped off by hand. The bottom half should be stripped of leaves and then buried in soil. By the next year the cuttings should have sufficient roots to be planted out into their final position, and from then on the tops need to be trimmed regularly. It will be quite a few years before they form a first-rate box hedge, but once they do it will be a hedge that lasts for hundreds of years, and also one that will require



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Breton Folk

The following extract is taken from *Breton Folk, An Artistic Tour in Brittany*, by Henry Blackburn with illustrations by Randolph Caldecott. It was first published in 1880.

Chapter V
Carhaix - Huelgoat

Thus far we have spoken of the northern coast, where the busy inhabitants of the Côtes-du-Nord come most in contact with French traders, and travellers of different nations. Let us now turn towards the mountains, where the country is less fertile, the people more isolated, and there is more character and local costume to be seen.

If we leave the Western Railway at Guingamp or Belle-Isle-en-Terre, we may follow the course of the streams which take their rise in the Monts d'Arée, and passing through Callac, reach Carhaix the same evening. We cross the purple mountains where the solitary shepherd in goat's-skin coat tends his flocks on poor pastures, and where the almost equally solitary, Englishman is busy with a fly-rod. At Callac, where comfortable quarters are to be obtained, many Englishmen stay for the fishing and shooting seasons; the streams are well stocked with fish, and there is little difficulty in getting permission for fishing. The game laws are very strict in France; the opening and closing of the shooting

season varies every year, the prefect deciding the day in September when shooting may begin. The *chasse courante*, which includes hunting the wolf and wild-boar, commences about a month later. Altogether there is more attraction for the angler than for the sportsman in Brittany, and there is no better centre for the angler than Callac.

We descend the hills from Callac, following the course of the river Aven to Carhaix, the ancient capital of the province and the centre of a large agricultural district, owing its present importance to its cattle fairs. At ordinary times life is peaceful enough at Carhaix; in the principle square is the Hôtel de la Tour d'Auvergne, where visitors can live as comfortably as in any country town in France, and where the days resemble one another very closely. Every afternoon the people sit and sun themselves in the principal square, as in the sketch below, and pigs lie down undisturbed in the middle



A French translation with - original illustrations - of *Breton Folk - Gens de Bretagne au XIX^e siècle* - is available from Coop Breizh 29540 Spézet. Published in 1994 by Keltia Graphic ISBN 2906992217 18 €

www.thebj.com



of the street; every evening the inhabitants walk under the trees on the dingy Place, with its avenues of limes, where there is a fine view of the country, and where is Marochetti's bronze statue of La Tour d'Auvergne, "le premier grenadier de France".

Between two and three o'clock in the afternoon there is the only communication with the outer world, when, with much cracking of whips and rattling over stones, a crazy vehicle called "the courier", with its lame and battered horse, covered with dust and foam, comes lumbering in. It brings a packet of newspapers, chiefly local; for Carhaix cares little for the doings of the world beyond that of which it is the centre. But we must now speak of the fair.

Six roads converge upon Carhaix, and upon these roads, and across the open land, on a summer's morning, comes a stream of horses, cattle, pigs, and people. It is the day of the cattle fair, a day for meeting and marketing for all the country round; a day of rejoicing, bargaining, and a day of cruelty to animals scarcely to be paralleled elsewhere.

It is only four in the morning, but the sounds of shouting, the lowing of cattle, the shrieking of pigs, and the heavy thud of sabots resound upon the roads. On the rising ground just outside Carhaix, on the western road, we can see them through an avenue of trees coming across the country in narrow defile, like an army on the march; the men leading the cattle, the women on horseback and on foot, laden with provisions; and others in holiday attire, arriving in country carts.

The sun shines full on the wrinkled faces of the men, and on the white caps of the women, and lights up the group with unwonted brilliancy; even the sober costumes of the people with their blue and brown stuffs, and the black, and white and fawn-coloured, cattle which they lead, would, if recorded faithfully by a painter, stand out in high accents of colour against the low-toned land. It is the sunny side of Brittany in all its quaintness, the pastoral aspect of life which those who dwell in cities seldom see. There is nothing to mar the beauty of the morning, for the noise of the market is as yet a distant

Breton Folk continued on page 26

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The Secret Garden in Cross Stitch Thea Gouverneur



If you are looking for beautiful cross stitch patterns, you are sure to be delighted with this book by Thea Gouverneur. Inspired by her garden, Thea has made flowers and fruits the subject of her designs, and roses, daffodils, honeysuckle, apple blossom, tulips and poppies are all included in these highly detailed patterns.

Thea Gouverneur's love of nature shows throughout the book; it is lavishly illustrated with photographs of gardens and Thea accompanies the 21 floral designs with recollections of her house and garden in the Netherlands where she grew up.

Although there are detailed instructions for beginners on how to cross stitch, these patterns are quite complicated and are probably best attempted by those with some previous experience in cross stitching. Each design can use as many as forty different colours and most are quite large.

This book has been translated into French and is sold in local craft shops, but as there is quite a lot of text in the book, you may prefer to get the untranslated version.

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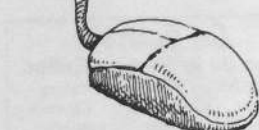
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F. A. Q. 6



Last month's column discussed the security problems associated with Windows

Q. "Okay, I've updated Windows. Am I safe now when I go on the Internet?"

A. Well, no. You see, new threats pop up all the time and updating Windows doesn't actually protect you from all, or even most of the hazards out there. Firstly, remember to check for Windows Updates often. You can actually get the program to do this automatically but letting a computer think for itself is a very questionable thing to do. They really are stupid.

More importantly, you should install a Firewall.

"A WHAT?" I hear you cry. Let me explain.

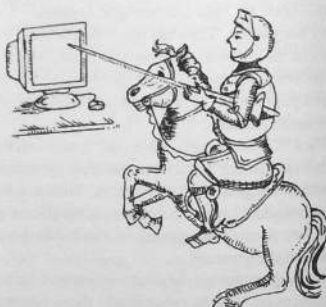
Your computer has a number of entrances and exits. They're called ports. You have about 65,000 of them but most people only use three. Port 80 is used to access the Internet, whilst ports 25 and 110 are used to send and receive email. All the rest are just sitting there waiting for some nasty person to work their way in.

There are two easy ways of "Hacking" into your computer. The first is by searching randomly across the Internet. As you already know this only takes them about 20 minutes on average. The second way is to infect your computer with a type of program called a Trojan Horse. These come in email messages and look innocent. They don't seem to do anything but as soon as you go online they send a notice to their friend to say that you're there. It's that easy.

So, we install a program that closes all the doors and only opens those that we specifically need. That's a firewall. Window XP has a rudimentary one but it's one of Bill Gates' flat tyres. Several companies sell very good products but the best one I've found for the ordinary user (like me) is free. I like "free." It's called Zone Alarm and you can download it from <http://www.zonelabs.com>. They do a "professional" version but you'd have to pay for that and the benefits are dubious.

Once installed you must work through the tutorial. It isn't difficult and should only take about fifteen minutes. No more hackers!

Ideally, one should install a firewall before ever allowing a computer to access the Internet, but for that you need a copy of the program on disk.



Any more questions?
graxwarrior@tiscali.fr

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Website Workshop

How do you get your business online?

Questions answered by a professional website designer:

Q: What is a website?

A: A website is a single or series of digital pages displaying information which can be made up of text, graphics, video etc. The pages are connected by hyperlinks and are written in a recognised Internet code such as HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language). Although a website has pages it is not used in a linear fashion like a book; by clicking on the hyperlinks you jump to areas, other pages, or even other websites that interest you - you are in charge of where you go. Retracing your steps is easy too, as the simplest way to do it is to just keep clicking the 'Back' button on your browser (browsers will be covered in another issue).

Q: Why do I need a website?

A: A website provides instant global access to information about your business, whether it be your products, pictures or just your phone number. It can provide useful information by being your online brochure or it can sell your products directly via online payments - it can be many things.

Q: Are domain names important?

A: Yes, very! They are your website's address so that people can find you on the Internet. You have to register a domain name to use it; this stops other people using it and ensures that your chosen name is totally unique. The choice of name is extremely important because when a potential client is searching for a company's website, their

first attempt is likely to be to guess at the domain name e.g. www.microsoft.com. The trouble is, it is getting harder to find names that are not taken, but you will find that the more personal it is to you, the more likely it is to be available.

A domain name always finishes with a dot and several letters e.g. .com, .co.uk etc. These are called the Top Level Domain (TLD). Next month we shall look at what these TLDs mean.

Website Workshop is a new column written by Malcolm Wearing who, before moving to France, was a senior multimedia consultant. He now specialises in designing and producing websites for people with French property to let.

Please send questions to malcolm@practicalnet.co.uk
www.practicalnet.co.uk

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Letters

Embroidery Group

A small group of keen embroiderers has started an informal association here in Brittany. Our aim is to support, encourage and inspire each other as we learn more about creative embroidery. We would welcome other stitchers who are keen to learn new techniques and share any expertise that they may have with the rest of us. From time to time we will have a project to work on which will give an opportunity to design for ourselves and to experiment. We may buy as a group from the UK or the USA as some materials are hard to find in France. If, after a while we have accumulated enough finished pieces, we hope to find a venue for an exhibition.

We intend to meet monthly and share a light lunch and maybe a short workshop session to learn new skills. Our next meeting will be in Mael Carhaix on Wednesday 16th March. If you are interested please contact Shirley McCann. 02 97 51 42 54 (Pontivy) coldharbour@wanadoo.fr

Penpals Wanted

We have owned a property in Caurel for just over a year and are now in the process of selling our house in the UK to make the move permanent. Your magazine has been enlightening and it is great that we can access information online. I would like to put a plea in the magazine for 'penpals' who I could correspond with over the internet to chat about life in the region. I am married with two daughters (aged 4 months and 23 months). Unfortunately I do not yet speak French (having lived in Spain for four years and then buying in France!!) but I am learning. Maybe a French person who would like to practise English would be ideal. I hope you can assist.

Thank you again.

Regards

Amanda Campbell skida@tiscali.co.uk

Five Departments

I recently discovered your January 2005 issue. I found it very interesting, even for an old native Breton as I am!

I disagree, however, with the definition of Brittany you give in your CBJ Quiz (P33): for me the "Loire Atlantique" department is really a part of Brittany.

Not only was it too a part of the former province of Brittany, as you rightly put it p. 13 ("Brittany in the French Revolution") 'five of the new 83 departments then created comprised the land of Brittany' but "Loire-Atlantique" department is still nowadays very close to the other 4 departments of the administrative region created during the German occupation (probably because there was too much insurgency in Brittany, particularly in the "Loire Atlantique" department!): the economic connections are quite strong as well as the human ones (as I have relatives living near Nantes I am very aware of this!).

One can just hope that such inhuman division imposed upon us by the "conquering powers" shall soon be a thing of the past!

With my best wishes,
Bernard Cadoret,
Etables sur Mer

Tattoo Numbers for Dogs and Cats

I think that by French law when you advertise an animal to give away or sell (cats and dogs) you are required to quote the tattoo number in the advert. This was done mainly to stop stolen animals being sold on, and also to minimise those people who go and pick up a good number of pets and then sell them on to the testing research labs. Believe it or not this is still going on a lot. Please check this out.

Best regards,
David King

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

www.thebcj.com

Back in Brittany

Just to say we bought your magazine in Callac. Opted for a subscription. We can only visit in school holidays and so when your magazine arrives in the UK we feel just for a few hours to be back in Brittany. Enjoyed the web site. Well done. And thanks for your hard work.

Dorothy Skelley

Contributions/Submissions

Have just discovered the CBJ, despite having lived in Plounevez-Quintin since end of September; an impressive publication. But there is no mention either in the Journal itself or online about the source of articles - do you take contributions/submissions? And, if so, what sort of thing would be acceptable?

Look forward to hearing from you.
Mark Andrew

Contributions are always welcome. GL

Yew Hedges

Dear cbj, I have had horses and goats near yew trees and they have never been tempted to eat it. I wouldn't be too sure about cows! I've seen them eating some pretty disgusting hay at times. The local farmer told me they'll eat anything off the ground!

Don't know if this will be of any help to your readers. Great mag. Keep it up.
Lesley McCoy.

What Website?

Hello, we have recently moved to Brittany and discovered the CBJ (which we thoroughly enjoy) soon after stepping off the ferry. A letter in the latest edition mentions your website but I can't find any reference to it in the journal. It may be me!

Could you point me in the right direction please?

Many thanks...Carol and Mike, Loqueffret

The website address is www.thebcj.com We had a few complaints about this, and will try to ensure that the website maintains a higher profile in future issues. GL

www.thebcj.com

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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 What's On

What's On

3rd March to 7th April

Callac library
Victor Hugo exhibition writings, drawings, paintings etc.
Admission Free.
Mon 4.30 - 6.00.; Wed & Sat 10-12 & 2.30 - 5.00.

Saturday 5th March 9 p.m.

Poullaouen (well marked in village centre)
Jabadao + Fest Noz. Breton Traditional music with Eastern influences. Trumpet, piano, accordion and drums.

Sunday 6th March

Camoët (Carolann's in the centre of the village)
Boot & Book Sale Secondhand books, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Free tables. 3 course Sunday roast 9.50€ per person, book in advance. 02 96 21 54 62.

Wednesday 9th March (8pm)

La Plélauff, Salle Polyvalente
AIKB: Maryse L'Hermitte and her association Danserien Bro Pellian have invited AIKB to join their **Breton dancing class**. If you would like to take part, give ring 02 96 24 87 90.

Sunday 13th March 10-12.30 ; 2-4.30

Servel, near Lannion.
Irish Music workshop. Violin, Bodhran, Harp. Not for beginners. A ceili follows from 5 p.m. For more information call Dany O'Neill on 02 96 47 26 55 or 06 19 48 33 30

Sunday 13th March 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m.

St. Nicodème, Ty Plouz
Used Book Bargain Sale. Roast pork Sun. lunch. Live auction. Items wanted. 02 96 45 79 11

Sunday 13th March 2.30 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Ste Trephine
Eclectic **story teller** (in the French language). Story telling, music, children's workshop. Come with the children. Food and drinks available. Adults 5 euros. Children free.

Sunday 13th March 11am - 4pm

Calanhel, Salle du Fete
Easter Craft Fair. Entry free. 5€ per table. Demonstrations of Rag Rugging and card making at 2pm. Refreshments will be available. Sheila: 02 96 21 64 22 or Ruth: 02 96 21 67 30"

Please send information for 'What's on' to info@thebcj.com.

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Au Rendez-Vous
Des Celtes
In the past month we have served:
Tiger Prawns & Thai Green Curry Sauce
Duck Breast with Hoi Sin & Plum Sauce
Trout with Bacon, Leek and Cider
Gammon Steak with Honey and Mustard
Red Mullet with Orange, Walnut & Pesto
Artichoke, Mushroom and Stilton Bake
—AND YOU THOUGHT WE JUST DID FISH & CHIPS—
Booking Recommended
LE BOURG - PLUSSULIEN
02 96 24 04 26

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



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



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Le Fournil
Botaval, 29270 Cleden Poher
Come enjoy the opening night on
saint patrick's day
Thursday March 17th at 7 p.m.
Free buffet
Irish-owned and run




www.thebcj.com

What's On 19

Thursday 17th March 7 pm

Cléden Poher
Grand St Patrick's Day opening. Celtic Bar, Le Fournil. Free Buffet

Saturday 19th March 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Guénin, Salle Polyvalente
Spring Fayre. Book, cassette and magazine exchange, cakes and other home-made produce. Organised by St Andrews Church in Brittany. Tel: Tricia Jeyes 02 97 39 09 63 tricieyes@bir.fr org John Fox 02 97 38 14 10 jonfox@tiscali.fr

Sunday 20th March 5 p.m.

Carhaix, Espace Glenmor
Traditional Rajasthan dances and songs, with celebrated gipsy dancer Gulabi Sapera from Northern India.
Tickets and information: 02 98 99 37 50

Sunday March 20th 4 pm - 7 pm

Châteauneuf du Faou
"Good Time Jazz" at the Bar "Tal Ar Pont". (Tel: 02 98 81 84 75) Lively, entertaining jazz in a great Anglo-French atmosphere. Arrive early...It gets packed! Just next to the bridge in Châteauneuf. Admission 5 euros/2 euros (students).

Friday 25th March 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

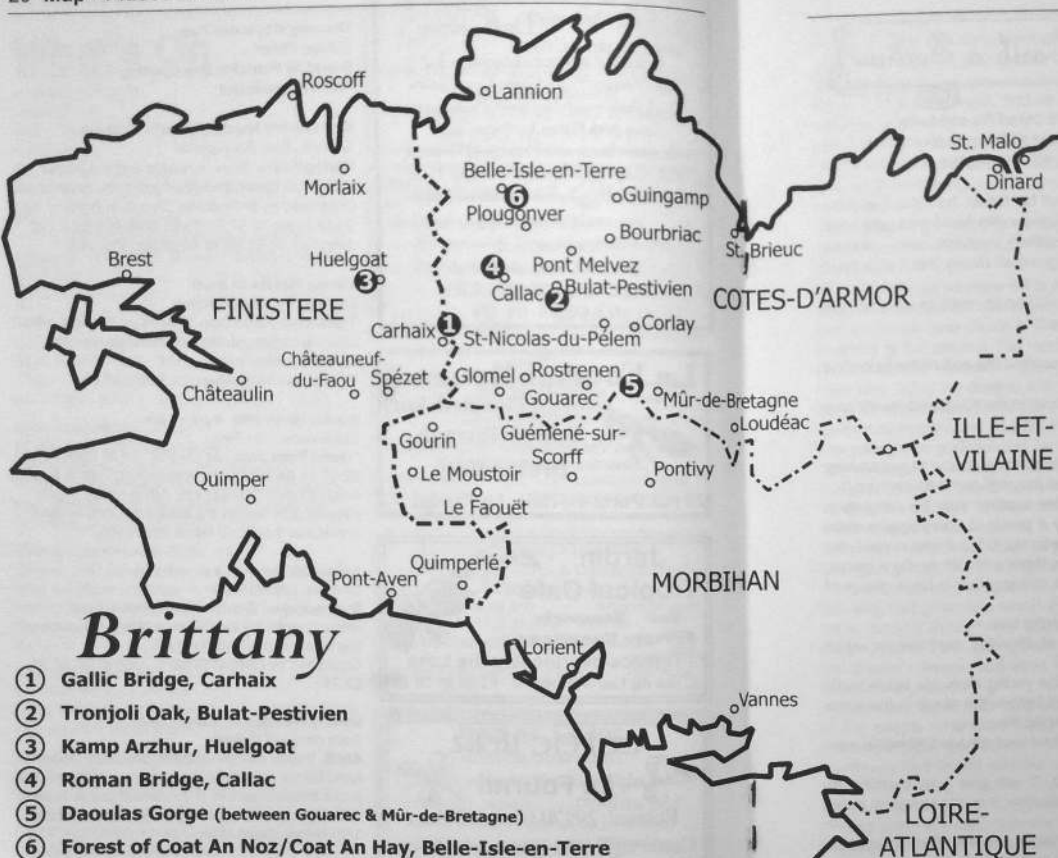
Carhaix, Les Halles
Spring Fayre. Garden stalls, books, food, refreshments, art exhibition, starting a business, live music and Irish dancing.
Organised by Central Brittany Journal 02 96 21 52 21

Monday 28th March 10am - 2pm

Salle de Saint Gelven.
AIKB. Easter Fayre Artisanat, brocante, second hand books and loads more. Come and have tea and a bite with us too. If you would like to have a stand, give us a ring 02 96 24 87 90 before the 18th March. Open to all.

Sunday 3rd April. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Briec
Garden Sale in l'ancienne salle des fetes, rue de la Résistance (well signposted). Plants, cuttings, seeds, garden furniture. Stalls 2 euros. Book a stall on 02 98 59 30 39 or 06 66 76 30 30. Refreshments will be available. (Organised by Association Marmalade Theatre)



- ① Gallic Bridge, Carhaix
- ② Tronjoli Oak, Bulat-Pestivien
- ③ Kamp Arzhur, Huelgoat
- ④ Roman Bridge, Callac
- ⑤ Daoulas Gorge (between Gouarec & Mûr-de-Bretagne)
- ⑥ Forest of Coat An Noz/Coat An Hay, Belle-Isle-en-Terre



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Spring Fayre

Friday March 25th
11 a.m. - 8.30 p.m.

Gardening

Art and Photo Exhibition and Sale

Easter foodstalls

Books

Living in France - help and advice
with starting a business

Craft Demonstrations

Irish music & dancing
6.30 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.

Exhibitors include: Wendy Mewes of Red Dog Books whose new book, *Walking and other activities in Finistère*, will be on sale; David Tolman, publisher of 'Fluent-French audio'; Permanent Lemon - Cornish Craft chocolates.

Music by Paddy O'Neill who plays Donegal style fiddle, and Geordie Byrne on guitar. Dancing led by Dany O'Neill.

Admission Free Refreshments

Les Halles Carhaix

www.thebj.com

Sickle and Spade are Worth a Fortune

Once upon a time an old man was dying, and he called his son to him. "Yvonnik," he said. "I am very poor and I have nothing to give you but my spade, for stirring up the earth, and my sickle, for reaping the corn. Use them well and they will bring you happiness." The young man was brave and strong and when he had buried his father, he set out into the world. He walked with his spade over his shoulder and his sickle in his hand and was soon far, far from his village. After a year and a day he came to a cornfield, in which men were busy reaping. They were working with all their might, but they were going so slowly that it took them a week to cut one swathe. "Never have I seen such poor workers!" thought Yvonnik. "I could do as much in an hour." He went up to them, and saw that they were using wooden sickles. "What can your master be thinking of?" he cried. "See here."

So saying he bent and began to cut down the corn; soon he reached the end of the field. The reapers were filled with admiration. "You have a treasure there, young man," they said. "Come with us to the King, and he will give you a good price for it." As they had said, the King was eager to buy the metal sickle. "I will give you in exchange three marvelous dogs," he said. "No harm can come to you so long as they are with you. All you need to do is blow this whistle and they will come to your aid."

The young man thanked him and continued on his way. After another year he came to a graveyard. A corpse was stood on the wall, and not far away a group of gravediggers were digging a grave. They were working with all their might, but it was no use, for they had only their nails to dig with. It took them a month to dig a grave, and when someone died the King had to call together a large group of gravediggers.

"Have you no spades here?" said the young man. "Spades? No, we have nothing like that. Besides, we have no wood or iron."

"Let me show you their uses," said the young man. He set to work throwing the earth right and left, and before the clock in the town could strike the half hour, he had finished the grave.

The King himself had come running and was amazed when he saw what had been done.

"Oh, give me your spade," he said. "I will give you anything in exchange. Take my warhorse. He is cleverer than the cleverest man, and stronger than an entire army."

The young man took the steed, mounted it, and set off with his dogs following behind. Soon his way led him to a land where all the people were in mourning. He stopped, and asked someone what was the matter.

"Alas, have you not heard?" they said. "Our beloved princess has been captured by the Caragine. He has shut her up in a castle surrounded by seven walls, and guarded by a dragon with three heads. It can only be slain if its three heads are cut off at the same time. The King has promised to give his daughter's hand, and half his kingdom, to the man who rescues her, but all who have tried have lost their lives. One man got so far as the



dragon, but he was slain immediately; the others could not even get past the walls." "Very well," said the young man. "With my horse and my hounds I will be able to defeat this giant and this dragon."

"Master," said the steed. "Mount on my back, and when we are inside the castle we shall see what we shall see."

The young man obeyed, and the steed galloped to the Caragine's castle.

"What a fine horse," said the Caragine. "I have never seen one so wonderful."

"You shall have him," said the young man. "But on one condition. You must ride him first to see how tame he is."

The Caragine got into the saddle and the steed galloped to the edge of a high cliff. It stopped suddenly and reared up onto its back legs. The Caragine lost his grasp, and fell down into the precipice.

"Now, Master, all we have left is the dragon," said the steed to the young man. They rode up the steep mountain to the castle surrounded by seven walls. The first door was so heavy that twenty men could not have forced it. The steed gave it one kick and the door and part of the wall came crashing to the ground. The next door was even heavier, but the steed kicked this down also, and the next, and so on, until they came to the castle courtyard.

Here they found the dragon with three heads. Its tail was several yards long, and its body was covered with scales. It had jaws like a wolf, and when it saw the young man and his horse, it opened its mouths and let forth a terrible roar.

The young man pretended to be afraid and fell at the dragon's feet.

"Mighty dragon," he said. "I have been very impudent to enter your lair, and I know that I deserve to die. I do not ask you to spare my life, but please, grant me one last favour."

"What is it – quickly?" demanded the dragon.

"I wish to give three whistles."

"Very well – whistle as much as you please."

The young man put his fingers to his mouth and blew three long whistles. The dogs that the first king had given him heard the sound, and came running through the opened doors into the courtyard. Each one seized hold of one of the dragon's heads, and soon the monster fell dead to the ground.

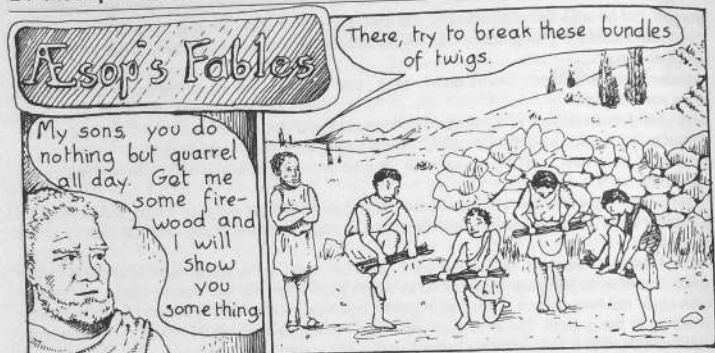
Immediately, the air was filled with the happy cries of the people who were being kept prisoner in the castle. They poured out of the doors into the courtyard, and at the window of the great tower there appeared a beautiful young girl. It was the King's daughter.

"Young man," she said, "I do not know who you are, or from where you have come, but I know that no other man could have fought so bravely. I will gladly become your wife."

She got up behind him on the saddle, and they rode home to the King's castle. The King was as good as his word, and soon the marriage was celebrated. Everyone was invited to the wedding: the people, the steed and the three dogs. I too was there, and I found it very hard to leave the festivities and come here to tell you of all the wonderful things I saw and heard.



24 Aesop's Fable



GBJ Quiz

1. What is the Breton name for Finistère?
2. Where did Faïence pottery originate?
3. At which towns does the canal which runs through Brittany start and finish?
4. What are the principal ingredients of Kouign-Aman?
5. What is the name for the Breton bagpipes?
6. What is the name of the lake which bisects the Nantes à Brest Canal?
7. In which year, and for what purpose was it built?
8. What is the best tool for harvesting wheat?
9. What are the Breton salt farmers known as?
10. What are korrigans?
11. In what year was the Loire-Atlantique department separated from Brittany?
12. What is the capital of Côtes d'Armor?
13. What is the department number of Ille-et-Vilaine?
14. In what year, and for what purpose, was Brittany Ferries originally started?
15. Camus de Bretagne is a variety of what vegetable?

Answers page 35

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Word Search 25

Word Search
Find the 60 characters from Shakespeare's comic plays
Words can run forwards, backwards, up, down, and diagonally

P R O S P E R O O N I S R O B E R O N P
R P O R T I A I V L I S T I T A N I A E
E B A S S A N I O I D U A L C K E R C T
D E O I A O B K D L E O N T E S R U I R
N A R T T L C I P A L O I V H B H H S U
A T N N T I I L A U N C E L A E K T S C
S R A A D O S N S N C V Y A R E R N E H
Y I B E I Y M S D C C K A M E A O O J I
L C N O M R L O R E N A I H B U F A U O
F E R D I N A N D L M A C I T E S W L T
B P S N R E E M L O R E N Z O S L U I H
H E H A A H N V Y T U C T N I D C I A E
E P Y L N E I A N G E L O R S N A K N L
R E L R D C T S A O V R E U I A H M I E
M R O O A N N W A B I N E R R U T E R N
I D C S D I E S E B A S T I A N S T A A
O I K A T R L Y S O E F E R W C H U H R
N T E L D P A B S H A L L O W L L T T
E A S N U G V B T U F A L S T A F F A N
S T A R V E L I N G Y C H A R L E S K A

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AGUECHEEK
ANGELO
ANTONIO
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BEATRICE
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BIANCA
BIRON
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CHARLES
CLAUDIO
CLOWN

CYMBELINE
DEMETRIUS
FALSTAFF
FERDINAND
FLUTE
HELENA
HERMIA
HERMIONE
HERO
ISABELLA
JESSICA
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PERDITA
PETRUCHIO
PORTIA
PRINCE HENRY
PROSPERO
PUCK
ROSALIND

SEBASTIAN
SHALLOW
SHYLOCK
SILVIA
SNOUT
SNUG
STARVELING
THESEUS
THURIO
TITANIA
TRINCULO
VALENTINE
VIOLA

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26 Breton Folk

Breton Folk continued from page 12

sound, mingled with the bells of Carhaix for early mass; there is nothing to suggest a change but the gathering of clouds towards the west, and the stout umbrellas and cloaks carried by the women. Let us follow them, later in the day, to a large square where the fair is held, and where there are wonderful sights and sounds; under the trees a crowd of men and women, in the dust and heat, horses, cattle, and pigs, in perpetual movement, with much drinking and shouting at the booths which line one side of the enclosure. There are a great many horses for sale, which do not find buyers, although horse-dealers have come from all parts. The cattle market is overstocked, and the little black and white cattle, a cross between Alderneys and Bretons, for very small sums to reluctant purchasers. The pig market is more active, as every Breton peasant likes to possess a pig, and the noises proceeding from this part of the square are deafening.



"The cattle-dealer, in blue blouse to keep off the dust, is the exact portrait of a prominent figure moving amongst the crowd throughout the day."

The meetings of the country people, and the groups sitting under the trees to rest, are as suggestive pictures as we have seen, and the costumes are full of variety and interest. These markets are held several times a year, and for a few hours disturb the quiet of the sleepy town of Carhaix. The cattle-dealer, in blue blouse to keep off the dust, is the exact portrait of a prominent figure moving amongst the crowd throughout the day.

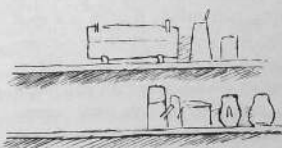
We could well stay at Carhaix, for the scenery is varied and interesting, and there is much to observe in the farmhouses in the neighbourhood – old furniture, old carved bedsteads, cabinets and clocks, old brasswork, old lace and embroideries.

Pictures come to us at every turn, pictures of domestic happiness and content, only to be seen in byways far removed from cities and their troubles; family groups, in which our presence seems sometimes an intrusion.

Nearly everyone we meet at Carhaix is engaged in agriculture, and the majority are well-to-do. The land yields well, and there is the Canal de Brest passing through the town to take the produce to the coast.

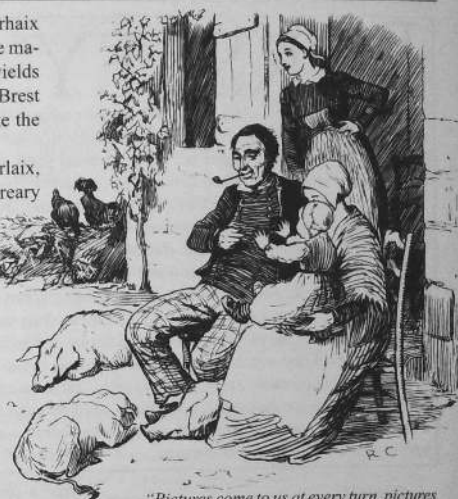
Turning northwards towards Morlaix, we pass through somewhat dreary scenery, until we come to a gorge near Huelgoet, which, with its rocks and rushing streams, will remind us of Switzerland; here are some ancient lead and silver mines, which were a source of considerable wealth in the fifteenth century. This is a suggestive part of Brittany, full of poetry and mystery.

To be continued.



Waiting for a meal at Huelgoat

Breton Folk 27



"Pictures come to us at every turn, pictures of domestic happiness and content, only to be seen in byways far removed from cities and their troubles; family groups, in which our presence seems sometimes an intrusion."

Breton proverbs

**Pask gleborek,
Eost baraek.**

Abundant rain at Easter,
Abundant bread in August.

**Ber, ber, miz C'houevrer,
karg ann and hag ar foz,
Me ho dizec'ho en eun deiz
hag eun noz.**

Rain, rain February, fill stream
and ditch, I (March) will dry
them up in a day and a night.

PARSLEY

Of all herbs parsley is probably the most useful, with its mild taste giving it great versatility in cooking.

When well established, plants can produce a veritable abundance of leaves; yet the secret of successful parsley growing is elusive and can often seem rather random.

There are several superstitious beliefs concerning parsley, such as that it will grow better for a wicked rather than a good man, or that parsley will only grow when it is the man who 'wears the trousers' in a household. Whatever the case, there is a good chance of getting a successful parsley crop if the following method is applied.

Firstly, good, perfectly fresh seeds should be obtained and planted in a warm place; this can be in pots indoors, or in the ground in a greenhouse. If the seeds are to be planted outside, then the sowing can be delayed until April or May. When the plants have five or six leaves they should be planted out into a spot with rich, deep soil, but any place will do. Resist temptation, and let the plants grow big and strong before harvesting any leaves, and be sure to water them in dry weather. Parsley plants flower in their second year of growth and self seeds readily: once established, parsley can be left to become a self-propagating permanent feature of the garden, self-seeded seedlings can be transplanted to wherever you want them to grow. Leaves from a strong plant can be picked continuously from the summer of one year right through to the spring of the next.

Lawns and Lawnmowers

People who move to Brittany are often taken aback by the vigour with which grass grows in this part of the world. Not only does a lawn grow, and need cutting, throughout the winter, but it can also un-

dergo a phenomenal burst of growth in the spring, particularly if there is a spell of warm, wet weather. In these circumstances it is necessary to have a bigger and tougher lawnmower than you might expect, especially if you have moved from a house with a relatively small lawn in the suburbs of a town or city.

Mowing even a medium-size Breton lawn can be quite a punishing experience for any lawnmower, and when buying a machine it is important to check that the supplier has a good after-sales service and will be able to provide spare parts and do repairs.

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A Cottage Garden In Brittany

March is a good time of year in which to make a new flowerbed, or fill in any gaps in an old one. It is possible to build up a beautiful flower garden, which is both vibrant and in keeping with the surroundings, using just a little initiative and only the smallest possible financial outlay. There are a few flowering plants that appear in almost every Breton garden; these can be found everywhere, growing wild as garden escapes or struggling to survive in an abandoned garden, and can be relied on to do well wherever you put them. There are also other wild flowers which can be collected from around your land, and if replanted in the right spot, can be relied upon to prosper.

The following is a list of some of the more essential, classic Breton garden flowers:

Hollyhock and Tree Mallow: These occur in almost every old garden. If you don't have any in your own garden, the seeds can be collected quite easily from plants growing beside the road - thereby ensuring that you really do get the traditional varieties. Seeds planted in June will flower the following year. Tree mallow is common in Brittany; the leaves are like those of hollyhocks, but much more downy, and the whole plant, when full-grown, resembles a small shrub. It is extremely quick growing and each plant usually lives for three or so years - after which it may be blown over in the wind. Its flowers are small and purple, yet it is very pretty on account of its foliage. Self-seeded, young plants are often found growing around the base of older ones, and can be transplanted at this time of year.

Mullein and Foxglove: Both these plants are very hardy; they have attractive foliage and stunning flowers. They are biennial which means that seeds that germinate this year will flower next year, and the plant will then die. Once you have them established in your garden, they will, however, grow up from seed every year, and do not require much



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work at all. Foxgloves are particularly well-suited to growing on the stone wall that are such a common feature of Breton gardens.

Little mullein plants can be found growing on waste ground, and foxgloves abound on almost every bank. They both transplant well, providing they are kept moist in the weeks after they have been transplanted.



Foxglove

Sweet Pea: Sweet peas are climbing plants which produce an abundance of lovely blooms throughout the summer. It is the more traditional, perennial sweet peas that one should keep a look out for; these are very vigorous, and produce an absolute mass of pink flowers in the Summer. They can often be found surviving amongst the long grass and brambles in abandoned gardens. Suckers and rooted stems can be transplanted successfully.

Lupin: A well-established lupin plant has the potential to provide a spectacular display early in the summer, when not many other plants are in flower. Many different colours are available from plant breeders but self-seeded plants tend to gradually revert to their natural pink colour.

Pansy: Pansies grow well in even shaded and exposed positions. They are useful for filling in gaps between larger plants. In recently harvested fields the wild pansy, or heart's ease, will often be found flowering, often in hundreds or thousands.



Tree Mallow

Honesty: Honesty does best in shade, where it will happily grow amongst grasses. It is a plant that is attractive for most of the year: its purple flowers in late spring develop into curious seedpods, which are retained for a long time. It spreads rapidly and if you dig up even a small piece of root plus shoot, it should have a good chance of growing.

Loosestrife: This must be one of the most popular garden plants in Central Brittany, and rightly so, as it one of the few herbaceous plants that is tough enough to compete with the weeds. It forms dense clumps that will light up the garden in summer with its shock of yellow flowers. Any rooted portion that is cut from the clump can be expected to thrive and spread rapidly with only a minimum amount of care.



Honesty

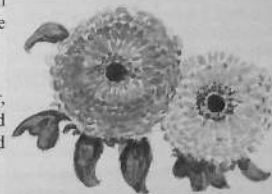
Phlox: This is another popular and very successful herbaceous plant. It is inconspicuous for most of the year but in late summer it becomes densely covered with (usually) purple, highly fragrant flowers.

Wild flowers, such as yarrow, primroses, violets, red and bladder campion, forget-me-nots, bluebells, orchids, snowdrops, poppies and cornflowers also look stunning in any garden. It takes skill and sensitivity to get some of these flowers to do well, but it is worth the effort, as gardens are now becoming one of the principal reserves of many of these flowers, where they can survive until conditions in the wider countryside once again become suitable for them to grow and prosper.

Annuals such as love-in-a-mist, poppy, cornflower, snapdragon and marigolds can be grown from seed and used to fill gaps in the garden. Seeds can be collected and used from one year to the next.



Cornflower



Marigold



Peter Commandeur at his nursery at Ste. Brigitte (leave the Rostrenen to Loudeac road at the Abbaye de Bon Repos, and follow the signs).

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Peter and Marieke Commandeur moved from South Wales ten years ago to start their own business in Central Brittany. Since then, they have developed their land into a modern plant nursery and have built up a large collection of plants, suited to local gardening conditions. In the summer they are busy selling plants from their premises in Ste Brigitte and attending weekly markets in Rostrenen, Pontivy and Guémené sur Scorff. In the winter Peter undertakes landscaping work. He is available throughout the year to give expert advice on plants and planting - in Dutch, French or English. He also makes regular trips to Holland, where he is able to obtain almost any plant that a customer may want.

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Buying a House in the Breton Countryside

Things to look out for when buying a house in the Breton countryside include the following:

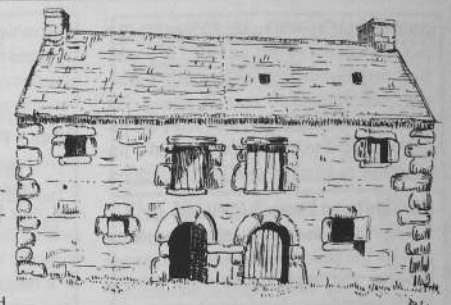
Drains

Flush toilets, bathrooms, and running water are relatively new innovations and, when buying a house, it is advisable to work out what sort of drainage system it has, and to determine whether it has been updated to cater for waste water produced by these installations – some properties just have a simple soak away which may originally only have been intended to cope with the water from a single tap.

If a house does not already have a septic tank, check that there is enough room to install one, in compliance with current regulations i.e. that there is a large, fairly flat area below the level of the house which is not too close to any roads, hedges, wells, trees, buildings or boundaries, and which is not prone to flooding. There are a surprisingly large number of properties which do not have sufficient space to accommodate a septic tank, and this obviously has an impact on their value.

Access

Check both that the property has proper access for vehicles from the public road and whether or not any neighbours or farmers have rights of access to their land through the garden, or if there are any shared rights of access.



Boundaries

Inheritance laws have resulted in many individual smallholdings being divided up between a large number of beneficiaries, with the result that each outbuilding attached to a single house may now belong to a different person. It may also be that

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34 Buying a House

parts of what appear to be the garden of a property are not in fact included in a sale. Boundary disputes are notoriously intractable and difficult to resolve after a sale has been completed, and they have the potential to lead to feuds that can make life miserable in an otherwise idyllic location.

Proximity to Farm Buildings

It is regrettable but true that farms no longer provide the peace and tranquility that one hopes to find in the countryside. Modern farms are fully industrialised plants with heavy machinery operating at all hours of the day and night, and the intensive methods of animal husbandry now employed result in odours which can be quite distressing if you happen to live nearby.

Things to Do

Talk to the Neighbours:

It does no harm to introduce yourself to your prospective neighbours when you are considering buying a property. This may seem to be a slightly irregular idea to anyone moving from a town or city where there is a greater level of anonymity, but in the country people often already know

prospective buyers of houses in their village, and the custom is to provide help and assistance to people who are destined to become one's neighbours.

Offer a Fair Price

Unfortunately, buyers from the UK have the reputation of paying slightly over the odds for houses in Brittany. If one is new to the area, one should try to escape from the trap of seeing Breton properties as a bargain as compared to the UK: offer a price based on local conditions, not on what it would be worth in the UK. If necessary, enlist the help of someone who knows the area.

Use Your Common Sense

The facts of life in Brittany are essentially the same as everywhere else: the agent selling a house, and the owner, may both be very reasonable people and they may be very helpful, but their main aim is to get a good price for their property.

You should either personally verify any information that they provide, or else employ someone who can verify it on your behalf: this is simple common sense.

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14. In 1972, to transport carthorses and
13. Saint-Brevin
12. Breton good grey folk
11. Plozeur
10. For the millers.
9. The Lac de Guerdan.
8. Brest
7. Flour, butter, and sugar
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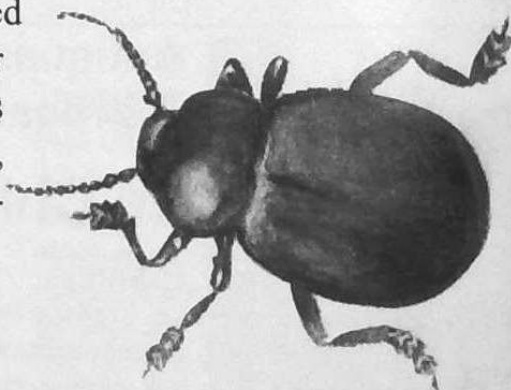
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Bloody-Nosed Beetles (*Latin: Timarcha tenebricosa*)

French: **Crache-sang** Breton: **c'hwil**

On sunny days in late February and throughout March, the bloody-nosed beetle can be seen in Brittany. They are a leaf-eating species which are particularly fond of goosegrass, where they lay their eggs, and it is near goosegrass that one is most likely to find them. They walk in a distinctively ungainly manner, and in summer, when one often sees them on open expanses of grass, such as a lawn, it is fascinating to watch them slowly climbing the blades of grass and falling off the other end in such a clumsy manner it is hard to imagine them making any progress. Walking is their only means of getting around, for they are flightless beetles despite a deceptive groove down their backs. With most insects this would be their wingcase, but with the bloody-nosed beetle it is just a groove.

Another distinctive feature of this beetle is its peculiar defence method. If you have ever handled one you may have noticed that it started bleeding from its head or leg although you were not aware of harming it. If you were worried that the beetle was damaged you will be glad to hear that this was not the case. When under threat it drops blood from its mouth as a means of deterring predators, which is what has given it the name, bloody-nosed beetle, in English, and crache-sang (spit blood) in French.



Bloody-nosed beetles are 1–2 cm long. They have little claws at the bottom of their feet to help them climb plants, and if you pick one up you will find these claws can grip onto your finger quite tightly.



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