

Central Brittany

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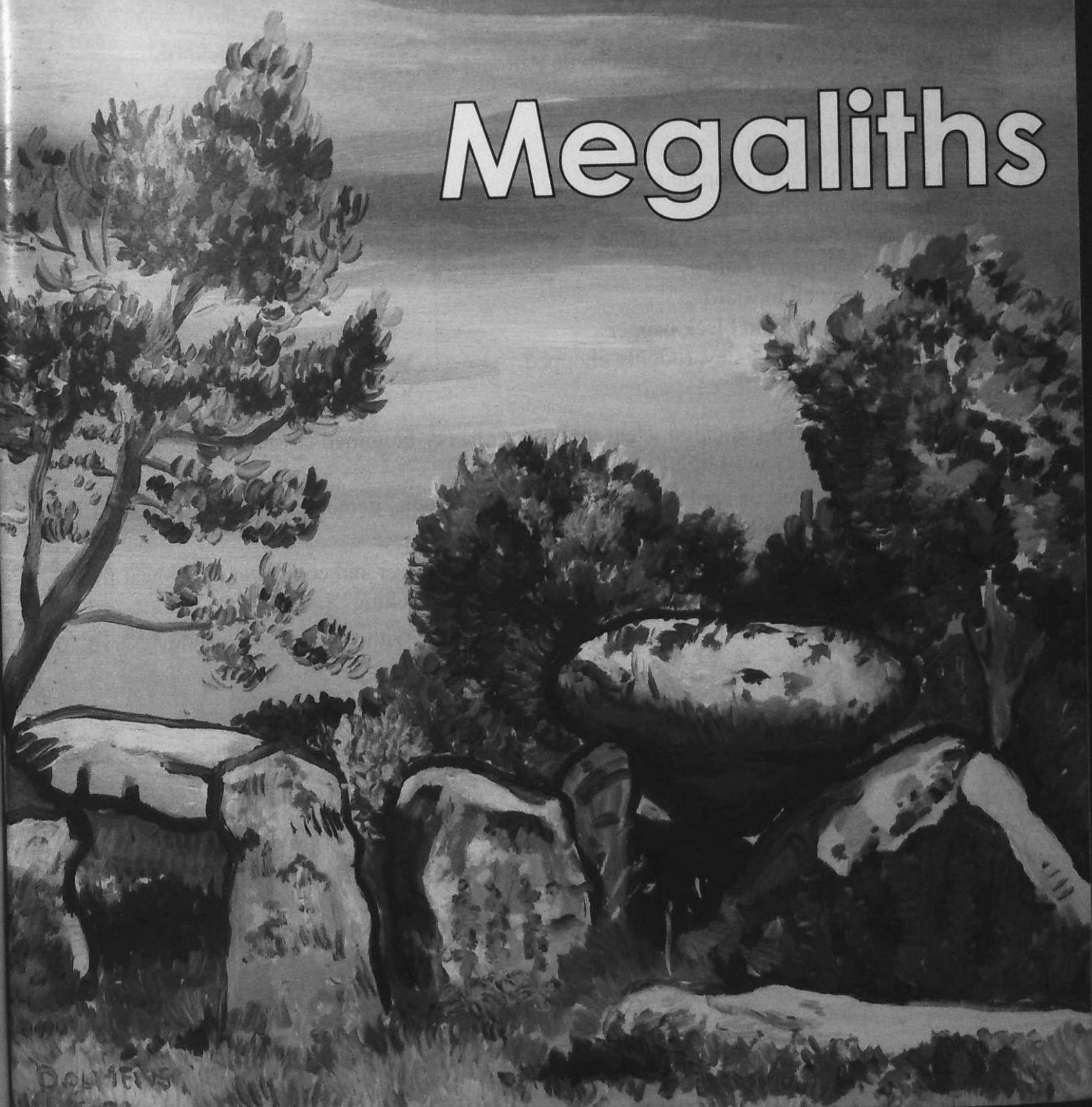
Journal

November
2005

1€

ISSUE 17

Megaliths



DOLMEN

2 Seasonal Recipe: Boston Baked Beans

Seasonal Recipes

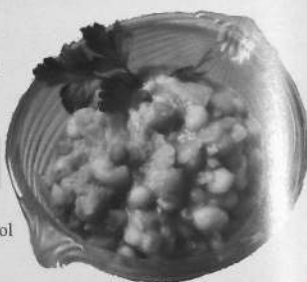
Ways to use produce from the garden

Boston Baked Beans

This version of the classic American recipe uses a local variety of the haricot bean, Coco de Paimpol.

Ingredients:

- 1lb 14 oz (850 g) fresh or cooked coco de Paimpol beans, or 2 x 400 g cans haricot beans
- 1 large onion
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 fl oz (120 ml) cider or apple juice
- 6-7 tablespoons passata
- 1 tablespoon black treacle or molasses
- 1 tablespoon demerara sugar
- 1 teaspoon French mustard
- salt and freshly-ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, roughly chopped



Haricot Beans = haricots blancs
Onion = oignon
Olive oil = huile d'olive
Cider = cidre
Apple Juice = jus de pomme
Passata = coulis de tomate
Molasses = mélasse
Demerara sugar = cassonade (sucre roux)
French Mustard = moutarde de Dijon
Parsley = persil

Method:

1. Peel and chop the onion. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed casserole dish, and add the onion. Fry until lightly golden.
2. Add the cider, or apple juice, passata, black treacle, demerara sugar, and mustard. Bring to the boil.
3. Drain the beans and add to the tomato mixture. Cover and cook over a low heat for 12-15 minutes. Stir from time to time to prevent sticking.
4. Season to taste with salt and pepper and sprinkle with the chopped parsley. Serve hot.

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Le Moulin Blanc
Pierre and Paulette would like to inform readers that the restaurant "Le Moulin Blanc" is open until **Saturday December 2nd**.
By way of thanks for your custom, there will be a farewell buffet for the clientele on the last evening.
For more information, please call: **02 96 21 60 81**

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CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAYRE

Sunday 27th November 1.00 pm
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4 Smallholding

Smallholding - Kergreiss

Ever since man first invented agriculture, smallholdings have been the cornerstones of civilisation. Many traditional smallholding techniques have been swept away by the revolution that has taken place in farming over the past century. Today's smallholders are faced with the challenge of adapting this ancient way of life to modern circumstances.

Phil and Hil Stevens moved to Silfiac, in Morbihan, eighteen months ago, where they have a house and two hectares of land. Their philosophy is one of self-reliance rather than self-sufficiency. They acknowledge that there are many areas in which they cannot, realistically, be self-sufficient, but, by relying on their own resources, they are able to produce their own food, gather wood for the fire, pump water for the garden, and do their own building work - providing them with an enviable degree of independence.



Phil and Hil Stevens. "If we can raise it, grow it, build it, fix it, or do it - we do."

This year's main building project has been to build a small barn to house, amongst other things, Phil's two tractors - a Massey Ferguson 152, bought locally, and a Kubota mini-tractor brought over from the UK for working the vegetable garden.



The smallholding has three hives. Each yielded 50 kg of honey this year, which was well in excess of what Phil and Hil need for their own use.

Smallholding 5

Because modern breeds of chickens are often ill-suited to life in the open air, rare or endangered species are a speciality of Kergreiss: they keep over a dozen different varieties in an effort to preserve these magnificent birds for future generations, whilst also helping to maintain the gene pool. Young chickens should be available to good homes from next spring.

Right: a Welsummer cockerel

Below (clockwise from top left): a Cendred hen, a Braekel cock, a Tricolour Sussex hen, and a Houdan cock.



The smallholding has two polytunnels which have given Phil a chance to indulge a long-cherished ambition to grow chilli peppers. This year he has grown 15 different varieties.



The vegetable garden is laid out in 14 plots 1½m wide which can be worked from the grass strips running between them. This minimises the possibility of soil compaction.



Kergreiss also has a ram, some ewes, and some pigs, and a bullock may be added. Phil and Hil are also considering running courses on Self Reliance and Smallholding techniques next year. You can read more about the couple in their regular internet column: www.franchetree.com.
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Teashop Review: Paprika, Carhaix



This attractive tearoom is in the centre of Carhaix, not far from the library. The owner is from Hungary, and traditional Hungarian furniture, clothes, music, food, and wines are on sale.

The tearoom is at the back of the shop and is furnished with very pretty painted chairs, cupboards, etc. There are three tables - one small, and two that

can comfortably seat four or five people. Books about Hungary in English and French are scattered around for visitors to browse through as they enjoy an espresso, organic hot chocolate, fruit tea, or a traditional fruit juice. There is a wide selection of Hungarian chocolate-covered marzipans; we particularly enjoyed the chocolate and hazelnut varieties. Traditional savoury pastries, called Pogácsa, and little gingerbreads are also available.

Wed. Fri. Sat.: 10.30 a.m. - 7.00 p.m.; Tues. Thurs. & Sunday: afternoons
5 ave General de Gaulle, Carhaix (next to AXA Insurance) 02 98 93 19 17



Can One Person Make a Difference?

Patrick Hutton carries his campaign against cricket on Radio 4 to the streets of London.
(See letters, page 10)



Breton Houses:

David Moignard's house portraits. See 'Three years in Brittany' page 12.



CBJ Calendar 2006

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Calendar 2006

Editorial

A Month of Megaliths

I have spent most of the last month researching the article on megaliths and have found that the more that one delves into the subject, the more remarkable it appears to be. Over the years, I have become used to seeing huge lumps of granite planted in the soil and saying to guests 'Oh, yes, that is a menhir', without fully realising that no one has any real idea who put it there, how they put it there, or why they put it there. Apparently, there are few, if any, areas of the world which have archaeological remains comparable to those of Brittany in extent or antiquity, and it is interesting to reflect that many thousands of years ago this region may have been one of the great centres of world civilisation: something to give local entrepreneurs cause for hope as they prepare to face up to the challenge of the new global economy.

Another feature of this month's Journal which has been a source of great enjoyment, has been the Christmas shopping page. One of our aims when we started the Journal was to promote the small businesses of the area, and this has slipped from view slightly over the course of the past year as we have struggled to keep up with demand for advertising space. I hope that the selection of local shops on page 44 proves interesting; apologies to anyone missed out - there are only so many businesses that one advertising executive can get round in a limited amount of time! Other special features of this month's issue include the first instalment of a new translation of an old Breton poem, Tour Ann Arvon, the first part of the story of Princess Marcassa, and an introduction to some of Brittany's mushrooms, plus a record number of classified advertisements, and a return to a slightly larger gardening section: anyone who has been following the month by month guide to growing chicory will be pleased to see that November is the month in which interesting things finally start to happen.

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Looking for a gift?
Christmas Market
Arts & Crafts
MOTREFF
Salle Polyvalente
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NEWS

Hassle Free Work

Argoat Emplois Services, Rostrenen

Argoat Emplois Services is an employment agency with a difference. It may be able to find you work, but, equally, if you do have a small amount of work - as a gardener, cleaner, home help, builder, etc. - but do not want all the bother of registering a business, the work that you do can be declared through the agency.

The agency will also help you with the paperwork if it looks as though you have sufficient work to start a full-time business of your own.

Argoat Emplois Services can also help both private individuals and businesses who need part-time or temporary assistance, but who do not want to become involved in all the administration required when employing staff.

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Babel

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Bable organise French / English conversation classes in N.W. Côtes d'Armor (22) and N.E. Finistère (29), with the aim of helping both French and English speakers to improve their language skills. The classes are assisted by a fully-qualified French / English teacher in an informal and friendly atmosphere at the Ti An Holl, Plestin les Grèves - Côtes d'Armor - every Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. All levels of competence are catered for, from absolute beginners through intermediates to fairly-fluent speakers of both languages. Ages are from 18 upwards. Bable is a non profit-making enterprise and there is nominal charge per term which includes a registration fee. Plestin les Grèves is situated between Lannion and Morlaix, on the D786 road - the Ti an Holl, Office Culturel, is close to the Marie in the town centre.

For more information contact: David Ross - 02 96 54 55 69 (English speakers) or Wendy Bishop: 02 98 67 66 58 - French / English speakers.

Duvunet in dra hag a zo ordinal e vont hag e
tont, ha na bauz jamez,
kouskoude n'han eus ket a dreit?

Guess what always comes and goes, never
rests, and yet has no feet?

- Ar mor

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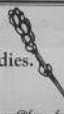
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Christmas Craft Fayre

Sunday 27th November 1.00 pm.

This year's Christmas Craft Fayre will be held in the Salle des Fêtes, Cléguerec. (Apologies for those readers who could not find this town on the map after it was spelt 'Klegereg' in the Oct. issue of the Journal - the original spellings of place names in Central Brittany may be a feature in a future issue.)

Doors open at 1pm, free entry.

Over 50 stalls selling everything from traditional Christmas puddings to hand-crafted jewellery. Hot & cold drinks will be available along with snacks & cakes. Everyone is welcome: come and enjoy an afternoon out and do a bit of Christmas shopping!

English Week in Rennes

The Rennes / Exeter twinning committee are helping to organise a 'Semaine anglaise' at the Maison de l'Europe in Rennes from the 5th to the 9th December. The schedule will include conferences and discussions including a round table on the theme of people moving from Britain to Brittany. All residents of Brittany are welcome to attend. Anyone who would like to take part should contact Mrs Peron-Lambert vice-president of the Rennes-Exeter twinning committee: peronla@aol.com.

Callac - Foire Froide

Sixty shops in Callac, including the local supermarkets, have got together to organise another Winter Fair. This year there are over 30,000 euros worth of prizes. Shoppers get one ticket for every 3 euros spent between the 19th Nov and the 3rd December. The draw takes place in Callac at the Mairie on the 3rd Dec 7.30 pm. Results will be posted on the CBJ website: www.thebcj.com.

New Stockists

New stockists of the Journal this month include the Casino Supermarket in the centre of Carhaix, and Intermarché in Merdrignac.

If you have difficulty finding the Journal in your area, let us know, and we will contact a local shop to see if they would like to stock it.

The Language of Shakespeare

"The lamentable change is from
the best,
The worst returns to laughter."

King Lear Act IV, Scene 1

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Letters

Beautiful Brittany

I have just received the October issue of the Brittany journal from my daughter and her husband who moved over to live there 6 months ago. I really look forward to reading it.

I spent a short holiday last summer in Poullaouen and thoroughly enjoyed visiting different places around that area of Brittany. I found the markets really amazing with the Breton people dancing in the streets, which I joined in with gusto. We were there for the Bastille day celebrations, the parade of the pipers and dancers was spectacular, something I will never forget.

The most striking feature of our visit was the lack of traffic on its roads. I also was impressed with the laid back attitude of its very friendly people.

We are going to spend Christmas with my daughter and her husband over there, and hopefully a longer spell next summer.

I was upset when they left England to live in Brittany, but now I feel part of that too.

Margaret and Dave Warman
Droitwich Spa
Worcs. England

Chess Club Huelgoat

Chess players, from beginners to experts, are invited to come along to a new Anglo-French chess club in Huelgoat. The Club, called Le Petit Pion (or little pawn) has an English president, Sue Anderson, a French secretary, Claude Le Carre, and an English treasurer Barry Childs.

It meets each Tuesday evening in a room at L'Homme au Chapeau bar in the Square. Chess is very popular in France, and for those players seeking more than a convivial evening playing chess once a week, there are many opportunities to play in tournaments or league competitions.

The Club also has a strong youth policy, and Sue and Claude are organizing chess activities in Huelgoat's primary school each week this term. They are working with the commune to find separate accommodation for a youth wing for the club.

If you would like to find out more about the Club, you can contact Sue at sueanderson@wanadoo.fr or why not drop in at L'Homme au Chapeau any Tuesday evening?

Sue Derson

Bikes & Lorries

I am in the process of registering my bike business with an anticipated start date of 1st January. I brought with me a very large supply of tools and parts for bikes and will be aiming at supply, repairs and fitting, wheel building, total or part assembly, and hire.

You may be interested in a recent experience of mine regarding the mobile suppliers of tools. I am aware of three such lorries, one of which, EuroVanadium, does seem to offer a higher quality of tool but still at a favourable price.

In March a product I wanted was not on the lorry and I therefore decided to order by post. A month later I received

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bikes & lorries

a parcel with part of my order but not the item I particularly wanted, no explanation, no refund, and a 'dated' credit note. I wrote requesting details of what was going on: NO RESPONSE! I wrote again **AGAIN NO RESPONSE**. I went to the Gendarmerie, and they phoned the firm, only to get the message that they were then closed for August.

In September, I went to the lorry, and they were extremely helpful, and explained that the tool I wanted was no longer stocked and arranged a full swap to the value of the credit note.

I have no complaint with the service provided by the lorry, but would warn against dealing with this firm by post.

All the best,

Terry MANUEL terry.manuel@wanadoo.fr

Charity Auction for Telethon, St. Thuriau

Wishing to meet people and play a role in the life of my village of St Thuriau last year, I joined the Committee of "Telethon." This is a national French charity for children with life threatening illnesses like Cystic Fibrosis. It is always held on the first weekend in December.

I plucked up courage to go to the meeting and offered to host something on the Sunday as all the other events in the village were taking place on the Saturday. To cut a long story short, the village raised 8,000€ and I added nearly another 900€ and all in all was a record for the village.

This year I am helping again and along with my new friends am going to hold a grand auction at 2.30pm on Sunday 4th December. Entrance will be 1€ and for this you get a mince pie and glass of mulled wine to get you into the spirit.

Now comes the appeal: if you can donate a gift towards the auction ASAP I can then create interest by having them on display well in advance. Suitable items could include jewellery, pottery, pictures, perfume, booze, unwanted gifts, nearly new etc. etc. in fact anything saleable.

If you have nothing to give then please support us on the day. Last year we had some banter going and a good time was had by all.

I shall be closed for business 4/12/05 as it will be a dedicated day for Telethon. All items can be brought to Le Chineur, Le Faven Ty Douar, 56300 St Thuriau [see map p 7]. Tel. 02 97 39 38 93 or e mail ritaboulton@hotmail.com

Can arrange some pick ups if desperate. Any business which contributes will get a mention at the auction.

Regards Rita Boulton

Cricket on Radio 4 (see picture page 6)

I would like to inform those six of your readers who wrote to me in support of the "No to cricket on Radio 4" campaign (and anyone else who sympathises) that on their behalf my wife, Brenda, and I held a two person mass demonstration outside the BBC Television Centre, Wood Lane, London W12 7RR.

The offices of Mr Mark Damazar, Controller of the Radio 4, are there, and so if you wish you may write to him either in favour or against the cricket coverage. An alternative is to phone the 'Action Line' 0044 800 044 044 and register your opinion.

Judging from the 6 letters I received, the writers are a group of colourful individualists. I thank them and remind them that for each one of them, perhaps 50 people thought of sending a letter.

Best regards,

Patrick Hatton

p.s. Congratulations to the England team on winning back 'The Ashes'. I understand that the last half day was quite exciting.

Please send letters to: info@thebcj.com
or by post to CBJ, BP4, 22160 Callac

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Three Years in Brittany

On moving to France three years ago my partner Christine and I bought an historic gem of a manor house – its beginnings harking back to the 100 Years War. We offered bed and breakfast, but like others some way from retirement age, we needed other income to sustain our new lifestyle. Having been a commercial artist in England, I gravitated towards something similar. I began producing house portraits in watercolour for people and participated in fetes and exhibitions. A memorable one was held in a small village, displaying and selling work created by the English community in Brittany. Paintings and sculptures were arranged throughout the church, community hall and sports gym, patiently assisted by the maire, who

spoke English. One French couple who commissioned a portrait, suggested I went with them there and then to photograph the house. It was to be a surprise, they explained, for some relations of theirs and now was a good time because they were away on holiday. They assured me we could locate the house, but try as we might, we kept ending up in the wrong place. With the best light disappearing I took what shots I could and arrived back at the exhibition to find hordes of people gathered round tables drinking and listening to a live band. The exhibition had finished and this was the finale to the weekend.

Sometimes though I like to produce paintings en plein air. A couple of passers-by watched me working before explaining that they were renovating their Breton farmhouse and would need a portrait for their B&B publicity and website. Later, as I drove up with their completed picture on board I could see what appeared to be a wheelbarrow of fresh cement being forklifted up to a first floor bedroom. Inside, husband and wife, float and trowel in hand were busy applying lime-based mortar to the wall. I was curious, for I too had walls in need of pointing and rendering – skills I had yet to learn. Fatally, I happened to mention this during a brief sojourn for coffee.

"There's only one way to learn," they said, simultaneously pointing to a pair of overalls.
"Why not?" I replied, not quite sure what I was letting myself in for. In fact, that bit of coaching in rendering and pointing stood me in good stead. Only in France.....

David Moignard and partner Christine moved to Brittany 3 years ago. David produces watercolour portraits of Breton houses and runs watercolour courses for beginners and improvers Tel. 02 99 80 31 55

Pera e ia buhen,
buhennac'h, ar huhenna?

Who goes fast, faster,
fastest?

Harz! Dira-z-onn me a bleg ann holl. N'em
euz bro ebet, hag a beb lec'h ez onn. Harz!

Beware! All bow before me. I am from no
country, and I am from everywhere. Beware!

— Ann ovel, or sklerjen, or sonj.
— Wind, light, thought.

— Ann Anhou
— Death.

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Megaliths

Brittany is an area of the world which is exceptionally rich in the stone structures which are collectively known as megaliths.

These megaliths fall into various categories, some of which are more familiar than others:

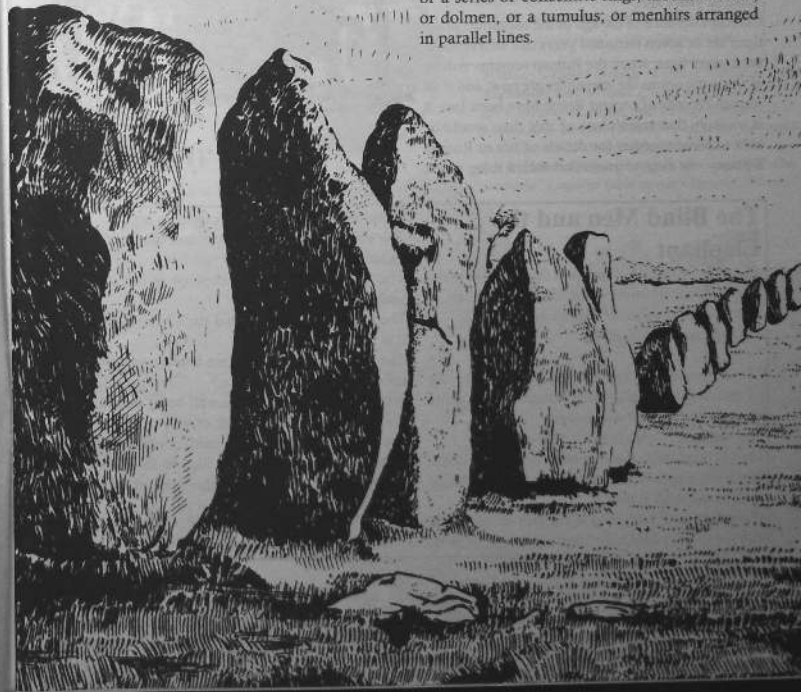
Menhirs: Stones set vertically into the ground (one third below the surface and two thirds above) ranging in height from a few centimetres to several metres.

Dolmens: Also known as stone tables, these typically consist of two vertical stones set in the ground supporting a horizontal stone balanced across them.

Allées Couvertes: These are effectively a series of dolmens placed beside each other to produce a corridor-like space inside.

Cairns and Tumuli: Tumuli are dolmens covered over with earth, sometimes to form a pyramid-like shape; and cairns are composed of stones piled up around dolmen-type openings to create small rooms or chambers in their interior.

Alignments: Alignments consist of a series of menhirs arranged in a line, or in a circle. Sometimes these alignments are complex, consisting of a series of concentric rings, around a stone, or dolmen, or a tumulus; or menhirs arranged in parallel lines.



14 Brittany's Megaliths

What Do We Know About the Megaliths?

Beyond the fact that they exist, we know very little for certain about the megaliths. Who built them? How were they built? What were they for? Many people have tried to provide answers to these questions; but before accepting the current explanations it is worth stopping to remember just how difficult it is to see into the past.

For example, we know from written evidence that in Roman times Brittany was a thriving part of the empire, and that Carhaix was a prosperous Roman city complete with paved roads, town houses, baths, law courts, military barracks, a forum, city walls, etc. A visitor to the town today would be hard-pressed to find a single trace of all this activity - even though it was in full swing just sixteen hundred years ago.

Current estimates of the age of the megaliths make them six or seven thousand years old. In five thousand years time, when the Roman remains will be of the same age as the megaliths are now, and if all written records of ancient Rome have been lost, it is unlikely that researchers of that time would be able to piece together the details of life in Roman Brittany - or even to guess that such a thing as the

Roman occupation of Brittany had ever occurred. The same problem faces us today in trying to understand why and how the megaliths were built, and how they fitted into the overall pattern of life at that time. We have a few thousand stones to study, some broken pieces of pottery, some bones and some stone axe heads; logically, any guess that we make about the origin and purpose of the megaliths, based on such scanty evidence, does not have much chance of being correct.



DOLMEN

The Blind Men and the Elephant

The story of the blind men and the elephant is often cited to illustrate what can happen when one tries to understand something without having sufficient information.

"Four blind men were walking down the middle of the road when they were asked to step aside because an elephant was coming.

"An elephant? What is that?" they asked.

Out of kindness, the elephant keeper let them touch the elephant, so that they would be able to understand what it was.

One of the men took hold of the tail, another took hold of the elephant's ear, another took hold of its

trunk, and the fourth took hold of its leg. The elephant went on its way and the blind men began to discuss what they had felt. The first man said 'The elephant is like a rope with a fluffy end.' The second man said, 'No it isn't, I felt it myself, it is like a banana leaf.' The third man said, 'You are both wrong, the elephant is like a thick snake.' And the fourth said, 'You are all being ridiculous, the elephant is like the trunk of a tree.' Try as they might they could not agree upon what an elephant really was like: in their frustration they argued with each other and ceased to be friends."

Previous page: the alignments at Carnac, Morbihan

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Brittany's Megaliths 15

Where are They?

Menhirs and dolmens are scattered all over Brittany; the greatest concentration of cairns and tumuli is around the coast. The better preserved and most striking megaliths are clearly marked on the blue IGN maps, and most communes still have at least one such example. It is also quite common to come across stones in the woods and fields that in all probability were once part of a megalithic structure.

It is estimated that there are still over a thousand standing in the Breton countryside, excluding those that are part of alignments.

Carnac has more such remains than anywhere else - including over two and a half thousand standing stones arranged in a series of complex alignments.

megaliths of the Forest of Duanlt



The Megaliths of Brittany



Word Origins

It may appear that the modern study of megaliths uses a vocabulary drawn from the language of the people of the land in which these stones are most prolific - i.e. from Breton, but this assumption probably obscures the truth.

Bretons traditionally regarded the stones as being the homes of the Korriganes and the fairies. Their names for them reflected this belief: Ty ar Gorrighed, Ty ar Gorrighed, Ty ar Boudigued, etc., all being variations on 'home of the fairies'. Some names included the word lec'h hinting at the existence of a cave or grotto and these probably referred to the structures that we now call dolmens: Ti-lia'h-ar-C'horiged, home/grotto of the Korriganes. Dolmen means table-stone (dol=taol=table, men=stone) and originally referred to the flat stone on the top of the dolmen. Menhir means tall or long stone (men=stone, hir=long); smaller standing stones were often referred to as 'peulven' (peul=post, ven=maen=stone).

Brittany's tallest menhir: Kerlaos, Finistère. 9 m. Barnenez: Built at least 1500 years before the great pyramid in Egypt, the cairn at Barnenez is estimated to contain 10 000 tons of stone, surrounding a total of 11 dolmen-type corridors. La Roche-aux-Fées: 'Europe's most beautiful allée couverte', contains table stones weighing 200 tons.

Megaliths of the Forest of Duault



The Forest of Duault (see map page 15) is not particularly well-known for its megalithic remains; the pictures on this page illustrate some of the menhirs and dolmens stumbled over in the course of a day's walk. The less celebrated megaliths are often the most rewarding to visit as they are still to be found in a fairly natural setting.

Above: One of the Jumeaux, twin stones standing close to each other in a field that was this year planted with maize.

Above left: A menhir in the middle of a path running through the forest.

Left: A dolmen on the edge of the forest.

If you have pictures of megaliths that you would like to see featured in the Journal please send them to CRJ, BP 4, 22160 Cullac. cjb22936@aol.com

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Why the Megaliths Pose a Problem to Historians

Most of us have, in the course of life - whether we did well at school or not - picked up an idea about the history of civilisation: before modern times there were the Middle Ages; before that, the Roman Empire; and before the Romans the Ancient Greeks. The Ancient Greeks owed their culture to Bronze Age heroes remembered in mythology and in Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

These early Greeks were descended from barbarous Celts who migrated across Asia until they reached the Mediterranean and made contact with the ancient civilisations of Egypt and Mesopotamia - and it is from this meeting that modern civilisation has evolved.

One problem with this Mediterranean-oriented view of world history is that it fails to provide a convincing explanation for such striking archaeological remains as Brittany's megaliths.

If it had been Breton (instead of Roman and Greek) historians who had been responsible for shaping our ideas of history, then it is unlikely that they would have devised a theory that described the inhabitants of this peninsular 6000 years ago as either uncivilised or technologically backward. At the very least, it would require a high level of social organisation, stability of government, clarity of purpose, and technological know-how to move and position even the remains that have survived to the present time.

The idea that the people who constructed the megaliths were primitive, stone-age people, living in caves and scratching a living from hunting and gathering, does not come from an impartial study of these stones; it is derived from a pre-conceived idea of world history, that took no account of their existence.

Adding to the mystery is the fact that Brittany's menhirs and dolmens bear a striking resemblance to remains found in other parts of the world - not only in Wales, Ireland, and South-West England, but also in South America, West Africa, India and the Far East, implying the existence of a global culture, not acknowledged in most histories of the world.

Also, although bones and human remains have been found inside many dolmens and tumuli, there

is no proof that the main purpose of the megaliths was to act as burial chambers. And even if the dolmens were built as burial chambers, this does not help to provide an explanation for the thousands of stones that have been so carefully arranged around Carnac, for example. The truth is that 6000 years ago (or longer) there were things going on in Brittany that we do not understand and which we cannot explain: a state of affairs which makes historians feel very uncomfortable.



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Archaeological Research into the Megaliths

The singularity of Brittany's megaliths resulted in them receiving an exceptional amount of attention in the early days of archaeological research. With the benefit of hindsight, this is now regarded as being unfortunate - the enthusiastic amateurs who sifted through the soil around the foot of the megaliths in the nineteenth century no doubt missed material that may have been detected by the more sophisticated researchers of modern times, if the sites had been left undisturbed.

Archaeologists realised at the outset that they could divine very little from the stones themselves, and therefore turned their attention to searching the ground around them; in the assumption that the people who built the megaliths would have left some debris around and about. Pieces of pottery, axe heads, bones, etc. were indeed found inside or close to most of the megaliths that were investigated and it has been possible to assign a date to these relics: bones, and other organic material can be dated using carbon dating, and artefacts such as pottery and axe heads can be dated by comparing them with similar items found in other sites. This work has led to approximate dates being assigned to the various megaliths:

Cairns: The stone cairns are believed to date back to around 4,700 BC.

Tumuli: The tumuli are believed to be more recent than the cairns - dating back to around 4000 BC.

Menhirs and Dolmens: The oldest menhirs and dolmens are believed to be at least as old as the oldest cairns, but it is thought that new menhirs were still being erected up until 2000 BC.

Allées Couvertes: The famous allées couvertes above

the Daoulas gorge are believed to date back to 3200 BC and it is thought that structures of this sort were still being built up until around 2000 BC.

It must be borne in mind that these dates are based on highly circumstantial evidence: there is no proof that the people who left these relics in and around the megaliths were the people who actually built them.

You Cannot Tell the Age of a Megalith

People who are not expert in this field often assume that it ought to be a simple matter for modern science to determine the exact age of each specific megalith.

This is not the case and there is, in fact, no known technique that will give even the slightest indication of when a particular stone was quarried, moved, or set in place.

As far as science is concerned, a stone that one sees in a field could have been placed there a hundred years ago, or a hundred thousand years ago. Similarly, it may be possible, by matching the composition of the rocks to determine where a particular stone was quarried, but it is not possible to tell when. Nor is it possible to tell how many times a stone was moved before being placed in its current position.

It is for these reasons that modern experts have been unable to completely dispel ideas that the megaliths are not stone-age in origin but date back to a far older, pre-Atlantic civilisation.



La Pierre Glissante, Fougerès: slide down the stone and you will find a spouse within a year.

Folklore & the Megaliths

Apart from archaeological evidence, the only clue that we have to the purpose and origin of the megaliths comes from the oral traditions of the region: i.e. from folklore passed from one generation to the next over successive centuries.

Over the course of six and a half thousand years which have seen countless wars and several migrations one could not expect this folklore to have been preserved intact, but, on the other hand, in the absence of any other information about the megaliths, it should perhaps be treated with more respect than has so far been the case. Breton folklore with respect to the megaliths comes in many different forms: healing properties have been attributed to certain stones - in particular pressing one's chest against (or hugging) a menhir, or sitting on certain dolmens, is believed to restore lost fertility; many dolmens have traditions associated with them that help young women to find a husband; and it is a commonly-held belief that the stones increase the fertility of the soil - crops grow better in a field that contains a menhir, for example, than elsewhere.

It is likely that these traditions have existed for thousands of years and that it is largely due to them that the megaliths have survived intact up to the present time - unlike the Roman buildings which commanded no such respect.

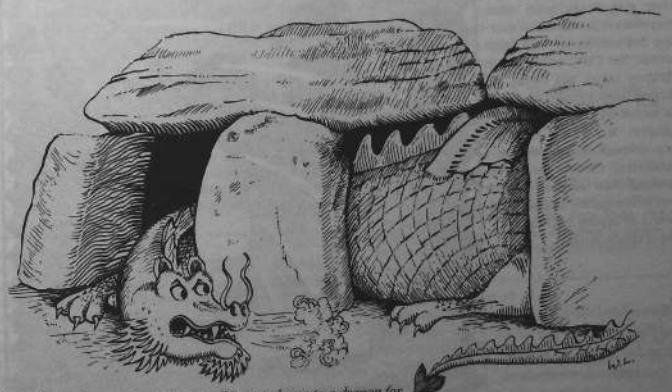
Another branch of folklore provides explanations for the origins of the megaliths. A famous example relates to the Roche-aux-Fées in Ille et Vilaine: 'The Fairy Queen

1000 Years of Persecution

The beliefs attached to the megaliths in common folklore are certainly pre-Christian in origin and are regarded by the Church as being the remnants of a pagan religion. Jealous of their power over their congregations, Breton priests have therefore spent much of the past thousand years trying to dissuade their parishioners from having anything to do with the megaliths - and convincing them that the traditional beliefs associated with them are a form of devil worship that will lead to hell.

This explains the confused nature of many Breton fairy stories in which the Devil and the Virgin Mary now feature alongside korrigans, giants and huge serpents.

sent off her fairies to collect suitable stones from a nearby outcrop of granite. The fairies gathered the stones in their aprons and carried them back to the Queen. When she had enough she sent word to those who had not yet returned that the work was finished; and they dropped their stones just wherever they happened to be.' This explains why the ground between the Roche-aux-Fées and the quarry from which its stones come is littered with huge chunks of granite - from the same quarry. In many cultures around the world there is a belief that



According to legend, the Roche-aux-Fées was home to a dragon for many years before it was eventually tamed by St Armel.

20 The Megaliths of Brittany

stones were once able to fly; this is reflected in the local belief that on the night of the Winter Solstice the menhirs rise out of the ground, exposing the treasure hidden beneath them, and then fly off to the nearest water source from which they drink. Once their thirst has been quenched they fly back to their resting places and settle back into the ground in exactly the same position as before.

Up until the advent of archaeology, most people outside of Brittany assumed that the megaliths had been built by the Druids - the ancient megaliths fit into the pattern of sacred places which were used by the Celts before the Romans came to Brittany; menhirs, for example may have been regarded as conductors helping to balance the energy of the earth with the energy in the air. However, it now seems clear that the Druids themselves were not responsible for constructing Brittany's megaliths, nearly all of which pre-date their era by at least 2000 years; and Bretons themselves never regarded them as being anything to do with building the megaliths - which were universally regarded as the homes of the Korrigans.

These beliefs have not survived the upheavals that have taken place in the countryside over the past few decades and this explains why at least a third of Brittany's megaliths have been uprooted and cast aside over the past hundred years. Where they are being preserved, it is often as a tourist or heritage site rather than as part of everyday life. Anyone who has a menhir or dolmen close to where they live, will, however, know that they still represent one of the most interesting features of the local landscape, and that when one is out walking, it is surprising how much more often one is drawn to visit the local megalith than any other landmark. There is something truly extraordinary about these ancient constructions, which cannot help but make one stop and think about the people who built them, the life they led, and how it compares to the life we lead today. For this reason alone, they deserve to be preserved, and, hopefully, as Brittany emerges from the turmoil caused by the depopulation that has taken place over recent decades, the twenty-first century inhabitants of the region will place the safeguarding of the surviving megaliths towards the top of their list of priorities.

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The biggest threat to the future of the megaliths is the

fact that, perhaps for the first time since they were built, they are no longer seen as having any practical use; obviously their original builders, whoever they might have been, had a very clear purpose in mind when they went to the trouble of moving and positioning such huge stones; the Celts who lived in Brittany before and during the Roman times regarded the stones as sacred sites, intrinsic to their religion, and in the Christian era, although denigrated by the established Church, the stones retained their mystical appeal and were regarded as a potential source of fertility and healing by the common people.



'On the night of the Winter Solstice the stones rise out of the ground to reveal the treasure hidden beneath them.'

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What's On

Every Sunday evening from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

Musicians meet & play at Le Lion d'Or pub situated on the crossroads between Séglien & Clégüerrec. Free bowl of soup for all guests. All proceeds from the evening's entertainment go to the Martin House Children's hospice (www.martinhouse.org.uk). More info: please call the landlord, Peter Smith, 02 97 38 05 11.

November

Walks (10 km approx.) organised by Rederien Kreiz Breizh take place every Thursday & Sunday around Central Brittany. In November there are walks arranged around Plounevez, Mellionec, Gourin, Clédén Poher, Berrien, Poullaouën, St Hermin & Locmaria-Berrien. For more information, contact M. Le Moigne 02 98 81 70 64 (some English spoken).

November

Still time to enter the painting competition organised by Liviou Kreiz Breizh (Couleurs du Centre Bretagne) at Espace Glenmor, Carhaix. Open to all adult, amateur artists. Free subject choice. Call 02 98 93 23 97 (English spoken). 5€ per entry. Works entered are on exhibition in Glenmor from 10th - 18th November.

Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th November

Organic wines & local produce. Tasting and competitions. 15 vineyards represented. In the marquee at Espace Glenmor (on the ringroad, Carhaix, 29) 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Entrance 1 €. More info (French) 02 98 99 18 93

Sunday November 6th

GOOD TIME JAZZ at Châteauneuf du Faou, Bar Tal Ar Pont (just next to the bridge) 4pm - 7pm. 5 €/2 € students. Lively, festive jazz in a great atmosphere!

Sunday November 6th

Indoor car boot sale. Tables free but booking essential. Carolann's, Carnoët. (On left as you enter village.) Well marked. 10 a.m. - 1.30 p.m. Hot food available incl. fish & chips. 02 96 21 54 62

Tuesday November 8th

AIKB- (Association Integration Kreiz Breizh) are organising a visit to a cider factory, and an angora goat farm where mohair is produced. 5 €. Tel: Liz on 02 96 24 87 90 for more information.

Wednesday November 9th

AIKB Quiz Night with Bar & Bar-snacks, Salle Polyvalente, Gouarec. 8pm. Prizes for the best answers. Questions in English & French. Open to all - teams (of 4) and individuals. Entry 1€ 50 per person. For more info, call Liz on 02 96 24 87 90.

Wednesday November 9th

U.T.L. (University of Free Time) in Châteauneuf. First conversation workshop (French/English, English/French). 2.30 pm at the Communauté des Communes, rue de la Gare, Châteauneuf. All welcome.

Saturday November 12th

World Music concert at Kergloff (nr Carhaix, 29) in the Salle Culturelle, Makida Palabre - a musical meeting between Mamar Kassey from Niger and 4 well-known Breton musicians. 12, 10 and 7 € tickets. 02 97 23 83 83

Sunday November 20th

La Chapelle Neuve (nr Callac -22) Autumn open day 'Apple Tree Festival' organised by the Centre Forêt-Bocage (Woodland Centre) 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. The public are invited to watch (and join in where appropriate) activities which include: Cider making,

What's On 21

Au Rendez-Vous Des Celtes

In the past month we have served...

Langoustine Bisque
Fresh Figs with Parma Ham
Tiger Prawn Thai Red Curry
Chicken, Sun Dried Tomatoes & Olives
Duck Breast with Raspberry & Balsamic Vinegar
Walnut & Whisky Tart

...AND YOU THOUGHT WE JUST DID FISH & CHIPS...

Booking Recommended

LE BOURG - FLUSSULIEN
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Fleur de Bretagne

Camping Rostrenen, Kerandouaron (dir. Silliac)

Bar Open every day except Wednesday

12.00h - 14.00h & 18.00h - 22.00h

Bar meals available in the evening - come and try our

steak & chips (booking advisable)

Room available for small groups (up to 10)

Pool table Dart Board Internet 1 euro for 15 mins

Tel: 02 96 29 15 45

planting fruit trees, exhibition of different varieties of apples, jam tasting, clogmaking. Workshops for the children include: Breton wrestling, drawing, etc. Admission free.

Sunday November 20th & Mon. November 21st

Woody Allen's MATCH POINT, in English, at Callac cinema. 9 p.m. With Jonathan Rhys-Meyers & Scarlett Johansson. 2 h. 3 min. long.

Sunday November 27th

Christmas Craft fair in the Salle Polyvalente, Clégüerrec (direction Mur de Bretagne). 1 p.m. - 6 p.m. Free entry. Over 50 stalls. Food and entertainment.

Sunday November 27th

Christmas Fair at Le Faouët, 22160 La Chapelle Neuve. 10 km from Callac (the road to Lohuec, well signposted). 2 p.m. start. Free stalls. Hot drinks and cakes available. Proceeds to cancer research. For a stall or information please ring 02 96 21 63 81.

Sunday December 4th

Teletthon Live Auction at Le Chêneur, St Thulau nr. Pontivy - see p.7 for directions. 2.30 p.m. start. Free glass of mulled wine & mince pie to all. All proceeds to Charity. Events will happen all over France (similar to U.K. Children in Need appeal). Phone 02 97 38 38 93 for more details.

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Q.: "In an earlier offering you suggested that ADSL is cheaper than conventional dial-up. I've been doing the sums and this isn't the case, so what's the advantage?"

A.: I don't wish to appear pedantic (but I am), but what I said was: "The cost benefits are debatable but really only advantageous to those who are presently using RNIS (ISDN to English ears)..."

Evidently, this isn't the case for my questioner. He is, most likely, using a dial-up connection. I've discussed the other advantages before so let us stick with the cost aspect.

Comparing like with like is impossible because ADSL offers an 'always on' connection that is reliable and very fast as well as giving the opportunity to use a telephone at the same time. No more engaged signals! Few ISPs are now offering unlimited access over Dial-up. Those that do, typically charge €30 a month. Wanadoo is currently offering ADSL at €26 for a twelve month contract. Better, they have a limited service at €19.90 without a contract (sans engagement) which would be ideal for most users who only want to do a bit of surfing and send emails. Installation cost is about €50 but you'd recoup that fairly soon.

There is one cost aspect that may be of interest to people who suffer large telephone bills. ADSL allows good quality calls to be made from one's computer using "Voice over Internet Protocol". VoIP isn't a new technology but I predict that it is going to be the next "Big Idea" for communications. By downloading some free software and buying a headset with microphone (€10) one can speak to anyone in the world who has the same set-up. My wife was talking to our son who was on a yacht in the Mediterranean Sea. (Cooking for the Spanish Royal Family by the way - even I'm not above name dropping!) The essential point is that the call was FREE!

You can get the software and more information about Skype at [<http://www.skype.com>]. If you want to call a landline telephone you will need to set up an account using your credit card. If you take normal precautions to ensure that you are at the correct secure site you shouldn't have any difficulty. 150 million people cannot be wrong.

As an alternative there is VoIP Buster! [<http://www.voipbuster.com>] [<http://www.voipbuster.com/>] This is a similar service that, for a €1 set up charge, allows you to call fixed phones in about a dozen countries, absolutely free. The UK, USA, Spain and France are included. This is a relatively new service for which the software is still being tested. It's in "Beta" to use the jargon. Whilst some people have had problems, most find that it works fine, although the software is a bit basic. The good news is that you can test it for free. Calls cut off after one minute. Longer calls require the payment of that €1 but this can be done using PayPal - safer than a credit card.

Of course, none of these services is likely to remain free except between computers but they're worth a go. Dial-up users could try it but the signal quality will probably make the experience very frustrating.



Any questions?
graxwarrior@wanadoo.fr
or leave a message with the CBJ:
02 96 21 52 21

BURO+
express
Office Supplies Stationery Printers
Fax machines Photocopying
ZAE du Pôcher, Carhaix (near McDonald's)
Tel: 02 98 93 04 10 Fax: 02 98 99 13 06

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Website Workshop

Last month we looked at Email, this month we shall examine the Spam phenomenon.

Q - So what is Spam?

A - The term Spam refers to unwelcome, inappropriate and unsolicited bulk email. Spam is often referred to as Unsolicited Bulk Mail (UBM), Excessive Multi-Posting (EMP), Unsolicited Commercial Email (UCE), spam mail, bulk email or just plain junk mail.

Q - How will I know I have received Spam?

A - These spam emails usually come with subject matter such as Chain Letters, Pyramid Schemes, Multi-level Marketing Schemes, 'Get Rich Quick' or 'Make Money Fast' schemes, Pornographic Solicitations, Drugstore Advertisements or Holiday Prize Promotions.

Q - Can spam be dangerous?

A - Spam is often considered the electronic version of junk mail. It is sent in order to sell products and/or services, promote a scam, or even distribute viruses or spyware (covered next month).

Q - How did these spammers get hold of my email address?

A - Information about you such as your name, address and buying habits are a commodity that is regularly sold and traded. Some companies sell their mailing lists to third parties - including spammers. Spammers will also obtain information by using software that automatically harvests email addresses found on the Internet, searching newsgroups for those who are posting messages, searching chat rooms for addresses, or even hunting for recently completed sales on services such as eBay.

Q - What can I do about it?

A - There is a lot of things you can do to reduce the amount of spam in your inbox:

- Don't buy anything promoted in a spam message
- Don't reply to spam or click on its "unsubscribe" link because all this does is identify your email

address as live and therefore much more valuable when selling on.

- Disable preview panels in email programs such as Thunderbird or Outlook to prevent spam from reporting back to its sender.
- Install spam filtering/blocking software such as MailWasher Pro (www.firetrust.com) to preview emails on the server, choosing which emails to delete before downloading them.
- Set up a disposable or secondary email address for public use, such as online registration and e-commerce sites.
- Some spammers use computer programs to guess email addresses and research shows that email addresses containing numbers, letters and underscores are more difficult to guess and tend to receive less spam.
- Images used in emails can be adapted to send messages back to the spammer who uses them to locate live email addresses - try viewing your emails in plain text rather than HTML.

Next month: Spyware

malcolm@practicalnet.co.uk
www.practicalnet.co.uk

Practical net is a company that specialises in the design of websites for site owners and small businesses in Brittany.

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PRINCESS MARCASSA

Once upon a time there lived a king of France who had three sons. The two elder sons were strong and handsome, but the youngest was weak and sickly. He spent all day sitting in the corner of the fireplace, and for this reason he became known as Luduenn*.

The old King had fallen ill and nobody could cure him. At last a magician arrived, who said that he would not get better until he had touched the Drédaine bird, in its golden cage.

"Where is this bird?" asked the King.

"In Princess Marcassa's castle, which lies beyond the Red Sea," said the magician. "It is surrounded by three high walls, and the three courtyards are guarded by giants, seven foot high, and dragons, who can breathe fire seven leagues round about.

"Who will go to such a castle, to fetch me the bird?" asked the King, with a sigh.

"I will father," said the eldest son.

He took gold and silver, mounted on the best horse in the stables and set out with the words:

"If I do not return in a year and a day, it is because I am no longer alive."

He travelled so swiftly that he soon came to Bro-Saoz (land of the Saxons – England). He asked the way to the castle of Princess Marcassa, but people only laughed at him. He went to stay at an inn, and found such merry companions there that he did not leave until his money ran out.

When the year and a day had passed away, and the eldest son did not return, the second son asked permission to go in quest of the Drédaine bird. His father gave him gold and silver and he soon reached the same inn as his brother. He too stayed there, and led the same life.

The year and a day passed away, and seeing that his brother did not return, Luduenn went to his father, who was growing more ill by the day.

"Father," he said, "I wish to look for my brothers and the Drédaine bird."

"You, my child?" said the old man. "Stay at home to close my eyes when I die. You will never succeed where your two brothers have failed."

But Luduenn still wished to go. His father gave him a little money, but much less than he had given to his other sons. Luduenn went to the stables, and took a dromedary that travelled seven leagues an hour.

He soon reached the town where his two brothers were living, and asked everyone if they knew the way to the castle of Princess Marcassa. People replied that they had never heard of it except from the two young princes, who led a merry life at the inn. Luduenn was overjoyed to hear that his brothers were still alive, and hurried to meet them. They welcomed him, stole his money, and sent him on his way.

Poor Luduenn went on, his heart heavy at his brothers' unkind treatment, but thanks to his dromedary, he travelled very swiftly.

One night he found himself in a great wood. Wild animals could be heard all about, and growing afraid, he climbed a tree. From its branches he saw a little light, and he climbed down and made towards it. It was a candle, shining through the window of a little hut, made from branches and dry grass. In it was a little old woman.

"Please, grandmother, may I stay here for the night?" he said.

"I cannot take you in my child," said the old woman. "For I have no bed."

* From the Breton word for 'ash' - often given to people thought to be slow-witted or lazy.

"I can sleep on the hearthstone, grandmother."

"Very well, come in, for I feel sorry for you."

Luduenn tied his dromedary to a post, and entered the hut.

"How bad it smells in here," he said, holding his nose.

"Yes. It is my husband. He has been dead eight days, and his body is still here."

"Why do you not bury him?"

"Alas, my child. I have not money to pay for the burial."

"I am not rich, grandmother, but tomorrow morning I will pay for him to be buried."

The next morning Luduenn went to the men in the village and said:

"Here is the money that you asked of the old woman in the forest. Take it, and bury her husband straight away."

The corpse was buried, and Luduenn walked by the old woman's side behind the coffin.

He continued on his way, and came to a great, barren plain. As he was travelling over it he saw that he was being followed by a white fox.

"I wonder why this animal is following me?" he thought to himself.

At the far side of the plain, the fox began to speak to him:

"Are you looking for the Drédaine bird?"

"Yes dear creature – can you give me tidings of it?"

"Yes. You are not far from it now. Can you see that castle on the mountain? It is in there, and this is what you must do to win it. The castle is surrounded by three walls; inside each wall is a courtyard, which you must pass through. The first courtyard is full of serpents, toads and poisonous reptiles; in the second courtyard are serpents and tigers, and in the third courtyard are serpents and giants, who guard all the doors into the castle.

"They all sleep from eleven to the last stroke of noon,

and you can walk past them, and even tread on them,

without their awakening. Once you are in the castle

you will pass through three magnificent apartments

and in the fourth (I will not tell you what you will

find in the first three) is the Drédaine bird, in its

golden cage which hangs from the ceiling by

three gold chains. He too will be asleep. Close

by, a sabre hangs from a golden nail. Take it,

cut through the three chains, and carry off

the bird in its cage. But, do not forget, all

this must be done by the last stroke of

noon, otherwise the doors will close

on you, and you will never return.

Luduenn thanked the fox for his

advice, and continued on his way.

He arrived at the castle when eleven

was chiming. The door stood open, and

he passed through the first courtyard.

Enormous serpents and other reptiles

lay over the ground, but they did not

awaken. It was the same in the second and

third courtyards, and his courage nearly forsook

him at the sight of such hideous monsters. At last,

however, he reached the entrance to the castle itself.



26 Breton Story: Princess Marcassa

No one was in the first room, but on a table there stood a loaf of good, white bread. He was hungry, and cut himself a large piece. To his wonder, the loaf did not become any smaller, and he put it in his pocket saying:

"This might come in useful on my journey."

In the second room he found a tankard of wine, with a glass beside it. He drank one glassful, then another, and then another. When he had finished, he put the tankard in his pocket and went into the third room.

In this room lay a beautiful princess, fast asleep on a purple and gold bed. He gazed at her, open-mouthed, and then he took off his shoes, tiptoed up to her side, and kissed her. She did not awaken and, bearing in mind the fox's advice, he went on to the fourth room.

In this room he found the Drédaine bird, fast asleep in its cage. He saw the sabre hanging from the wall, and on its blade he read these words:

"He who owns me can kill ten thousand men with the edge of my blade; with the other side he can cut whatever he pleases."

"Very good!" said Luduenn, and seizing the sabre he cut the three chains with three powerful strokes – slash, slash, slash! He seized the cage and, sabre in hand, ran out of the castle and through the three courtyards. As he crossed the threshold of the last courtyard, midday began to strike. He leapt onto his dromedary, which was waiting at the door, and set off with the speed of the wind.

When the princess, the giants, and the serpents awoke, they knew immediately that the bird had been stolen. The serpents began to shoot forth flames, and the giants set off in pursuit of the thief. Luduenn and his dromedary had their hair singed, but the dromedary was guided by the white fox who ran ahead of them, and travelled so fast that they soon left the castle's dominions behind.

The white fox immediately disappeared, and Luduenn continued on his way.

Second and final part of Princess Marcassa, in the next issue of the Journal.

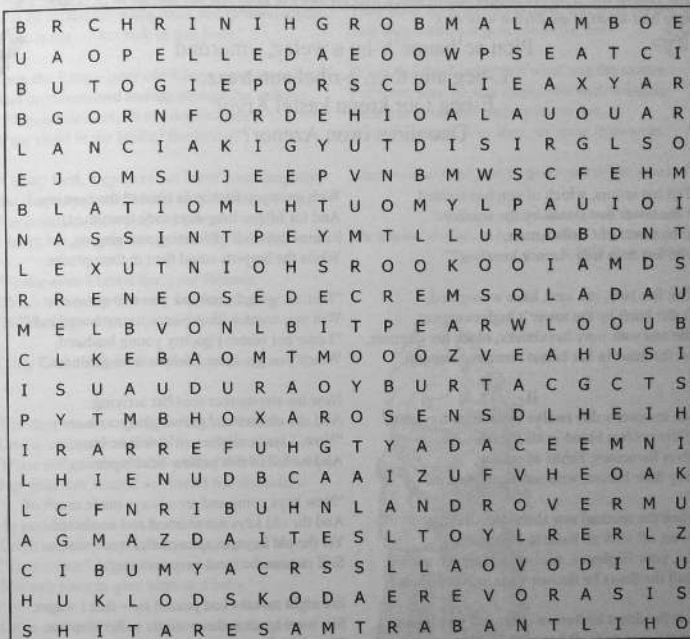
'Princess Marcassa' is a traditional Breton story, retold and illustrated by Bethan Lewis



Word Search 27

Word Search: 67 MAKES OF CAR to be found.

Words can run forwards, backwards, up, down, and diagonally.



ALFA ROMEO	DAEWOO	LAMBORGHINI	OLDSMOBILE	STUDEBAKER
AMBASSADOR	DAIHATSU	LANCIA	OPEL	SUBARU
ASTON MARTIN	DODGE	LAND ROVER	PEUGEOT	SUNBEAM
AUDI	FERRARI	LEXUS	PORSCHE	SUZUKI
AUSTIN	FIAT	LINCOLN	PLYMOUTH	TOYOTA
BEDFORD	FORD	MASERATI	PROTON	TRABANT
BENTLEY	HILLMAN	MAZDA	RELIANT	TRIUMPH
BMW	HONDA	MERCEDES	RENAULT	TVR
BUBBLE	HUMBER	MG	ROLLS ROYCE	VAUXHALL
BUICK	HYUNDAI	MINI	ROVER	VOLKSWAGEN
CADILLAC	JAGUAR	MITSUBISHI	SAAB	VOLVO
CHEVROLET	JEEP	MORGAN	SEAT	
CHRYSLER	KIA	MORRIS	SINGER	
CITROEN	LADA	NISSAN	SKODA	

The Tower of Armor

Tour Ann Arvor

'Tour Ann Arvor' is an old Breton ballad which tells the story of Lady Azenor, mother to St. Budoc, one of the best-loved of the Breton wise men.

Piou ac'hanoc'h-hu a welaz, - mordud
E-beg ann tour, e-ribe ann treaz;
E-beg tour krenn kastel Arvor
Daoulinet itron Azenor?

I

"Tell me sailors, which of you has sighted,
In the tower that stands by the seashore?
In the tower of Castle Armor,
Who has seen lady Azenor kneeling?"

"The fair lady, my lord, have we sighted,
As she knelt by the tower's high casement,
Pale and wan were her cheeks, black her garment,
But the heart in her breast remained tranquil."

II

One summer's day twelve emissaries travelled,
Of the noblest blood in all Breizh,
Silver harnesses, habits of yellow,
Grey their horses, with red, open nostrils.

When the sentinel saw them approaching,
He set off with all haste to his master,
"Lo, your Highness, twelve men are advancing,
Shall the doors be thrown wide to admit them?"

"Let the doors be thrown open, my watchman,
Let the men with all honour be welcomed,
Let the table be laid at this instant,
Welcome well, when the time comes to welcome."

"On behalf of our King's son we come, Lord,
Here to ask for the hand of your daughter,
Here to ask for your daughter with honour,
Lady Azénor seek we in marriage."

"With all joy will I give him my daughter,
He is handsome and tall, they have told me,
No less comely and tall is my daughter,
White as milk, and as mild as a bird."

With great joy Bishop Is blessed the nuptials,
And for fifteen long days they continued,
Fifteen days full of feasting and singing,
While the harpists stood firm in their places.

"Dearest wife, I must ask you this question,
Will you come with me back to my homeland?"
"I care not where I go, my young husband,
Where you go, there I follow with gladness."

Now his stepmother sees her arriving,
And she chokes and grows giddy with envy.
"Now, I know all the world will be busy,
And be full of this yellow-beak's praises."

"New keys come and are always made much of,
And the old keys are scorned and neglected.
Yet the old keys, in spite of this treatment,
Still remain the most easy and useful."

Ere eight months had passed by – that I wager,
She went bearing these words to her stepson,
"Speak and say son of Breizh, would it please
you,
To spend nights with the wolf in the moonlight?"*

"Oh take heed – if you trust me – take heed,
It may not be true yet – but it will be.
Oh my lord, give a thought to your honour,
Guard your cuckoo's nest with due attention."

"If your counsel is faithful, my lady,
Straight away will I bear her to prison,
She shall wait at the top of the tower,
And ere three days are past, I will burn her."

*i.e. to be ousted from the husband's place in the bedchamber.

III

The old King, when he heard of the rumour,
Wept and shed many tears in his sorrow, –
And he seized his white hairs and moaned loudly,
"Woe is me – I am sick of this body."

Then the King – poor old King – gave an order,
And he summoned and questioned the sailors;
"Oh you mariners, do not deceive me,
Is my child in the land of the living?"

"Oh my lord, they have not burnt your daughter,
But they say she will burn on the morrow;
She is still at the top of the tower,
I heard her singing there yesterday evening."

"Yester-even I heard her, your Honour,
Oh, so tranquil and sweet was her singing:
'Please forgive them, please show them
forgiveness,
O my God, let them feel your compassion.'"

IV

The day came – and she walked to the fire,
Like a lamb, she was free from foreboding,
White her gown, and she walked there barefooted,
Her gold hair floated out round her shoulders.

As poor Azénor went to the fire,
Large and small spoke in protest against it:
"Tis a crime – a great crime – that is certain –
She was soon to give birth to a baby."

Large and small they all groaned as she passed
them,
But the stepmother felt no relenting,
"Tis no crime," she replied, "but a virtue,
We but slay the young snakes with the adder."

"Now blow hard, merry lighters, blow hard,
Let the fire burn stongly and brightly,
Blow still harder – my children – blow harder,
Let the flames rise up high, as is seemly."

They blew hard, and blew hard, and grew weary,
Still the flames would not rise up beneath her;
They blew hard, and blew hard, and grew weary,
Still they could not give life to the fire.

When the chief-judge saw what was the matter,
For some time he was speechless with wonder;
"She has doubtless enchanted the fire,
If she burns not, why then, we must drown her."

Second and final part in next issue of the Journal

*Translated from the Breton,
the original ballad can be seen online: www.thebcj.com
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Chicory

Month by Month: November

1. Dig up the chicory plants. Cut off the tops and the thin, tapering end of the root. Many books suggest that you discard any roots that have a diameter of less than two inches at the top, but this is not necessary, it is quite possible to get a good crop from smaller roots.



2. Dig a trench in a polytunnel or greenhouse. The trench should be about 18 inches deep. Fill the trench to within about 6 inches of the surface with a loose mixture of soil and peat or soil and compost.

3. With the aid of a dibber insert your chicory roots into this loosely-packed soil mixture. Position the roots so that they are close to each other but not touching, and so that all the tops are at the same level.



4. Cover over with the remainder of the soil that you dug from the trench, and then cover this with grass-cuttings or compost from the garden. Put a black plastic sheet over the top of the grass cuttings. The aim is to totally exclude light from the chicory.

5. The chicory roots will start to sprout and form chicons in the dark. They can be checked from time to time by peeling back the black plastic and carefully removing some of the earth. Start harvesting after 3 weeks. Pull up the whole root - cut just below the crown.



N.B. Most years, a slighter later crop of chicory can be obtained by leaving some of the plants in their original growing position: chop off the tops, cover with several inches of soil and/or compost plus a sheet of black plastic. The chicons should be ready for harvesting in the new year.

November in the Garden

Lawns: This is a critical time of year for the lawn. It is advisable to take advantage of any fine day to get into the garden and mow the lawn on as low a cut as possible. If the grass is allowed to get beyond a certain length it will not dry out, even on sunny days, and will become almost impossible to cut: this does not stop it growing, of course, and if you are not careful your lawn may end up looking like a thick meadow by next spring.

Broad Beans: Broad beans are not a traditional Breton vegetable, possibly because so many other beans grow well here - but none of them are ready for harvesting early in the summer at the same time as the autumn-sown broad bean. The secret of growing this vegetable successfully is to select the right spot. The aim is to sow the seeds now, in November, and then to nurture the seedlings through the winter so that they can take advantage of the warm spring weather to mature and set flower. They should therefore be sown in a bed that has good soil, which is sheltered from the prevailing westerly winds, and which is not too shaded. There are often just one or two weeks over the course of the winter - in January or February - when the weather is cold enough to damage the broad bean plants. If they can be covered over with straw or bracken at this time, they stand a good chance of providing the first proper crop of the summer, next year.

In recent years, local shops have started to stock 'Longue de Seville'; this is not hardy enough for winter sowing in many Central Breton gardens. A variety such as 'Aquadulce', is preferable.

Potatoes: If you favour no-dig gardening, now is the time to designate which areas of the garden are going to be used for potatoes next year, and to cover them over with a thick layer of mulch. This prevents weeds growing and reduces the need to dig or rotivate the ground next year.

Storing Winter Vegetables

The biggest difficulty in storing winter vegetables is in finding a suitable storage area. It should be cold, but frost free, and it should be mouse and rat proof. It does not matter if it is damp: underground rooms and cellars are traditionally used for vegetable storage.

Carrots: Carrots are probably the most popular of all the root vegetables and it is well worth making the effort to dig up and store any that you still have in the ground.

Dig up the carrots, remove any leaves that they still have, and place them in wooden vegetable boxes (which you should be able to pick up from the supermarket); pack them with peat or sand or dry soil in such a way that the carrots are not touching each other.



Beetroot: Pull up your remaining beetroots and twist off the leaves. Store them in a box or crate. The beetroots will keep until well into the new year.



Parsnips: One of the wonderful things about parsnips is that they can withstand the worst winter frosts, and they can be left in the ground right through the winter. It may be advisable to cover them over with straw or bracken to prevent the tops going black.

Early November is the time to pick your kiwis. Leave them in a cellar for a few weeks before eating, to allow them to ripen.



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32 Classified Advertising

Classified Advertising

25 words 3€

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(Before 20th of the month)

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For Sale

Firewood 90% oak, 10% beech. Cut to size. 160 €/cord delivered. From pruning and sustainable forests. 1 metre lengths green wood. 105 €/cord Tel: 02 96 13 40 05

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Father & son who are working foresters have oak and beech firewood - dry or green - for sale. Delivered anywhere. Tel 02 96 36 58 40 evenings.

HORSE TRAILER 2 places (French reg.) Batson 55 Pullman large horse, 1993. American rear doors, low ramp. Front exit door ramp. Fully padded, saddle rack. 2 sets Weatherbeater Transport protection inc. (value €150) 3 750 ono. Tel Mike 02 96 43 44 23

Log box - brass & wood sailing ship design. 30 €. Gilt framed print 'The Landlord's Tale' - (olde-worlde tavern scene) 24 ins x 20 ins approx. 30 €. Also other pictures if interested. Tel: 02 97 38 04 52

3 Game Boy Advanced SPs. 50 €, 60 € & 70 €. Contact Chrissie 02 96 29 69 12

Pei-Job mini-digger. EB12-4 with cab. In excellent working order. 7,800 €. Also Ifor Williams 2 tonne twin axle trailer with loading ramps. 1,500 €. Tel 02 98 99 81 69

2 Berth Micro-lite Discovery Caravan. Brand new fridge unused, cooker and also brand new unopened awning. Excellent condition. 3,575€ tel: 02 98 78 13 63

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English cooker with double oven. Parkinson Cowan, Sonata 50 GX. L.P.G. Very good condition. Chocolate brown/cream. 100 € ono. Tel: 02 96 50 42 51

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Heavy duty steel 5'6" L x 4'2" W load space. Needs some TLC hence price 50 €. Tel 02 97 39 48 84

Rotivator. As new, quality model, Honda petrol engine, 22" tilling width, [was 780] bargain at 400 €. Mower, McCulloch, as new, with Honda 5.5 petrol engine, 16" rotary blade 200 €. Tel 02 97 39 48 84

For Sale continued page 35

SUDOKU PUZZLE

Fill in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each smaller 3x3 block contains all the numbers 1-9. No row, column or 3x3 block should contain the same number twice.

Solution page 36

Puzzle supplied by Trevor Dallas

www.madmanacrossthewater.com

			4	7	1			
2	7							
4			2		5		3	
	6	7		9	5	4	8	
	2			7	4		6	
		9	6	3		7	5	2
		2	8			6	4	
			3			9		5
5						3		

www.thebcj.com

Nature in Brittany: Mushrooms 33



In the Autumn the ground comes alive as thousands of mushrooms push their way up through the soil, or from dead wood. Even the most cautious person would find it hard not to be a little curious as to the properties of these wonderful products of nature.

1 The warty surface of this mushroom, makes it easy to identify as *Scleroderma verrucosum*. 2 & 3 *Boletus badius*; the Boletes species of mushrooms are characterized by having a spongy layer of vertical tubes on the underside of the cap, as opposed to gills. 4 & 5 Young and old parasol mushroom, *Macrolepiota procera*. Edible. 6 When mature, puff balls burst open, puffing out millions of tiny spores. 7 Dog stinkhorn (*Mutinus caninus*) 8 Sparassis crispa, or brain fungus; found at the bases of pine trees in early Autumn. Edible.

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34 Nature in Brittany: Mushrooms

KEBELL-TOUSEG

9. The colourful cap of a fly agaric. 10 & 11. *Fistulina hepatica* (beefsteak fungus), young and old. Found on trunks of oak and chestnut trees in Autumn. 12 & 13. Shaggy ink caps (*Coprinus comatus*). Very good to eat when young, but quickly dissolves into ink. 14. Stinkhorn; an unmistakable species emitting a foul smell. 15. Young fly agaric growing in a beech wood.

*Kebell-touseg, Breton for mushrooms. Singular: kabell-touseg, meaning toad's hood.

Classified Advertising / Gardening 35

For sale continued from page 32

Bicycles, never used, x1 gents Raleigh Pioneer blue 200 € and x1 ladies Triumph met. green 180 € or 350 € pair. Also car bike rack, new, holds x3, Witter, pole design 45 €. Tel: 02 97 39 48 84

1920's Gramophone player and records, [not horn type], wind-up, - a useful and decorative piece of furniture. 2 cupboards 38" h x 18" w x 20" : 200 €. Also antique Hallstand, chooks, mirror, umbrella stand and marble top 71" h x 32" w x 13" d : 200 €. Tel: 02 97 39 48 84

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Personal

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Classified ads continued page 36

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Maintenance and Small Projects 22

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Solution: Sudoku puzzle Page 32

5	9	3	4	8	7	1	2	6
2	7	6	5	1	3	8	9	4
4	1	8	9	2	6	5	7	3
3	6	7	2	9	5	4	8	1
8	2	5	1	7	4	3	6	9
1	4	9	6	3	8	7	5	2
9	3	2	8	5	1	6	4	7
7	8	4	3	6	2	9	1	5
6	5	1	7	4	9	2	3	8

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38 Classified Advertising

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Need help? (contd.) - paint, wash up - whatever. Can work hours to suit you. How did you manage without me? Katrina 06 86 05 08 30

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Vehicles for sale continued page 40

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Building & Property Services 39

Building & Property Services

Duart Services Property Management. Painting and decorating. Garden maintenance and fencing. Cleaning. Key holding. No job too small. Caravan and boat storage. Tel Graham or Sharon 02 98 72 95 37

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Building & Property Services continued page 40

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Vehicles For Sale *continued from page 38*

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Vehicles for sale continued page 42

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Building & Property Services 41

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42 Property For Sale & to Rent

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Vehicles For Sale continued from page 40

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www.thebcj.com

Central Brittany Journal - November 2005

Property 43

Property



Property of the Month

Carhaix

Situated in the old village of Petit Carhaix is this very pretty 3-bedroomed, stone-built, semi-detached cottage within walking distance of the river and the old town. It has a lounge/diner and fully fitted kitchen, ground floor shower room, utility room, 2 bedrooms, fitted wood burner, storage heater, garage and a good-sized rear garden. 140,714 € incl. all fees

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Wood Mouse

(*Apodemus sylvaticus*) French: mulot sylvestre Breton: Morsenn

Appely Dappely,
A little brown mouse,
Goes to the cupboard
In somebody's house.

In somebody's cupboard
There's everything nice,
Cake, cheese, jam, biscuits
- All charming for mice!

Appely Dappely
Has little sharp eyes,
And Appely Dappely
Is so fond of pies!



This old rhyme very aptly describes the wood mouse, partial to apples, and anything which can be found in somebody's cupboard from pies to plastic!

Although generally found outside, wood mice will often venture indoors at this time of year, to make a temporary home in your house.

Big-eared, beady-eyed, furry, whiskered and small – although they aren't everybody's favourite creatures, few people will deny that mice are cute.

When living outdoors they will inhabit a complicated system of burrows, and when indoors they can find a similar home behind your walls. They are nocturnal animals, so it is at night that you will hear them scurrying, racing, nibbling, scratching, falling and rolling behind the walls, ceiling and floor, making one wonder why the expression quiet as a mouse was ever invented!

There has never been an easy way to rid a house of a mouse. They are rarely caught in traps, and although the presence of a cat will deter them, it won't stop them altogether.

The most effective way, if you are not too scared of mice, is to block up its escape routes, pull out the furniture, and catch it in your hands!

Wood mice are good jumpers, very agile, and frighteningly fast; in fact, the acrobatics they perform when cornered, and their amazing ability to escape through even the tiniest gap, can make your mouse chase quite as entertaining as a Tom and Jerry cartoon come to life.

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