

Issue 198

1€

Central Brittany Journal

December 2020



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More Christmas ads on page 4

Cover:
see page 6



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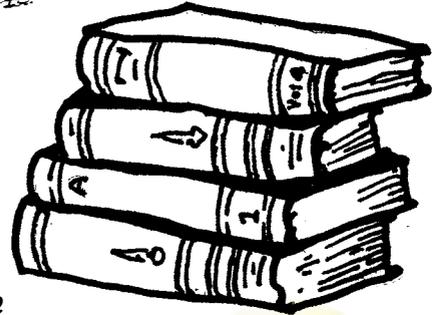


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*Drinks to Top
the Season
pages 28-29*



Limericks 16

*Tim the
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Moorhen 31



Time to think about New Year resolutions for a post-Brexit world?

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whether face to face, by video or phone

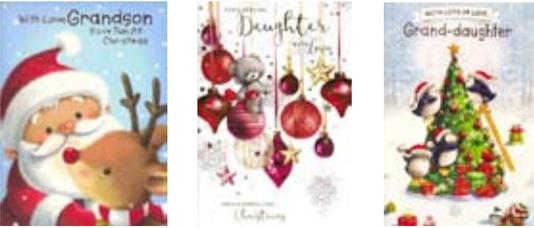
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4 Christmas adverts



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Editorial

Putting this Christmas issue together has brought home the degree to which daily life has been affected by the virus restrictions – no carol services, no Christmas meals, and no Christmas markets. However, there are also clear signs that the human ability to adapt and improvise is starting to reassert itself, and, particularly after the start of this second lockdown, people are finding ways of helping each other without risking spreading the virus. I am not, personally, a believer in the magic power of a vaccine to return life to how it was before, and am pinning my hopes on these more human-scale initiatives being able to restore civilised values to daily life.

Thanks to everyone who sent in last minute material for the What's On and Christmas features as it became clearer what sort of restrictions would apply in December, and thanks are also due to the regular contributors who have managed to keep providing interesting material for the Journal whilst being confined to their houses for much of the time.

So...even if it is likely to be a simpler and more constrained festive season than usual, I would like to wish all CBJ readers a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year ! *GL*

Central Brittany Journal

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Letters: letters@theobj.com Whats On: whatson@theobj.com

Central Brittany Journal, B.P. 4, 22160 Callac, France. Editor: **Gareth Lewis** info@theobj.com

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Hetty's Kitchen pages 32-33

Red Salad

Turkey à la King

Panettone Stuffing

Jazz Up the Mince Pies!

*Mike Boshier's
John Deacon Series
'The Perfect Christmas Gift'
page 34*

Tim the Gardener 'Une Année avec la Terre'

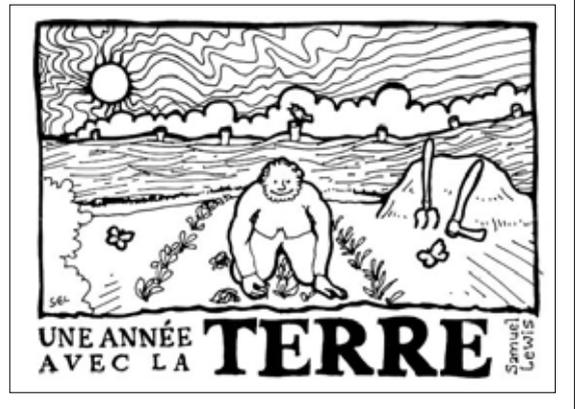
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Cover: Christmas Holly

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* In the event of continued lock-down restrictions after the 1st
December, a "Click & Collect" option will be available. 22 Route
de Berrien, 29690 Huelgoat. 02 98 99 78 04 / bookworm22@
live.co.uk Web: www.reddogbooks.com. See page 33

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Christmas Boutique at the Ch'ty Coz, Bulat Pestivien.

Due to the closing of bars and restaurants for an indeterminate time over the Winter months, Emmanuelle at the Ch'ty Coz has decided to transform her cafe into a Christmas boutique. There will be craftwork by local artisans, quality, locally-sourced foodstuffs and antiques and vintage items on sale. Starting from the **3rd December**, opening times will be 2pm-7pm Thursday-Sunday (but may be liable to change). For more info contact Emmanuelle on 02 96 45 75 74 or chtycoz@orange.fr. Online boutique at www.ma.simpleboutik.fr/chtycoz Ch'ty Coz 22160 Bulat Pestivien



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56 - Taupont



Tax & Investment

What you need to think about to help future-proof your finances

Not much is certain as we head into the final stretch of 2020. With no end in sight for the global coronavirus pandemic and still no final word on Brexit, we can expect things to remain unsettled for some time. While no-one can predict exactly what is around the corner, there are some sensible steps you can take to make your financial position as secure as possible.

2021 will begin with the UK's full departure from the EU. While this should have no immediate impact for Britons lawfully settled in France, there may be longer term effects for the unprepared. For example, some UK savings and investments could attract a higher tax bill from 2021 once they cease to be EU/EEA assets. In any case, your circumstances evolve over time. Review your financial situation at least once a year, looking at how your investments, assets, pensions, tax and estate planning are structured and can best work together.

The current climate presents challenges to preserving and growing your wealth. We have had a prolonged period of low interest rates and the pandemic is generating economic and market uncertainty. There is more global tax scrutiny than ever, with frequent changes to tax and pensions legislation.

At times like this, careful planning plays an important role in securing your long-term financial security. While all investments carry risk, a suitably diversified portfolio can help manage risk within your comfort lev-

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el. Establish a clear and objective view of your risk tolerance to determine the investment approach that best suits you. An adviser is best placed to do this objectively using psychometric testing, for example, together with an analysis of your personal situation and financial goals.

Most people will benefit from an independent and expert review of their finances. It is difficult to look at your broad financial situation from a truly objective point of view or fully understand the cross-border tax implications. As the goalposts often change, it is easy to get DIY tax planning wrong.

A professional financial adviser can take time and use relevant tools to thoroughly understand your unique situation, needs and objectives to tailor tax-efficient solutions.

If you have a relationship with a UK-based financial adviser or hold a British bank account or investment product, check if they can legally provide services to you from 1 January. As things stand, many UK financial businesses are set to lose their license to operate within the EU/EEA once the Brexit transition period ends.

An adviser with local knowledge and expertise in cross-border tax planning can help ensure your wealth is held as tax efficiently as possible for France, recommending locally-compliant solutions that also offer other advantages, such as multi-currency options and estate planning flexibility. Ultimately, the sooner you set up a suitable, long-term strategy to protect your wealth, the sooner you can have peace of mind about your financial future in France.

*Dave Lamont, Blevins Franks
niort@blevinsfranks.com*

This article should not be construed as providing any personalised taxation or investment advice. Keep up to date on the financial issues that may affect you on the Blevins Franks news page at:

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More Art and Craft ads on page 4

Mr Biznuz

The End of the Nation State?

We have heard a lot about how difficult things are for business this year, but it is in the nature of business for there to be ups and downs; what should probably be of more concern is the effect that the pandemic is having upon our government institutions.

There are several areas in which they appear to be losing control. One problem is the degree to which governments have taken responsibility for health care. Although government run, health care systems operate like insurance schemes – you pay national insurance payments, taxes, and social charges when you are able to work, and claim medical care when you are ill. The health systems, however, are not designed to cope with a Covid epidemic, and governments have sought to limit the load on their health systems by slowing the spread of the disease by stifling economic activity. This in turn cuts off government income from social charges, etc. It has also opened the door to global internet companies, which pay fewer taxes and social charges locally, to take over large parts of the economy from which they had previously been excluded. The governments are trying to make up their short-term lack of income (and increased spending) by either borrowing or printing money. This undermines confidence in government-backed currencies, and has re-ignited interest in digital currencies (governments cannot manipulate them). Governments are therefore faced with shrinking economies, less tax revenue, the possibility of increased expenditure if they cannot prevent an increase in unemployment, and less control over their currency than



they have had in the past. To further complicate matters, issues from which governments have previously been able to shield attention, such as social justice and the colonial legacy, are forcing their way to the fore – as are a range of environmental issues including global warming, pollution, and plastic waste in the ocean. Whereas governments once felt unaccountable on these issues, the global spotlight being shone on how well governments are dealing with the virus, and how much money they want to borrow to get over the immediate crisis, has brought these issues into focus. The epidemic has already speeded up the process by which countries have been losing control of their sovereignty to the global economy; it is likely that this will continue, and whilst private business activity will bounce back, the institutions of the nation states look more at risk.

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ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Every Friday at Noon at the Foyer Culturel Rue du Pont de Fer, Mur-de-Bretagne (over the road from Intermarche). Contact Number 06 79 93 69 30.

ALCOHOL SUPPORT GROUP: CARHAIX

Poher Alcool, weekly meetings, different places, different times. Call 02 98 93 48 95, louis-marie.mondeguer@orange.fr

Clubs & Associations: For a free entry on the Church and Community page, please send information to: info@thebj.com / CBJ, BP4, 22160 Callac

Spotlight on Brittany:

December: In an antidote to lockdown blues, Spotlight on Brittany takes us all over the region to meet people who are passionate about their activities. We hear from art historian Caroline Boyle Turner about her favourite artists, Gauguin and Sérusier, and from Rebecca Durrell about her enthusiasm for cycle racing around Brittany. Florence Liard is equally keen about her language drama group, Frogs and Roastbeefs, and Anthony Sturbois encourages us to go to the bay of Saint Briec to marvel at the enormous flocks of migrating birds, once the lockdown is over, naturally. To escape the confinement with these dynamic individuals, turn to Radio Kreiz Breizh on Wednesdays at 14h00 and Saturdays at 12h00 (102.9 Mhz-106Mhz), or on Radio Bro Gwened (101.7Mhz-92.6Mhz) on the first Wednesday of the month at 14h00 and the third Sunday at 9h30. More simply perhaps, you can listen anytime to this month's programme, and others from the archive, by following the links on our website: www.spotlightonbrittany.fr

CHRIST CHURCH BRITTANY

(Church of England – Diocese of Europe)
14 rue Général Dubreton, 56800 Ploërmel, Morbihan.
www.churchinbrittany.com email: info@churchinbrittany.com
Chaplain: Pastor Robin Adams. Mobile 07 80 56 26 32 or pastor.robin@churchinbrittany.com
Churchwardens: Chris Wilson 02 97 72 19 29 or Janet Lageveen 02 98 99 63 14

Due to the current restrictions it is not possible to hold live services at our worship centres, and although the restrictions might be lifted on 1st December there is no certainty that this will happen. If the restrictions are lifted and we are able to restart live worship, you will find details of the services for December on our website or Facebook pages. In the meantime, you can join us instead for one of our recorded services, prepared by Pastor Robin, and that you can watch on our website or Facebook page on a Sunday morning. There are also various Zoom coffee meetings that take place in our Chaplaincy, so if you would like to join in one of those please contact your local worship centre to make sure you receive an invitation. Contact details and locations of our worship centres are given on the CCB website.

HUELGOAT (Second and fourth Sundays in the Parish Church, first, third and fifth Sundays in the Salle Paroissiale diagonally opposite the church))

For more details contact:
Henk Lageveen 02 98 99 63 14 ccb.huelgoat@gmail.com

PLOËRMEL (in the Chapel at 14 rue Général Dubreton)
Sunday morning services at Ploërmel are normally followed by a shared lunch.

For more details contact: Chris Wilson 02 97 72 19 29.

REDON (Eglise St Charles, 10 avenue Gaston Sébilleau, Redon) Contact redon@churchinbrittany.com

ROSTRENE

Word and Worship services in the salle paroissiale, 4 Rue Joseph Pennec, Rostrenen, Holy Communion services in the Chapelle du Collège de Campostalat, 5, place du Bourg Coz, Rostrenen (off Rue de la Marne)

For more details contact: Linda Doidge 02 96 13 42 71
lindadoidge@gmail.com

NEW ADVERTS: DECEMBER

Property Services

M.D. Renovations	p.44
Richard Hince, Electrician	p.45
Velux Certified Installer	p.51

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Service de Nettoyage Complet	p.44
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Gifts

Cardsetcartes	p.4
John Deacon Series	p.34

CBJ Quiz

December 2020. Set by *Jon Chambers*

Target: 25 points. *Answers page 40*

I: General Knowledge & Current Affairs

- 1 Which two controversial spads were given their marching orders last month from No. 10?
- 2 In ancient Rome, 10 cohorts made up one ... what?
- 3 Complete the quotation: 'Gold is the money of kings, silver is the money of gentlemen, barter is the money of peasants – but __(?)__ is the money of slaves.'
- 4 According to ancient Greek belief, what substance flowed through the veins of gods?
- 5 'Richard Of York Gave Battle in Vain' is an example of which memory device?
- 6 Which notorious criminal died last month, aged 74?
- 7 What is the name of Long John Silver's parrot in *Treasure Island*?
- 8 Which 9-letter adjective beginning with S has synonyms listed by the Collins English Dictionary including self-indulgent, pleasure-loving, and hedonistic?
- 9 What would MIX subtracted by CLIX be, expressed as a Roman numeral?
- 10 Which festival was celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains last month?

II: History & Geography

- 1 Japan consists of nearly 7,000 islands. But how many are usually thought to constitute 'the mainland'?
- 2 Augustus was the first. Who was the second Roman Emperor?
- 3 Which Scottish city lies on the banks of the River Tay?
- 4 Which British PM won a Nobel Prize for Literature?
- 5 Which African state, founded in 1822, is known for registering oil-tankers?
- 6 What was Casanova's occupation at the time of his death? Bonus: Which Count employed him? (Clue: one of Beethoven's famous 'middle period' Piano Sonatas is named after him)
- 7 Which empire did Suleiman the Magnificent rule over during the C16?
- 8 1763 marked the end of which European conflict?
- 9 In 1855, Britain had 11,744 of them, Germany 7,826, and France only 1,588. What were they?
- 10 Typhoon Vamco hit which country last month?

III: French Language & Culture

- 1 Which hugely influential play, written in French by an Irishman, was premiered on 5 January 1953 at the Théâtre du Babylone?
- 2 In what year was the French Foreign Legion formed? +/- 5 yrs.
- 3 How is the fruit la mûre known in English?
- 4 Which culinary product is associated with the town of Montélimar?
- 5 Which artist painted a series of five paintings called *The Card Players* in 1890-92?
- 6 Which composer wrote *Symphonie Fantastique*?
- 7 Which department in Normandy is named after an alcoholic drink?
- 8 What name is given to the French archipelago in the Caribbean, the largest of which is Basse-Terre?
- 9 Which chateau is the most visited in France?
- 10 What does a confiturier make?

IV: Connections

- 1 What name is given to the defensive walled courtyard, accompanied by a motte, often found in medieval castles?
- 2 Which mineral, found in various colours, is associated with the month of November and is Scorpio's birthstone?
- 3 In French, such a traveller would be called a pèlerin. What would s/he be called in English?
- 4 Which region of the south island of New Zealand covers some 44,000 km² and is famed for its grassy plains? (Its Māori name is Waitaha.)
- 5 Which polymath and Founding Father of the US invented the lightning rod?
- 6 Which actor, who died in 2004 aged 52, injured his spine in a riding accident, leaving him paralysed?
- 7 Which notorious GP is believed to be the most prolific serial killer in British history?
- 8 What item of clothing is defined as 'a sleeveless jerkin only of front and back pieces and with a hole for the head'?
- 9 Which doctor, opera and theatre director died last November, aged 85? He was a member of the *Beyond the Fringe* comedy revue that included Peter Cook, Dudley Moore, and Alan Bennett.
- 10 Who co-founded a film company in 1961 with James Ivory, making 44 films until his death in 2005?

Bonus: What is the connection?

Popular phrases and sayings concerning: Jack

Jack the lad – Name once given to a harmless ruffian – a bit of a lad – and latterly to a promiscuous young man. It appears however that the phrase may be of comparatively recent origin. It became apparent in the 1970's and is said to have originated in Liverpool working class slang, referring to an outstanding individual in a group.

Before you can say "Jack Robinson" – The phrase, meaning immediately, straight away, was certainly in use during the 18th century and has several suggestions as to its origin. A very volatile gentleman of that name used to pay flying visits to his neighbours. He would ring the door bell and change his mind and dash off before the servants had time to announce his name. Another explanation has it that Sir John Robinson, who was an Officer commanding the Tower of London 1660 – 79, had something to do with it, in which case it may refer to the speed of beheading with an axe.

A Jack of all trades is master of none – One who can turn his hand to anything is not usually an expert in any one branch. Originally a contemptuous expression as such a person was seen as a sciolist.

A Jack in office – A self-important petty official. This expression was in use by 1700

To jack up one's job – or jack in – To abandon it, throw it up. Probably a corruption of chuck up. Similarly, to be quite jacked up is to be done for, ruined, finished.

Jackanapes – A pert, vulgar little fellow, a prig. The word first appears as a derisive nickname for William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk – murdered in 1450 – whose badge was the clog and chain of a tame ape. Jackanapes must have been in use however, before it became a nickname and it is uncertain whether the "napes" is connected with apes or Naples. There is an early 15th century record of apes being sent from Naples to England.

A good Jack makes a good Jill – A good husband makes a good wife, a good master makes a good servant, Jack, a generic name for man, husband or master and Jill for a woman.

To make one's Jack – To be successful. The allusion is to the jack in games such as bowls.

Jack's as good as his master – An old proverb indicating the equality of men.

By the way



Telephone: 0033 (0) 2 97 27 01 71

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Limericks

Encyclopaedias

*Have encyclopaedias now had their days?
Most people today use other ways,
But will we always get
Information by the NET,
When Google et al are zapped by cosmic
rays?!!*

Cyril Young

*Mine came one Christmas instead of a toy,
I turned every page in amazement and joy,
Now they`re on line, but that seems ok,
For that`s how it is for the kids of today,
But mine was my world, when I was a boy.*

Jim Henderson

*Encyclopedia volumes of information,
Alphabetical guide to explanation,
A thing of the past,
As most things don't last,
Cause now we have telecommunication.*

Patricia Hebblewhite

*A crossword compiler from Hay,
Was heard, on occasion, to say,
This large book of words,
Isn't just for the nerds
Encyclopaedias rule, OK?*

Sandra E Chubb

*What a rotten year 2020 has been,
With lockdown, isolation and quarantine,
Attestation forms and restrictions so
tight,
And no real change in sight,
We hope next year there will be a vaccine.*

La Taupiniere

Chess Puzzle

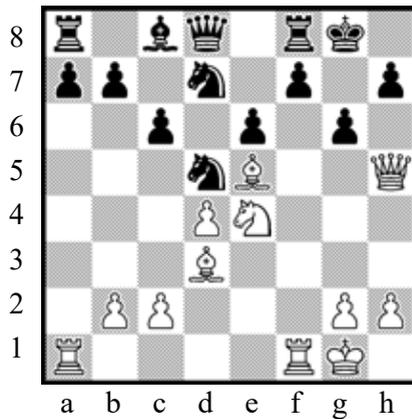
White to play and win

A complicated puzzle with a simple solution!!

This should not take too much time away from Christmas lunch. Be careful, black can defend for a while.

Hint: White just needs one move to either deliver mate or win black's queen.

Solution page 48



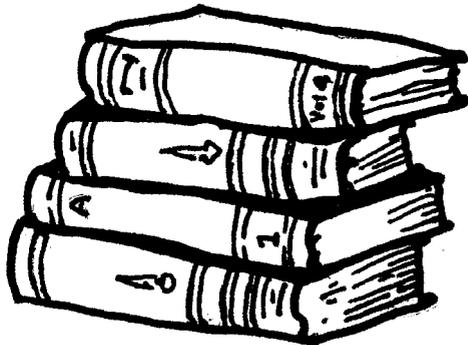
The Knight in Shining Armor. Huelgoat Chess Club, chrisandmalbody@yahoo.co.uk

January Limerick Challenge:

Please send limericks on the theme of:

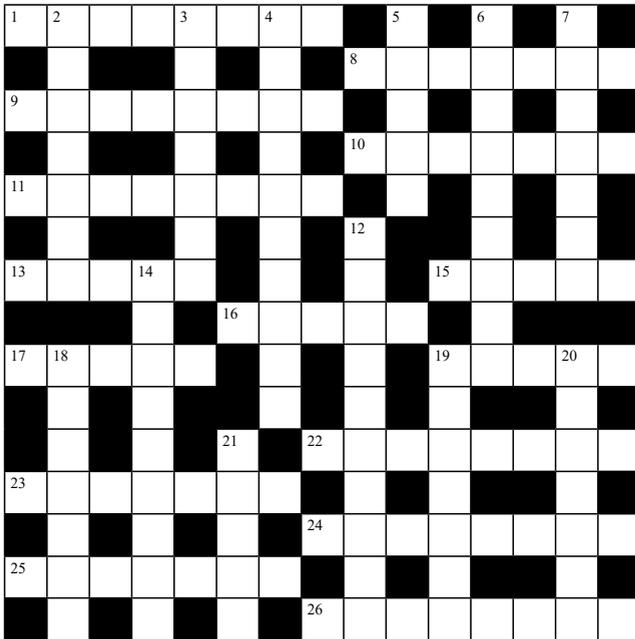
Apps

by the 20th Dec. to: info@theobj.com /
CBJ, BP4, 22160 CALLAC



Prize Crossword

December *Jim Henderson*



Across

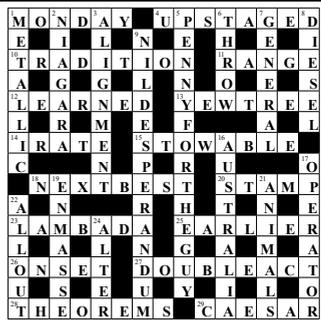
1. Arrived in East Berlin for the climate (8)
8. Revised Daiquiri cocktail that is up to the mark for the non-driver (7)
9. Take on part as directed in good natured way (8)
10. Latest vehicle for Mr Bean? (7)
11. Insatiable need for understanding of ecstatic display (8)
13. Trouble free journey on shorter route (5)
15. Up and about after alarm went off (5)
16. Free choice of where to be at (5)
17. Have friends round for a blow out (5)
19. Civil servant? (5)
22. Unique international exchange – being lectured in toerag behaviour (8)
23. Ahead of the rest but not in a scoring position (7)
24. Incubation period is over and out – in state of decline (8)
25. Something has narked the good doctor – sounds holy (7)
26. Old soldier, not irregular, now regaled in short blasts (8)

Down

2. Legitimate distance covered – partly with winged assistance (7)
3. Understand somehow the significance of the church (7)
4. Undercover operator appeared with banner (10)
5. Extracted from feature of ebb and flow (5)
6. Seemly duties for the wardrobe mistress (9)
7. Carry on against young native American? (7)
12. Systematic preparation for the migrant Eel (10)
14. Air division of America? (9)
18. Do business with the motor trade (7)
19. Profess to having data for negotiating with vindicator (7)
20. Don't hang around for this party (7)
21. Gold plated parting (5)

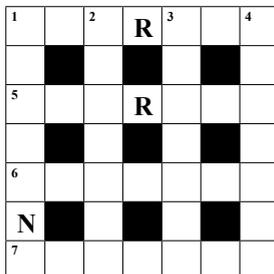
Solution November Prize Crossword:

Winner Nov. prize crossword: *J. Charles, Locmaria-Berrien*
 Twenty euros to the first correct solution drawn from the hat for the Dec. prize crossword. Please send completed solutions to: Prize Crossword, CBJ, BP4, 22160 CALLAC, by 20th Dec.



The 'Little Toughie'

Jim Henderson



Clues Across

1. Bristling (7)
5. Robber (7)
6. The best of a bad job (3,4)
7. Freshwater duck (7)

Down

1. A dastard (7)
2. Worsened by debauchery (7)
3. A rhetorical question (7)
4. Series of thirty requiem masses (7)

The following numbers of letters are required to solve this puzzle

A – 5; B – 1; D – 4; E – 4; G – 1; H – 1; I – 2; L – 5; M – 1; N – 4; O – 2; R – 5; S – 1; T – 3; W – 1.

Some of these have been inserted already to help you get started.

Solution in the Jan. issue. Solution Nov. Little Toughie page 38

Tim the Gardener

Looking back, 2020 will definitely go down as being a good year in the garden. There was plenty of sunshine over the summer months, and we had enough rain to keep most crops growing throughout the season. In my garden, the root crops have been particularly good this year, and now is the time to store things away for the winter - if you have not already done so.

My potatoes are safely stored in a clamp. I have found this to be a better storage method than trying to find a mouse-proof area indoors: the potatoes seem to keep better (possibly because it is colder and damper in the clamp, than in a shed), and mouse damage tends to be less. I now use a similar method for my beetroot. I have also lifted the whole carrot crop (which has been exceptionally good this year) and am storing it in a mouse-proof container in the shed. I will be leaving the parsnips in the ground for a while longer, taking my chances with the field voles which, I am sure, will want their share of the crop.

Winter Mulching

Once the ground has been cleared of this year's crops, I can start to think about getting it ready for next year. I have been using a system of winter mulching in my vegetable garden for the past few years, and it has proved to be very successful. Several compost heaps, now in various stages of decay, have built up over the summer, and I am spreading these over the ground once it becomes clear. I am also taking the opportunity to remove perennial weeds, such as docks and nettles, which have a habit of re-establishing themselves in the garden as the year goes on, and to cut back grass etc. encroaching into the garden from the edges.

The mulch works in the same way as the leaf litter on a forest floor; it protects the soil from frost and cold winds, it draws worms and other soil organisms up to the surface, it stifles weed growth, it prevents water and wind erosion, it provides nutrients to the soil, and the presence of worms, etc. near the surface aids drainage and stops the soil becoming water logged over winter.

I will draw the mulch back progressively in the spring, to expose soil that, hopefully, will be almost ready for planting - just needing to be hoed, and raked to create a fine tilth into which seeds can be planted.

Some of the mulch will be worked into the ground in the process, further aiding soil fertility, and the rest can be piled up for later use; it makes an ideal growing medium for demanding plants, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, courgettes, and pumpkins.

Tree Work and Banks

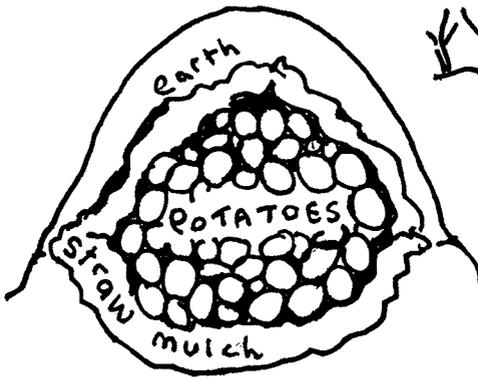
One of the reasons why I will be rushing to get my vegetable garden jobs done before the end of the year, is that I am looking forward to being able to start work on my trees in a few weeks time. It may not be a scientifically-established fact, but there is a deep-rooted belief amongst gardeners that deciduous trees reach their maximum state of dormancy around the time of the winter solstice; the life of the tree descends down to the roots, the sap withdraws from the trunk and branches, and everything combines to make the first few weeks of the new year the best time to work on your trees.

So the other job that I will be doing in December is planning which trees will be coppiced, and how the job will be tackled. I plan to extend my anti-deer fencing again this year, using hazel, ash and willow, coppiced from the banks. Some of the banks that I plan to run the fence along are a little neglected, so I will be cutting brambles, wheeling earth from one place to another, and will maybe get out the winch and the crowbars to shift a few rocks that were dumped on the banks in the days of the Remembrance.

Restoring the banks in my garden is a long-term project that I have now been working on for over 20 years. Initially, I viewed the banks as being mainly a convenient way to break up the garden into distinct plots, that could be planted in rotation. I took some time to study old plans and aerial photos of the area (these are available online), and tried to work out where banks would have been one hundred, or two hundred years ago – before the process of combining fields to facilitate ploughing with horses and tractors took hold. I then transplanted trees, such as hazels, ash, oak, willow, beech, and birch, that were growing up here and there on the land, and piled up a small amount of earth around them with a hoe and a fork. Over the years, I have added to these rudimentary banks with barrow loads of earth, turf, and stones collected from the crop areas. What I have discovered is that the banks are multi-functional, trees grow faster on the bank than on flat ground, the banks help to retain water in the garden and reduce erosion, and, perhaps most importantly, they act as mini wildlife reserves running through the garden, providing a home for a myriad of plants and animals, providing the biodiversity necessary for a naturally-balanced ecosystem, upon which gardening depends.

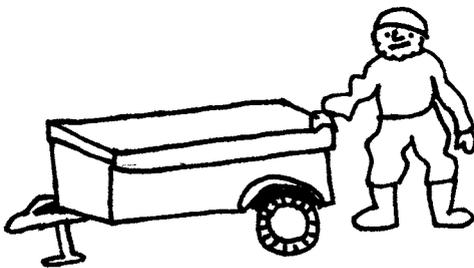
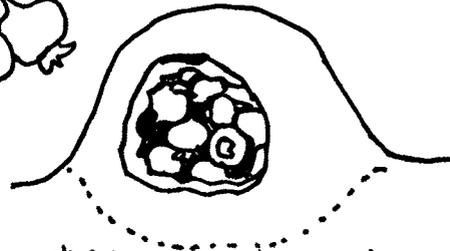
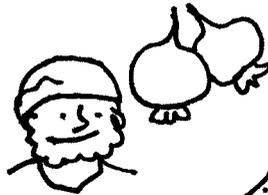


As winter sets in, it's nice to think about all the stores I've laid by.



I am storing my potatoes outdoors, in a cocoon of straw mulch, covered over with earth.

I am using a similar technique for my beetroot.



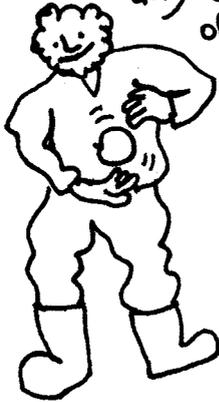
In the past I have used an old trailer with a metal lid. The mice can't get in, but the frost can!

For my carrots this year, I am doing something new. I have sawn an old barrel in half, and packed the carrots tightly in. I am keeping them in a shed.

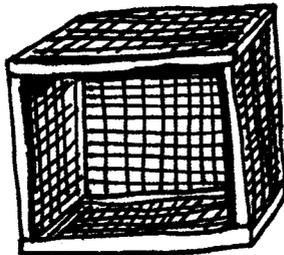
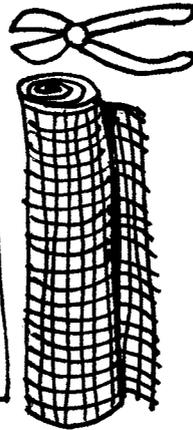
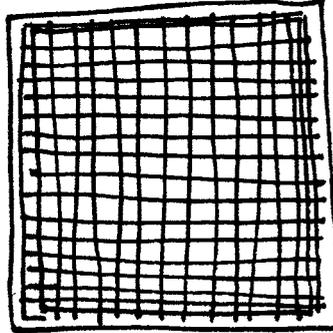
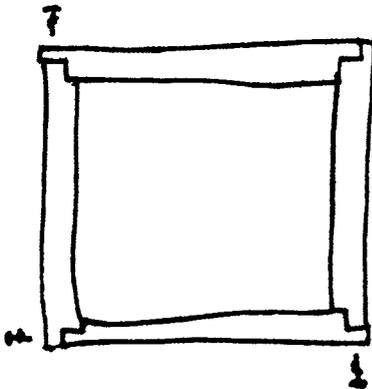
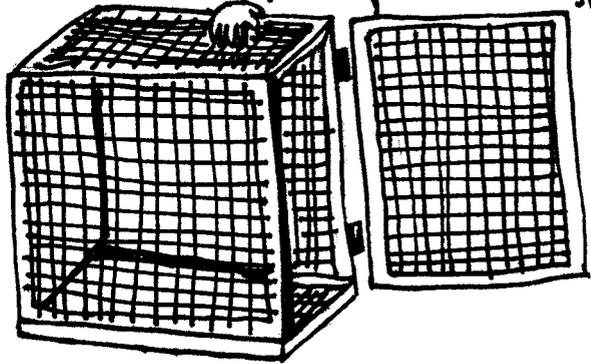


20 Tim the Gardener

Apples need somewhere airy but free of mice.

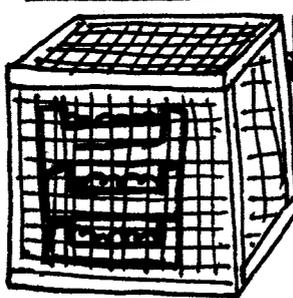
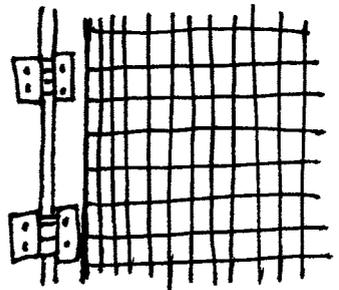


A couple of years ago I thought I would make an apple store.



I screwed together five panels.

And then fitted a sixth panel on hinges.



I pack my apples in boxes, and stack them in the cage.

The cage can go anywhere cool and frost free, like a barn or loft.



William's War: Part 24

Continuing the war diaries of William Fredrick Spinks, edited by Hilary Bridewell.

William, now a seasoned soldier has returned to France. It is now the summer of 1916 and he has just finished his first day on the Somme.

When we were relieved, it was only to huddle in some shallow dug trenches and wonder if we should escape the shells which continually fell.

Bazentin-le-Petit, no memories of that, only heavy shelling and no shelter.

High Wood – what a shambles. We were in support on the 20th July. Here I saw a German Red Cross dressing station. All inside had been killed by hand grenades. Who did it? The mystery I never solved. Surely, only men satiated with blood lust would do a thing like this.

On August the 18th we were the Centre Battalion in the attack in Wood Lane Trench – our casualties were heavy and we were withdrawn to hutments. It was here we had a Battalion parade and I saw our Colonel in tears, as he sat on his horse, after hearing the result of the roll call. Nearby the Highlanders were playing a dirge on their pipes. “The Flowers of the Forrest”, lamenting over their dead.

When not in support or front line we were engaged in carrying parties at night. Those carrying parties, how they were hated. With rifle and equipment we struggled with ammunition of all sorts, rations, duck boards, stumbling in the dark, sweating with our efforts, digging trenches and feeling that God Himself had deserted us.

On August the 24th we were in reserve to the Delville Wood attack. The trees stood like bare poles, their branches torn off with the gun fire of our artillery. The same torture of the mind, at the prospect of ghostly wounds, more than that of instant death.

A welcome rest at the end of August for nearly a month, and back in the trenches in front of Hébuterne.

Here I was one of a working party engaged in making a tunnel into “no man’s land” for some fu-

ture purpose, but this section was quiet. The French had recaptured it, and 'twas said that at night the French and Germans used to engage in barter in favourable spots between the trenches.

We returned to the Somme in wet weather in late October – Trônes Wood. The engineers had brought up the railway to this spot. I stared in amazement when I saw the big engine with R.O.D (Railway Operating Division) on their sides, and fighting was here only recently.

The weather continued cold and wet and carrying parties every night, with men slipping into filled shell holes and soaked to the skin. In the wood we managed to get some fires from the debris of the trees. For some reason that I do not know, Jerry did not shell. My eyes were sore from the acid smoke of the green wood. I made a shallow dugout in a shelter spot and slept well. The bed (of earth) seemed springy. When I investigated, I found that my mattress was the distended body of a dead German buried just below the surface. I changed my bed and bedroom.

Around here I saw my first tanks. They were 'bogged' in the mud and derelict. One had lost its rear steering wheels. Another had its tracks damaged by shell fire. Did their crews survive?

On October the 28th we occupied trenches in front of Les Bœufs. They were just unconnected short sections of trench with no means of communication in day light. They were water logged. There was no means of receiving any hot food. When the rations arrived, they were soggy, for those who had carried them up had stumbled in the mud like I had done.

In front of us we could hear the groaning of the wounded who had been in the recent assault. Nobody could do anything until the next night came and our stretcher bearers rescued those that they could find. One poor fellow was brought into our trench. He had been emasculated (probably by shell splinters) it was pitiful to see him.

Our company went into support after its miserable experience. The same waterlogged conditions prevailed.

To get some warmth into my body, I lit a small fire on a ledge at the back of the trench to brew some tea. After I had made the tea, I cleared the embers away, intending to use the place as a dry seat. I discovered to my horror, that I had lit the fire over a Mills bomb – a thin layer of earth between it and my fire. I sought another spot without delay.

Continued on page 22

22 Computer Bob

COMPUTER BOB

HP Instant Ink Printers

When you buy a new HP printer look for labels saying Instant Ink as you will need to understand what that means and sales assistants probably won't tell you.

Available on a selected range of HP wi-fi printers, HP Instant Ink is a different way to pay for your ink and prints at home. You don't actually pay for the ink or the printer ink cartridges. Instead you pay a monthly subscription to print a set number of pages on your home printer. HP sends you ink cartridges whenever you need topping up, and you only pay the monthly fee - unless you run over your pages allowance. With an Instant Ink subscription, you can print whatever you want – text, images or photos – up to a monthly set limit of pages. HP automatically sends out a new ink cartridge when you need one (with delivery costs included). You still have to buy the printer paper, though.

Some HP printers offer a free trial to Instant Ink for up to three months, but you'll have to sign up to a subscription afterwards. The options are:

- 0.99€ for up to 15 pages per month with an unused rollover of up to 45 unused pages then 1€ for each set of 10 additional pages.
- 2.99€ a month for 50 pages with an unused rollover of up to 150 unused pages then 1€ for each set of 10 additional pages.
- 4.99€ a month for 100 pages with an unused roll over of 300 pages then 1€ for each set of additional 10 pages.
- 11.99€ a month for 300 pages with an unused roll over of 900 pages then 1€ for each set of additional 10 pages.
- 24.99€ a month for 700 pages with an unused roll over of 2100 pages then 1€ for each set of additional 15 pages.

If an ink cartridge is running low, the printer automatically alerts HP via the internet and a new cartridge is posted to you. If your subscription fails for any reason HP uses the internet connection to block the ink from working.

Of course, the question is whether or not a monthly subscription to Instant Ink works out as better value than simply buying your own ink cartridges as and when you need them. The answer to this really depends on how much printing you do. Text pages are generally cheap to print, so if you only print black text, shopping around for cheap printer ink cartridges can be cheaper than using an Instant Ink plan. If you regularly print colour pages or photos, Instant Ink is likely to work in your favour as you are paying for the number of pages printed not the amount of ink you are using.

If you want to print a mixture of text documents, photos and images, and are happy with signing up to a subscription service, then HP Instant Ink could be right for you. It favours regular users who do a wide range of printing. If you only print the occasional text document, then it's not for you. However, just as with a phone contract, if you do make the switch to Instant Ink you may need to become more conscious of what you are printing. Even the smallest dot of ink on a page will be counted as a printed page as part of your monthly allowance. So, if you accidentally trigger a big print job and exceed your monthly limit, you could end up with a nasty big bill at the end of it. You can change your plan at any time but cancelling takes 30 days and you have to return your Instant Ink cartridges to HP.

Personally I am not a fan as you are not in full control of your printing and the cost of compatible cartridges off the internet is likely to be cheaper unless you do a lot of colour printing.

If you need any help with the above, or any other problems you may be having, feel free to email me and I will do my best to help.

Email: info@computerbob.fr

William's War *continued*

After the trench spell, we went back to rest billets, and then returned to Bray-sur-Somme, and from there into trenches recently occupied by the French in this area. Xmas Day was spent in the Front-line at Rancourt. There is nothing in my memory about a Christmas dinner, nor do I recall any sign of fraternisation, but everything was quiet and the guns on

both sides did little firing. This winter saw the dogs of war sleeping in their quarters.

Again we left the fighting area and went back to Longpre-les-Corps-Saints on December the 29th.

The year 1916 ended with no regret on my part, only that the war had not ended too.

Edible Christmas Gifts #1

WHITE CHOCOLATE, CRANBERRY AND WALNUT FUDGE

Make this in the microwave.

- 1 tsp butter
- 3 cups* white chocolate chips (or chopped chocolate)
- 1 400g tin sweet condensed milk
- 75g butter
- 2 tsp rum flavouring
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup walnut pieces

Grease a 9" square cake tin with 1 tsp butter.

In a microwave safe bowl, combine the chocolate chips, condensed milk and 75g butter.

Heat, uncovered, for about three minutes until the chocolate starts to melt. Stir. Continue to cook in 30 second bursts, stirring between each, until the chocolate has melted completely.

Stir in the rum essence and vanilla. Fold in the cranberries and walnuts. Scrape into the prepared tin, level the top and leave to cool and set for at least 8 hours or overnight in a cool place.

Tip out of the tin onto a board and cut into squares with a very sharp knife. Package in a pretty box or a Le Parfait jar tied with a ribbon.

This recipe also works well with chopped dried apricots and pecans or dried mixed fruit and chopped almonds.

(*1 cup = 250ml)

QUIZ

12 Days of Christmaths

Darren Milsom

1. At the sales, Mr. A and Mr. B both got a bargain. Mr. A boasted, 'I got a third off this price!'. 'So what?' said Mr B. 'If I'd paid full price, it would have cost me fifty per cent more!'. Who had the best deal?
2. How many ways can 4 teams (A, B, C, D) in a World Cup group finish in a league table?
3. What is the lowest unachievable score with one dart?
4. On the same standard dartboard, what is the lowest unachievable score with three darts?
5. If it takes three men two days to dig a hole, how long will it take two men to dig half a hole?
6. CBJ – I wish a Merry Christmas. What is mathematical about this type of constrained writing?
7. Without following normal rules, explain the following sum:
I AM EQUAL TO VIVID MILL LESS DILL MIX
8. How can you divide a pizza into eight equal slices with three cuts?
9. What is the largest amount of spots that can be placed on a basket ball so that every spot is equidistant from each other. (Distance is measured on the surface.)
10. If each letter represents a different number, tackle this sum. As a start, the letter O is the number 4:

$$\begin{array}{r} P O T A T O \\ + T O M A T O \\ \hline S A L A D S \end{array}$$
11. The year 1961, when written upside down, looks the same. When was the last year before 1961 when this could be done?
12. A CBJ reader was angry at not being able to answer all the tricky questions, so he tore out pages 6, 7, 35, 43, and 44. How many pages in total had been ripped out?

Answers, page 33

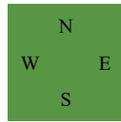
Bridge Puzzle 23

Master Pairs Technique by
J W Tait

Dealer South Duplicate Bridge
Non vulnerable

W	N	E	S
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

♠ 6 3
♥ A Q 9
♦ J 8 5
♣ A Q 6 5 3



♠ A K 9
♥ K J 7
♦ A 10 6 2
♣ 7 4 2

West leads 4♣ and East plays the J♠ and you decide to hold up. East continues with 7♣ and you win with the A♠. On this trick West plays the 2♣. As the opponents are playing normal 4th best leads you take the view that the opening lead was from a five card spade suit.

How do you continue ?

Solution page 34

*Bridge puzzle contributed by Dan Lewis,
buildingmatters@yahoo.co.uk*

Letters

Squirrels

Squirrels are a rarity, as explained in the November Journal. But thankfully, having three hazelnut trees in our garden, we still have our regular yearly visitor in action, eating one of the many hazelnuts it has buried in the ground.

Patricia Hebblewhite, Morbihan



Edible Christmas Gifts #2

OATY RAISIN COOKIES

These make a lovely gift packed into a Le Parfait jar with a ribbon and label tied around the top.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 225g butter, softened | 1 tsp baking soda |
| 1 cup* brown sugar | 1 tsp baking powder |
| 1 cup white sugar | 1 tsp salt |
| 2 large eggs | 1 cup raisins |
| 1 tsp vanilla extract | 1 cup dried cranberries |
| 2 cups rolled oats | |
| 2 cups plain flour | |

Beat together the butter, sugars, eggs and vanilla with a hand whisk until light and fluffy. In another bowl, combine the oats, flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder.

Add to the butter mix one cup at a time and beat in well with a wooden spoon.

Mix in the raisins and cranberries.

Drop spoonfuls on to greased and lined baking trays and bake for 12-14 minutes at 180°C/Gas 4. Slide the lining paper off the baking sheet and on to a wire cooling rack. Leave the cookies until cold. Pack into an airtight container.

(*1 cup=250ml)

#3 OAT COOKIES #3 IN A JAR

3 cups* rolled oats
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup plain flour
½ cup white sugar
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
½ cup mixed raisins and chopped walnuts
1 x 1 litre screw top Mason jar or le Parfait jar

Layer the ingredients in the following order and pack level:

Half the rolled oats; half the brown sugar; half the flour; the remaining rolled oats; the remaining brown sugar; the remaining flour

Mix the white sugar, soda and cinnamon and add next

Top with the raisins and walnuts

Attach a wooden spoon, ribbons and a label with the following instructions:

OAT COOKIES IN A JAR

Preheat the oven to 190°C /Gas 5

Beat 225g butter with 1 egg, 1 egg white and 1 tsp vanilla extract using a hand held whisk.

Stir in the contents of the jar and mix well.

Drop rounded tablespoons of the mix at least 5cm apart on lined cookie trays.

Bake 8-10 minutes until golden. Cool on the trays then transfer to a rack until cold.

Store in an airtight container. (*1 cup = 250ml)

LTA Drama Group

La Troupe Arlequin

December, the last month, is when we reminisce over the past events, but not this time. I think we have all lived through the most extraordinary year we have ever experienced. Indeed, it was an annus horribilis. So I am not going to dwell on it.

As a drama group, it is especially hard to sit around twiddling our thumbs as December is an incredibly busy month for us. Scenery has to be transported from storage to the hall and prepared for painting. Our artistic designer has to sketch out how the various scenes will look, then the “flats” as they are called, may need over-painting before the artists set to work. All this takes up time and space, and is not necessarily a priority as far as the production team are concerned, as they have to source and introduce props needed on stage.

Also in a flurry of activity are our wonderful wardrobe ladies. Each of the principal actors in a pantomime can sometimes need upward of 3 costume changes, and most of the others need 2 changes. When you have a cast of around 20 to 30 actors, that is a lot of burning the midnight oil sat at a sewing machine! Then you get the tantrums when someone doesn't like their costume or their head gear – no wonder actors get a reputation for being temperamental lovelies!!!

No show can go on without the backstage crew! They have to erect scenery, change it during acts, make sure the props are in place, and most important, know when to operate the curtains! Very funny for the audience when a crew member is caught on stage!

Amidst all this chaos, rehearsals still have to continue. By now lines are more or less learnt and just need polishing. Some scenes need extra time to be perfected where timing is essential. And then there is the singing under the strict, and I mean strict, direction of our choir master. A lot of people did not know they could sing until he told them they could!

Yes, we are missing all that, but a New Year looms and plans are still afoot for new productions. Finally, from the LTA, we wish you all a peaceful Christmas, and stay safe.



Tina Alexander.

On and Off the Beaten Track

Breakfast with Babs

So that's the government's strategy. They want to turn all us amateur scribblers into Proust. Being shut up for weeks must be much like his voluntary bedroom purdah. Problem is, if one's subject matter involves travelling, the only place to go is to the temps perdu.

Fifty years ago, I used to cross the Standedge Pass (Stan'edge t' locals) morning and evening on the A62 from Marsden via Diggle to Oldham. On top of the world, 1200 feet up with another grim day before or behind you stiffens the sinews. Physically and emotionally it was the high point of my day. On either side the moors stretched away, bleak and danger-



Across Marsden towards Standedge, c1970

ous. Luminous sunrises and blood red sunsets engulfed vast skies, while capricious weather swept in, often in surprising combinations - rain, thunder, lightning, snow, and fog, fog, fog.

There were a couple of pubs coming up from Marsden, one, the Coach and Horses, was originally a way-side alehouse, while just over the top was a larger one with accommodation evocatively called The Floating Light. (It did.) In the late 60s a builder acquired the Coach, added a large function room, modernised the kitchens and turned it into a hotel, sometimes of the afternoon sort. More interestingly, the hotel licence meant drinks after 10.30 p.m. for residents, most of whom arrived at 10.29. It never looked much from the road, but, like the Tardis, it could be surprising inside.

The builder died and his estate put in a manager, TC, an enterprising, former TV advertising executive. My net pay as a young teacher was about 30 quid a month and did not go far, even though my first house cost only £2,400 and beer was about two bob a pint. To make ends nearly meet, I worked evenings: one night a week as an assistant youth worker and weekends at the Coach. I have worked in several pubs, but the Coach was the first and different. TC was nothing if not dynamic. Friday was generally busy and finished late – late night drinkers spend well. Saturday night, there was a function or a dinner dance and Sunday night a disco. And there was Sunday morning...

TC knew the man who was president of a working men's club federation, or some such, and together they hatched a scheme that was controversial in conservative Chapel circles. Club members used to save up for an annual outing. TC's outing formula was simple. Beer, breakfast, beer and a cabaret. And Babs.

Weekends passed in a whirl. The Saturday dinner dances finished late and then we had to reset for breakfast. I got to bed at 2 a.m. earliest, then was back in at 8.30. At 9 a.m. the first coach would arrive. 45 men poured through the door in all shapes and sizes. Wiry Durham miners, factory workers, or big, paunchy men... All male human life was there. Some had started drinking on the way and most had certainly tanked up the night before.

To start with they were three deep at the bar. Typically, we would be three or four serving, feeling like the last survivors in the redoubt at Rorke's Drift. "Ten pints of bitter, four of Guinness, three Newcastle Brown. No, wait on. Fred, d'you say bitter or Guinness? Sorry, luv – they preferred our glam colleague to us blokes

– nine pints of bitter, five of Guinness, no six, and two Newkies.” We just poured and the stuff disappeared. They were mostly good-humoured and out to enjoy themselves. Two or three pints later they went through for a full English and more beer until about 11.30 when the cabaret began. Though they seemed to appreciate the comedian and the singer, what they were waiting for was Babs. The stripper.

She was an ample woman, who also happened to be the wife of the aforementioned president. She would out play her routine accompanied by a feather duster manipulated provocatively, gradually revealing her ample proportions of which Brunnhilde would have been proud. When, finally, in the altogether, she would pick out a likely member of the audience and sit on his lap. I have seen strong men blanch as she approached and have an abiding memory of a small man, lithe as a racing-snake, quailing in horror as she enveloped him, cheered on by his mates.

Living in Marsden in the late 60s, it was the last thing you would expect and it was controversial. And of course, it could not last, but it was fun while it did. Once again, I was lucky to have passed by when I did, but looking back, perhaps some time is better perdu.

*Richard Griffiths,
rpf@orange.fr*



Marsden - moors in winter, c1970

Edible Christmas Gifts #4

SPICED CLEMENTINE PRESERVE

20 firm Clementines, unpeeled
500ml cider vinegar
1 kg caster sugar
1 tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed
2 cinnamon sticks
4 star anise

Wash and dry the clementines. Prick each fruit half a dozen times with a cocktail stick.

Place the whole fruits in a pan and cover with

cold water. Bring to the boil and reduce the heat to a simmer. Cover with a lid and cook very gently for 15 minutes until tender. Test with a skewer but take care to avoid splitting the skin. Drain the fruit and discard the liquid.

Meanwhile, over low heat, stir the vinegar, sugar and spices in a pan. Once the sugar has dissolved, bring to the boil and simmer gently, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Add the cooked fruit and simmer gently for a further 15 minutes.

Lift out the clementines with a slotted spoon and pack into two 1 litre warmed and sterilized jars. Cover the fruit with the spicy syrup, ensuring there is one cinnamon stick and two star anise in each jar. Seal with vinegar-proof lids.

Store at least three weeks in a cool, dry cupboard. The fruit will keep for about three months, but once opened, refrigerate and use within two days.

Serve the whole fruits as an accompaniment to cold meats or with ice cream.

Exploring the Worlds of Beer and Wine

“... seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam.”

Charles Dickens, A Christmas Carol 1843

Drinks to Top the Season

Wine, beer and spirits are often an enjoyable part of winter celebrations such as Christmas and New Year. They are popular with added spices, fruits and sweeteners that impart warming effects and delightful taste twists to familiar drinks, transforming them into even more satisfying beverages with which to mark our progress through the long northern winter.

Such traditional additives are equally well suited to complement non-alcoholic beverages. A good example is a Christmas tea made by combining black tea with orange, lemon, pineapple, maraschino and caramel to produce a soft “mouth feel” with subtle flavour nuances. Other traditional ingredients include cloves, a cinnamon stick or a vanilla pod.

Christmas Tea

- 1 Orange
- 1 Lemon
- 6 Cloves
- 1 Cinnamon stick
- 1 Vanilla pod
- 100g Black tea

Peel the orange and lemon skins without the white pith, dry the zests in a preheated oven at 210°F for 30 minutes, let cool and cut into small pieces; chop the cloves and cinnamon coarsely, split the vanilla pod into 1 inch sections and mix all the ingredients together. This makes a wonderfully fragrant tea to celebrate Christmas – no alcohol required!

Another seasonal drink tradition is ale brewed stronger, richer and more full-bodied, to be satisfying in the winter. Although spices are not often included in English seasonal ales today, this was common as early as the sixteenth century, and is still widely practised in the US where experimenting with craft ales is popular throughout the year. Names such as Young’s Winter Warmer, Harvey’s Christmas Ale, Hook Norton Twelve Days and Fuller’s Old Winter

Ale tell the story. Typically dark and malty with a sweeter finish and higher in alcohol, they are best sipped slowly and are ideal to share with friends during the holiday season. As they are strong beers, they can even be aged for years in cask, like wine. We do not have easy access to these ales in Brittany – but check with your nearest specialist supplier, or local brewery, as some do produce their own seasonal ale or lager beers.

Mulled wine (or less commonly mulled ale) inevitably comes to mind when discussing Christmas beverages. Typically using red wine as a base (no need to go for an expensive one), white wine is also popular. Other ingredients may include spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, cardamom, star anise or allspice, as well as orange and lemon, and some form of sweetener such as honey, maple syrup or brown sugar. Port, sherry or madeira may be used in place of red wine, or brandy may be added. A simple method is to bring the wine or ale to a simmer, without boiling, to avoid removing the alcohol, add the spices, orange and lemon zest and other ingredients, and simmer for at least 30 minutes to bring out the full spice flavours. The mulled wine or mulled ale may be served in a heat-resistant glass or mug.

There are more elaborate, traditional methods for mulling wine and ale. A good example is described in “Some Christmas Night Caps”, an item in an online blog entitled “Food History Jottings” (18 December 2013) by Ivan Day. The dean of food historians, Day discusses the original meanings of “mulled” (not what you may think), and the mulled wine known as “Smoking Bishop” (nothing to do with smoke, and not much with bishops!). His extensive publications cover everything one could wish to discover about centuries of cooking methods and entertaining in England and Europe.

Any review of seasonal drinks would not be complete without mentioning “wassail”, a beverage made with cider and spices and associated with the ancient English yuletide custom of wassailing the apple tree to ensure it bears a good harvest in the year to come.

As we have seen, most of our favourite seasonal drinks involve warming the beverage, flavouring with spices and sweetening. A possible exception is eggnog. A drink with its own long history, eggnog is usually (though not always) served chilled, and includes milk, cream, egg yolks and rum among the ingredients ... but that must be a story for another

Christmas.

We may end this brief review with the closing words of Charles Dickens' classic "A Christmas Carol" (1842) that conjures up for us the true spirit of Christmas:

"A Merry Christmas, Bob!" said Scrooge with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon over a bowl of Smoking Bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy another coal-scuttle before you dot another i Bob Cratchit!"

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more..."

Roger Dawson

www.brittanywineandbeer.com

vistaprintdigital.com

rogeralan.rd@gmail.com



Drawing inspired by John Leech's "The Christmas Bowl", from "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens (1843)



Photo of the Month: Huëlgoat Mill, *Melvyn Card*

Lock, Stock and Barrel

At some time or another all British residents of Brittany have done something like this once upon a time. The variations are bound to be close to infinite. This extract from the abandoned journal is our version. At a time when nobody is going anywhere again it seemed appropriate, somehow.

Snow had fallen in every other part of the UK and was travelling west. It had reached Exeter the night before, or that morning. Honiton was a whiteout and Radio Devon was suggesting you travelled only if absolutely necessary. It was necessary, and there had been no sign of snow.

The removal people were not going to leave until later, after loading and leaving us. Separate journeys to the overnight ferry would be made. We decided to leave immediately, packed the car, hitched up the trailer and went like characters in a blockbuster disaster movie. We headed south to Plymouth and the ferry port, noting how, as we travelled over rural Devon and Dartmoor, dark snow-laden clouds drew closer.

We were second to arrive behind a customised flat-back truck with detached caravan arrangement. The man who had it kept hopping in and out, as if consolidating his temporary residence.

It was then 2.30pm, boarding started at 8pm. This increased the sense of trying to escape, as the ferry had not yet arrived. Places take on a character of their own in such situations, developing their own unspoken society and culture. More vehicles arrived as the afternoon continued to darken and became

night. The snow we had fled began to fall and the car became colder; like others, we needed to run the engine. Some went to the toilets, often. Two men from somewhere behind drank from beer cans. This was a “booze cruise” for some. We drove forward under the large canopy of the booking-in booths for shelter as snow trickled down, and saw that nobody else did. We realised there was a white line, now behind our car, that we were not supposed to drive over yet.

The booking-in car park was full by the time the desks opened. Some of the romance of the venture returned when we saw the ferry sail into dock – a large white elegant vessel that would take our virtual mass of refugees, emigrants and booze cruisers away from this Cold War atmosphere broken only by flood lights, the city lights of Plymouth and truck lights as they rolled into their separate booking-in yard.

The scene changes to the restaurant of the Pont Aven. We sat at the end of a long table at the restaurant and ship’s rear window looking down on a pretty-well empty loading area. Still the flood lights and functional cuboids of buildings, like a scene from an early John le Carré novel, with gently falling snowflakes.

We had always felt that once on board the ferry, we were almost already in France. It worked this time too, with a bottle of Baron Rothschild on the table, having devoured our generous choice of the buffet and then entrecote steak cooked à point with a béarnaise sauce, vine tomatoes drizzled with balsamic vinegar and a carefully prepared potato mash, all beautifully presented.

There would be no need to return soon.

James Bell

EDIBLE CHRISTMAS GIFTS #5

PARMESAN SHORTBREAD BISCUITS FOR CHEESE

100g unsalted butter, cubed
50g Parmesan, freshly grated
100g plain flour
50g ground almonds
Pinch of cayenne pepper + extra

Put all the ingredients plus a pinch of salt in a food processor and whizz to a dough.

Shape into a flat disc, wrap in cling film and chill for at least an hour or overnight.

Knead the dough very lightly until pliable, then roll out on a lightly floured board to a thickness of 4-5mm. Cut out shapes with Christmas cutters and transfer to a lined baking sheet, spaced 1cm apart. Dust very sparingly with cayenne and bake 15-20 minutes at 170°C/Gas 3 until pale golden.

Leave on the baking sheet until completely cold.

Pack into an airtight container. They keep for two weeks.

Birds to See in Brittany: Moorhen

French: Poule d'Eau

Breton: Gallinula



Our name has no connection with moorland and is a corruption of “mere” meaning a lake. Certainly we are always to be found near water – generally bordered by rushes, sedge, reed grass and other aquatic plants and have been known as Water Hens and Marsh Hens. We are easily recognised by our brown-black plumage with white stripes on our flanks merging into a continuous band. We have a red frontal shield, yellow tipped bill with red base, dark grey flanks and underparts, and a white undertail with a central black strip. Our legs are green with red garters.

We generally fly only short distances and are seldom seen in open water, preferring to remain in the margins. We have strong legs and like to walk and even climb trees. Our feet are not webbed and our toes are long which helps us to move easily on many surfaces. We float when on the water but we can dive well when we are threatened and can hide underwater with only our bill showing.

We nest amongst the marginal plants or in a bush and occasionally a tree. When built in a bush the nest is often resting on the old nest of some other bird. Both parents build the nest of interwoven grasses, reeds etc and it is lined with softer materials. There are two or three clutches in a year each consisting of 6 to 10 or even 12 eggs – the first is usually laid in April. The young are fed by both parents and fly at 40 – 50 days. Our food consists of a wide variety of leaves, seeds, fruits and also insects, worms, snails and fish.

Jim Henderson

Red Salad (for 6)

- Small red cabbage, core removed, very finely shredded
- 2 large red onions, peeled and very thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 tbsp balsamic glaze
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped dill
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp fennel seeds, lightly toasted in a dry pan and crushed
- 250g cooked beetroot, cut into small wedges
- 1 cucumber, peeled, halved lengthways and deseeded
- 150g soft goats cheese
- 100g pomegranate seeds

Mix the red cabbage and onion in a large bowl. Sprinkle over the salt, mix lightly and leave to soften for 30 minutes. Rinse under the cold tap and squeeze out all the moisture with a clean tea towel or kitchen paper and set aside.

Mix the balsamic, oil, herbs and fennel seeds in a small screw top jar. Season well with salt and pepper, screw on the top and give it a really good shake.

Mix with the cabbage and onion and set aside for 15 minutes.

To serve, layer the cabbage mix with the beetroot and slices or ribbons of cucumber.

Top with chunks or slices of goats cheese and scatter over the pomegranate seeds. Finish with a good grind of black pepper.

Serve as a side with cold meats or roasted chops or chicken.

Turkey à la King (for 4)

- 85g butter
- 225g sliced mushrooms
- 2 large shallots, finely diced (or 1 large onion)
- 1 cup* diced sweet peppers (*1 cup = 250ml)
- Salt & pepper to taste
- ½ cup plain flour (or a little bit more if you like a very thick sauce)
- ¼ cup dry sherry
- 3½ cups chicken stock
- Pinch finely grated nutmeg
- Pinch cayenne pepper
- 2 tsp fresh thyme leaves, stripped from the stem
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup/80ml crème fraîche
- 4 cups of cubed cooked turkey (or chicken)
- 1 tsp snipped chives for garnish

Melt the butter in a frying pan over medium-high heat. Toss in the mushrooms and a pinch of salt. Sauté until the mushrooms release their moisture.

Continue cooking until the moisture has evaporated and the mushrooms begin to brown. Add the shallots/onion and keep stirring until they soften, about 3-4 minutes.

Reduce the heat to medium. Sprinkle the flour over the mushrooms. Cook, stirring, until the flour starts to turn golden (about 5 minutes). Add the peppers and keep stirring for another minute. Pour in the sherry. When it stops sizzling, add the stock. Raise the heat a little and bring the mix to a simmer, stirring continually. When it starts to bubble, turn the heat to low and simmer very gently for about 15 minutes until thickened. Stir in the cayenne and nutmeg.

Stir in the parsley, thyme, crème fraîche and turkey. Cook gently until heated through. Adjust seasoning if necessary.

Serve over rice, pasta, mashed potato or toast!

Panettone Stuffing

(Adapted from a Nigella Lawson recipe)

- 2 large onions, chopped
- 250g dessert apples, cored and chopped
- 400g smoked streaky bacon slices, chopped
- 2 sticks celery, chopped
- A few sage leaves
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, crushed to paste
- 200g cooked, shelled chestnuts, chopped
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 500g Panettone, sliced
- 2 large eggs

Place the onions, apples, bacon, celery and sage leaves in a food processor and blitz to mush. Heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the blitzed mixture, stirring, for 10-15 minutes.

Tip the contents of the pan into a mixing bowl. Add the chestnuts, lemon zest and juice and the Panettone ripped into bits. Get your hands into the bowl and mix thoroughly.

If making this ahead, cool, cover and chill for up to two days, or freeze.

To cook, bring the mix to room temperature.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6.

Beat the eggs and stir into the stuffing mix. Transfer to a greased baking dish or a greased foil tray and bake for 25-30 minutes until the stuffing starts to shrink away from the sides of the dish and a wooden skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Cool in the tray and cut into squares.

Serve with the turkey or any other roast. Nigella also suggests cutting into smaller squares to serve as canapés

Books

The Stolen Saint, Wendy Mewes



A new novel by Wendy Mewes, who is wellknown for her books on the history and landscape of Brittany. It is set in an imaginary Breton village, and features the legacy of two Breton saints and a magical spring.

After a period of major personal change, Yuna returns from her busy life in London to the quiet village of Ploubannec where she was born. Here she renews her family connection with the rich heritage of Brittany. When she discovers a secret place of ancient stones and living water,

strange things happen, but it is not so easy to solve the puzzle of the saint's stolen statue.

Brittany is a magical place where all things are possible and the elemental powers of the earth have never been forgotten...

ISBN: 9780993581557 286 pages 10€ / £9.99

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Book signing with Wendy Mewes, The Bookshop, Huelgoat, 5th & 6th December, see page 8

Answers: 12 Days of Christmaths page 23

1. They had the same discount, mathematically.
2. There are 24 permutations ABCD, ABDC, ACBD, ACDB, ADBC, ADCB, then BACD, etc.
3. 23
4. 163
5. There is no such thing as half a hole.
6. Each word contains the same number of letters which follow the order of pi: 3.14159...
7. By adding the value of each Roman numeral the real sum is $1613 - 1612 = 1$
8. Two cuts at right angles will make 4 equal pieces. Stack them up in a pile, and cut them in half.
9. The maximum is 4 spots. Imagine a tetrahedron (pyramid) inside the ball, and all 4 spots would appear on the apexes.
10. $345954 + 546954 = 892908$
11. 1881
12. 8 pages: 5 and 6, 7 and 8, 35 and 36, pages 43 and 44 are two sides of the same sheet.

Jazz Up the Mince Pies! (makes 24)

Start with:

1kg shortcrust pastry (buy packs of ready made!)

2 large eggs, beaten

300g jar of mincemeat

Now choose a filling:

1. Egnog Cream Filling

2 large egg yolks

50g caster sugar

¼ tsp cornflour

50ml milk

130 thick cream

¼ tsp vanilla extract

Freshly grated nutmeg

50ml bourbon

With an electric whisk, beat the yolks with the sugar until pale. Whisk in the cornflour and set aside.

In a heavy based saucepan, heat the milk, cream, nutmeg, vanilla and bourbon until steaming but not boiling. With the whisk running, drizzle the hot liquid into the egg mix until combined, then transfer back to the saucepan. Cook, stirring, over medium heat until thickened. Cover and set aside to cool.

2. Ginger Marmalade Filling

4 balls of stem ginger in syrup, finely chopped

100g thin cut lemon or orange marmalade

Mix together and set aside

3. Marzipan and Pistachio Filling

50g pistachios, finely chopped

¼ tsp ground cinnamon

50g honey

Squeeze of lemon juice

75g marzipan, cut into small cubes

Mix together then set aside

Grease two 12-hole cupcake trays.

Unroll the pastry and cut out circles to line the cupcake cups.

Fill with a generous teaspoon of mincemeat followed by a generous teaspoon of one of the other fillings.

Cut out 24 smaller circles for the tops. Brush the rims with beaten egg and lightly press the lids into place.

Use any trimmings to make decorations and stick them to the lids with a little beaten egg. Chill for an hour.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Brush the remaining beaten egg over the mince pies and bake for 25-20 minutes until golden.

Cool in the tins for a few minutes then lift out on to a wire rack. Dust with icing sugar and serve.

Joyeux Noël et Bon Appétit!

34 Christmas Gifts

Solution Bridge Puzzle 23

page 24

Mentally Placing a Card

South is playing in 3NT. West leads 4♠, East wins with J♠, and continues with 7♠, which declarer wins with A♠.

♠ Q 10 8 4 2
♥ 10 6 4
♦ Q 9
♣ J 10 8

♠ 6 3
♥ A Q 9
♦ J 8 5
♣ A Q 6 5 3



♠ J 7 5
♥ 8 5 3 2
♦ K 7 4 3
♣ K 9

This hand has seven top tricks and the obvious line of play is develop the club suit for two or more additional tricks. There are three lines of play.

1. An immediate finesse of the Q♣. However, if the finesse loses and the spade suit is cleared declarer cannot afford West to regain the lead if for example he holds J10x♣.
2. A far better line is to play a club from hand and duck in dummy. East will win cheaply and return a spade. Declarer now takes the finesse of the Q♣. If it succeeds, or West shows up with Kx♣ he makes four club tricks for a score of 430. If the finesse loses his club suit is established and the contract just made since East has no more spades to return.
3. Even better. A top class declarer intending to duck a round of clubs, crosses to dummy with a heart and makes the first lead in the club suit from the table. This has the effect of putting East under considerable pressure whenever he holds Kx♣, and he is likely to go up with the K♣ in order to return his partner's suit. Since this declarer play cannot lose, and offers an opportunity to a defender to go wrong, it is the recommended line.

♠ A K 9
♥ K J 7
♦ A 10 6 2
♣ 7 4 2

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See **ANIMAL WELFARE** p.44

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See **BED & BREAKFAST** p.44

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See **GARDENING pp. 40-41**

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Colour Classified

page 34 & 55

Translation & Advice

See **HELP & ADVICE** page 10

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Property

page 53 & 54

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Solution Nov. Little Toughie
see page 17

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⁷ T	H	E	R	M	O	S

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Firewood & Fuel
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Answers CBJ Quiz page 14

I: General Knowledge & Current Affairs

- 1) Lee Cain; Dominic Cummings
- 2) Legion
- 3) Debt
- 4) Ichor
- 5) Mnemonic
- 6) Peter Sutcliffe
- 7) Captain Flint
- 8) Sybaritic
- 9) DCCCL
- 10) Diwali

II: History & Geography

- 1) 4 – Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, Shikoku; (accept 5, with Okinawa)
- 2) Tiberius
- 3) Dundee
- 4) Churchill
- 5) Liberia
- 6) Librarian; Waldstein
- 7) Ottoman
- 8) Seven Years War
- 9) Kilometers of railtrack
- 10) Philippines

III: French Language & Culture

- 1) Waiting for Godot
- 2) 1831
- 3) Blackberry
- 4) Nougat
- 5) Cézanne
- 6) Berlioz
- 7) Calvados
- 8) Guadeloupe
- 9) Versailles
- 10) Jam

IV: Connections

The connection is The Canterbury Tales.

- 1) Bailey (Harry Bailey, the Host)
- 2) Topaz (Sir Topaz, who features in The Host's Tale)
- 3) Pilgrim
- 4) Canterbury
- 5) Benjamin Franklin (The Franklin's Tale)
- 6) Christopher Reeve (The Reeve's Tale)
- 7) Harold Shipman (The Shipman's Tale)
- 8) Tabbard (The Tabard Inn)
- 9) Jonathan Miller (The Miller's Tale)
- 10) Ismail Merchant (The Merchant's Tale).

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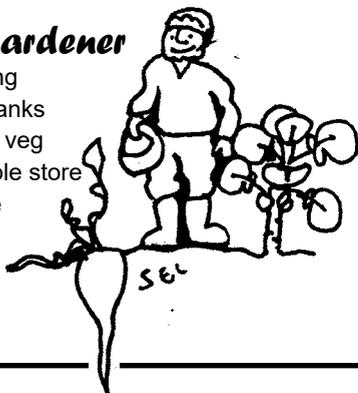
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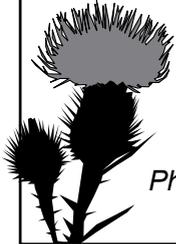
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Looking for a Home

May we wish health, happiness, peace and prosperity this Christmas and in the coming New Year and thank everyone who carries on and gives support to all those in need during these unusual times.

It's good to reflect that there are many constants despite the uncertainty that exists; the young will continue to thrive and grow, the seasons will change, come what may, nature will always surprise and amaze us and of course the love and companionship of a pet gives a feeling like no other.

We would like to feature three lovely dogs this month; they are the representatives of the many in the various shelters in our area, who are needing forever homes. If you are considering taking in an adoptee please look at the local rescue centres.



IRIS: 7 year old, female Dalmation/English Setter x. Very friendly and intelligent and loves children. Contact: Green Valley Brittany, tel 06 95 56 64 73.



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If you would like further information about these or other dogs in the local refuges, please contact Liberté Pour Chiens on 02 96 72 26 53 and we will do our best to help. You can find more information and photographs of dogs available for adoption in the local refuges on the Liberté Pour Chiens facebook page.



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