

POUL-FETAN

a breton village of the past

The timelessness of a village of yesteryear. At the end of a little road winding among the woods, discover the thatched cottages and the farmlands in their setting of greenery, entirely restored. You can see the farm animals, the farmlands, the way of life as it was in the middle of the 19th Cent.

For centuries the village was home for 4 to 5 families, and inhabited until 1970. It was acquired by Quistinic Community in 1977. Restoration work on the buildings was carried out between 1979 and 1992, and on the farmland between 1992 and 1994.

Le Terroir

The Chestnut

Their fine trunks supplied floorboards and building timber, the branches furnished poles for many uses. Cut into strips and carefully plaited, they were used for making wheat baskets. The leaves of the undergrowth, swept up in winter supplied animal litter and thus the manure for the crop fields. The chestnuts harvested in autumn were eaten, roasted or cooked in water.

The Heath land

This was the only way to make good use of soils difficult to cultivate. The gorse, sown and cultivated, was cut 3 or 4 times a year. It was used as animal litter and, when crushed, supplied food for the horses. In winter, the gorse was cut and used for carpeting boggy areas and the ruts in the roads. Scraped up in spring, it became an ingredient of the manure. Gorse wood is ideal for heating the copper cooking bowl and the crêpe hot plate.

The farmlands

The greater part of the cultivated areas were on the large slope to the north of the village. To the south the land was used for the ponds and cultivated where possible. A 3-year crop rotation was practised. 1° one wheat - 2° one secondary cereal (barley, rye, oats) - 3° one fallow, often used for pasture.

The Blavet Valley

The river was canalised in the first half of the 19th Cent. and played a part in the introduction of fertilisers to the countryside, although it was soon to come under competition from the railway.

The Meadows

As their name indicates, they were for producing non-pasture grass, destined to be mown. For that an open area is needed, well sheltered, and above all having an irrigation system with a principal water channel following the main road and secondary channels.

The Pastures

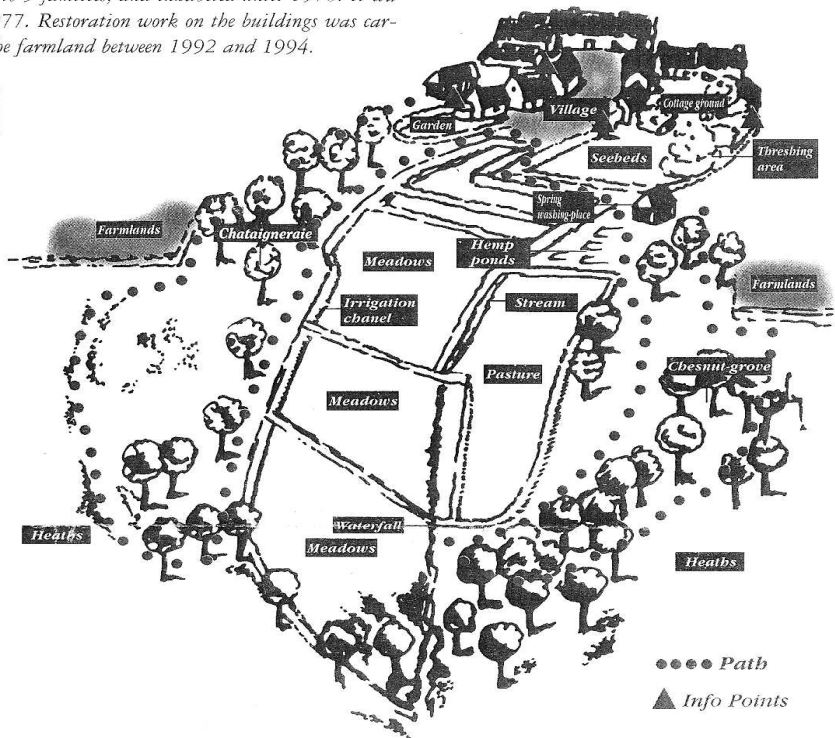
It was not possible to irrigate them because they were above the main channel, so these small parcels of land were grazed directly by the animals. It was the same thing for the parcels beside the Blavet, which were less warm than those in the glen.

The Spring and the Washing-place

The spring has given its name to the village. The Washing place (lavoir) was where the women met and where, twice a year, they had the "big wash".

The Steeping ponds

These ponds were used for steeping the hemp, which was submerged and covered with branches and stones to keep it down. This immersion allowed the decomposition of the plant resins, thus



freeing the textile fibres.

The Waterfall and the Old Watercress bed

The Seedbeds

Little plots of land where plants are sown in a temporary place before replanting, when large enough, in open field or garden.

The Gardens

Latecomers to the village and, to start with, just part of the cottage ground, they were for vegetables and flowers.

The Cottage Grounds

These plots, always situated in the immediate vicinity of the houses, were for domestic cultivation and for fruit trees. Piles of

straw, wood and sometimes sheds covered with the year's straw, were to be found.

The Threshing Area

Here the cereals were threshed with flails. The repair of this area supplied an opportunity for dancing, when the clogs of the dancers stamped down the earth.

Animals

You have seen a 19th century family livestock, composed of different races, that are now protected. In the past, these races were common on farms and they were the only source of sustenance.

Breton Pie bald cows

This strong, little (1 m 17 withers) race comes from South Finistère. They have lived there for 3 centuries and they have well endured the Breton climate as well as adapting to granite grounds.

The Breton Pie Bald cow is especially famous for its fatty milk production (about 3600 kg/lactation).



Hen "coucou de Rennes"

This elegant hen is well-known for its eggs and its flesh.

The feather colours are a mix of grey blue stripes with a white background.



Pig "Blanc de l'ouest"

Its origin goes back to the Celtic race that populated the West of France at the end of the Middle Ages.

They were very important for a 19th century family, because they represented the only source of meat.

Height : male : 1.10 m
female : 1.05 m
Weight : male : 400 kg
female : 350 kg



Sheep "Lande de Bretagne"

This old little race is black or white. They were bred only for their wool, in central Brittany

Goat "des fossés"

They were used only for the maintenance of hedges and ditches.

Breton draught horse

It measures about 1m58 (withers)
It weighs from 900 kg to 950 kg
As it is strong it was used for farmwork.

