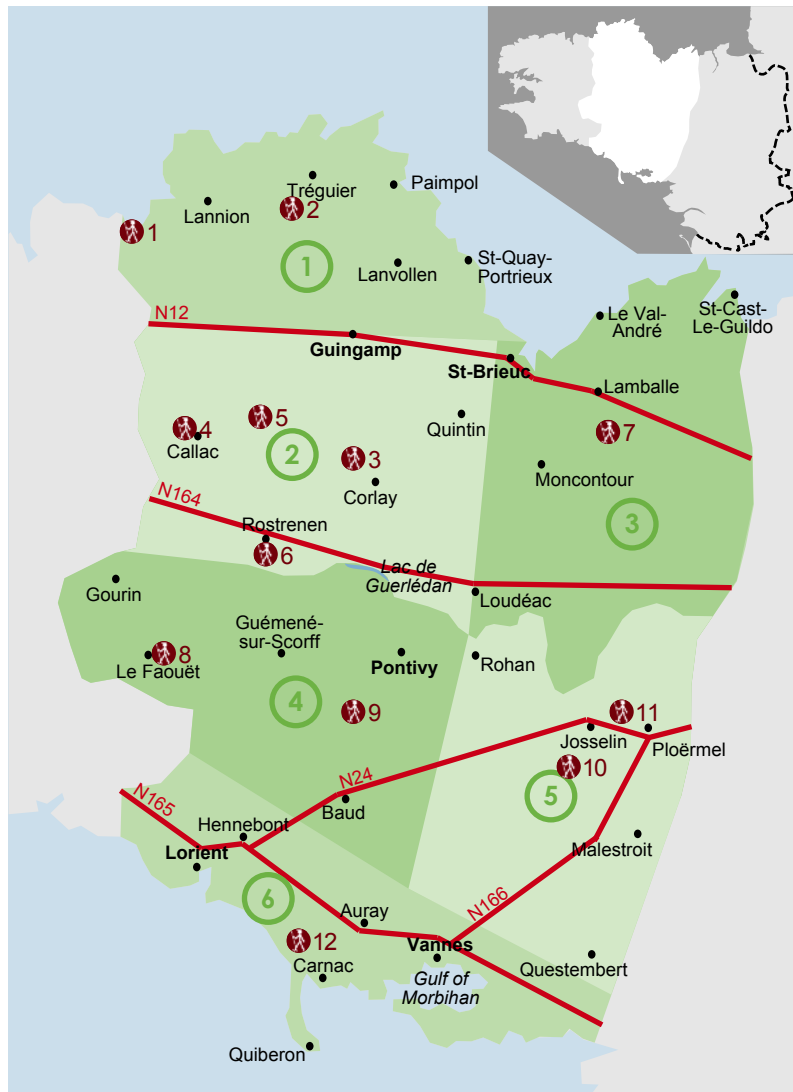


MAP OF CENTRAL BRITTANY

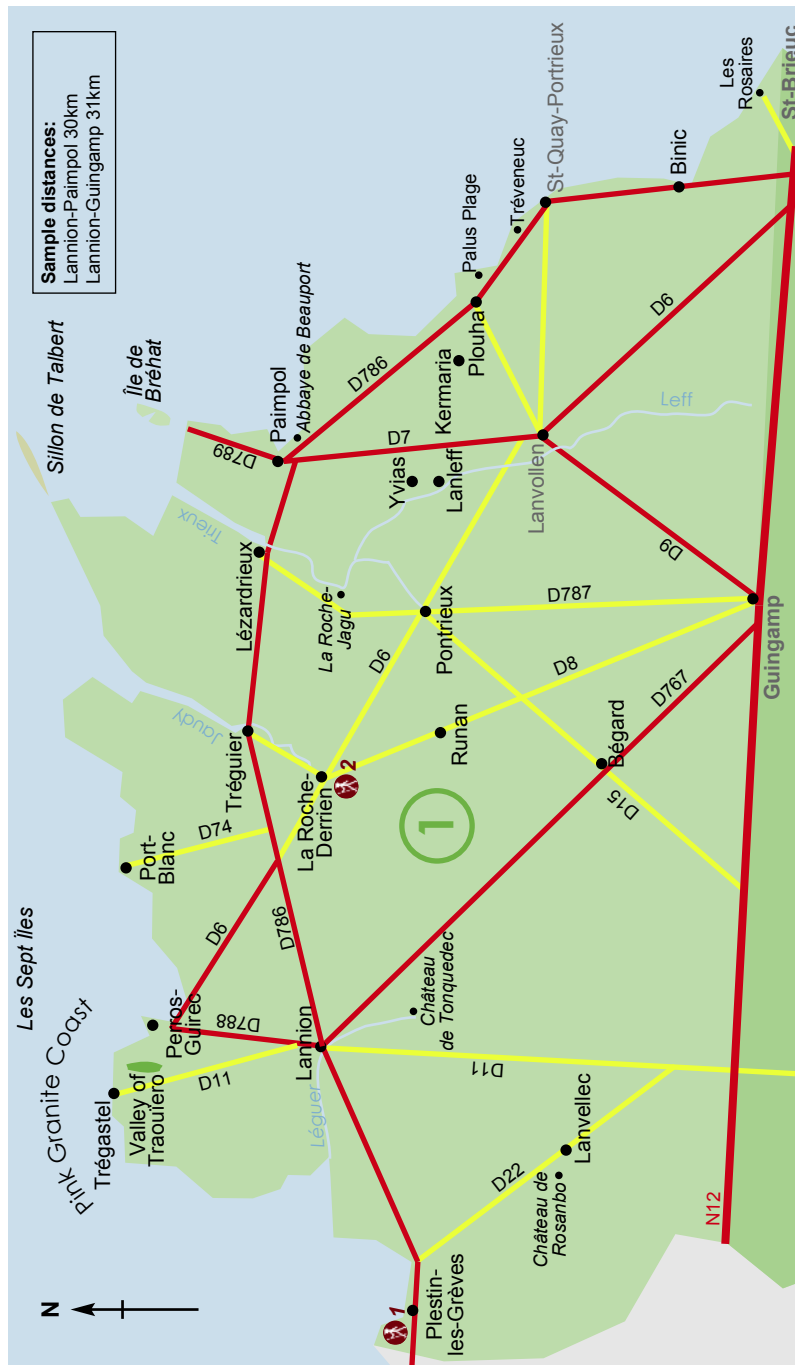


1 AREAS for SECTION A - Places of Interest

1 WALKS for SECTION B

CONTENTS

	page
About this book	3
Map of Central Brittany	4
Glossary, Abbreviations & Symbols	6
Introduction	7
SECTION A - Places of Interest	
1. The Northern Coast and its hinterland from Plestin-Les-Grèves to St-Brieuc	11
2. The Argoat of Côtes d'Armor southwest of St-Brieuc	23
3. Armor and Argoat, St-Brieuc eastwards	37
4. The Argoat of Morbihan westwards from Pontivy	51
5. The Argoat of Morbihan, Rohan to Questembert	63
6. The Southern Coast and Gulf of Morbihan	73
SECTION B - Walks	
1. Plestin-Les-Grèves	84
2. La Roche-Derrien	87
3. Kerpert	90
4. Callac	93
5. Bulat-Pestivien	96
6. Locmaria, Rostrenen	99
7. The Valley of the Gouessant	102
8. In Marion du Fauouët country	104
9. Le Site de Castennec	107
10. Guéhenno	110
11. Along the Ninian	113
12. Erdeven	115
SECTION C - Topics	
Islands - Archaeology - Museums - Parks & Gardens - Children's Interest - Walking	118
Index	124



SECTION A

1. The Northern Coast and its hinterland from Plestin-Les-Grèves to St-Brieuc

This is an area with much to offer in addition to its exceptional coastline, which provides an earthly paradise for walkers and beach-lovers alike. The interior is full of colourful and picturesque estuary towns, such as Lannion, Tréguier and the exquisite Pontrieux, as well as enticing river valleys at every turn. Notable also is the wealth of religious buildings from the enigmatic Temple to the well-named Abbey de Beauport and the rich decoration of chapels such as Kermaria.



Abbaye de Beauport

©RDB

u ABBAYE de BEAUPORT

Founded by Count Alain de Penthièvre et de Goëlo in 1202 for monks from Mont St-Michel and Avranches, the abbey, on a coastal site which is not only beautiful but strategic, was once a seat of great power and authority. Remains of the chapter house, cloisters and refectory can still be seen. The abbey was sold as 'Bien national' during the Revolution and is today owned by the Conservatoire du Littoral which protects the largely ruined abbey and its grounds, containing a rose garden, cider apple orchards and a little sheltered port.

It is open every day throughout the year and gives courses in the cultivation of apples and the history of the abbey. In season there are guided outings into the countryside including night walks on Wednesdays and Sundays, a festival of old plants in July and concerts on Thursday evenings in summer. Booking is advised: 02 96 55 18 58

PLOUHA (TO 02 96 20 24 73)

Though only a few kilometres from the sea, Plouha retains a refreshing atmosphere of serious daily business, scarcely giving the time of day to passing tourists. The main square has a number of good bars and a lively market on Wednesdays. Art exhibitions are held at Castel Pic (02 96 20 27 10) and more art can be seen in the rue des Frères Leguen.

A visit to the 'Sept Chapelles' can be arranged on 02 96 20 35 78.

This will include the fabulous

u Chapel of Kermaria with its famous frescoes, or just visit this chapel in summer when it is open all day. It dates originally from the 13th century, although its most remarkable features are later. The porch has a little hall of records above and an external balcony for delivering judgments. At entry level, it contains painted wooden statues of the twelve apostles. The 15th century colourful frescoes in the nave show the fascinating *Danse Macabre* or Dance of Death – 47



Chapel of Kermaria

©RDB

medieval figures of varied social standing linked by what they all have in common: death. (See also the church at Kernascléden, page 54.)

u PONTRIEUX (TO 02 96 95 14 03)

'Pontrieux, coin délicieux', goes an old song and the town certainly knows how to make the most of its assets: floral decorations cover its pretty bridge while the *lavoirs* along the river banks, where until recently women washed their clothes, are now a tourist attraction with a special festival, the *fête des Lavandières*, in mid-August. It is a centre for crafts with a stained-glass window maker and several art galleries.

Take a boat trip along the river at night (book at the tourist office) and visit the little park by the river by day. North of the main town, walk up the right bank of the river past the little harbour, stopping at the *crêperie* for a snack. Or take a 5km walk along the *Trieux* starting at the tourist office, unmistakable in its medieval house on the main through road.



Pontrieux

©PA

PORT BLANC (TO 02 96 92 81 09)

Anatole Braz, the renowned collector of local Breton legends, described the sea at Port Blanc as 'divine, the swimming isles clothed in light'. A simple, even humble little port, it has, nonetheless, attracted its share of celebrities including Marie Curie. It has also attracted the English both in war and peace since at least 1230, when they helped to finance the Bretons against the French. Situated on the vulnerable headland, the chapel at Port Blanc was originally a 'tour de garde', a watch tower looking out to sea.

Walk the coastal path to le Royo and back with its view of the *Île aux Femmes* and *Île Saint-Gildas*, where a chapel has stood since the 11th century or, to make a circular walk, return via the calvary at *Crec'h André* and *Poulpri*. The '*école de voile*' (sailing school) at Port Blanc gives lessons in sailing, canoeing and fishing and the *Ausqueme* sailing boat takes visitors out for fishing and bird-watching trips.

The market is on Saturday.

u La ROCHE-DERRIEN

(TO 02 96 91 50 22)

La Roche-Derrien is situated on a rocky hill above the river *Jaudy*, where it widens into mudflats, attracting a variety of birds (including white herons) on its way to the sea. In the central square a number of medieval timber-framed houses still stand, sagging somewhat but looking solid enough to last another few centuries. (See Walk No.2, page 87)



La Roche-Derrien

©PA

Château de la ROCHE-JAGU (02 96 95 62 35)

Built in 1405, vertiginously high above the River *Trieux*, the château is now civic-owned and has been renovated. Inside, the château is fascinating with its numerous fireplaces and surprisingly airy spaces. The his-and-hers chapel is charming and the walks along the upper corridors give a magnificent view of the winding, muddy *Trieux* and the wooded bank opposite.

Three walks around the land are indicated on the map in the car park but it is just as good to find your own way round the herb and rose gardens, camellia walks, wisteria tunnels and down to the little harbour. The château often houses art exhibitions and in summer the public can attend lively, good-humoured, free spectacles on the lawns.



WALK 1: Plestin-Les-Grèves

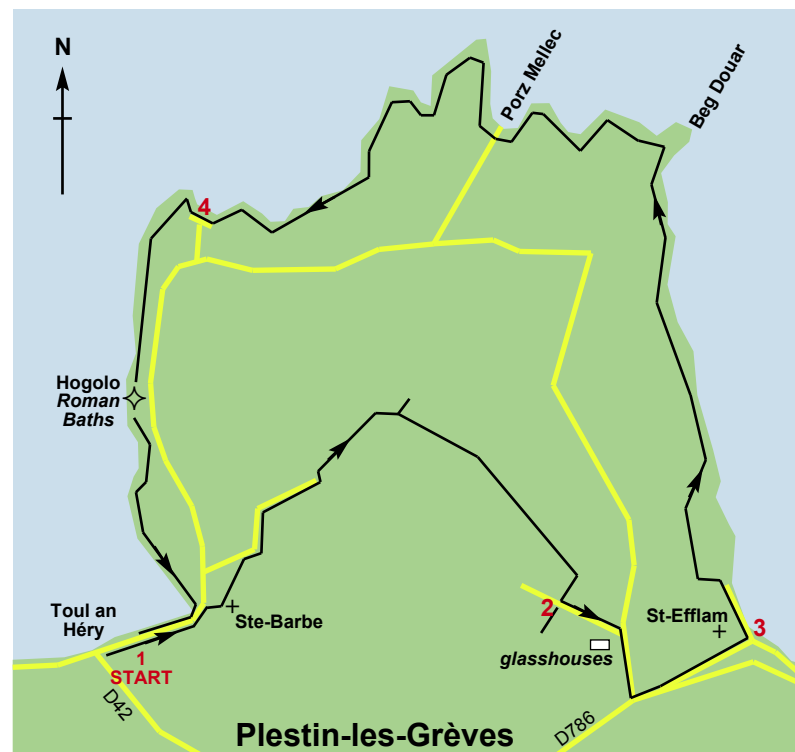
Length 8½kms **Time** 3hrs **Level** - difficult (steep path)

Location & parking: (this walk can be started at the Rue des Carrières on the sea front but, in summer, parking can be difficult.) Drive instead to Toul an Héry, taking the D42 out of Plestin towards Locquirec. The poorly indicated Toul an Héry is situated on the bank of the River Douron which divides Côtes d'Armor from Finistère. Park on the river front.

Refreshments: in Plestin, none on route.

Notes: the Sunday morning market at Plestin-les-Grèves must surely be the best in the Côtes d'Armor. Here you can buy your picnic or a pizza from the van or eat at one of the popular cafés.

1. Walk away from the bridge along the D42 following the shore. After 500m turn right into Place de Sainte Barbe where, until recently, the sea came up to the chapel dedicated to the patron saint of coastguard vessels. Go up the path to the left of the chapel, bordered by an ancient wall. At the top turn right and follow the lane past a few houses to its end. Turn left onto the footpath, open views to either side. Pass through a little wood of pine and juniper, keeping to the right on the yellow-marked path. After the wood, the path becomes a track and divides. Take the right track leading down towards a little farm where pigeons are bred. (Dozens can often be seen on the roofs.)



2. At the crossroads (where a marker points right to Traou-Dour) turn left up the lane, passing a group of greenhouses, to the road junction. Turn right, then, after 100m, turn left on the D786 towards St-Efflam. Keep to the left side of the road and go immediately down the car-free no-entry road to the left. The lane leads down to the sea, passing the chapel of St-Efflam high on the left. This can be reached by ascending the little path marked with a fleur-de-lys. Descend again by the wide stone steps to the fontaine, now neglected and denuded of its saints but still very sweet.

3. At the road junction, go left into the Rue des Carrières along the sea front. At the end of the road take the footpath climbing steeply onto the cliffs. Ignore all other paths and keep on this, the coastal GR path (red and white slash). The tide goes out an unbelievably long way in the huge, flat bay of Plestin and the sound of breaking waves and gulls can be heard all along the coastal path. (At the stone jetty of Beg Douar, benches afford a break and a sea view across the