

Spotlight on Brittany: Idioms

Idioms 3

Bonjour!

For this programme, I thought it would be a good idea to grab a copy of *Le Télégramme* and skim through it, looking for examples of idioms at work.

First, an article about 17 Bretons being amongst the 500 richest industrialists in France:

*Si 14 d'entre eux ont vu leur fortune professionnelle réduire, trois **tirent leur épingle du jeu.***

Ok, then.....*tirer*: to pull or pull out.....*une épingle*: a pinthen *du jeu*: of the game or from the game. Put it all together and you get: *withdraw your pin from the game* , which suggests a meaning, but in fact this is how you say *to come out of something well* – *to do all right*, if you like. So, *tirer son épingle du jeu* means *to come out of something well, even to extricate yourself with a positive result.*

Next, we have an article about the financial support available for building new houses, in order to stimulate the market. At the end of the first paragraph:

*Encore faut-il connaître ces différents **coups de pouce.***

Not too hard, is it : And yet you know "*coups*".....are *blows/strokes* "*de pouce*"*of the thumb or big toe*, if you are talking about feet???? It's obviously not making sense literally, so it must be an idiom! What the phrase really means is something like *nudges in the right direction* or, here, *nudges towards sources of help*. A better translation of the sentence is: *And yet you have to be familiar with these various sources of help*. So, *un coup de pouce* is more of a helping hand than a whack with a thumb!

A bientôt!
