

Spotlight on Brittany: Out & About

Poul Fetan History

Presenter	Now here is one for everyone. We join Richard Flament, who is finding out about a place called Poul Fetan, near Quistinic in Morbihan. There is a little change to the way we are presenting this today – it is in French throughout, but you can use the interview to practice your French comprehension and I will tell you more about this at the end.
Richard Flament	Today we are in Poul Fetan, a village of the 16th century, which has been renovated, I am now passing over to the operations manager who will present her village.
Rejane Even	Hello, my name is Rejane Even and I am responsible for operating the site of Poul Fetan.
Richard	Could you elaborate a little more? I see that the village dates from the 16th century and it was recently renovated. Could you give us some details on both the old village and the new village?
Rejane	Yes, the village does indeed date back to the 16th century.
Richard	So the village was created in the 16th century with some parts being closer to the 17th.
Rejane	Well, quite: so the first traces of inhabitants have been found to be from the 17th century.
Richard	I saw in the village, as in all villages, there are many small houses. These houses were occupied, can you talk a little about the composition of this village?
Rejane	Well, in effect, the village consisted of a dozen cottages and at the time, it was inhabited by many families of peasants. It was, I would say, from a survey, a village of roughly 45 people, who lived here at the same time, relatively large families. So, of course, there were a number of residential homes and other facilities, such as cellars, barns and also plots of land for herbs, small gardens, vegetable plots and areas under cultivation.

Richard	And the name of the village? Poul Fetan, could you give us its meaning?
Rejane	Well: Poul Fetan consists of two words. So Poul means pond, water hole, or washing facilities. So for us, this means the laundry, and Fetan, the fountain, which then gives us "the fountain for doing the laundry".
Richard	Do you know why the village has experienced a period of disappearance between its abandonment and the current renovation?
Rejane	Well, I would say, that it was at the time of the diversification of the countryside, or rather that the people were going towards the town and therefore gradually, the village itself had become forgotten. With a lack of maintenance and restoration this has meant that the village was completely ruined and in this case, there was no possibility to live there.
Richard	About what period was this?
Rejane	Around 1950 to 1970. There was only one family, but they lived in an area near the village.
Richard	So the village was still inhabited until the mid 20th century.
Rejane	Absolutely, yes, and the last person left in order to live in a village nearby called "the Nividic" about 200 metres from Poul Fetan, so he did not go very far.

Poul Fetan Activities

Rejane	So now, we track the activities dated to the mid 19th century. I would say that, to retrace a little history briefly, the village was in ruins until 1977 and the Quistinic community decided at this time to redeem this village. They have undertaken various initiatives with organisations to help them prepare the grant applications in order to ensure the restoration of this site. So it was a long process, I would say over the period between 1979 and 1994. There was also the involvement of many Quistinic volunteers who, rightly, thanks to their work, have made this restoration possible.
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Richard	Thank you very much. Of the activities that have been recreated here, did they already exist in the 16th century, such as the potter or the baker? Were there craftsmen in this village as there are today?
Rejane	There were craftsmen then, but ... unfortunately, there was no baker, or potter at that time. However, evidence has been found that there were weavers, clog makers, masons, too, but especially farmers and peasants at that time.
Richard	Therefore, one talks about the activities of this village.
Rejane	Well, today, we retrace, what I would say, are the characteristics of the village, so we can find out the movements of peasant life in the era of the mid 19th century. Therefore all activities are undertaken for cultural purposes, requiring large amounts of research, I would say, to gain historic knowledge and to transcribe this information to our visitors. So to give some examples; we organise activities, such as laundry work, wool spinning and dyeing, milking cows, also activities like embroidery, including fine fabrics and dress materials, find out how they fed themselves with demonstrations of buckwheat pancakes, buckwheat porridge, oatmeal porridge, potato pancakes. You can also find out about the making of hemp rope and also a horse demonstration.
Richard	Thank you very much, it remains for us to go and see these events and taste the buckwheat crêpe. We will visit all this and I invite everyone who hears us to do the same.

Poul Fetan Information

Richard	When can we visit the village? Is it open all year? Are there opening and closing times?
Rejane	Well, the village is open daily from 1 April until 26 September. As to the opening hours, from April to May we are open from 2.00pm to 6.30pm and from June to September it is from 11am to 7.00pm. Knowing that our activities take place every afternoon, we advise our visitors to come really early in the afternoon to enjoy all the excitement, because our activities are distributed roughly every half hour and they occur one after the other.

Richard	Thank you very much.
Rejane	Thank you.
Presenter	<p>Poul Fetan is at Quistinic in Morbihan. From the N24 near Baud, take the D172 and then the D3, the Route du Bubry, towards Bubry. Quistinic is on the D156, a left turn. There is a map and more information on www.poul-fetan.com and most Tourist Information Centres around Central Brittany will have a leaflet for you. It is a marvellous achievement – to have reconstructed a whole village and to have brought it to life. Come along, it really is worth a visit and there is lots to do for everyone, young and old.</p> <p>On www.spotlightonbrittany.fr you will find both French and English transcripts of the interview. You can download the podcasts and listen again. If this sounds a bit too much like homework for the summer break, you can always reward yourself by visiting Poul Fetan. There's a lot more there than we had time to talk about today.</p>

