



Drop by Drop – Canal News

If you're feeling slightly intoxicated by this month's theme of alcohol we thought a piece about our favourite stretch of water in Brittany, the Nantes to Brest Canal, would make for a refreshing break.

In 2017 with any luck and a fair wind you are going to see boats sailing once again on the canal.

Since the autumn, the Conseil départemental has been busy dredging, repairing locks (even replacing lock gates) and clearing debris from the 55km of the 365km-long canal that crosses the Côtes d'Armor.

If you take the canal path from Gouarec direction Plélauff you will see every 500m or so, a bright orange flash on a tree or on the bank. This marks little rigoles or feeder streams that over the years of neglect had become blocked, causing flooding and rotting acres of trees and creating stagnant ponds. Now each one, from Bon-Repos to Goariva (the last lock before Finistère) has been cleared and now water flows both ways from the feeder ponds to the canal and vice versa, oxygenating the water to the delight of the farmers, the fish and waterlife, the ducks and herons and, of course, the fishermen.

The weekend 13 and 14 May, the associations, the Compagnons of the abbey of Bon-Repos and the Racines d'Argoat celebrate their 30th birthday. The Compagnons saved the abbey which is now owned by the Conseil départemental and the Racines present every year the Son and Lumière of Bon-Repos, the history of the abbey with hundreds of volunteers.

As part of the celebrations the Conseil départemental wants to highlight the canal and that's where we come in with boats, lots of boats : fishing boats, rowing boats, kayaks, canoes, canalboats, and with any luck our very own toue - a traditional wooden, flat-bottom boat.

There will be canal shanties (like sea shanties but on the canal) and re-enactments of the lives of the last families that lived and worked on the canalways.

And that's just the start of 2017's programme!
You can see the calendar on our website amisducanal22.fr

In no time at all I bet you you will think there have always been boats on our canal here.

In fact it has taken 6 years of solid, but gentle pressure on politicians to get where we are today. Like water on a stone, drop by drop, the campaign of the Friends of the Canal in 22, has slowly but indelibly left its mark, and now the canal is open to everyone who wants to sail from La Pitié to the Lake.

Ah, now, if we can just find a way to get over the dam ...

