



## Jean-Noël Potin, Le Poher

Jon I'm with Jean-Noel Potin, from *Le Poher* newspaper. So, Jean, welcome to our studio here. Could I just ask you, why are you here?

Jean-Noël Oh, that's a long story. To cut the story short, I'm originally from Brest. I moved to Canada as a young journalist, when I was about 23, and lived in Canada for about seven years before heading back to France in 1997. My wife is Canadian and we decided to come to Brittany after having lived in Normandy for about three years, where I worked also as a journalist for a local paper there. I was then hired by *Le Telegram* – and *Le Poher* being one of the titles carried by *Le Telegram* – I was offered the position there as Director, in 2015.

Jon I also understand you've been abroad quite a lot. You've obviously spent time in Canada ...

Jean-Noël That's right. I actually started very young, because my father used to work for the ship-building industry, in Brest. The ship-building industry for France has quite a few ... there are quite a few places where you can be sent, and one of them is Tahiti, in the South Pacific, so I was very lucky indeed because my father was sent there for six years, between '77 and '83, and that was of course a fabulous experience. I loved Tahiti, for culture, for, for many things, beside of course the scenery is just beautiful, and the people, who are really interesting and charming. And the music, which ... I'm very fond of music and this is something that ... I really fell in love with the music from the South Pacific. If you live in France and if you're sent abroad to improve your English, if you're in Brittany usually you go to Ireland, Wales, or, or the south of England. For us in Tahiti we had the choice between Los Angeles, Hawaii or New Zealand, so I figured, well, New Zealand is probably just the furthest place on earth I'll ever have chance to move to, so I actually chose Auckland, and I spent about seven weeks in Auckland, and that was another major discovery in my life. I have been very, very fond of ... passionate, actually, about New Zealand music ever since.

Jon Were you made to play rugby?

Jean-Noël I was, actually, yeah. The thing is, you know, we have our main holiday in July and August in France, so in Tahiti that's exactly the way it works – so it's the same – so in July and August we have our major holiday. In New Zealand it's just the opposite, because this is winter time, in July and August, and this is usually when they go to school, so I was actually at school during the, the seven weeks that I spent there. And I was in a college called Rangitoto College, so I was in that college for a, for a number of weeks then and it was of course for me also an experience to learn how to play rugby, but I was not very good.

Jon So back to your newspaper. What does *Le Poher* actually mean?

Jean-Noël *Le Poher* is actually the name of the area, where, you know, around Carhaix.

Jon And your paper, you have an English page, don't you?

Jean-Noël That's right.

Jon                    It's just made a comeback.

Jean-Noël            It's a comeback, as you say. It was actually launched by one of my predecessors, Pascal Boudiret, who used to be the Director of *Le Pover* and they launched that page, of course, since there was quite a community of English-speaking people in the area, and I felt it was a shame to have abandoned that page, because that was quite a while back that they decided to stop for a reason that I don't even know of. It's ... I figured since we were launching a new formula for the paper, I figured that it would be interesting to make it come back. So we've been working on that and, well, I'm quite happy that we did it, because we, we, we're getting positive feedback from it.

Jon                    But your English page, as well as being for English people who live here, it's also for French people, isn't it?

Jean-Noël            That's right. We, we didn't want to exclude anyone, so the ... my idea was really to have, on the one hand, content that would be appealing to the English community, so having good stories, you know, like the ones, for instance, that you've started to write yourself ...

Jon                    Oh, they're very good!

Jean-Noël            But also we found Mike Lucas, who is an author from, from England who lives close to Baud, so in the Morbihan, who writes a column every 15 days for us. Mike Lucas was actually the founder of the Micro Theatre in England. And the things we wanted to bring about, to have real content, you know, in English, but also to have content that would appeal also to the, the French people who want to read English, and I'm actually amazed because this is really one of the first feedbacks that I got, is actually some of the French people, from the French community, like to read in English and to, to, try to, you know, to perform better, or to better their English.

Jon                    Now then, the English page, I do ... I notice, it has very quick answers at the bottom – quick likes and dislikes, that kind of thing, so I'm going to do the same with you, now. Tell us one thing you like.

Jean-Noël            Oh well, music. Definitely!

Jon                    One thing you hate?

Jean-Noël            Something I hate ... I would say, er ... phew, that's a difficult question. I'm pretty easy.

Jon                    So we'll leave that blank. Your favourite place you've ever visited?

Jean-Noël            I would say Tahiti.

Jon                    Your favourite place in Brittany?

Jean-Noël            That would have to be the centre of Brittany, which I find very, very interesting, and you see a place like Gouarec, or instance, you have little jewels that are completely unknown, or even Saint Barde close to Le Faouët ... there are beautiful places all around here.

Jon                    Jean-Noel, it's been a pleasure. Thank you very much.

Jean-Noël            Thank you, Jon.



