

# *The Brida Journal*

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[www.journal.brida.eu](http://www.journal.brida.eu)

Week 52/2020

**Ideas and Conversations, for and by learners of English.**

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## **Tour de France, Stage 8, Charente-Maritime 2 Romans, Ships, History**

*Geneviève sails with us through time.*

We start our leg of this tour in Saintes, a very old town. It dates back to Roman times. I suggest you first visit the Gallo Roman amphitheatre built around 40-50 BC. It was a big amphitheatre with a capacity of 15000 spectators. Let the spirit of the theatre embrace you by sitting on a step. Then, walk to the “Porte des Morts” (Gate of Death) and feel the glorious victory of a gladiator as you emerge from the “Porte des Vivants” (Gate of Living).

Just outside of town are the remains of a Gallo Roman aqueduct. It supplied the necessary water to the town and to the thermal springs there. 160m long, 27 arches, the highest point is 16m.

The “Thermes de Saint-Saloine” were built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD in two steps. The remains show us the warm basin (caldarium) surrounded by a wall. In the town centre itself is the Arc de Germanicus. This is a monumental gate which was erected in 18-19 AD. It was the start of the “Via Agrippa” and served the entrance to the town. It was rescued by Prosper Mérimée in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He was one of the pioneers of the novella or short story and dedicated the Arch to Tiberius and Germanicus, important witnesses to the town in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

Weaving our way through history, there are also many castles (Château de Crazannes; Château de Panloy, Château de la Roche Courbon) to explore and you can also stroll along the Charente River.

Just a hop, skip and a jump away is of course the famous town of Cognac. Visit and take part in a “degustation”, a Cognac tasting.

North west of Saintes, on the coast, is La Rochelle. The city has the feel of an open-air museum.

Free from feudal tutelage, the town greatly benefited from its newfound liberty, as it began to develop maritime commerce thanks to the wine and salt trade. We remember that the vineyards in Charantais were

the biggest in France. With this independence secured by trade, it welcomed the new ideas with the Reformation and became a Protestant bastion. Threatened by the political unification of the King of France, La Rochelle was destroyed in the great siege of 1627/28.

It was the ocean which gave La Rochelle a second breath with the commercial trade to New France (Canada) and the Antilles. It was the age of shipowners. With the effects of the French Revolution and the following empirical wars, the town fell into a slumber until the creation of the “Port de Commerce de La Pallice”, which is now the 6<sup>th</sup> largest French harbour.

In the 1950s the town’s population grew rapidly, new districts were created and the town was modernised. During the 1970s the town turned “green”, leading the way in ecological and environmental projects.

Synonymous with La Rochelle is the frigate, the *Hermione*

The original frigate was constructed in 1779. Under the orders of La Touche-Tréville, the ship’s maiden voyage was on March 10, 1780, to take part in the decisive victory in the American War of Independence. It became a symbol as the “Frigate of Freedom” and the Franco-American friendship. It sank in the Loire estuary in 1793, but the original anchor and three original cannons can still be admired in the “Ducs de Bretagne” castle in Nantes.

In the 1980s, a group of friends decided to breathe new life into the armoury of Rochefort, one of the most beautiful armouries dating from Louis XIV. A curious project crept into their minds: to rebuild the *Hermione*. It was an ambitious undertaking.

Although some 550 vessels were built over a period of two and half centuries at the Rochefort Armoury, the group had to research the plans in the port archives. It is an irony of history that they found the plans of *Hermione*’s sister ship “*Concorde*” in Greenwich, England. The replica was constructed using the plans of the *Concorde*.

The *Hermione* – La Fayette Association was established in 1992 under the leadership of the Mayor of Rochefort (Jean-Louis Frot) and the author and academic, Erik Orsenna. Benedict Donnelly was the association’s Chairman. There were 5000 members who followed the adventure of the *Hermione*.

In the spring of 1997 the main keel was laid. To construct the replica, 2000 oak trees from French forests, 1000 pulleys, 400,000 pieces of wood and metal, 25 km of rope for the rigging and 2131 m<sup>2</sup> of sail cloth were necessary. Having a width of 11m and a length of 44.20m, it was equipped with three masts. The vessel has three decks for navigating, artillery, and crew quarters.

On April 18th 2015, *Hermione* was brought from Rochefort to the Île d’Aix on the Loire Estuary, accompanied by thousands of spectators.

Like the original vessel, the *Hermione* sailed from Rochefort to North America. After sailing for 27 days across the Atlantic, its first port of call was Bermuda and then it sailed north along the East Coast of the United States and Canada, stopping 12 times en route.

Its highly symbolic journey reinforced the Franco-American friendship. The crew wore original uniforms upon arrival in the US.

Further voyages to the Mediterranean and Brittany were made in 2018 and 2019. Now, I must stop again. There is some Cognac waiting for me. A bientôt!

# Bye-bye 2020. Hello 2021

As we learned this year, you can make plans. And then you have to cancel them.

So, with lots of caution, let me lift the curtain a little on the plans for the Journal next year. These are the first ideas that some of you have been sending to me or I have been discussing with others. I know other people will still send in their suggestions.

From Steven in Tanzania comes a suggestion about “quality education” and youth unemployment. While he sees it from an African perspective, it is something which concerns us all.

The future is the dominant theme for many people I have spoken to. How will we shape the world and our lives after the pandemic? For me personally, trust, respect and civility are at the top of the agenda. It somehow seemed lacking as this year progressed. As one person told me, “How can I help future humanity?”

On a lighter side, there are rumours about a Mr Cuddles and his exciting adventures. Cheese and tea will be explored in greater detail. Also in the early planning stages are some contributions on music.

For those who live closer and work with me, I offer you the chance to advise me on my vegetable plot. For several reasons, I neglected my garden somewhat for the last 2 years. Plants, gardens, landscaping, and maximising 50 m<sup>2</sup> without spending too much money will be a recurring theme of next year.

Some people I hope to include into the Brida Community should be able to advise us on health topics and decorating ideas.

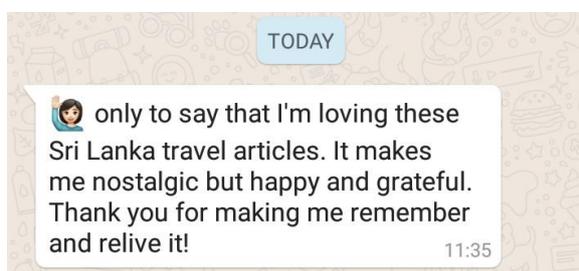
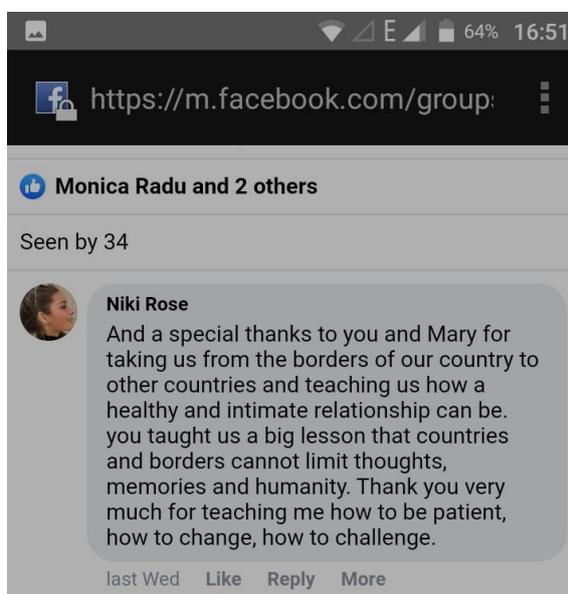
No doubt, as the year progresses more ideas and themes will emerge.

This is the last issue for 2020. The next issue will be published on January 10, 2021. See you then.

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## Michèle:

Your text "thank you" in the last Brida journal is very moving! the encouragement that you have received and that you still receive are justified, this journal is alive, cooperative, varied, it speaks of life, through such different people! Thank you to you !





# Yule Log

## Ingredients

6 large eggs, separated  
 150g soft brown sugar  
 50g cocoa powder  
 ¼ tsp salt  
 ½ tsp cinnamon  
 ½ tsp ground nutmeg  
 1 tbsp caster sugar

**For the filling:**  
 225ml double cream  
 250g chestnut puree  
 1 tbsp brandy (optional)

**For the icing:**  
 285ml double cream  
 150g good quality milk chocolate, broken into pieces  
 100g dark chocolate  
 Pinch of sea salt

## Method

Preheat the oven to 180C. Grease a 30x20cm swiss roll tin and line the base with greaseproof paper.

Put the egg yolks in a food mixer and whisk for a couple of minutes. Sprinkle over the soft brown sugar, breaking up any lumps, and whisk until you have a thick mixture. Meanwhile, sift together the cocoa powder and seasoning, then whisk them into the egg yolk mixture.

In a clean bowl, whip up the egg whites to soft peaks, then fold them into the rest of the mixture. Pour this into the tin, spread out evenly, and bake for about 30 minutes until cooked and bouncy. Put a clean tea towel on a cooling rack and top with a similarly sized piece of greaseproof paper. Sprinkle this with caster sugar.

When the roll is cooked, run a knife around the edges, then shake it out on to the greaseproof paper. Peel off the lining paper, and then, using the tea towel to help, roll it up tightly and leave to cool on the rack.

Whip the cream to soft peaks, and then fold in the chestnut puree (if it isn't already sweetened, you may wish to add a little sugar) and brandy. Make the ganache by heating the cream to a bare simmer, then take off the heat and add the chocolate pieces and salt. Leave for a minute or so, then stir to a smooth paste, and allow to cool to room temperature.

When the roll is barely warm, unroll it on a board, remove the paper, and spread with the chestnut cream. Roll up again, and place on the serving plate. Spread with the ganache, and, as it cools, use the tines of a fork to create a bark effect – you can add more ganache for a thicker coating once the first layer has cooled if you like. Dust with icing sugar for a snowy effect just before serving.



## Our special offers for this week. Boxing Day Sales

Egyptian Bath Towels  
70 x 130 cm  
€12

Frying Pan  
28 cm diameter  
€22.50

Square food container set  
5 per pack  
€8.99

Double walled glasses  
350 ml  
€13.00

Cross Action  
Toothbrush Heads  
4 per pack €11.99

Large Lavender  
Scented Candles  
Per candle €17.40

Roasting Tray Set  
Two per pack  
€12.99

100 % microfibre mop  
€4.89

Create your own  
mug design markers  
€4.20

Pyrex Jug with lid  
1 l €9.99

Cheese knives and board  
Gift Set, €33.99

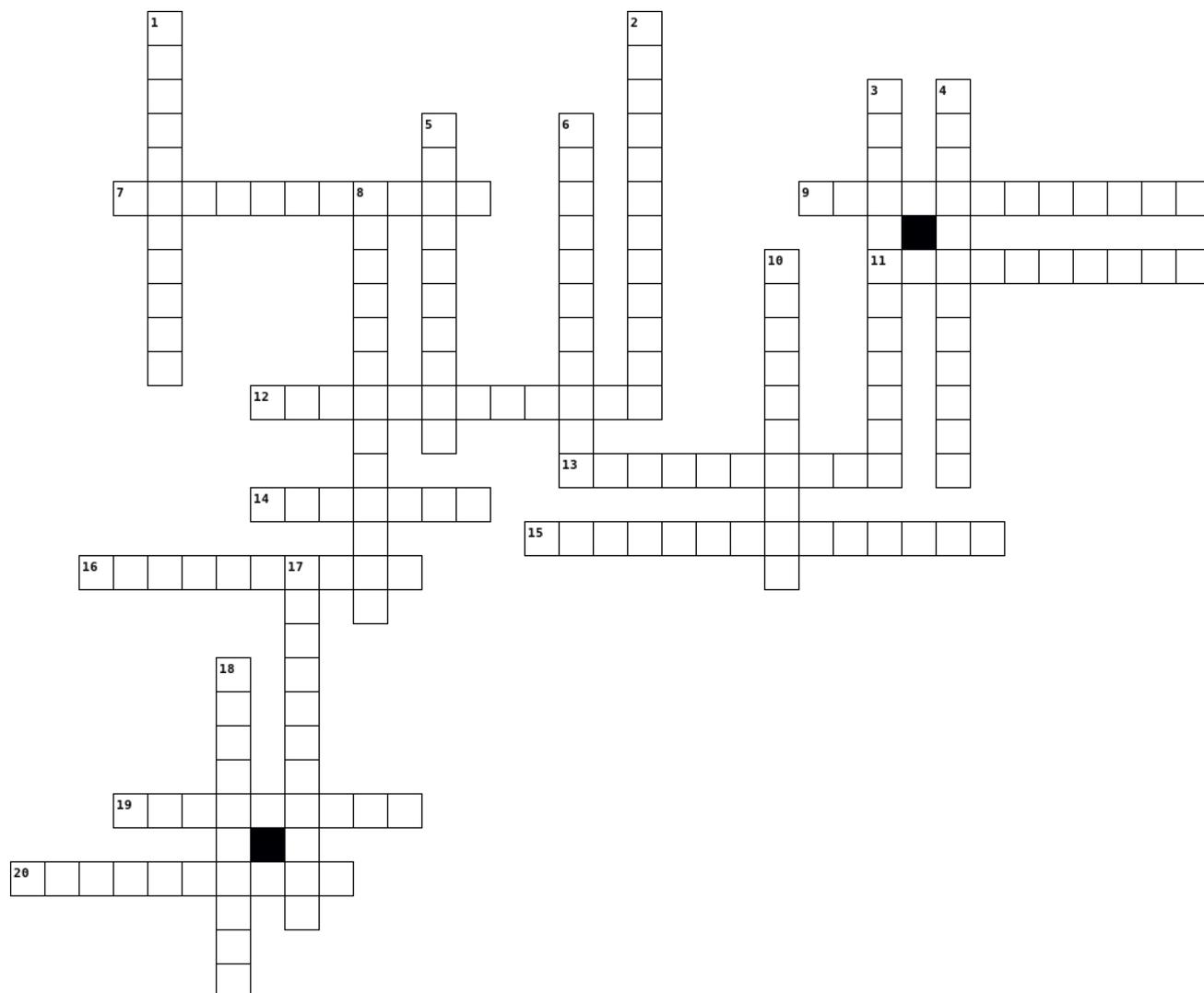
Bamboo Ostrich  
Feather duster  
€6.99

Underbed Storage Bag  
€5.99

Steak Knives with  
wooden handles.  
4 per Pack €14.25

Chopping Board Set  
Mixed sizes €15.50

# The Crossword - Ships



**Across**

7. When you are a member of two or more people as partners.
9. The skill in a craft or the quality of something made by hand.
11. When you are a trainee in a company to gain work experience.
12. A contest for the position of champion in a sport.
13. When you can write beautifully.
14. Family relationship, next of kin.
15. The time served as an apprentice.
16. When you belong to an organisation, group or club.
19. When you own something.
20. When you are an expert of something or have profound mastery.

**Down**

1. The quality of your work.
2. When you can ride a horse skilfully.
3. The connection between you and your friends.
4. A country governed by dictators.
5. When you are friends with somebody.
6. What you have when you are a citizen of a country.
8. Fair play, especially in sport.
10. The action of leading.
17. What you have when somebody pays for your education.
18. The number of readers of a publication.

**Solution 51.20****Across**

4. wise
6. wet
8. untidy
11. uncomfortable
12. tiny
14. loud
15. delicious
17. short
18. round
20. handsome

**Down**

1. beautiful
2. happy
3. bright
5. expensive
7. truth
9. tired
10. difficult
13. younger
16. close
19. cold

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**The Brida Journal** is an educational tool with the purpose of helping learners to improve their knowledge of English. Educators wishing to participate in the programme should contact me via email.

### Third Party Inspirational Sources

classifieds: [gumtree.ie](http://gumtree.ie) or [gumtree.co.uk](http://gumtree.co.uk),  
the supermarket: various supermarket websites in the United Kingdom