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Maps:
SHOM 7146
Navicarte 543
IGN 0519ET

The Glénan Islands

Difficulty: **x x x**

Distance: 25 nautical miles (2 days)

Leaving and Arriving: Pointe de Moustierlin



A small bay at Penfret.



Bird watching on the Île aux Moutons.



A break on the sand bank at Guiriden, opposite Penfret.
Photo E Julé

THE GLÉNAN ARCHIPELAGO, made up of six main islands and a multiplicity of rocks and reefs, surrounds a lagoon known as La Chambre. Sheltered from the prevailing winds this is a magical spot with its shallow azure waters, white sand and marl. The famous sailing school 'Les Glénans' is based here.

Started in 1947 its philosophy is self-sufficiency, taking responsibility and working together. Its courses are accessible to all. The best selling book; '*Le Cours des Glénans*' is an exceptional resource for all sailors. It has been translated into English many times; *The Glénans Sailing Manual*, *The New Glénans Sailing Manual*, etc.

Launching, Landing and Parking:

Pointe de Mousterlin (the headland between Bénodet and Concarneau): slipway to the east of the point, handier than the one near the hotel; parking at an angle along the road; portage, a trolley might be useful at low water.

Two other possibilities, these routes are slightly shorter as they take you directly across, missing out the Île aux Moutons: 1) West of the beach at Lesconil; near the sailing school, large parking area. 2) East of the port of Trévignon: slipway and large parking area.



Le Renard and l'Istrec in the bay of Saint-Malo. Photo E. Julé

Leave from the Naye slipway a little before high water. Take care, this is a busy ferry port, the cross-channel ferries travel much more quickly than it looks. The marinas are also busy with leisure craft. After a few paddle strokes the massive walls of the old city come into view. The Malouins (inhabitants of St. Malo), famous for their seafaring skills, have an illustrious history and at times have formed a separate state, independent of both French and Breton authority. Inside the port, the sailing ship *Le Renard* (The Fox) is a replica of the ship sailed by Surcouf, the last and most famous Malouin corsair. By virtue of its speed and handling, he overtook, boarded and ransacked merchant ships sailing up the Channel as recently as the early 1800s.

Skirt the breakwater, watching out for fishing lines and head for the Grand (Large) Bey. Chateaubriand is buried here, continue along the ramparts to the Fort National, the cut back to the Petit (Small) Bey. All of these three islands can be reached on foot at low water. Look out to sea and then head for the La Conchée Fort.



This is considered the best example of a fort built by Vauban and is now owned by a restoration society.

From La Conchée make a ferry glide across to Cézembre, it has the only beach in the area. The tide can run strongly in the channels. Cézembre is still riddled with unexploded munitions and only limited

La Conchée Fort.

areas have public access, the rest is the haunt of gulls. There is a quay and a bar-restaurant, the 'Repaire des Corsaires' (the 'Corsairs Lair') above the beach.

Circumnavigate the island anti-clockwise, the outside coast is very rocky and swell swept, a great place to paddle, but one that demands some expertise. Consider staying on the inside if there was swell on the paddle across. The Grand Jardin (Great Garden) lighthouse was rebuilt in the 1950s in a contemporary classical style, it has a representation of Neptune just below the light. Cross the channel of 'la Petite Porte', this is the main shipping channel and can be busy, stay in a tight group, cross at right angles and keep a 360° watch. Once on the other side head for the last fort, that of Harbour Island, watch out for the numerous reefs. South of the fort are many sandbanks, one of these, 'Les Pourceaux', was a farm in the 15th century.

Skirt Dinard, with its kitsch skyline and seaside villas in what the French call the English style. The last obstacle is the current from the Rance Barrage power station, this can be strong and can change quickly, paddle against this as far as the Solidor Tower, then head back to the start point. ■



WEATHER, TIDE AND SAFETY

Heavy shipping traffic, keep a listening watch on channel 12. Strong tides, especially the flood tide, which runs from west to east from HW -5 (strongly HW -4 to HW -2) (St. Malo). The ebb flows west from HW. Water flowing out through the Rance power station can be strong inside the Rance and is also felt in the shipping channel.