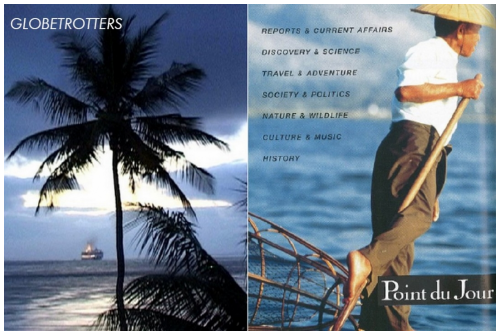


FRANCE: THE APPLE TREE

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On the peninsular of Plougastel in Brittany, the celebration of All Saints Day is unique, resembling no other. The ancestral rite of the Apple Tree brings together two powerful symbols: the yew tree, symbol of eternal life and knowledge, and the apple, symbol of fertility. The yew is cleaned until just the wood remains, the apples are stuck on the branches like onto pikes, and the apple tree is carried through the village. Those gathered around the tree recall the loved ones they lost, a way to keep them alive forever. Money is collected to hold mass for the dead. This pagan ritual had been prohibited for 20 years by the village priest, but the ceremony has now been resuscitated and is accepted by the church.

Categorie(s): Collections - Series
Tag(s): Traditions, Regions

Producer(s): POINT DU JOUR
Length: 1x11 / Format: One-off
Original version: French
Versions available: French / International
Nationality: France, 1998
Rights: tv worldwide
Support(s): SD â€“ Digital 4/3, SD - Beta SP
http://www.pointdujour-international.com/catalogueFiche.php?idFiche=29715&lang=en