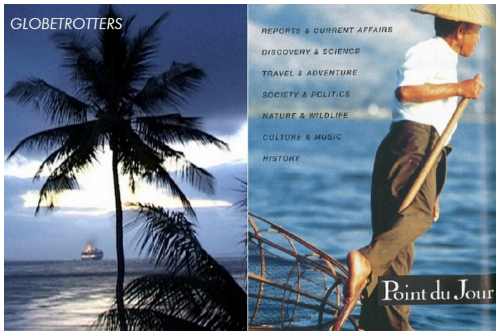

FRANCE: BOULOU POK - MARDI GRAS IN BRITTANY

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It's been a custom for three centuries already. Every year on 'mardi gras', the men of Guerlesquin in Brittany's « Finistère » district, separate into Northerners and Southerners for their own civil war. Those whose houses face north confront those with houses facing south. They fight with the 'boulou', a weird sort of ball, on the church forecourt, their very own battleground. Otherwise, the rules are totally incomprehensible, but no matter - it's serious business. It's called the World Boulou Pok Championship, originally invented by a priest intent on liberating the men from the control of their womenfolk. The battle always ends in a boisterous armistice and one easily understands why the championship is only held once a year.

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