

# BRO NEVEZ 77

# February 2001

ISSN 0895 3074

---

**Editor:**

Lois Kuter  
169 Greenwood Ave., B-4  
Jenkintown, PA 19046 U.S.A.

(215) 886-6361  
E-MAIL: kuter@netreach.net

---

The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981.

**Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is a newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, May, August and November. Contributions, letters to the Editor, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor. Suggested deadlines for receipt of contributions for Bro Nevez are: January 20, April 20, July 20, and October 20.

Ideas expressed within this newsletter are those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily represent ICDBL philosophy or policy.

Membership in the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL includes subscription to Bro Nevez:

Voting Membership:	\$18.00 (calendar year)
Non-Voting Membership:	\$17.00

Subscriptions:      \$15.00 U.S. and Canada first class mail  
                             \$20.00 overseas by surface mail  
                             \$25.00 overseas by airmail (printed matter rate)

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to do this. In some instances we are also very happy to establish an exchange of publications.

**U.S. ICDBL Web Site:** <http://www.breizh.net/icdbl.htm>

\* \* \*

The **Canadian Branch of the ICDBL** was relaunched January 1998. That branch of the ICDBL publishes a newsletter called Brittany/Bretagne/Breizh (trilingual in English, Breton, French). For information about the newsletter and joining the Canadian Branch of the ICDBL, contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, 58 Century Drive, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 4J6 CANADA (e-mail: jdkoneill@sympatico.ca). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.

---

**BRO NEVEZ 77****February 2001**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
Editorial: "If you want to kill your dog, call it a mad dog"	1
Oil & Water – Report on a Visit to Brittany – Natalie Novik	2 – 3
Diwan and Skolaj Diwan ar Mor-Bihan	3-4
A New Study – <u>The Nominoë Study of the Breton Language</u> , by Jeff Ó Néill and Marcel Texier	5-6
New Publications from Brittany	6-12
<u>Brezhoneg pa gari!</u> , Gwyn Griffith's, <u>Llydaw: Ei Llen a' l Llwybrau</u> ; Fañch Peru, <u>Va Enezenn din-me</u> ; Alain Pierre and Patrig Sicard, <u>Guide Pratique de la Danse Bretonne</u> ; Joseph Jigourel and Yann Fournier, <u>Costumes de Bretagne—l'Esprit d'un Peuple</u> ; Christian Nicot, <u>Dernières Coiffes de Bretagne/Koefou diwezhan Breizh</u> ; Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine, <u>Qust et Vilaine, Pays de Traditions</u> ; Louisette Radioyes, <u>Traditions et chansons de Haute-Bretagne—Le Répertoire de Saint-Congard et ses environs 1962-1970</u> .	
New magazines and some not-so-new magazines	12-13
<u>Celtics—Le magazine des musiques celtiques</u> ; <u>Koroll—Danses bretonnes</u> ; <u>Hekleo ar C'hoarioù</u> ; <u>Gouren Infos</u>	
Some Shorter Notes on New Books in and about the Breton Language	13-15
Learning Welsh in the U.S.A. – Cwrs Cymraeg	16
Music from Brittany	17-20
Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde, <u>Buhez</u> ; Marianig Larc'hantec, <u>Chall ha dichall</u> ; Loened Fall, <u>An Deizioù zo berr</u> .	
Heard of, but not heard – New CDs from Brittany	21–22
Breton and Television: France 3 Ouest and Year 2000 Du-mañ Du-se Prizes	23-25
Ofis ar Brezhoneg	25
The U.S. ICDBL in the news ... an article for Musique Bretonne	25
A Quick Festival Note: Fête du Chant Traditionnel à Bovel	26
Breton Vocabulary for Music .. or how to read the notes to Breton CDs	27-29
International Celtic Congress – July 23-28 in Rennes	30
A New InterCeltic Flag	30
Travels in Brittany – An American on Foot in 1853	31-34

# EDITORIAL

For the past year and a half the French press has printed a number of articles in which Breton militants have been portrayed as terrorists and Nazis—direct descendants of Hitler and a handful of Bretons seeking independence for Brittany who collaborated with Germany during World War II. Of course negative press for the Breton movement is not at all new, and many French collaborated with Germany during the War also. But somehow Breton collaborators are always portrayed as the only evil ones. The articles appearing in newspapers such as Charlie-Hebdo, Télérama, Libération, Le Canard Enchaîné and most recently Le Nouvel Observateur, distort the history of Brittany during the World War II period and they also distort the work of Bretons today who are attempting to protect their most basic human rights—not as terrorists or xenophobic fascists, but as Europeans and people with an international outlook and respect for cultural diversity.

It has been disheartening to see the same old tired attacks on Breton militants of the World War II period, but it is even more disheartening to see how petty and seemingly dishonest these can be—phrases and paragraphs of Breton writers pulled out of context or badly translated from Breton to French to make these writers appear to be evil racists. In looking back it is easy to condemn Bretons for the actions they took during this period. The Bretons of the 1940s are not the Bretons today fighting for the survival of their language and culture. To pretend or imply that Breton militants today think like Célestin Lainé or that those promoting the Breton language must automatically be right-wing fanatics or neo-nazis is absurd.

A great deal of precious time and energy can be lost in attempting to counterattack the distorted profile of the Breton movement implied or directly presented in the Parisian press. But it is important that Bretons do not accept the distortions and half-truths that are being tossed out to discredit the work done to keep Breton a living language and strengthen Breton culture in all its many expressions. While Bretons have been publishing articles to set the record straight, there have also been a number of petitions to protest attacks on the Breton movement. One of these has been launched by staff of the Coop Breizh book publisher and distributor (the DISTOK-CGT Union).

**“If you want to kill your dog, call it a mad dog.”**

That’s the title of a petition which has been circulating, calling on Breton artists, writers, and editors, and anyone else concerned, to speak out against attacks which depict those in the Breton movement unfairly as racists, anti-Semites and fascists. The petition speaks out against those who would protect the sanctity of French Republicanism while disregarding the freedom of the press, basic human rights, and respect for minority peoples and languages. So far over 412 signatures have been collected from a variety of writers and poets, university professors, publishers, book store managers, musicians and singers, actors, radio and TV personalities, and heads of cultural associations.

The history of Brittany and the Breton Movement is not without its nasty moments. The efforts today by Bretons to promote the wealth of Breton cultural expressions within Brittany is a positive force where people are making an effort to understand their history (with all its warts) and to create a better future where there is the freedom necessary for one to be Breton and to also be a citizen of the world.

# OIL & WATER

## Report on visit to Brittany

December 19-26, 2000

by Natalie Novik

The goal of my visit was to meet with as many organizations as possible involved in the oil spill movement in Brittany, keeping in mind that the time of my visit made it difficult to find people at work.

The first meeting was in Perros-Guirrec with the Syndicat Mixte. We met over lunch, hosted by the Syndicat Mixte, to review the present status and actions of the Syndicat, transmit the latest documentation from the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council (RCAC) in Alaska, and discuss further cooperation between the two countries.

The next meeting took place in LeFaou, at the home office of Stephan Marlesquin, who is the manager of the Marée Noire web site. We discussed at length what aspects of oil spill prevention should take a priority, and among others, there is a proposal to create a "clean pavilion" for French registry in the French Antilles, where a wide range of services would be offered along with registry for a lower price, thereby encouraging ships to register and abide by higher standards.

The following day, I had a lengthy meeting with Emmanuel Morucci in Brest, who heads the Maison de l'Europe, i.e. the local antenna of the European Union. He has already presented a proposal to the French President to create a body of European coast guards, and received the approval of the President to go ahead. The project is now before the European Parliament for consideration. We also discussed the following projects:

- a) A symposium in Brest on March 29<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the creation of the European coast guards. Participation by the US Coast Guard would be welcome.
- b) Organization of a seminar to deal with the psychological trauma on the local populations. The preliminary idea would be to hold it in Ploudalmezeau, some time end of August, perhaps

early September. Morucci has already talked to Alphonse Arzel, the mayor, about this idea, and got his agreement. The goal of the seminar would be to bring together the local villagers from Alaska and Brittany, and possibly other regions (Scotland, for instance), as well as their health providers (doctors, psychologists, social workers), to explain how the oil spill has impacted them from the psychological point of view and what can be done to lessen the impact.

- c) Creation of an oil spill prevention training center: the idea is already on its way in Valdez, and a similar center could be created in the Bay of Brest (Guipavas being an ideal location): both centers would be twinned, and receive each other's students. The idea would be to exchange knowledge and skills, and give students a wide exposure to various climates and conditions.

I went back to the Aber Benoit and Aber Wrac'h (the site of the Amoco Cadiz oil spill, over twenty years ago) to take pictures. Overall, the beaches look clean, but two things struck me: numerous rocks by the shore still bear the black polish of oil, and in the Aber Benoit bird preserve, which lists 14 species of birds wintering in the preserve, I could count only 5 or 6.

After discussing the Erika spill consequences with local people on the south coast, I went down to Quiberon, and sure enough, found fresh oil on the Western beach between the rocks. Actually, the day before, two oiled birds had been found on shore. And I took a tour of the salt marshes near Guerande, to find them clean and inhabited by scores of egrets: one of the inhabitants confirmed that the booms are still in place at the entrance of the bay, as pellets and pads continue to come ashore in nearby villages.

The whole region of Brittany gives the impression of being quite discouraged at this point: a few days after the Erika, on Christmas eve 1999, a hurricane not only threw the oil on the beaches but also devastated the country, ruining woodlands, destroying property and houses, killing cattle. And now this year, exactly one year after the Erika, flooding swept all along the coastline, Chateaulin, Quimper, Quimperle under 10 feet of swirling muddy water, numerous other cities and villages struggling with the sudden invasion of water. I

found flooded fields even in the center of Brittany. New flooding happened again in January, in the same areas. The total cost of the floods adding millions of dollars of damages to a region barely recovered from the previous disasters.

To top it off, two lawsuits against the Erika were lost: the small village of Mesquer in the salt marshes lost against Total, on the grounds that the oil was not a waste product as their lawyer proposed (French law forbids hazardous disposal of waste), and two regional tourism offices (Bretagne and Pays de Loire) also lost against Total: they had sued the company for a televised ad showing the spill and Total's efforts to clean it up, and believed the ad was responsible for the low tourism figures this summer. Total won on the grounds that they showed the beaches being cleaned.

The only consolation perhaps was the final report by the inquiry office BEA, stating that indeed the Erika was "eaten up by rust" and extremely poorly maintained. Their conclusion is that the Maltese shipchandler Tevere Shipping, the PanShip managing company as well as the insurance company Rina all bear a very heavy responsibility in letting this ship go out to sea: the ship literally caved in when it found itself in a gale 10 storm.

Also reassuring is the fact it was impossible to make contact while in Brest with the Abeille-Flandres, the response vessel in charge of patrolling the entrance of the Ouessant rail and the nearby coastline, the most dangerous place when ships come out of the British Channel into the Atlantic. The response vessel is out almost constantly this winter, and they have hauled back to port a number of ships that either had to be repaired or were simply forbidden to go back out. Let's hope that the creation of a Coast Guard body at the European level will lighten the Abeille-Flandres' burden, and make these waters safer.

\* \* \*

## DIWAN

As reported in the November issue of Bro Nevez (no. 76), Diwan continues to work on plans for integration into the public school system of Brittany. Negotiations

with the French government have been slow, but continue on as Diwan leaders work to insure that incorporation will not compromise the hard work of over 23 years to build a successful Breton language immersion system where students learn to use Breton for their studies and for all their everyday activities (while successfully mastering French--and other languages--as well.).

In November a 24-page document was distributed to parents and Diwan supporters outlining the propositions from the Ministry of Education and providing commentary on the part of Diwan President Andrew Lincoln and members of the Diwan Council of Directors. This also included substantial commentary from the four Council members who had resigned in October over concerns in the negotiation process. Meetings were held in November and early December in different areas of Brittany for Diwan parents, teachers, and supporters, to provide further information and answer questions about the complex issues involved.

On December 10<sup>th</sup> a special General Assembly was held to debate the propositions from the Ministry of Education. This resulted in the adoption of a "platform" of formal requests for clarifications to be made in the proposals for Diwan's incorporation before Diwan will move forward. Included in these is the call for a clear definition of "immersion" learning so that the use of the Breton language in teaching and in school activities is not eroded in the future. Also needed is a clarification of the role Diwan will play in a council to oversee academic policies, recruitment of teachers, evaluation of programs, etc. Further specifics are also needed for funding salaries of teachers and staff, as well as for plans for teacher training to meet expansion goals. The definition of plans for growth in classes and teacher training, with insurance for the financial means to meet that growth, are particularly important since there are fears that once the Ministry of Education takes in the Diwan schools, they could be left to

languish and become mired down in the same lack of ambition that has blocked the growth of public school bilingual programs to meet the growing demand on the part of parents.

In discussions and meetings between Diwan and

Ministry of Education staff which have continued since December, a number of clarifications have advanced while others need further work. Of great importance is a government decision and formal proposal for special recruitment for bilingual teachers to meet the needs of both Diwan and the bilingual programs in the public schools. There are indications that this will come shortly. If not, Diwan and the public school bilingual teachers and parents (through Unvaniezh ar Gelennerien Brezhoneg and Div Yezh) will join and rally supporters for a street demonstration in Quimper on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion continues and careful scrutiny is being given to Ministry of Education proposals by a reunified Diwan Council. Things may not move as quickly as one would hope given the financial needs of Diwan for incorporation into the public school system, but it appears that this move will only take place once guarantees are in place that this will mean future growth for the Diwan immersion system. And this requires the parallel growth of other bilingual programs with the assurance that parents can choose the schooling they desire for their children (In Loire Atlantique as well as in the four departments of “official” Brittany).

Note: I would be happy to photocopy the special issues of Diwan’s *Kannadig* which detail the proposals being discussed for anyone interest. Information for this article was also drawn from *Breizh Info* 202 (13 December 2000) and from articles in *Le Télégramme* from December 10 & 11, 2000.

\* \* \*

### **SKOLAJ DIWAN AR MOR-BIHAN**

This school year (2000-2001) forty-one middle school students started at the new Diwan school of Morbihan (23 in the 6<sup>th</sup> level and 18 in the 5<sup>th</sup> level). This middle school draws students from eight Diwan primary schools in Morbihan and Loire-Atlantique: Gwenrann (Guérande), Naoned (Nantes), Sant Nazer (Saint-Nazaire), An Alre (Auray), An Oriant (Lorient) Boad, Gwened (Vannes) and Kistreberzh (Questembert).

Work is underway to renovate a building in Vannes—

hopefully by the end of this school year. The Morbihan “college” has taken out a long-term 7 million franc loan for the work and is aggressively working to build support for the school and to equip it. In the meantime, for the second year, the school is based at the Centre Culturel Amzer Nevez in Ploemeur.

## A NEW STUDY OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE: Facts about the Present and Ideas for the Future

The Nominoë Study of the Breton Language – Compiled from field research: February 2000. By Jeff Ó Néill and Marcel Texier.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Over the years I have received a number of requests from university students (in many places of the world) who are seeking information about the Breton language. They write: “I am a student at X University. I am currently writing my dissertation on the Breton language, and would be extremely grateful if you could send me some more information.” Where do you start!? In most cases such students are looking for up-to-date information about the current state of the Breton language ... in the schools, in the media, in public life, etc. There is a wealth of material written about the Breton language in books, in journal and newsletter articles, and even on the internet. For English speakers the options are much more limited, although Per Denez’s booklet for the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (Brittany – a Language in search of a future) published in 1998 gives a good basic introduction. Even so, when students ask me for more details and current statistics about the Breton language I find myself scrounging through a variety of sources to cobble together information and send them ideas of where to look for further information (after all, I’m not the one writing the thesis!). As I know from my own experience, it is a challenge to find information about the Breton language outside of Brittany,, especially if your fluency in French is limited.

This is just one reason that I am pleased to have the new study by Jeff Ó’Neill (head of the Canadian Branch of the ICDBL) and Marcel Texier (an ICDBL representative for France). This will not hand students easy answers to all their questions, but does provide a wealth of information in just 28 pages.

Jeff Ó’Neill is the main architect here, who builds the study on a model established by sociolinguist Joshua Fishman who has done many studies of minority languages – most notably for this approach to Breton,

Reversing Language Shift, where he looks at various factors key in the survival of “smaller” languages. Fishman has proposed an eight-stage process which he feels is necessary for any language to follow in order to grow. Jeff Ó’Neill uses this eight-phase idea in looking at the state of the Breton language and in making fifteen proposals of his own to be considered in looking at the future of the Breton language. While one may not agree with these proposals or feel that the Fishman model is the best for Brittany’s particular case, this study certainly provides lots of food for thought and discussion.

The Nominoë study also provides lots of basic information including some maps, a history of the Breton language and lots of facts and statistics about its current use by different age groups and in different parts of Brittany. The study then looks at Fishman’s eight stages of reversing language shift and what Bretons are doing at each of these stages.

Stage 8 and 7: Reassembling the language and bringing it to adults, some of whom once learned and still remember it marginally and others who never acquired it.

Stage 6: Establishing the vital linkage with youth, family, neighborhood and community

Stage 5: The attainment of literacy, independent of the public education system.

Stage 4: Education in Breton and learning Breton at school.

Stage 3: Breton in the work sphere.

Stage 2: Local governmental services and media

Stage 1: Breton in the higher spheres of work, education and government.

Of particular interest in the presentation of these areas is the wealth of statistics (thanks in large part to information provided by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg).

Following this section a brief presentation is given of the state of language planning in several other countries: Quebec, Wales, Ireland, Catalonia, Friesland,

and the Basque land.

It is the concluding sections which focus on building communities of Breton speakers that are most likely to provoke some interesting discussion. Not all will agree with the analysis or the authors' ideas as to what must be done to insure the future of the Breton language.

The strength of this 28-page study is that it collects a great deal of information about the state of the Breton language in one place and offers a new way to think about the Breton language. Many of the statistics will become obsolete in a few years, but the study provides an interesting baseline to look at change in the coming years and progress (we hope) in Bretons' work for their language.

The study is the product of a relatively short period of research with some time spent in Brittany for first-hand observation, and more time spent in communication with a large number of Bretons to gather as much information as possible. I think it is safe to say that the Nominoë study is a work in progress and that it is not a final statement but merely a proposal. In just 28 pages one cannot present everything. After all, books have been written on many of the topics presented in summary form in this study. And perhaps a bibliography and resource list should be added for those who want to understand a larger historical context. It can safely be said that the authors would welcome comments, corrections, or questions.

A photocopy of the study can be provided by the U.S. ICDBL (via Lois Kuter). A contribution to cover postage costs would be appreciated (\$2 suggested).

Or, you can access it by internet:  
<http://www.breizh.net/icdbl/saozg/nominoe.htm>

With time there will be a link to it directly from the U.S. ICDBL web site.

\* \* \*

## NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM BRITTANY

### SOME BOOKS

E Brezhoneg Pa Gari! CD-ROM for beginners learning Breton. Warok S.A.R.L., Brest. 2000.

Reviewed by Mary Turner

A brand-new tool is available for beginners learning the Breton language, E Brezhoneg Pa Gari! (In Breton, when you're ready!) created by the company Warok. Available on 2 CD-ROMs or one DVD-ROM (for you technologically advanced among us), it represents a new, totally interactive, multimedia approach to learning the language on your own. And the best news is that you can choose whether you want to work in French or ENGLISH, making it one of the few tools available to English speakers for learning Breton.

The program is divided into 15 lessons, and is built around a video-film of a love story between Yann, who works at a port-side bar in Douarnenez and Naïg, the girl of his dreams who works in a bread and candy shop. The story takes you through many real-life situations, such as buying and selling in the shop and pub, food, drink, illness (when Naïg's friend Nurse Branwenn, played by the great Breton singer Marthe Vassallo, tends to an ailing Yann), computers, clothing, and cultural and geographic information about Brittany.

Each lesson begins with a video segment. The dialog in Breton is displayed beside the video so you can follow along, and you can move the cursor over each line of dialog to see the translation in English (or French) in a window below. The video can be stopped, started, rewound or fast-forwarded as you wish, and can be enlarged to full-screen.

There are words and phrases underlined throughout the dialogs, and you can (should) click on these words to bring up a window with information about different grammatical rules of the language. The entire set of grammar lessons, as well as a mini-glossary of words used in the lessons and a larger dictionary of words and phrases, can be accessed at any time through links at the bottom of the screen. And all of the presented links should be studied carefully as the information will be part of the exercises and tests.

After reviewing the video you can play a series of dialogs based on the video segment, each with a picture and a question, and three possible answers displayed. After selecting an answer to the question an appropriate

response will be displayed, and you can go back and select all three answers to see the different responses. The questions, answers and responses are all read aloud. While the dialog in the video is at normal conversation speed, the dialog questions and answers are read a little more slowly.

A 'triskell' symbol at the bottom right corner of the screen allows you to access exercises, a test and a display of your results on the exercises and test for the lesson. The exercises are divided into 5 parts: Vocabulary, where you fill in puzzles using picture or written hints, and label items in a picture; Grammar, where you move words into the correct place in sentences or category columns; Pronunciation, where you can use a microphone to repeat words and phrases, comparing your vocal pattern to the native speaker's; Dictation, where you type the sentences dictated (spoken very slowly); and Cultural Knowledge, with a variety of exercises to test your knowledge of Breton geography and culture and even other Celtic languages as compared to Breton. For each of these categories (except pronunciation) you can click a button to display answers you got wrong, allowing you to correct them, and then click a button to reveal all the correct answers.

The tests are shorter and take the same format as the Vocabulary and Grammar exercises, except that you can't correct your answers after you have finished a screen. The results screen displays your 'grade' for each of the exercise and test areas, as a red, yellow or green light.

I did notice a few problems in the program, such as some incorrect English spellings and grammar, a couple of places where I attempted to drag a word to the correct spot in a picture and it wouldn't stick where I put it (I finally got it to work), new words in exercises that had not been introduced in the video, so I had to refer to the dictionary link a lot (not necessarily a bad thing), etc. And the program will mark your answer as incorrect if you don't use the accents... But overall, the problems are very minor; the conception and presentation are extremely well done.

It's more of a 'jump in with both feet' approach, and it does progress pretty quickly into the language from lesson to lesson. This can be bad or good depending on your learning style. Personally speaking, I think I will also need to use the more traditional methods available. But on the whole, this is an outstanding new tool that I recommend for anybody who wants to learn the language, whether you use it alone or in conjunction with other methods. And as the CDs are labeled "Volume 1 for Beginners", I have high hopes that they are hard at work on the sequel for more advanced learners.

E Brezhoneg Pa Gari! is available from Ar Bed Keltiek ([www.arbedkeltiek.com](http://www.arbedkeltiek.com)) and Brittany Shops ([www.brittany-shops.com](http://www.brittany-shops.com)). The Brittany Shops price for either CD or DVD

is 498.94FF (approx. \$70) including US delivery by post, and the Ar Bed Keltiek price will be about the same. If you do decide to purchase it, drop me a line at [maryt@southwind.net](mailto:maryt@southwind.net) and I'll let you know how to do the accents and other tricks I've learned about the program.

Will the nervous, bumbling Yann win the heart of the fair, self-assured Naïg? You'll just have to get the program and find out for yourself!

\* \* \*

Llydaw: Ei Llen a'i Llwybrau gan Gwyn Griffiths. (Brittany: Her Lore and Her Pathways, by Gwyn Griffiths). Gomer Press. 2000. 246 pp. ([www.gomer.co.uk](http://www.gomer.co.uk))

Reviewed by Bob Roser  
President, Welsh Society of Fredericksburg Inc.,  
Fredericksburg, Maryland

This book is a guide to Brittany in Welsh. The description from the back of the cover says, "this book raises the curtain on the culture, literature, and history of our Celtic cousin. But different from many other books about Brittany in Welsh, it does not emphasize the precarious status of the Breton language, but instead concentrates on the literature of the country - in Breton and in French - and on the literati's interpretations of their own districts. Along with a good selection of pictures, and a combination of facts, opinion, and experience, this volume will be sure to appeal to you if you are one of the host of Welsh people who go to Brittany on vacation or if you live in one of the growing number of towns in Wales that has linked with Breton communities - over 30 at this time."

The author is a journalist who is a native of Cors Caron, but who has moved to Pontypridd and has extensive experience working for Cymro, the BBC and free lance work. At this time he is a part of a team producing Cymru'r Byd (Wales and the World), a service in Welsh of the BBC Wales on the world wide web. He confesses that he has a great love for Brittany - "...the weather is better than in Wales, the food better than Wales, the buildings better than Wales, the music better than Wales..." The chapters in the book are divided according to the regions of Brittany. The author also wrote another guide to Brittany entitled "Chwydro Llydaw" (Wandering around Brittany) over

20 years ago. This book also makes observations as to the improved situation in Brittany today compared to what he saw in his last book. He states that the economic situation has greatly improved and is actually better than in the rest of France. While there are many similarities between the two countries, there are also many polar opposites. The author states that "Lle y mae Cymru'n dlawd, mae Llydaw'n gyfoethog - a lle mae Cymru'n gyfoethog mae Llydaw'n dlawd (Where Wales is poor, Brittany is rich and where Wales is rich, Brittany is poor). The book is a wealth of information on every aspect of Breton life. The only possible drawback to the book is that, except for the cover, all the photos are in black and white.

*Editor's Note: Gwyn Griffith is the Welsh Representative for the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language. See Bro Nevez 74, May 2000, for some information about some of his current activities.*

\* \* \*

Va Enezenn din-me. Fañch Peru.  
Skol Vreizh. 2000. 84 pp. ISBN 2-911447-46-8.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Fañch Peru is a prolific writer (see Bro Nevez 71, August 1999 for a good introduction). This most recent work is a collection of over 30 short poems about animals, plants and places of his native Treger, about Ireland, about seasons and months, and some rhymes and little songs. Like his other books, this one is friendly for Breton learners where one can pick through a few short poems, and just work on one Haiku at a time. And some of the poems are nice to read aloud – however poor your Breton may be.

\* \* \*

Guide Pratique De La Danse Bretonne. Alain Pierre et Padrig Sicard. Editions Alain Penneec. December 1999.

Reviewed by Natalie Novik

This soft cover, rather thin, album is the amateur's version of "Guilcher's bible", as they name it in the

preface. It describes 34 dances, pinpointing the exact region where it is danced on a map, giving a description of the steps and the arm position according to the Guilcher method for each one, a musical example, the required tempo, and often a sequence of color photos to show how it is danced. The authors also go into details regarding the regional variations. In some cases, they also give the words to the music.

If I were to teach a Breton dance seminar, this is the book I would take along. Given the very precise indications of the villages where these dances originate, it makes it feasible to find festou-noz where they will be danced. I remember scouring a whole night the Pontivy area, trying to find a place that danced the laride-gavotte, this book would have told me to head straight for Cleguerec or Remungol.

\* Jean-Michel Guilcher. La Tradition populaire de danse en Basse-Bretagne. 1963; new edition 1997, Coop Breizh/Chasse-Marée-Ar Men.

\* \* \*

Costumes De Bretagne - L'Esprit d'un Peuple. Joseph Jigourel & Yanna Fournier. Le Télégramme. 2000.

Reviewed by Natalie Novik

This is also in French, but the illustrations are so abundant that if you are a Breton costume fan with no gallic skills, you will still enjoy it. Classified by region, this glossy hardcover book presents color and black and white photos as well as paintings to illustrate the astonishing variety of the Breton "guises". Instead of trying to emulate Creston\* with an exhaustive inventory, they tried to recreate the evolution of each costume from generation to generation, often using family pictures to do so. However, while the authors sometimes name the families they refer to, most of the time the illustrations are anonymous.

The period between WWI and WWII becomes very obviously the time when men in Brittany gradually relinquished their characteristic outfits, the large brimmed hats, the richly decorated chupen or outer jacket, and the large belts with silver or gold buckles. The story it tells us about women is quite different.

First of all, in many regions, the "coiffe" is still worn by older women. And it also demonstrates how in the same family, the coiffe and the collar may vary depending on the age of the woman. We also see very well how the fashions of the 20's, 30's, 40's and even 50's impacted the feminine costume, and the effort made by the Celtic circles to find a compromise between this incredible variety.

The comments are short, but there are also maps on every page to locate the point of origin of the given costume. The only regret, perhaps, is that the book definitely focuses on Lower Brittany, and does not dedicate too many pages to the costumes of the Pays Gallo, which are also very interesting. Maybe next time!

\* René-Yves Creston. Le Costume Breton. 1974, Paris: Tchou.

\* \* \*

**Dernieres Coiffes De Bretagne - Koefou diwezhan Breizh.** Christian Nicot. Le Télégramme. 2000.

Reviewed by Natalie Novik

Christian Nicot is a photographer who has gone on a real safari in Breton villages to get a glimpse of the last wearers of the "coiffes". The subjects remain anonymous, although the villages and dates are indicated. As in the book reviewed above, the coiffes are classified by region and once again with a focus on Lower Brittany, with the exception of three photos in the Nantes area. The photos are excellent, but in many cases when the subject faces the photographer, she does not look too pleased to be photographed! This is in stark contrast with Michel Thersiquel's work a few years ago called "Visions Bretonnes" (Double Face, issue no. 1), where the photographer knows his models and they appreciate his work, and he names them in his comments.

To be very honest, I don't like the title of the book and its preface, hinting at the fact that Nicot found the last tenants of the tradition who were still wearing coiffes between 1985 and 1996. It implies that nobody wears them anymore in this millenium, and that the coiffes are

a lost art. I disagree with this statement; it reminds me of the "vanishing race" statements about Native Americans all through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I have just been in Brittany in December, and I have seen some coiffes. Not a lot, but some. They might be slowly disappearing in everyday life, but they are reappearing at the same time with increased magnificence on the heads of the younger generation during festivals and celebrations all over Brittany.

\* \* \*

Oust et Vilaine, Pays de Traditions: tome 1—La Culture populaire, Marqueur d'identité. Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine. 2000. 289 pp. ISBN 2-908379-05-8. Includes 70-minute CD of music.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

No one has to convince me that the area of Brittany defined by the Oust and Vilaine Rivers has an incredibly rich culture and history to be described. In exploring this area during some six months in the late 1970s, that became quite evident. While work to document and make better known the history and culture of the area of the Pays d'Oust et Vilaine by its residents dates back many decades, things have only intensified since my visit in the 1970s. This beautiful book (in a 9 ½ x 10 inch format) provides a wealth of information as well as detailed drawings, maps, and gorgeous photographs to present just a few topics—in some cases simply to introduce a topic worthy of several volumes itself.

Founded in 1975, the Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine includes a number of individuals who have spent many years researching the riches in their backyards. They have not only researched things, but have also worked to protect and promote the use and development of unique cultural features passed down from one generation to the next. Eighteen such individuals have collaborated on this volume.

Geographically, the area covered is marked by water, with some seven rivers converging in the region around the city of Redon. Cutting through is another important waterway built in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century—the canal from Nantes to Brest. The importance of geography and water ways as well as marshlands is covered mainly in

the introduction to the volume. This is followed by a place-name study which links geography to history and languages—and here you will learn to what degree the Breton language was once part of the cultural landscape of this area. Another 50 pages present history—from prehistoric sites to contemporary economic development.

If there is one topic in this book which dominates, it is architecture—not castles and cathedrals, but rural farms and homes. Jean-Michel and Yves Dubost cover basic layouts of farms and small villages, and the basic construction elements. In some 70 pages, Albert Poulain provides detailed maps and drawings of variations in roof structure, stairways, window frames, doorways, chimneys, all sorts of out buildings and appendages to houses and barns, as well as fences, outdoor ovens, wells, crosses and niches for religious statuary. For those restoring a house or interested in building a new structure which respects the history and style of a particular area, this is invaluable information.

This volume also includes an essay on costumes and their variations, with lots of wonderful photos and maps. An essay on dance gives an introduction to the history and evolution of the various ones traditional to this area (the “jubilé,” various “bals,” “ridée,” “pilé-menu,” “contre-rond,” “tour” and the well known “rond de Saint-Vincent-sur-Oust”). Included are lots of good maps, including one for the many organizations active in teaching and promoting dance. An article on instrumental music traces the history of various instruments—biniou/bombarde, fiddle and accordion—and their evolution and changes in popularity and performance. Given the importance and richness of song in this part of Brittany, the article about it is very short—just eight pages—but gives one a taste of the tradition and a good idea of the wealth of research and collection that has been going on since the 1950s in this region.

One can perhaps forgive the relatively short treatment of music in that a compact disc comes with the book to illustrate very well the song tradition in particular.

In presenting the CD, Robert Bouthillier claims that it perfectly represents, in a concentrated form, the song tradition with a diversity of song types, styles, occasions for singing, and ages of singers. And I would

have to agree—all the elements are there. Several thousand songs have been recorded by collectors in this area, most of them singers or musicians themselves who live in the area such as Albert Poulain and Albert Noblet who got things going in the 1950s.

In just 70 minutes one gets a very good feel for the character and richness of song in the Pays d’Oust et Vilaine (a song tradition where French is used). There are several “complaintes”—the equivalent to the Breton language “gwerz”—which demonstrate some deep roots in their account of events as far back as the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Featured is the response style of singing which I find so characteristic of both eastern and western Brittany where phrases are repeated in songs for dancing, marches, or songs you sing around a table for enjoyment. In this region of Brittany the response is not given by just one or a couple of singers, but by literally every one present. This is well demonstrated in performances from the Bogue d’Or song festival/contest where hundreds join in on a response. The closing song on the CD is a fine example (from the Bogue of 1993) where Mme Marie-Françoise Chauvin (whose age is not revealed but whose voice betrays a certain experience) challenges the audience with a particularly difficult series of syllables to be repeated. In the first few verses the audience stumbles and laughs, but they are quickly up to the challenge and master the quick series of syllables, transcribed as “daw daw, rabedi rabedaw, rabedi bedi.”

One finds on the CD older masters of song as well as wonderful younger voices. Topics range from love lost and found, to satire, history and war, and include an Easter “passion” story, as well as “counting” songs with lots of fantasy as the number of potatoes or spinning ladies builds. While song is rightfully given a big place on the CD, there are also some instrumental pieces to characterize the use of chromatic and diatonic accordion, fiddle, biniou/bombarde, bagad and even a harmonica for dances and melodies.

Notes to the CD are in the back of the book, and include not only an excellent introduction by Bouthillier, but also a brief introduction to each piece and texts to all the songs.

This CD provides a wonderful sampling of the musical traditions of the Oust and Vilaine Pays which are still

very much alive in this region of Brittany. The book and CD are the product of a team of individuals who are passionately engaged in documenting the history of their community but also incorporate the wealth of cultural traditions of this area into their lives. And most of them are active in finding ways to insure that the unique traditions of their home will continue to be passed down to the next generation.

A second volume is in the work which will include articles on the ancient pottery works in the region, fairs and markets, slate quarrying, furniture, cuisine, seasons and the calendar, popular expressions, and everyday objects.

\* \* \*

Traditions et chansons de Haute-Bretagne – Le Répertoire de Saint-Congard et ses environs 1962-1970. Louissette Radioyes.

Tome 1, Édisul/CNRS Editions, 1995, 300 pp.

Tome 2: Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine, 1997, 383 pp.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

These two volumes are not brand new, but well worth a belated review for Bro Nevez. And they illustrate well the immense wealth of song to be found in Upper Brittany—indeed, in just a 50 square kilometer area, including Saint-Congard, Saint-Martin-sur-Oust, Saint-Laurent-sur-Oust, and Ruffiac (an area about halfway between Ploermel and Redon).

Volume 1 includes over 60 pages about the song tradition of this area—occasions for music-making, different styles of singing, how songs are learned, and how song fits into the life of a community. The author also explains how she did her research and the recordings, and the repertoire she selected. Louissette Radioyes comes with analytical skills obtained through university training as an ethnomusicologist, but she is also a native of the area she studied. She did not parachute in as an outsider to “discover” the song traditions but has the distinct advantage of being a participant in the community she studied. Besides describing the social context for song in the first volume, also included are some 140 song texts and music transcriptions with an explanation of their social

“use” and information about the singers themselves. Scholars of traditional French song will appreciate cross references to songs catalogued by Laforte and Coirault.

Volume 2 includes an additional 215 songs grouped by type: dramatic or tragic tales, religious subjects, the soldier’s life, love, shepherds and shepherdesses, marriage, songs for children (sung by adults), children’s songs, crimes and events, anecdotes, satirical and comic songs, drinking songs, courting songs, and “other.” An index of first lines—a key identifier beyond shorter titles—would help a singer find a desired text. Also included in Volume 2 are photos of singers and short biographical notes on over 30 singers who served as principal sources of collected recordings. These notes include basic information about the individual but also about their style of singing and particular features of their repertoire.

Both these volumes provide valuable documentation of songs which were part of the song repertoire of this small region of Brittany before 1970. And certainly many of these songs still are part of the ever healthy oral song tradition of eastern Brittany.

Louissette Radioyes gives song scholars a considerable body of material for comparative studies of song in other parts of France and in Canada. And these volumes can certainly be a source for today’s singers who might want to broaden their repertoire or recall a forgotten text. Most important to this study is the fact that Louissette Radioyes gives these songs life in describing how song has been so central a part of social life in the Saint-Congard area. And from my experience of Upper Brittany and the area around the city of Redon, it’s safe to say that song and singing still has an important place in peoples' lives.

## NEW MAGAZINES

Presented by Natalie Novik

### CELTICS - Le magazine des musiques celtes

This glossy and lavishly illustrated magazine has just published its first issue. It is in French only, and costs FF 216 (or \$ 33) to receive six issues outside of France. The first issue came with a CD sampling some of the artists featured in the magazine. Two very useful features for ICDBL readers are the www page, giving you all the latest sites and what they do, and a page of upcoming events and fest-noziou. This issue includes a long interview of Dan ar Braz (photo on the cover), portraits of Irish, Galician, Welsh and Breton musicians, one article on a biniou maker who sculpts fantastic creatures out of wood for the pipes, fifteen pages of CD reviews and numerous small articles and announcements. *Celtics* is produced in Rennes and written by a number of locals interested in various aspects of Celtic music. However, since it is in French only, Lois is not losing her job, although it could make it easier!

### KOROLL - Danses bretonnes

For the dance maniacs, this is a handy little publication that you can take along with you to the next fest-noz. It is also the first of its kind and features four dances: Rond de Molene, Gavotte des Notables, Derobee de Guingamp and Valse Ecossaise. Each dance features: a map to locate where it's danced, a background, a suggestion where to find a recording of it, what costume it is traditionally danced in, what instruments are used, a description of the steps and a diagram of the steps. And a few illustrations, usually showing the "coiffe" and a local view. It is simple, easy to follow even if you can't read French, and entertaining as well. And the instructions work, I tried. Koroll is published by "Menhir Volant" in Plougonver. Each issue costs \$ 7.00 (approximately), but I am afraid they don't take credit cards or dollars. It does not say anywhere how often they intend to publish it.

\* \* \*

## Several not-so-new magazines worth a note

Presented by Lois Kuter

### HEKLEO AR C"HOARIOÙ

The sixth issue of this magazine came out in December 2000 and it seems to be an annual 40-page magazine. It is published by the Confédération F.A.L.S.A.B. and focuses on traditional games and sports of Brittany. In this particular issue you have short reports on activities and contests throughout Brittany to promote various games (palet, galoche, boules, as well as gouren/wrestling). Articles sometimes give an interesting history of a particular game and the many variations one might find in Brittany. Many readers of the magazine will be interested in the contest results as well as news about new books or upcoming contests and events—which can have an inter-Celtic and even international scope. There are lots of photos, and for those readers like me who have never heard of "palets" these help visualize the game and how it's played. This particular issue of Hekleo also features an article presenting traditional sports of Ireland.

Address: F.A.L.S.A.B., place Amiral Ronarc'h, 29720 Plouneour Lanvern. E-mail: falsab.ploneour@wanadoo.fr

### GOUREN INFOS

Gouren is the form of Celtic wrestling traditional to Brittany. This magazine has been going strong for quite a while (no. 46 came out in October 2000, and it seems to be published three or four times a year). Most of the 16 pages are devoted to contest results, including frequent inter-Celtic and inter-European contests which include backhold as well. While the magazine will be of most interest to those who practice gouren—and this includes all ages and women as well as men—there is almost always an interesting article about the history of gouren and traditional Breton sport, or a presentation of a traditional wrestling style from some other country of the world.

Address: Federation de Gouren, ZA Saint Ernel,

29800 Landerneau. Web site: [www.gouren.com](http://www.gouren.com)

\* \* \*

## Some Shorter Notes On New Books In And About The Breton Language

Yeun ar Gow. Diwar dorgenn kareg-an-tan. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2000. 180 pp.

A collection of writings and short stories—many previously unpublished—by a prolific Breton writer who died 34 years ago.

Gérard Bailloud. L'imprimerie Lédan à Morlaix (1805-1880) et ses impressions en langue bretonne. Skol. 2000. 208 pp.

Alexandre Lédan (1777-1855) was a printer who is known for his publication of popular literature—short books and song broadsheets. This book is the result of detailed research to index some 400 works and to track down their whereabouts. Included is a 24-page bibliography as well as five indexes to help locate texts by titles, authors, key words, theme and song melodies. There are also numerous reproductions of some of the works catalogued.

Jurij Brezan. Ar Vilin Du. Transl. by Jakez Konan. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2000. 149 pp. ISBN 2-86863-122-3  
A masterpiece from Sorb literature, “Die Schwartz Mühle” translated into Breton. This centers on the interplay of power, knowledge and man’s liberation.

Kristian Brisson. Ar Genkiz. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2000. 206 pp. ISBN 2-86863-120-7.  
A new novel where a familiar character from previous works reappears: Gwenole from Concarneau. He seeks to break the monotony of everyday life ... not as successfully as he hopes.

Gérard Cornillet. Geriadur Brezhoneg Alamaneg. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh 2000. 1190 pp. ISBN 2-86863-121-5.  
This is the first ever Breton-German dictionary with 36,000 entries, including phonetic transcriptions, phrases, and a grammar guide.

Albert Deshayes. Dictionnaire des prénoms celtiques. Le Chasse-Marée/Ar Men. 2000. 208 pp. ISBN 2-914208-02-2.

A dictionary of some 950 names for saints of Breton, Welsh, Cornish, Irish and Scottish origins. If you’re seeking a name for a new baby this will certainly give you an exhaustive source, as well as some fascinating histories of well known and unknown Celtic saints.

Ronan Doare, translator. Aladdn & Ali-Baba. An Here. 2000. 55 pp. ISBN 2-868431-97-6.

This translation of the well known stories of Aladdin and Ali-Babba are told in a simple Breton with a vocabulary list at the end to aid Breton learners.

Y. Doelan. Temi e variazioni, Danvelloù brezoneg. Emgleo Breiz. 2000. 292 pp. ISBN 2-911210-14-X.

A collection of short and longer stories written between 1994 and 1999.

Alain Fournier. Meaulnes Veur. Translated by Yann-Ber Thomin.

Ar Skol Vrezhoneg. 2000. 252 pp. ISBN 2-906373-82-6.  
Translation into Breton of Fournier’s work Grand Meaulnes which has already been translated into a number of languages and read by generations of young people.

Etienne Gasche. Translation by Herve ar Gall. Kaourintin skrivener Istor rouaned Breizh.

An Here. 2000. 64 pp. ISBN 2-868432-12-3.  
Born in the fifth century, Kaourintin is still alive today to visit schools and tell children about the history of Brittany.

Tugdual Kalvez. Blaz ar vuhez. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2000. 71 pp.  
Sixty poems collected under a title roughly translated as “the taste of life” by poet and Breton language militant, Tugdual Kalvez.

Xavier de Langlais. Enez ar Rod. Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 2000. 308 pp. ISBN 2-86863-124-X.

This is the first Breton novel describing the future written in Breton by one of the masters of Breton literature.

Alexandre Ledan. Trajadienn Gabriela Vergi. Ar Skol Vrezhoneg. 2000. 165 pp.

Ledan was a well known printer in Morlaix in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who published “feuilles volants” (song broadsheets) as well as other popular texts. This book is pulled from some three thousand pages of manuscripts by Ledan and is the Breton translation of a novel set in French verse in the middle ages (La Chastelaine de Vergy).

Erwan Le Pipec. Le Breton de Malguénac.  
Hor Yezh. 2000. 132 pp. ISBN 2-910699-40-4.  
Originally a masters thesis completed in 1998 for the Université de Rennes 2, this is a detailed study of the Breton from the Vannetais area of Manguélaç.

Pascal Moal and Guy Etienne. Geriadur ar mediaoù. Fiñveier, video, e teir yezh: galleg, saozneg, brezhoneg.  
Preder. 2000. 360 pp.  
A trilingual (French-English-Breton) dictionary of some 8,000 terms related to film and video. This is based on Moal’s Lexique Cinéma-Vidéo, published in 1995.

Régine Pascale and Marie Kergueris; translation by Hervé Danielou. Le vieux pêcheur et les formors et autres contes bilingues français-breton.  
Harmattan. 2000. 48 pp. ISBN 2-7384-8625-8.  
Legends and fairy tales with all sorts of monsters and unusual creatures in a bilingual French-Breton collection.

Jean-Yves Plourin. Initiation au breton familier et argotique.  
Armeline/Coop Breizh. 2000. 234 pp. ISBN 2-910878-14-7.  
Introduction for Breton learners to slang expressions and words for the Breton language with some 1,5000 examples.

Naig Rozmor, Translation by Rita Williams. Y Meistr.  
Liogan Editions. 2000. 168 pp. ISBN 2-908463-36-9.  
Two works by Naig Rozmor translated from Breton into Welsh: Ar Mestr, a theater piece, and Barzonegou, poems.

Dido Sotiriou. Douaroù Gwad.  
Mouladurioù Hor Yezh/Dastumad Skrid. 2000. 292 pp.  
ISBN 2-86863-123-1.  
A look back at ethnic strife and the wars between Greece and Turkey during the 1920s with all the human turmoil that war can create.

Jonathan Swift, translation by Gwenole Bihannig. Beajoù

### Gulliver

An Here. 2000. 54 pp. ISBN 2-868431-98-4.  
The classic Gulliver’s Travels translated into Breton. This is written with a basic vocabulary suitable for beginners with a vocabulary list at the end of the book.

J.R.R. Tolkien. Translated from English by Alan Dipode. An Hobbit.  
Les Editions Arda. 2000.  
Most readers should not need an introduction to Tolkien’s masterpiece of fantasy, The Hobbit. Here it is in Breton.

### **A new website for those interested in Breton language books**

The publisher Mouladurioù Hor Yezh now has a web site where you can get short descriptions of recent publications. The descriptions are trilingual in Breton, French, and English. The address is:  
<http://www.cloitre-imp.ft/editions/mouladurioù>

Those with questions or wishing to place orders can also contact this publisher by e-mail:  
[MOULADURIOU.HOR.YEZH@wanadoo.fr](mailto:MOULADURIOU.HOR.YEZH@wanadoo.fr)

## Catalogs for the publisher AN HERE

For those interested in finding more Breton language books, I have recently received several catalogs from the publisher An Here. These include several hundred children’s books in Breton, literature in Breton from the publisher Al Liamm, and several dozen books in French on Breton history, culture and social issues. I would be happy to photocopy materials or you can contact An Here directly at the following addresses:  
Editions An Here, Kergleuz, 29480 Ar Releg-Kerhuon.  
Telephone: 02 98 28 10 37. E-mail:  
[an.here@wanadoo.fr](mailto:an.here@wanadoo.fr)

\* \* \*

## New Linguistic Atlas of Lower Brittany

A Press release from the Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique

Telephone: 02.98.01.63.31; fax 02.98.01.63.93

The Nouvel Atlas Linguistique de la Basse-Bretagne [by Jean Le Du] (covering Finistère and the western parts of the Côtes d'Armor and Morbihan) presents an in-depth study of Breton geolinguistics at the phonetic, morphological and lexical levels. The informants, who were all natives of their respective communities, provided simple terms common to everyday life: nature, the weather, animals, etc.

The survey originally began in 1969 and was followed by a second one which was designed to fill in certain gaps and clarify a number of notions. The questionnaires were all recorded on location by various fieldworkers, an approach which permitted the author to transcribe the responses himself, thus guaranteeing strict homogeneity in the phonetic transcription.

The areas studied cover nearly one third of all the parishes of Basse-Bretagne (187 points in all). In addition to the words figuring on the 600 maps (more than 110,000 forms), one will also find variant responses to the questionnaire, assorted notes (proverbs, sayings, comments, etc.), as well as references to other linguistic atlases and Breton dictionaries.

The author, Jean Le Dù, is an emeritus professor of Celtic and the University of Western Brittany (Université de Bretagne Occidentale), Brest, and is a member of the Center for Breton and Celtic Research.

*Editor's Note:* I did not include the order form sent with the press release, but a special subscription price for the two volumes is being offered for orders received by March 31, 2001. That price is 1,000 francs. After that the price goes up to 1,500 francs. Those wishing to order the Nouvel Atlas Linguistique de la Basse-Bretagne are asked to make their check out to "Agent comptable de l'UBO."

The address is as follows:

Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique  
Faculté des Lettres Victor Segalen  
BP 814  
F-29285 BREST CEDEX

## **L earning Welsh in the U.S.A .**

*Dyn ni'n edrych ymlaen at eich gweld chi I gyd yn  
Atlanta ar Y Cwrs Arian!*

### **Cwrs Cymraeg, July 22-29, 2001**

Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia

(information gleaned from a Cymdeithas Madog flyer)

Each year Cymdeithas Madog, the Welsh Studies Institute in North America, Inc., offers Cwrs Cymraeg, an intensive, residential language course with the emphasis on spoken Welsh. Cwrs Cymraeg has been offered since 1977, so 2001 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> annual summer course. We intend to celebrate this very special occasion with Y Cwrs Arian, The Silver Course.

The emphasis on Cwrs Cymraeg is the spoken language, to allow students to learn and use Welsh just like that spoken in Wales today. There are six levels of instruction ranging from compete beginner to sophisticated advance students, with classes for about 4 hours per day. Workshops and evening activities are designed to reinforce the learning process.

Cymdeithas Madog always engages teachers from those with the most experience in teaching adults. This year is no exception and the experienced and gifted course leader is Dr. Emyr Daives of Trinity College Carmarthen. He is well known to veterans of previous Cyrsiau. His colleagues include both well-known and new faces—Steve Morris and Eleri Hughes from Wales and Marta Diaz, Kara Lewis, Meredith Roberts and Hefina Phillips from the United States.

The course is limited to 80 students, who are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The registration fee to reserve your place is \$100. Fees for the course vary depending on your level of participation and lodging. Some scholarships may be available.

For more information check out the Cymdeithas Madog website: [www.madog.org](http://www.madog.org)

I (Lois) would be happy to send a flyer to anyone interested, or you could contact U.S. ICDBL member Kevin Rottet in Whitewater, Wisconsin, who can help you with more details: [rottetk@mail.uww.edu](mailto:rottetk@mail.uww.edu)

## MUSIC FROM BRITTANY

### **Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde. Buhez.**

Keltia Musique. ECBM 1000. 2000. 61'23.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

“Buhez” is Breton for “life” and this CD is a celebration of Breton life and of some modern poets and singers who use the Breton language: Youenn Gwernig, Gilles Servat, Glenmor, Yann-Berr Piriou, Alan Stivell, Job an Irien, Per-Jakez Helias, Anjela Duval, and Roparz Hemon.

The performances on this CD involve over 100 musicians and choir members of the Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde. The choir is made up of people from some forty communities of northern Finistère. They do not sing to earn a living, but simply for the enjoyment—and in particular, the enjoyment of singing in the Breton language. But don't let the idea of “amateur” fool you—these are great performances and this group works hard under the direction of Christian Desbordes. He is not only the group's director, but also did the arrangements for most of the selections on the CD, the orchestrations, recording and studio mixing. And he provides some of the music as well with bagpipes, tin whistle and fiddle.

Three men and three women of the choir take a solo lead on eight of the fourteen selections: Vefa Guénegan, Gwenn An Dreo, Gwenn Le Roc'h, Jean-Luc Boulc'h, Louis Lestideau, and Charlez An Dreo. A number of instruments are used: guitars, organ, piano, synthesizer, harps, flute, tin whistle, percussion, fiddle, Scottish bagpipes, and uilleann pipes. Those that seemed to have the starring role from my listening were the harp, uilleann pipes and tin whistle. Bravo to the youngest of the performers: uilleann piper María Desbordes and percussionist Ewan Boulc'h—both still in their teens.

While the Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde is a formidable choir on its own, this CD stands out with the inclusion of two great guest singers: Gilles Servat and Youenn Gwernig. Gilles Servat sings a lovely text of his own (adapted to Breton by Charlez An Dreo), “Eured Elenor”/“Eleanor's Wedding”. Servat's warm low voice blends nicely with the choir for this lovely song where whistle, harp and uilleann pipes are used effectively to enhance the plaintive melody by O'Carollan (Turlough O'Carolan?).

Given a place of honor on the CD is Youenn Gwernig, with four of his songs included. And this is the intention of Christian Desbordes who played as a fiddler with Youenn Gwernig for ten years. Desbordes' familiarity and understanding of Gwernig's music is clear in the way he nicely retains its unique style and swing. And the voices of Louis Lestideau for “Gwez”/“Trees” and Jean-Luc Boulc'h for “E kreiz an noz”/“At dead of night” reminded me very much of Youenn Gwernig's voice. “Gwez” is a celebration of trees of Brittany—beech, oak and chestnut. “E kreiz an noz” evokes the wind that blows at night on rooftops. Leading off the CD is the song “Tuchenn Mikael/Saint Mikael's Mount” which tells of a trip to the chapel of Saint Mikael on top of the Arre Mountains of central western Brittany not far from Youenn Gwernig's home. To close the CD you have a joyful performance—led by Youenn Gwernig himself—of the song “Distro ar Gelted”/“Return of the Celts.” This anthem to Celtic emigrants everywhere tells of their not always willing departure from home, their tenacity in retaining their culture, and the return of Celts to their homelands to defend the rights of their country. This is truly a song about “life” and you will hear that it Youenn Gwernig's strong voice.

Many of Youenn Gwernig's songs defend Brittany, and this CD includes the text of another poet/singer who excelled in this area as well: Glenmor (1937-1996). Glenmor composed songs which were often biting in their

attack on France and on “big shots” of all kinds. He was for the “little guy” everywhere and the song on this CD is in the style of a march, urging people to fight back and not accept adversity: “Hold on and be careful; If you’re not strong nobody else will be.”

Anjela Duval (1905-1981) was another fighter. Her poem here, “An Alc’houez aour”/”The Golden key”, is set to music by Melaine Favennec, and tells of treasures locked in a tower until Celts and Bretons dive into the sea to retrieve the key of language. The selection “Ar Chas doñv yelo da ouez”/”Tame dogs will go wild” also has a militant edge. This is a poem composed in 1958 by Yann-Ber Piriou and set to music by Alan Cochevelou (Stivell). The arrangement for choir here gives it a more daring rhythm than most selections on the CD—fitting for this short text which speaks of Bretons rising up to break from shame and humble submission to France.

As evoked in several of Youenn Gwernig’s texts, “life” in Brittany is also about a love and respect for the natural world around one. “Etre mor ha buhez”/”Between Sea and life” is a text by Charlez An Dreo set to music by Christian Desbordes. An Dreo does not have the same name recognition as Servat, Gwernig or Glenmor, but this is a powerful song of love (sung by Gwenn An Dreo) for Brittany’s shores and sea. It describes the life of the sea and the colors and texture of the coast, and urges polluters to show some respect for these treasures.

If “life” in Brittany involves a battle for one’s language, culture and natural environment, life is also about love. A poem from 1961 by Roparz Hemon (1900-1978) tells of Izold’s longing to cross the sea to Cornwall. The plaintive music by Christian Desbordes and lovely voice of Vefa Guénégan perfectly suite this classic and tragic tale of love. Another powerful love song, “Men du”/”Black stone” has a text by Per-Jakez Hélias with music by Gilles Servat.

“Life” in Brittany has also included a spiritual element and two such selections are included on the CD with texts by Job an Irien with music by Christian Desbordes. “Warzu ar peoc’h”/”In quest of peace” is from the longer “Oratorio War Heñchoù ar Bed,” and praises those humbly trying to follow in Christ’s footsteps. “Klevit ar c’helou”/”Listen to the good news” is from the “Cantata Kalon ar Bed” and tells of the early Celtic missionaries who traveled to Brittany.

The CD includes one traditional melody, “Galvedenn”/”Call.” This is not a song, but syllables (“la la la la leno”) which would be used to call people to join a dance. This is a long variation-upon-a-theme arrangement of a simple melody which uses the full choir to nice effect. And with the important place of dance in the lives of many Bretons today—young and old—it is certainly appropriate for such an arrangement to be on a CD called “Buhez”.

Notes to the CD include the texts to each song in Breton, French and English with some good photos of the choir and solo performers.

This is a CD that succeeds in using the words and music of some of Brittany’s best Breton language artists to express what life is all about. Bravo to Christian Desbordes and the Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde for a fine performance.

**Note: See the review in Bro Nevez 67 (November 1998) for a review of “Noëls Celtiques” which was produced by Green Linnet here in the U.S. (GLCD 3124). This recording of Christmas music by the Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde won the Indie Award for “Best Seasonal Music 98”.**

**Marianig Larc'hantec. Chall ha Dichall** (flux and reflux). D.F. Kerig. Kerig 13. 1999.

Reviewed by Natalie Novik

This CD is dedicated to the art of harpist Marianig Larc'hantec. Her career spans over thirty years now, and she is the initiator of the harp contest at the Kan ar Bobl. I don't know anybody as dedicated to the Breton harp as Marianig. She teaches at the Lorient Conservatory, and has published numerous harp scores for beginners as well as advanced harpists, all inspired by the Breton repertoire. This CD is a vivid illustration of how you can open the door to a breath of fresh air in the conservative world of Breton harp music. Some of her works, like "Emann Fransez e Vilin Avel" or "Merlin au Berceau" have been heard for many years now, but always surprise by the inventiveness of her chords and particularly her left hand play. She enjoys trying new effects and being accompanied by unusual instruments. She was the first to try the harp-accordion marriage with Yann Dour, which earned them an award at the Lorient Interceltique Festival, and here one of her compositions "En coup de vent" blends the French horn with the harp in a surprising way.

Another aspect of Marianig's art is how precise her play is. It is a pleasure to listen to an artist who performs faultlessly, whose harp is perfectly tuned, and who is making no concessions to facility. Perhaps it's the teacher in her, or maybe just the Breton, with an unusual tenacity to give the harp the place it deserves. It is said of a great harper he can make his audience cry, laugh or sleep. While many a harper puts them to sleep, Marianig Larc'hantec makes you want to laugh in the wind.

\* \* \*

**Loened Fall. An Deizioù zo berr.** An Naer Produksion. An Naer 202. 1998. 59'34.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This is not a brand new CD but one well worth a review .. better late than never. The English notes on the back of this CD describe this band as follows:

The group Loened Fall ("the beasts") combines the traditional singing style which accompanies the dances of Central Brittany (Kan ha Diskan) with guitar, fiddle and bombarde. The resulting music is rich and energetic, while the singing possesses a precision that comes from generations of experience. This live recording should give you a feel of the almost magical bond that comes about between the musicians and dancers during a fest noz (dance gathering), where all involved sense the satisfaction and pleasure of being part of a whole.

*And that does describe the gist of it. "Generations of experience" are indeed present in that the young singers and musicians of Loened Fall have had the benefit of learning from masters of traditional Breton music such as Manuel Kerjean, to whom the CD is dedicated. At the heart of this group is the paired kan ha diskan singing of Marthe Vassallo and Ronan Gueblez. I liked the match of Gueblez's warm and mellow voice (a voice quality I find fairly typical of traditional male singers of Central Brittany) with the "harder" edge of Marthe Vassallo's powerful voice.*

*But the instrumental musicians in this group are by no means just a back-up band. They add energy and an interesting texture to the music, and at times take over the lead on the dances. The group includes Marc Thouenon on acoustic guitar, Hervé Bertho on fiddle, and Sabine Le Coadou on bombarde.*

*This is a CD for dances of central western Brittany with one excursion a bit to the southeast for a hanter-dro from the Vannetais country. Dances include all three parts of the traditional suites for plin, gavotte and fisel, and you also have a polka plin and kost ar c'hoat on the CD. These are all dances from Breton-speaking neighborhoods, so that is the language of the songs for them. Notes to the CD include all the texts with a good summary in both French and English. The high energy and precise rhythms of the dances are well sustained by the singers and musicians of Loened Fall, and this is certainly enhanced with a live recording where you can hear dancers' feet and hoots of joy. The recordings were made between March and July 1998 in Plouigneau, Plouisy, Pleudaniel, and Logivi-Plougras. This is a CD where those who love Breton dancing will definitely have the urge to get up and dance.*

*While dance dominates the CD there are two slower selections where you can catch your breath. Gildas Moal joins as a guest on biniou to pair with Sabine le Coadou for a lovely series of marches. The CD closes with a wonderful song for the New Year when Bretons in the past went caroling on New Year's eve. Loened Fall has sung this regularly at a New Year's Eve fest noz in Plouigneau. They are joined in this performance by singer Paul Heullou who added a few new verses to the traditional text. I have to say that it was a nice surprise to hear this voice and a song I recognized from Huellou's wonderful lp (Kanaouennou Breizh-Izel) recorded over 20 years ago.*

*Besides the texts for each song, the CD notes include a long list of thank you's and acknowledgements which give a good idea of some of the "roots" of this group and influences from contemporary singers and musicians. The non-standard size of the CD jacket will challenge and frustrate those who like the neat stacking of CDs in standard shelving systems. But, I like the more "book-like" appearance where a colorful cardboard cover eliminates the plastic case. There are lots of photos of the group and dancers and fest noz sites to give a personal touch. There are also drawings of the "loened fall" (more literally translated as "bad animals"): a horse, pig, cat, sheep and sea gull, which add a touch of humor.*

*I enjoyed the high energy of this CD with young singers and musicians (not much, if at all, out of their 20s) who have a mastery of traditional styles, texts, and rhythms, and also an ability to rearrange music in some new ways.*

\* \* \*

## **HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD**

### **New CDs from Brittany**

Notes for the following have been drawn from information found in reviews in *Musique Bretonne* 164 (janv.-févr. 2001), *Ar Men* 117 (dec. 200) and 118 (févr. 2001), and *Breizh Info* 205 (3 janv. 2001) – Lois Kuter

Christophe Caron & Christian Mayer. *Gwenn rann – bomarde et piano*. Coop Breizh CD 916. 2000. While bomarde has long been paired with the organ, this is a new combination of bomarde with piano. Melodies include cantiques, a scottish, an Irish tune, and a number of compositions. The overall feel for the CD is described as “classical.”

Roland Becker, L’Orchestre National Breton. *Er roue Stevan*. Carpe Diem 2627. (L’Autre Distribution). 2000. Roland Becker is a master of bomarde and the “National Breton Orchestra” is the trio of bomarde, biniou, and a drum. But there are some 32 musicians and singers contributing to this composition described as a “rustic opera” and a “Breton Carmina Burana” with its complex flow of instruments and voices, drawing from Breton traditional music and combining it with other contemporary sounds.

Dan ar Braz. *La mémoire des volets blancs*. 2000.

Twelve compositions inspired by the sea by Dan ar Braz who is a master of electric and acoustic guitar. These modern pieces won’t “sound” typically Breton but Dan ar Braz is not a typical Breton.

Pierick Houdy. *Messe d’Anne de Bretagne, La messe québécoise, Sainte-Anne-la-Palud, Chanson bretonne*. Performed by the Choeur de chambre Kammeton. MCM01. 2000. (available from: Marie-Christine Mauger, 334 chemin de Ternis, 07000 Privas, France; 120 francs)

Pierrick Houdy is a Breton composer who has spent a great deal of time in Canada which has inspired the composition “La messe québécoise”. The other three pieces on this recording are rooted in Brittany: The “Messe d’Anne de Bretagne” was composed in March 2000, while “Chanson bretonne” dates to 1947. “Saint-Anne-La-Palud is inspired by a poem by Tristan Corbière.

Paul Ladmirault. *Quatuors, trios, fantaisie*. Performed by Quatuor Liger and Louis-Claude Thirion. Skarbo DSK 4001. 2000.

This CD includes chamber music by another well known Breton composer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Paul Ladmirault, who studied under Fauré. Included are a string quartet, a trio “La fleuve” and a fantasy for violin and piano based on Scottish reels. These are performed by the Liger string quartet (musicians from the Orchestre national des Pays-de-la-Loire) and pianist Louis-Claude Thirion.

Les Assemblées Gallèses, *20 ans*. Coop Breizh 907. 2000.

This is a sampling of performances from an important festival featuring Gallo song and dance created in 1979. Dance is featured, but you also find young and less young singers from concerts, dances and various evening performances at this festival.

Gwenc’hlan. *Un peu d’air*. Ciré Jaune 170-848. 2000.

This group of five young musicians from central Brittany includes a singer, bass guitar and percussion, flute and tin whistle, and bagpipes. They perform a variety of Celtic tunes. Their reviewer in Ar Men magazine liked their use of song, but didn’t like their high speed and rather mechanical performance of jigs and reels. A band to watch no doubt.

Spontus. Spontus. An Naer Produktion. An Naer 401. 2000.

This is a group of six young musicians from the Vannetais area who perform a range of Breton dances but also marches and slow melodies. Instruments include fiddle, bass fiddle, accordion, guitar, biniou, and bombarde. Their review in *Ar Men* compliments them on a unique sound and mature performance which respects the rhythm of traditional Breton dances.

Les Ours du Scorff. Le retour d'Oné. Keltia Musique KMCD 113.

This is the fourth CD of music directed to children but of interest to adults from the Bears of Scorff (a river). This group includes some remarkable musicians: singers Gilbert Bourdin and Laurent Jouin, fiddler Fañch Landreau, guitarist Soig Sieril, accordion player Frédéric Lambière, and Jacques-Yves Réhault on banjo and other plucked instruments. Most selections on the CD are compositions with an inspiration from Breton music, with a few traditional airs and dances as well. Songs tell of humorous and everyday events in the lives of bears, mice, fleas and chickens.

Bagad Quic-en-Groigne. Self-produced CD. QEG 01. 2000.

This is a bagad from Saint-Malo and this CD includes three suites of music from championship competition performances of the past few years (in category 1). Featured are the traditional dances and melodies from the plin, fisel and Loudéac repertoires.

Bagad Brest Sant-Mark. Levezon. KBSM 003. 2000.

This bagad has not been a participant in the annual competitions for bagadoù, but was one of the earliest to innovate with compositions and daring arrangements of classical music and dances from Eastern Europe. This new CD shows that the bagad continues to innovate in arranging Breton tunes in contemporary styles.

Bagad de Lann-Bihoué. Ar Mor Divent. Byg Production-Columbia (Distribution Sony). 2000.

This bagad of the French Navy is perhaps the most recorded and best known of all. The turnover of conscripted pipers, bombarde players and drummers keeps it from attaining the level of quality and innovation found in the best Breton bagadoù. With the end of military conscription in France, we shall see how this excellent bagad does.

\* \* \*

## BRETON AND TELEVISION

The need for a bigger place for the Breton language on both television and the radio has long been felt in Brittany. With the creation of TV Breizh, a cable television station focused on Breton (and Celtic) programming, a step was taken forward in 2000 and the Breton language will gain a bigger and bigger place as that station grows. There is a lot of work to do.

## France 3 Ouest

From the first weekly 1-minute news broadcast in Breton in 1964, FR3 Ouest has slowly built up its programming to 85 hours per year today. That's less than 2 hours a week, but it represents one-third of the programming produced by FR3 Ouest. One can hope that programming in the Breton language will continue to grow in future years. FR3 Ouest has show support for Breton in another way with the creation in 1997 of the “Du-mañ Du-Se” Prizes for various categories of media in the Breton language.

## Year 2000 Du-mañ Du-se Prizes

The jury this year included 7 individuals from diverse backgrounds: Stéfán Alliot, a bilingual teacher and journalist for the Breton language with *Le Télégramme* newspaper; Guy Le Corre, a bilingual journalist for the radio France Bleu Breiz Izel; Nolwenn Louarn of the Ofis ar Brezhoneg in Rennes; Kristen Nogues, harpist; Gwen Ropars, a student at the Université de Haute Bretagne; Naig Rozmor, poet and author; and Fañch Broudig, chief of the Breton language programming for FR3 Ouest.

There are seven categories for prizes and it is worth noting not only the winners but also the other nominees in each category.

### *Priz ar gwella studiadenn*

#### *Prize for the best study in Breton*

Daniel Giraudon, Traditions populaires de Bretagne: du coq a l'ane. Yezhoù al loened. (Chasse-Marée-Ar Men). Daniel Giraudon teaches in the Celtic Studies Department of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest. The publication noted here is a detailed study of popular traditions and sayings related to animals in Brittany—not only farm animals, but insects, reptiles and birds.

Other nominees: Thierry Chatel for Alhwez louzeier bleunveg Breizh (Emgleo Breiz) and Daniel Le Coedic and Jean-Yves Veillard for Ar seiz breur.

### *Priz ar gwella danevell*

#### *Prize for the best short story in Breton*

Herve ar Bihan, “Remi” (published in ALLiamm)

Herve ar Bihan teaches in the Celtic Studies Department of the Université de Haute-Bretagne in Rennes. His short story awarded here is about a Jewish man who takes refuge in the Tregor countryside during World War II.

Other nominees: Yann Gerven for “Ur gwall rankontr (published in ALLiamm); and Per Garnaot for “Al louarn glas” (published in ALLanv).

***Priz ar gwella leor***  
***Prize for the best book in Breton***

Y Doelan, Temi Lvariazioni (Emgleo Breiz).

This author uses a pseudonym. This book—with an Italian title—is a collection of short stories, most of which are rather black in tone with a mixture of love, murder and violence.

Other nominees: Daniel An Doujet, Ur c'hi maget mat (Al Lanv); and Jan-Mari Skragn, Amzer ar vrezel kostez an Uhelgoad (Brud Nevez).

***Priz ar gwella pladenn***  
***Prize for the best recording***

Roland Becker, Er Roue Stevan (L'Autre Distribution)

As described in the “Heard of but not Heard” section in this newsletter about new CDs this is described as a “rustic opera” featuring the biniou/bombarde/drum trio as well as 32 musicians and singers in a composition rooted in Breton music, but contemporary in sound.

Other nominees: Denez Prigent, Irvi (Barclay); and Marthe Vassallo and Christian Ollivier, Ar bugel koar (An Naer Produksion).

***Priz ar gwella film tele***  
***Prize for best television film***

Sozig Daniellou, “Roparz Hemon” (52-minute co-production by Kalanna and France 3 Ouest).

Roparz Hemon was a famous Breton linguist who created the literary review Gwalarn in 1925. His role during the German Occupation during World War II has made him a controversial figure—a figure whose contribution to the Breton language cannot be underestimated, nevertheless.

Other nominees: Bastian Guillou and Soazing Daniellou, “Amzer ‘zo, eme tud Treger. N’eus ket re, eme al Leger” (France 3 Ouest); and Franck Saint-Cast, “An oabl eo va bro” (Arte-Film and France 3 Ouest).

***Priz are Gwella Komedian***  
***Prize for the best actor***

Strollad ar Vro Bagan

The three nominees in this category are all part of the Breton language theater troupe, Strollad ar Vro Bagan, so the prize was awarded collectively to this troupe headed by Goulc’han Kervella. The actors cited were Nicole Le Vourc’h, Bob Simon and Jean-Baptiste Lagadec for their roles in the play “Ar Mevel bras” based on the work of Pierre-Jakez Hélias.

***Brezhoneger ar Bloaz***  
***Breton speaker of the year***

Ronan Le Coadic and the group “Mignoned Anjela” for the edition of the complete works of the poet Anjela Duval. A simple farmer from Tergor, Anjela Duval started to write at the age of 50. Her poems are about her life as a small farmer, and while many spoke of the beauty of nature, she also had a number of militant poems in defense of the Breton language. Her complete works make up a volume of nearly 1,400 pages.

Other nominees: Lena Louarn for her 20 years as editor for the magazine Bremañ; and Pascal ar Marc'heg and the organization “Stumdi” for its publication of the CD-ROM “E Brezhoneg pa gari” for Breton learners (see review in this issue of Bro Nevez).

\* \* \*

## OFIS AR BREZHONEG

Founded in May 1999 through the initiative of the Regional Council of Brittany, the Office of the Breton Language has seen its work expand ever since. This office works in particular to promote the public presence of Breton, assisting businesses and town governments with translations for documents, signs and advertising. Today fourteen people work for the Ofis ar Brezhoneg in two sites, Rennes and Carhaix, with a new office opening in Nantes, and plans for a fourth to open by the end of 2001 in the Morbihan area.

As noted in an article about Ofis ar Brezhoneg by its director, Olier ar Mogn, the Office had its origins over fifteen years ago as the “Commission de toponymie et de signalisation” and then the “Service de la langue bretonne” within Skol Uhel ar Vro (Cultural Institute of Brittany). There are in fact five different services the Office provides. The “Observatory of the Breton language” collects basic information about the state of the Breton language—facts and figures about its demography, teaching, etc. The “translation” and “terminology” sections provide basic translation into Breton and assistance to organizations and businesses expanding their use of Breton. The “Agency for Development” promotes adult learning opportunities, and the “Linguistic Patrimony” section works with a number of cultural organizations to document things like old place names. While Ofis ar Brezhoneg has a small staff, the work gets done with the help of hundreds of other Breton speakers who collaborate on specific projects. Check out the web site: <http://www.ofis-bzh.org>

—~

## The U.S. ICDBL in the news ...

### “Briezh in USA” - an article for Musique Bretonne

Back in November 2000, I was asked by Catherine Derennes, a writer for Dastum's magazine Musique Bretonne, for an article about the Breton community in New York City. While I know that New York has had a very active community of Bretons centered around the “Stade Breton” and a number of “French” restaurants, it has been over fifteen years since I had any contact with anyone there, so I referred her to the one contact I had so she could find a better source of information. In my work with the U.S. ICDBL during the past 20 years, I have have to say that I have never been successful in establishing a contact with any real “Breton communities” in the U.S. There are many Bretons in the U.S., scattered here and there, and the U.S. ICDBL has benefited from the support of Bretons living temporarily in the U.S. for jobs and from individuals who have some Breton ancestry in their family. Knowing that an article about Breton emigration to the U.S. would require a great deal of research, I offered instead to write about the U.S. ICDBL--who we are and what we do.

Catherine Derennes accepted this idea and in the January/February 2001 issue of Musique Bretonne (No. 164), you will find my article. I would like to thank Catherine for a fine job of translating the article I wrote. While my French is O.K. for correspondence, it is not up to publication quality!

If you are in need of a good French language introduction to the U.S. ICDBL, this article should serve the purpose. Let me know if you want a photocopy.

If you have an interest in Breton music, I urge you to consider subscription to Musique Bretonne. It is a bi-monthly magazine with some 50 pages of articles about Breton music, with a focus on traditional music, but also including interviews with singers and groups, and pages of information about musical events in Brittany. For overseas subscriptions the cost is 150 francs—well worth the price. For more information check out Dastum’s web site: [www.dastum.com](http://www.dastum.com)

\* \* \*

#### **A Quick Festival Note**

### **Fête du Chant Traditionnel à Bovel**

April 4-10, 2001

While the summer time is when you find the highest concentration of music and dance festivals in Brittany, there are many others off season – and these can be very interesting.

The organization L’Epile based in Sel-de-Bretagne has sent me information about the sixth “Fête du Chant Traditionnel à Bovel.” Given the location of this festival, it is only natural that the traditions of Gallo Brittany are favored but there is a lot of variety to be found in the seven days of the festival. This includes a wonderful line-up of workshops for song (including some for children), a “joute chantée”—a challenge for singers to improvise and outwit each other, dance workshops, a countryside walk with singing, a fest noz animated by singers, and concerts by singers from a variety of traditions—both Upper and Lower Brittany, maritime Brittany, Occitanie, Flamenco, Quebec, and Georgia (as in former Soviet Union).

# BRETON VOCABULARY FOR MUSIC

... or how to read the notes to Breton CDs

Lois Kuter

The following are some vocabulary lists I put together for workshops I did at the Potomac Celtic Festival 2000. My knowledge of Breton is minimal at best, so I relied heavily on the use of dictionaries in preparing the vocabulary lists. I would welcome corrections to any mistakes I have made from those with a better grasp of Breton, or from those with a better grasp of the nuances of Breton music!

kan (pl. kanoù)	noun for song, singing
kanañ	verb, to sing
kaner (pl. kanerien)	singer, singers
kantik (pl. kantikoù)	hymn, hymns (cantique in French)
kan ha diskan	specific response style of singing in Breton found in west central Brittany
gwerz (pl. gwerzioù)	ballad, ballads (specific genre of songs in Breton recounting dramatic, historical or legendary events)
ur werzenn) (pl. gwerzennoù)	a ballad, ballads (more specifically cited)
hengoun	tradition
hengounel	traditional
son (pl. sonioù)	lighter repertoire of songs
sonerezh	music in general
soner (pl. sonerien)	musician (usually instrument player—especially used for bombarde and pipes)
binouer (pl. biniouerien)	biniou player
biniawer (pl. binawerien)	

talabarder (pl. talabarderien)	bombarde player
bagad (pl. bagadoù) kevrenn	Breton style bagpipe band section, “band” – often prefixes the place a bagad is based to give it its name. Example: Kevrenn Alre
pibroc’h	piobaireachd
ton	tune
bale (pl. baleu)	march (often sung as well as played – these are not military in style)
ton bale (pl. tonioù bale)	march tune
ton eured	wedding tune
heuliad	suite of tunes (usually for dances like plinn, gavotte, fisel)
tamm keñtan ton simpl	first part of dance suite “basic tune”; also called this sometimes
tamm kreizh tamm diwezhañ ton doubl	middle part last part double tune—second half of tune is twice as long as first part
dañs (pl. dañsoù) dañsal dañser (pl. dañserien)	noun for dance verb to dance dancer
koroll (pl. korolloù) korolliñ koroller (pl. korollerien) korollerez (pl. korollerezed)	dance to dance dancer female dancers
en-dro tro	again turn (root of verb treiñ, to turn)
hanter	half
kelc’h keltiek	Celtic Circle – usually a dance

troupe is a central feature of this club for Breton culture

“boest an diaoul” (devil’s box) and bouëze (a Gallo terms used in eastern Brittany especially)

abadenn (f) session  
(pl. abadennoù)  
sonadeg concert  
(pl. sonadegoù)  
gouel (pl. gouelioù) festival  
fest-noz (pl. festoù-noz) particular dance event of Brittany  
fest-deiz dance held in daytime  
(pl. festoù-deiz)

telemn (f) (pl. telennoù) harp (Celtic style harp)

violoñs fiddle

vielle vielle à roue or hurdy-gurdy in English; not translated into Breton?

## MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Note that feminine nouns (f) are subject to mutations

biniou bagpipe  
biniou kozh old biniou  
biniou bihan small biniou = same instrument as biniou kozh

biniou bras big bagpipe = Scottish style bagpipe adopted in Brittany

levriad the chanter of the bagpipe  
korn boud drone (korn = horn; boud = humming, buzzing)

bombard (f) bombard – the very loud  
(pl. bombardoù) “oboe” of Brittany

veuze (pl. veuzoù) bagpipe unique to s.e. Brittany; (this is not a Breton word, but you will not see it translated into Breton)

treujenn gaol clarinet (treujenn = trunk or stump; gaol = cabbage); word usually used for clarinet as it is traditionally played in Brittany.

clarinetenn (f) clarinet

akordeoñs diatonek diatonic or button accordion  
akordeoñs kromatek chromatic or piano accordion

the accordion has also been called “boest avel” (wind box),

fleüt a-dreuz e koad wooden transverse flute (Irish style flute)  
(pl. fleütenn, fleütoù)

taboulin (pl. taboulinoù) drum, percussion

gitar (pl. gitaroù) guitar  
gitar boud bass guitar

ograoù organ  
touchennegoù keyboards

saksafon saxophone  
trompilh trumpet  
trombon trombone

violoñsell cello

There are many other words used for all sorts of musical instruments, some of which you will not find in most Breton dictionaries.

## SOME WORDS YOU MIGHT FIND ON A CD JACKET

enrollet gant recorded by ..  
enrolladur recording

renet gant artistic direction by ...

mesket gant mixed by ...  
kemmesket gant

dastum to collect

dastumad	collection, anthology
fotoioù skeudennoù	photos [by ...]
chomlec'h	contact address
pedet	invited/guest artists
da trugarekaat trugarez da	thanks to ..., acknowledgements

## A FEW ADJECTIVES TO DESCRIBE MUSIC?

kozh	old
nevez	new
mat	good
mat-tre	very good
berr	short
hir	long
fall	bad
spontus	frightening, terrible
buan	fast
goustad	slow
trouzus	loud
dous	soft, sweet
heson, hesonus	melodious

## BRETON LANGUAGE NAMES FOR MUSICAL GROUPS

Just a few examples with some very literal translations

(note that the adjective follows the noun)

Bleizi ruz - red wolves

Bugel koar - wax child

Dalc'h soñj - remember (dalc'h – keep; soñj = thought)

Diaouled ar menez - devils of the mountains

Diroll -- dissolute, profligate, (or raging, like wind)

Distro - return, detour

Diwall -- look out, beware

Hastañ - to hurry up

Hirio - today

Kan ha distroy – a play on words for kan ha diskan

Koun - memory

Loened fall - bad animals

Loeroù ruz - red socks or stockings

Mesk ha mesk – pell-mell, helter-skelter

Pennoù skoulm - knot heads

Pevar den - four guys

Skeduz - bright, sparkling

Skolvan – name of a legendary character in a Breton song

Skrijadenn – shrieking, screeching

Sonerien du - the black pipers

Splann – bright, dazzling, clear

Spontus – frightful, terrible

Strobinell – magic spell, bewitchment

Ti jaz - the house of jazz

Tri Yann - the three Johns

Trouzerion - noisemakers

Tud - people, (family)

# International Celtic Congress

July 23-28 in Rennes

(Information from Breizh-Info 210 (7 février 2001))

The first International Celtic Congress was held in 1867 in Saint-Brieuc and Congresses moved to Ireland and Wales in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and between the two world wars. Since 1950 the Celtic Congress has become a yearly event rotating to each of the six Celtic countries.

The International Celtic Congress is a cultural organization with branches in each of the Celtic Countries and officers from various countries. Right now the President is from Ireland, Donall O Cuill, with a Scottish Vice-President, Christine Mac Kay, and a Welsh Treasurer and Secretary-General, Huw Price and Gwyneth Roberts. The idea of the Congress is to promote a better understanding of each other's history and culture among Celts. And in doing this the Congress fosters joint projects and the opportunity for the exchange of ideas.

The annual Congress attracts some 250 to 300 delegates from all six countries and each congress has a theme for its workshops. In April 2000 the Congress was held in Bude, Cornwall, and the theme was the "The Celtic Renaissance on the eve of a new millenium". In July 2002 the Congress will be held in Carmarthen, Wales. This year's congress in Rennes has the theme "The place of history today in the Celtic countries" During the four days of the Congress there will be many forums for discussion of this rich topic. This will include how Celtic history is taught in the schools and presented in media, and how various countries have succeeded in protecting and presenting historical sites. During the Congress participants will have the chance to explore Rennes, and each evening will feature concerts open to the public including artists from all six Celtic countries.

For more information check out the web site: [celt-cong@bretagnenet.COM](mailto:celt-cong@bretagnenet.COM)

## A NEW INTERCELTIC FLAG

The Breton Historical Association called "Dalc'homp Soñj" is offering a new inter-Celtic flag designed by Polig Monjarret. This incorporates the flags of Brittany, the Isle of Man, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, and Wales. The size is 1 meter by 1 meter and 50. Although the reproduction here does not show the colorful nature of the flag, it includes the seven colors found in all the various flags.

The price is 260 francs, but there may be some postage added for shipments to the U.S./Canada. For more information about ordering this flag contact:

Dalc'homp Soñj  
3 place Paul Bert  
56100 Lorient  
Brittany. France

Telephone/fax: 02 97 64 12 76  
e-mail: [dsbzh@infonie.fr](mailto:dsbzh@infonie.fr)



# TRAVELS IN BRITTANY – An American on Foot in 1853

The Pedestrian in France and Switzerland, by George Barrell, Jr. (NY: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1853).

*From time to time I have reprinted parts of travel accounts from the 19<sup>th</sup> an early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Bro Nevez. Sometimes such accounts give nice details about scenery and life of the period. Other times they focus on how dirty or unpleasant travelling was in those days with very little "ethnographic" insight. The following excerpt is from an account by an American, George Barrell, Jr., who did much of his travelling by foot throughout Europe. (Other bits of his book were reprinted in Bro Nevez 43, August 1992).*

*Thirty-four pages of Barrell's 1853 book about travel in France and Switzerland are devoted to Brittany, and the author describes his route from Mont Saint Michel through Dinan, Dol, Saint Malo, Jugon, St. Brieuç, Guingamp, Morlaix, Huelgoat, Carhaix, Quimper, Rosporden, Quimperlé, Pont Scorff, Hennebont, Auray, Vannes to Nantes. Often the entire town is summed up in one sentence: "Auray is in nowise remarkable." But some of Barrell's observations provide a bit more detail. While his descriptions of Breton people he meets are not always flattering, they do provide some interesting information about the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. -- Lois Kuter*

## CHAPTER XIV – QUIMPER TO PONT SCORFF

The next day a very odd tenement was passed [on a road from Carhiax to Quimper]; the weather being about the most disagreeable experienced for some time past. This habitation was a straw roof descending to the ground without any walls, being much like the hut of a savage. There was an opening in the front for a door, and a couple of pigs like their Irish brethren, stood therein.

The weather was very rainy, and I was forced to stop for an hour or two in a wayside cabaret; then, crossing a little hill that, owing to the bad repute in which it was held in bygone times, now goes by the name of the Robber's Mountain, I managed to "foot it" for some two or three hours; but was again obliged to enter a wayside house on account of the drizzling rain. I do not know the name of that little village; but there it was that, for the first time, was seen the rural Breton costume, and the piety of the inhabitants. When evening came on, the eldest of the little boys, sitting opposite to me in the fireplace, kicked off his sabots, and having kneeled, crossed himself, and went through his devotions like a good Catholic. Having finished his prayers, he arose, slipped his feet in the clumsy shoes, said something to me—perhaps wishing me good night, and went to bed.

When twilight came I went to the door to discover the cause of a disturbance that had attracted the rest of those in the room, and found that a young man was quarrelling, and that a woman was endeavoring to coax him into a house. His costume, and that of all the men and boys collected around, was the true Breton dress. The men wear on their very long and shaggy hair, a broad-brimmed, round-crowned black felt hat, with a piece of ribbon quivering over the side; a waistcoat with no opening in front, but ornamented by two rows of buttons; and a jacket sky-blue in color, descending to the waist, with the corners and the sides curving outwards. An immense leathern belt, with an enormous brass buckle, is around their waist; and below this a pair of Grecian breeches of white cotton fall to their knees, beneath which are gaiters and monstrous sabots. They generally wear two pairs of breeches—a pair of "tights" beneath the "bags;" for old men were often observed smoking their pipes by the fireplace, with that loose garment fallen half to their knees; and then the costume is by no means pretty or picturesque. And moreover they are a continual source of trouble, as they often require being pulled up: it really appears as if the wide belt and big buckle were worn more for ornament than use.

The next day was Sunday. The view from my window took in part of a church, with its curious tower; and the boys, girls, and men of the village collected around. The females

were neatly dressed, and the male portion wore their cleanest clothes. The bells chimed upon the still air, and the crowd entered the sacred building.

On the road to Quimper I fell in with a man on foot, leading a horse which carried two monstrous bags containing something that creaked not a little.

"Good morning," said I; "where are you going, and what have you in the bags?"

"Good morning," said he. "I am going to Quimper, and there are sabots in these bags!"

"Of your own make?"

"Yes. I make them during the week, and then on Sundays go to Quimper to sell them!"

"Why on Sundays?"

"Because then all the people near the town are there. I station myself near the church, and the people going in and coming out see my wares; and if they want them, they buy!"

"Your horse appears tired with that heavy load!"

"The load is heavy, and he is well tired; for he has been already nine hours upon the road."

So onward we jogged, and jogged, and jogged, and to save time, shortened our distance considerably by striking through a cross road, with cedar trees in abundance, wherein birds sang merrily, and entered upon the main road again, being nigh unto Quimper. The road was broad, and well filled with handsomely dressed people on their way to church.

The sabotier and his horse, and I and my stick, entered the crowded streets of Quimper. I left him before the door of an auberge near unto the cathedral, and he went on his way to sell his articles. Let us hope he had quick sales.

Quimper is the capital of the Department of Finisterre—all the ancient provinces are now divided into what are called departments, of which there are at present eighty-six—though it has only about nine thousand inhabitants, while Brest has thirty thousand. Quimper possesses a very fine cathedral, wherein was heard excellent organ-playing. It faces the market-place, and has a deep-sculptured portal rich in carved foliage; the interior is of a stately height. The Bretons are the most religious of all the French nation; and never was a church or cathedral so well filled with devotionists as was this. The pavement was hidden by the human sea. It was an impressive sight to see the long-haired men kneeling on the stone floor, and the women with inclined heads, upon their knees in prayer, while the sacred building was quivering with the rich notes swelling in harmony from the organ. There was near me a mother. She kneeled upon the pavement, and her hands clasped the rosary. On either side were her children—two girls; and she taught them how to pray, and clasped for them their hands, while the organ was sounding forth its heavenly music.

I left Quimper with two Bretons, one of whom understood a little French. The only thing that surprised him was that I could not speak Breton.

"But you intend to learn it, don't you?"

"I am afraid not."

"Quel dommage!"

America was to them the most interesting of topics. He who spoke French translated all to his companion; and every question that could be imagined was asked. But it was a pleasure to talk with them about my country, as every one who is away from his fatherland loves that topic of conversation.

The road to Quimperlé, instead of crossing the hills that are in its way, is carried around them; so that for some time, as we ascended, a good view of the country was

obtained.

All along the road, whenever we passed any houses, there we saw the Breton youth playing at the universal French game of balls. They rolled them against each other, and every lucky hit elicited great applause. The balls were of wood, and sometimes hollow, with a place where the fingers can be inserted, the better to throw them.

A church shot its spire by the wayside. My two companions marched up to it, removed their hats when they went into the yard, and then entered the edifice. They proceeded to the altar; fell on their knees before it; and repeated a short prayer. The church was remarkable for nothing; it had a few poor paintings within, and a bone house without. Apropos of the bone house, or reliquaire; it was like a large stone trough with a roof over it, and was filled with skulls and bones, thrown therein in a mass. These people do not desire their parents or friends should rest in the grave, but after a certain number of years the bones are brought to light, and placed in the reliquaire; and, in some towns, the skulls are laid on shelves, and the names of their former owners lettered in black paint above the eye-sockets.

I had an "interior view" that afternoon. My pipe was loaded, but on examining my match box it was found to be empty. The Bretons had, a minute before, used their last, and I was at a loss how to light the tobacco; when, as we marched on, the thatched roof of a small chaumière was seen. I rapped at the door; but, no answer being returned, pushed it open, and proceeded across the earthen floor to the fireplace, and, in so doing, much disturbed a couple of large hogs reclining upon the floor. Some fire was found, and while lighting my pipe, I accidentally glanced up, seeing a woman sitting in bed, looking steadfastly upon me. Wishing her good morning, I left the dwelling, again disturbing the two hogs.

I stopped at Rosporden for the night. My two Bretons took seats in the diligence for Quimperlé. A crowd of about a dozen old men and women were besieging it, imploring for charity; while a gend'arme, seated by the window in an opposite house, saw fit to let the filthy beings annoy the passengers; but no sooner did he happen to catch a glimpse of me, than he rose from his seat, and in less than half a minute I heard the familiar, "Monsieur est un voyageur!"

Rosporden is seated on the border of a large pond, in which the church, nigh thereto, was well reflected. The country, for some distance, was well wooded; and a pretty sheet of water, with handsome trees growing upon its border, was passed.

Oxen, harnessed to wagons, passed along. They yoke the oxen in that country in a different mode than with us. There the yoke rests on the head, the straps are passed around the horns, and the bandages descend even to the eyes. One thing is certain—the beasts are thus placed under more subjection than when the yoke encircles the neck; but another thing is equally true—it takes more time to get them ready for work, when they have all that strapping and bandaging to perform. You never see cattle grazing about the fields, wandering where they will; but all are tethered to stakes. Sometimes a dozen cows or oxen will be seen in a row, extending across a field, each one being tied to a post, with sufficient rope to enable it to feed; and thus the grass is eaten down smoothly, and nothing is lost.

Quimperlé is prettily situated on the brawling river Elle, and is a handsome little town. Along this river are houses covered with bright green vines, descending to the rock; while, under them, were washerwomen engaged at their work. It was a picturesque sight—those groves, and green, vine-clad houses, and the bright dresses of the women!

After tramping along a dreary road, and when about entering a village, I perceived the highway to be filled with hundreds of horses: at times one would escape from the crowd with a man on his back—and gallop furiously towards me; then turn, and gallop down the hill again.

"What village is that before me?" I asked of a cantoinnier.

"Pont Scorff."

"And what are they doing?"

"Selling horses: they have a grand fair there."

On coming nearer, it was found that between the horses were men, buying and selling; and that both sides of the road were crowded with spectators. I wedged my way through the noisy set, and found the inn the cantonnier had mentioned. It was filled to repletion with drinkers of cider, and petit verres of brandy. The costume of the men was again different from that of the inhabitants of Quimper; for, instead of widebreeched gay peasants, the people resembled Methodist ministers! They wore immense wide-brimmed black hats, and were clothed in black; while a smooth, white shirtband, without any knot or bow, added not a little to the sanctity of their sedate faces; but when they talked, oh where then was their sanctity?

In another part of this fair was held a cattle market, a pig market, and a market for the sale of gimeracks. There was noticed a Breton comba thing with teeth almost four inches in length, and in shape like the articles seen in old paintings, used by Venus when she dressed her hair—but, doubtless, the Bretons also used it to comb the mane and tail of a horse. The oddest characters of all were the hat sellers. They went about with from nine to a dozen hats, one pressed upon the other, and the whole carried on their heads. Whenever they lit upon a customer, down came the tower, in a very dexterous manner, to the ground, and one hat after another was tried, till the purchaser was suited.

As the sun descended the western sky, the crowd became thinner and thinner, and one by one they departed, some in carts, some on horseback, and some on foot. The youths tried their fathers' new-purchased horses by galloping them in every direction, in a very reckless manner; and the women had as much as they could do to get their pigs in their carts; but, having succeeded, away they also went. A tall, melancholy youth having tried, for the hundred and first time, to induce me to buy his horse, said he would have to wait till the morrow, when it would be "jumped at;" and bowing, took his leave. It was most fervently hoped that the rest of the guests would do likewise, for they made an awful racket down stairs till near midnight. I was in bed, trying to slumber, and had almost succeeded, when a select few came into the large bedroom, and gambled till near daylight; at which time, notwithstanding the clamor, I managed to fall asleep.

— —