

BRO NEVEZ

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE
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KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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

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On the cover ...

Designed by Herve Thomas, the design on this cover first appeared on the cover of the U.S. ICDBL Newsletter in May 1984. As you will read in this issue of Bro Nevez, the Diwan immersion Breton language schools continue to grow. But this growth is stifled by France's inability to recognize its deadly role in denying legitimacy and in withholding adequate support for its own regional languages and cultures.

Lois Kuter in Brittany

You will find that a lot of the content of this issue of Bro Nevez stems from my trip to Brittany this September. This is not because I am an ego-maniac who needs to talk about myself, but because my trip was very rich in opportunities to see and hear about what is happening in Brittany.

I had the opportunity to meet – briefly and less briefly – with dozens of different people active in support of the Breton language and culture. Certainly meeting old friends after many years between my visits to Brittany

was a great pleasure, but all the conversations were also important in getting a better idea of what is going on in Brittany. I am left with some pessimism about the continued resistance of France to grant even the smallest concessions for the health of its regional languages, but I am also optimistic about Brittany.

It is a land full of determined and creative people, and as older generations grow a bit weary of the fight for their language and culture (and it has been a fight), younger people seem ready to take on the responsibility to keep building.

There is work that the U.S. ICDBL can do to support the construction. We need to be active as individuals and as an organization in showing our support to people of Brittany. The newsletter and our website serve to do that. It is also important for us to write letters to Breton and French leaders (as we have done from time to time) to show that an international community is concerned about the future of the Breton language. And our continued financial support to the Diwan schools is also needed – more than ever.

A Traveler's Account – Lois Kuter in Brittany - September 19 to October 2, 2007

The following is a modified English version of an account I wrote for friends in Brittany whom I met (and for some, sadly, I did not have the opportunity to meet) to give them my thoughts about my trip. This is not a chronological day-by-day account of where I was and what I did, but more an account of my thoughts after meeting many different people and talking with them about Brittany and the Breton language and culture. Everywhere I went people greeted me warmly and I was treated with the utmost hospitality for which I am most grateful.

Almost everyone I met asked me if I noticed changes since the last time I visited (which had been nine years before!).

This was a difficult question since I was in Brittany this September for just thirteen days. Every time I visit Brittany I travel to slightly different places and meet different people. I noticed new super highways and more commercial development on the outskirts of larger towns and cities (not always very beautiful – a bit of suburban sprawl). But the rural countryside of Brittany remains beautiful. Even though one is less likely to come upon a herd of cows, the tractors and farm trucks are still out there on the small roads to require drivers to pay attention. It seemed that more old stone farm houses had been restored in smaller villages, and in the old centers of larger towns there also seemed to be more restoration work.

I took a walk with a hiking club around the town of Bécherel (a town famed for its old book stores north of Rennes) and this showed me that there were some little country trails well worth a discovery for those who love hiking. Thirteen kilometers up and down tiny little paths sunken between fields or on little dirt or paved roads was a bit of a physical challenge but certainly a pleasure. Bring your walking shoes! There are guidebooks to help you find these marvelous excursions.

The coasts of Brittany remain spectacular and I had the chance to take a little detour to the Cap Fréhel (a northern tip of coast between Dinard/St. Malo and Saint Brieuc) and to do some walking along the cliffs of the Crozon Peninsula (not recommended for those with a fear of heights). Outside of the tourist season you really can appreciate the wind and crashing of the waves on the Breton coasts and if you're lucky you will get that kind of a day where there is wind, dramatic clouds, a sudden downpour of rain (ideally a bit off in the distance), and a rainbow or two in between.

Everyone remarked on the very rainy and cold summer. I had a single day of rain during my stay in Brittany – a

very fine but driving rain that I have only experienced in Brittany. It gave me the opportunity to discover the art of a Breton painter, Yves Tanguy, in a big exhibit at the art museum of Quimper. Besides a trip to this exhibit of surrealist art, friends took me with them for a few other unexpected visits to see a TV documentary preview about women pharaohs of Egypt and a film about the life of Joe Strummer, an English punk-rocker who played with the band Clash. Brittany is certainly open to everything. But this is not surprising for a country of world travelers and explorers.

Other than a few hikes in the countryside and on the coasts – long and much less long - my exploration of Brittany did not give me much time to take quiet walks in the woods or lounge on any beaches. My trip wasn't the opportunity to be a true tourist to enjoy beautiful scenery, but the chance to meet people and see first-hand what is happening in Brittany – especially for the Breton language. It was a trip where I stayed mostly on the big highways.

I had the pleasure of seeing friends I have had for thirty years – often people I have not seen for nine, ten or fifteen years. I also had the pleasure of seeing friends I have made more recently such as those who came to the U.S. in March 2007 with the Kevrenn Alre. Everyone offered enormous hospitality. With just thirteen days for the trip (minus the travel days) it was impossible to visit all my friends that I hoped to see, and this gives me a reason to visit more frequently.

And my thoughts about Brittany?

I met people who find the political situation in France discouraging (especially President Sarkozy). I got the impression that it will require even harder work for Bretons to win the smallest advances for the Breton language in the schools, in public life and in the media. I met people who began their fight for Brittany a long time ago. Despite the numerous obstacles put in place by France, they weren't ready yet to give up. But one could sense that people were growing weary of the walls that continue to be built – even higher – by a state that proclaims itself to be the land of human rights and a champion of minority peoples. Except those in France because there are no minority peoples there. Everyone is 100% French, n'est-ce pas?

One can rejoice that today in Brittany nearly everyone has a favorable view of the Breton language and it is no longer viewed as a burden to be exterminated. Nevertheless, there remains some apathy and too few people who are ready to do something concrete to insure a future for the Breton language.

And, these people who have come to believe that the Breton language is a precious element of their Breton

patrimony, do they understand that a sustained fight is necessary to protect it? That their work is required to insure that the little advances gained through great efforts are not lost? Are there enough young people ready to continue the fight for the Breton language? France does not offer the resources needed for a natural evolution of its regional languages (indeed, it blocks this evolution), thus one must use the word “fight.”

I certainly met Breton people who gave me an optimism for the Breton language. Some of these were “militants” who were a little disheartened but determined nevertheless to continue their work. These also included young people who spoke Breton among themselves because it is a part of their social and professional lives. I met adults who have courageously jumped into 6-month language training courses to learn Breton so that it can become a part of their social and professional lives. There are jobs outside of the classroom where Breton is of value – health or administrative services, social services, or in the media ... and why not for ecotourism? I met parents who do not speak Breton but who put their children in Diwan schools because Breton is the language of the country where they live. There are also parents who enroll their children in Diwan schools because it's an immersive language school – no matter which language – and these schools offer a high quality pedagogical experience for their children. And I met children in two Diwan schools (Kemper Kerfeunteun and Landerne) who were proud to have a visit from an American who was interested in their language and who could offer them a few words in Breton. All this gives me optimism.

Since my last visit nine years ago, it was evident that Breton is seen and heard more in public spaces. This was clear at a lunch in a restaurant in Landerneau with the Mayor Yann Ber Thomin and some of his colleagues and friends where the conversation was almost entirely in Breton. There were just a few words in French to explain that Breton was the language used to conduct all of the work in their office. There are people who wear the new “spilhenig” (a pin to show that one speaks Breton) with pride and there are others who don't know exactly what to do with this very small pin which is very easy to forget on the clothing one wore the day before.

There is an enormous amount of progress still to be made for the future of the Breton language, but even during just thirteen days it was evident that there have been some changes for the good since my last visit.

I have an optimism about Brittany that is also fostered in meeting people who are involved in the cultural life of the town and country – people with a passion for the history of their little corner of Brittany who are at the same time international in their spirit. To immerse oneself in a study of history and traditions of one's own country does not

mean that one must forget the existence of other peoples of the world or forgo the enjoyment of meeting them.

During my trip I often had the opportunity to explain the work of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language – especially in interviews with journalists. My visits to the Diwan schools in Quimper and Landerneau were opportunities for interviews and articles about an American who defends the Breton language to be printed in the two major daily papers (Ouest France, Le Télégramme). This is right in line with the work of the U.S. ICDBL to show that the future of the Breton language is of international interest. There was also an interview with the Breton language station Radio Kerne where I responded in English to questions posed in Breton. Thank you, Pierre Mens, for helping translate questions into English and for transforming my answers into Breton.

The press was also present at a reception for me at the City Hall of Auray organized to recognize the trip to Philadelphia by the Kevrenn Alre in March 2007. Despite the absence of Mayor John Street at the reception given for the Kevrenn Alre in the big City Hall of Philadelphia (a city of 1.5 million) there had been a certain grandeur with formal speeches by the Director of International Commerce for the city and the Honorary Consul for France. But my reception at the Auray City Hall (a town of 11,300) was much warmer with a welcome by the mayor himself, Michel Le Scouarnec, and from Chantel Simon, Adjunct to the Mayor for Culture, who had organized the reception as well as a guided tour of Auray for me. It was an occasion to see some friends from the Kevrenn Alre, to share a glass of cider, and to meet journalists to talk about the importance of the Breton language and Breton music on a world stage.

It was most often over lunch or dinner at the home of old friends and newer acquaintances that I had the chance to exchange ideas – and especially to hear their ideas. Here are some events where I didn't always sit down for a meal, but had the chance to talk to dozens of people and meet many new ones:

- The Congress of the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) which focused on arts and which included the very moving evening ceremony for new members of the Order of the Ermine. Held in Saint-Brieuc, this offered the opportunity to talk with many people who have played – and continue to play – a major role in the promotion of the Breton language and culture.
- A meeting at the Locarn Institute with Bretons engaged in the economic and business world. A presentation was given on the supply of electricity in Brittany, but there was ample opportunity afterwards

for discussion on all topics. My guide for this and other travels during the trip was Jean-Pierre Le Mat, a regular contributor to Bro Nevez with his series of articles called “Deep Inside a Breton Skull.”

- Visits to the Diwan schools in Quimper and Landerneau where I met children, teachers, and parents, including a delicious “kig ha fars” dinner organized for me by the parents of Skol Diwan Landerne.
- A day and evening in Auray where I could explore some of the town of Auray and Saint Anne d'Auray (thank you Jacques le Tallec), catch up with Kevrenn Alre friends, meet a number of people active in cultural activities in Auray at the Mayor's reception, and talk with Daniel Carriou to learn about the very active cultural organization Cercle Sten Kidna which he presides.
- Presence at the “Rassemblement pour l'Unité de la Bretagne” in Rennes – with some 700 to 1,000 others to protest proposed plans to move judicial oversight of judges of Loire-Atlantique (currently in Rennes) outside of Brittany. This peaceful gathering offered the opportunity to meet many people active in working for the reunification of Brittany to include Loire-Atlantique.
- There were very short visits as well to the Radio Kerne studio (already mentioned), to the adult Breton language education center called Stumdi where I met its director Claudie Motaïs, to the offices and library of the Cultural Institute of Brittany where I met Bernard Gestin to discuss potential use of Bro Nevez material for an English language presence on the Institute's website, to the offices of Skol an Emsav where I met an editor of the Breton language magazine Bremañ Milio Latimier who has done an interview with me via e-mail, and to Ti ar Vro Kemper which is a meeting place and communication link for dozens of cultural groups in Quimper.

Besides the people cited above, I had the chance to share conversations with dozens of people I met during my travels in all five departments of Brittany – some simply old friends, some well known for their work for the Breton language and culture, and others not known at all. As a “journalist” for Bro Nevez I had the chance to do a few interviews which you will read in this and in future issues. Most of my conversations were much less formal. Many were unexpected and unplanned meetings which lasted just a few minutes. But all these short conversations as well as the longer ones added up to a very rich experience.

Sadly, I did not have the chance to dance at all during this trip to Brittany. There was no lack of music going on, but this was a trip where I met and talked with people, and the chance to go to a fest noz or concert was just not in the plans. In Rennes while I was at the demonstration for the unity of Brittany, there was a wonderful festival for Gallo music and culture taking place just a half-block away – Mill Góll. It was very tempting to abandon my friends and the demonstration to dance a ridée, ronde de Saint-Vincent, or pilé menu to the wonderful voices I heard over a loud speaker system. There were other festivals that took place during my trip including the 50th anniversary for the Coop Breizh, Celt'Vannes, and the wonderful little preliminary contests leading up to the Bogue d'Or song contest in Redon. And there were dozens of festoù noz and concerts to verify that music is plentiful year-round throughout Brittany.

And it is important to note a major musical event for Brittany that took place in Paris this September – “Breizh Touch.” This included concerts and workshops, but the main event was a huge parade on the Champs Elysée of bagads and dancers – some 3,000 musicians and dancers in all. Besides the thousands of people who came to see this live, the parade was televised on TF1 to a reported six million viewers. I was not in Paris (other than a short airport stop) and did not see the televised performances, but it was described as an impressive show of the richness of Breton music, dance and costume. Others complained that the more innovative musical styles of Brittany were not presented (including the jazzier side to what a bagad can do) but this is a project for another invasion of Paris.

During my trip I did have a little glimpse of the always evolving music of Brittany through a performance of piano compositions by Frédérique Lory during the Skol Uhel ar Vro Colloquium in Saint Brieuc. At the evening Ceremony of the Order of the Ermine, she also performed with an ensemble for the oratorio “L'inconnue me dévore.” While short excerpts did not do justice to this composition, clearly Bretons are creating interesting works in all musical styles.

In thirteen days one cannot do everything but this was a trip that was very rich in offering me the chance to exchange ideas with old and new friends. Brittany is a country that is very much alive with people full of ideas, interesting projects, and a few crazy dreams – as there should be.



Gouel an Erminig – Ceremony for the Order of the Ermine, September 22, 2007

Lois Kuter

One of the benefits of planning a trip to Brittany at the end of September was the opportunity to attend a day long colloquium organized by the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) on art in Brittany – it's Celtic roots and the presence of painting, sculpture and other "plastic arts" in Brittany today. But it was even more of a joy to attend the evening ceremony to induct four new members into the Order of the Ermine. Both of these gatherings held this year in Saint Brieuc offered me the chance to meet many old friends and acquaintances for a quick hello or longer conversation.

The evening ceremony was a moving tribute to four individuals who have invested a great deal of their life's work in the promotion of the Breton language and culture. After a speech of welcome from the Mayor of Saint Brieuc, Bruno Joncour, each new inductee was introduced with a short film documenting their work and unique personalities, and each was called to the stage by Yvonig Gicquel, the President of the Cultural Institute of Brittany, to be presented with the medallion of the Order of the Ermine. In keeping with the central place the Breton language has in their lives, each expressed their thoughts first and primarily in this language. To remind us that Breton culture is always moving forward with new creativity, short excerpts from an oratorio inspired by the writings of Xavier Grall and composed by Frédérique Lory was presented: "L'inconnu me dévore / An dianav a rog ac'hanoun."

As a member of the Order of the Ermine (since 1995), I take the opportunity with each November issue of Bro Nevez to reintroduce it and to present brief biographies of the new members.

A little history – the Order of the Ermine was created in 1381 by Jean IV after the Battle of Auray and is one of the oldest orders of Europe. It was created to unify Bretons around a sovereign duke (in an independent Brittany) and was unique in being open to commoners and women. This honorary order was reinstituted in 1972 to recognize Bretons (and others) who have offered exceptional service to Brittany. Today's members of the Order of the Ermine are given a "medallion" designed by Pierre Toulhoat which is very much like that of the middle ages, decorated with "ermine" and including the motto "D'am buhe" - "For my life" – a reminder to those in the Order of the

Ermine that they have a life-long responsibility of service to Brittany.

The four 2007 inductees to the Order of the Ermine are presented below:



From the website of Skol Uhel ar Vro, from left to right: Rhisiart Hincks, Martial Pézennec, Job an Irien, Francois Le Quémener, and patron for the ceremony Patrick Malrieu.

The biographies which follow are reproduced first in Breton and then in my translation (from French) from information provided by the Cultural Institute of Brittany in *Lizher'Minig* No. 14, Summer 2007.

Rhisiart Hincks

Ganet eo bet e Leicester, e kreiz Bro-Saoz, d'an 9 a viz Ebrel 1945. Pa oa e-tro dek vloaz e oa kroget da vont da Gembre da dremen vakañsoù. Dre ma klev ha ma wel ar c'hembraeg eno e sav c'hoant ennañ deskiñ ar yezh-se ha mont da chom e Kembre. Desket un tammig kembraeg gant skoazell al levrioù hag un hentenn skingomz, ez a da studiañ ar yezh hag he lennegezh da Skol-Veur Kembre, en Aberystwyth. Stagañ a ra ivez da heuliañ kentelioù brezhoneg Rita Williams ha goude ez a da heuliañ stajoù e Breizh. E 1975 e tap e aotregezh war al lennegezh kembraek. E 1979 ec'h echu e vestroniezh war ar barzh, kazetenner hag embanner E. Prosser Rhys, hag e 1982 e vez gounezet gantañ e zoktorelezh, war Istor ar studioù war ar Brezhoneg betek dibenn an Naontekvet Kantved. E 1978 e vez anvet da gelenner e Kevrenn ar C'hembraeg, Skol-Veur Kembre, Aberystwyth, e-lec'h ma ra skol bremañ war istor ar c'hembraeg ha ma kelenn brezhoneg modern, dre ar c'hembraeg. Kinnig a ra ivez kentelioù kembraeg, dre ar brezhoneg, evit Skol Ober. Kenlabourat a ra gant geriadur enlinenn liesyezhek Logos, ha kuzulier a-fed an arnodennoù eo evit Cymdeithas y Cyfieithwyr (Kevredigezh an Droourien). Skrivañ a ra er gelaouenn Al Lanv (Kemper) ha ren ar gelaouenn zivyezhek, kembraek ha brezhonek, Newyddion Llydaw/Keleier Breizh. Bet dimezet div wech, pevar bugel a zo gantañ: Banon, Mabon, Cynon ha Rhiannon.

Rhisiart Hincks was born in Leicester in the center of England, April 9, 1945. From the age of 10 on he

would spend vacations in Wales where he discovered the Welsh language. This gave him the desire to discover more about this language which he learned with the help of books and classes on the radio. He continued his studies of Welsh at the University of Wales Aberystwyth and got a degree in Welsh literature in 1975. There he also learned Breton through classes given by Rita Williams, to be followed by workshops in Brittany. In 1979 he completed his Masters thesis on the bard, journalist and editor E. Prosser Rhys, and in 1982 he defended a doctorate thesis on the history of Celtic studies and the Breton language up to the end of the 19th century. In 1978 he became a professor in the Welsh Department at the University of Wales Aberystwyth where he taught the history of the Welsh language and modern Breton in Welsh. He also takes charge of Welsh classes given in Breton for the correspondence school Skol Ober. He is a contact for Welsh for the on-line multilingual Logos dictionary and an advisor for the organization Cymdeithas y Cyfieithwyr (society of translators). He writes for the Breton journal Al Lanv and directs the bilingual Breton-Welsh magazine Newyddion Llydaw/Keleier Breizh. Married twice, he has four children: Banon, Mabon, Cynon and Rhiannon.

Martial Pézennec

Bet ganet eo e 1933 e Groñvel. Mont a ra tre e kelc'h keltiek Groñvel e 1946 hag ez a da soner e Kevrenn Rostrenenn e 1948. Kengrouer Kelc'h Keltiek Abati Langoned (Korollerien an Ele) eo gant Sam Le Poupon ha Fanch Auffret e 1952. Adalek 1953, ez a da soner e Kelc'h Keltiek Roazhon hag e Kevrenn Roazhon. Gant Jean-Yves Roche e krou ar bagad evit ar vugale Yaouankiz Breizh a zeuio da vezañ Bagad Kadoudal. Mont a ra tre e bodad renerezh Bodadeg Ar Sonerien e 1962. Titl gwellañ soner e koubl e Breizh e 1963 a dap gant e mignon Sam Le Poupon ha gantañ ec'h embann meur a bladenn sonerezh : Dañs Fisel, Au pays des Mille Boutons, Noce bretonne à Plouray. Distroet d'ar vro e 1967 e stal un ti-moulañ (Ti-moulañ Kreiz Breizh) e Rostrenenn. Engouestlet eo neuze e buhez sevenadurel, armerzhel ha kevredigezhel ar vro. Krouer ha kadoriad Foer-diskouez Kreiz-Kornôg Breizh eo neuze hag e ro lañs da gevredigezh kevelouriezh Rostrenenn gant Kantirk (Iwerzhon). Dilennet eo e kuzul kêr Rostrenenn ha deuet oe da vezañ bes-maer e 1983. E 1982, ez eo dilennet e plas Polig Monjarret e penn BAS. E-pad 9 bloaz e vez addilennet. Asantiñ a ra e 1986 da zerc'hel post kadoriad krezienn sevenadurel Amzer Nevez e-lec'h ma chom e-pad 13 bloaz. He c'hadoriad a enor eo hiziv. Diouzh un tu all, ezel meur a gevredigezh e chom (SUAñV, Glenmor : an distro, h. a.)

Born in 1933 in Glomel, **Martial Pézennec** listened to his father sing with the group Trouzerien when he was very young and he tried to reproduce airs played by his uncle on the accordion. He joined the Celtic Circle of Glomel in 1946 where he learned to play the biniou kozh, and then he became a piper with the Kevrenn Rostren in 1948. We was a co-founder in 1952 of the Celtic Circle of l'Abbaye de Langonnet (Korollerien an Ele) with Sam Le Poupon and Fanch Auffret. Beginning in 1953 he piped with the Celtic Circle of Rennes and the Kevrenn Roazhon, and co-founded with Jean-Yves Roche the bagad for children Yaouankiz Breizh which would become the Bagad Kadoudal. In 1962 he joined the directing committee of Bodadeg ar Sonerien. Playing in pair with Sam Le Poupon of Langonnet he won the title of champion of Brittany in 1963, and produced several records: *Dañs Fisel*, *Au pays des Mille Boutons*, *Noce bretonne à Plouray*. Returning home in 1967 he founded the Imprimerie Centre-Bretagne (Center Brittany Printing) in Rostrenen. As a participant in the economic, social and cultural life of the area he became president and founder of the Foire exposition Centre-Ouest-Bretagne, president and the initiator of the twinning of Rostrenen with Kanturk (in Ireland), municipal Counselor for Rostrenen and then Adjunct Mayor in 1983. In 1982 he seceded Polig Monjarret as head of the Bodadeg ar Sonerien for nine years, then in 1986 accepted the post as president of the cultural center Amzer Nevez, a post he held for thirteen years. Today he is honorary president. In addition he is the member of numerous associations (The Cultural Institute of Brittany, Glenmor: an distro, etc.)

Job An Irien

Ganet eo bet Job an Irien e Bodilis en un endro brezhoneger. Darempredet en deus skouted Bleimor en e yaouankiz. Eus 1962 betek 1982 e kemer perzh a dost e buhez ar Bleun-Brug oc'h embann ingal e kaieroù ar Bleun Brug, kanaouennoù (dastumad eun deiz gant Michel Scouarnec ha kanaouennoù evit ar vugale Deus ganin), kantikoù (kantikoù nevez e brezhoneg Hag e paro an heol gant Michel Scouarnec ha René Abjean) ha kanadegoù (Ar Marh Dall, War varh d'ar mor gant René Abjean ha lazoù-kanañ Penn ar Bed). Dre youl an Eskop Barbu e vez krouet e 1984 ar greizenn Minihi-Levenez, lec'h emgav evit ar vrezhonegerien. Job an Irien, e karg eus al lec'h-mañ, a gendalc'h da skrivañ o reiñ un ton muioc'h relijiel d'e oberenn : Kantikoù evit ar vugale, Klask a ran et Dremm an Aotrou, kanadeg Kan evid ar peoc'h ha da c'houde War heñchou ar bed gant Christian Desbordes hag adarre lazoù-kanañ Penn ar Bed. E 2000 e krou Kalon ar bed gant Christian Desbordes

ha René Abjean en iliz-veur Kemper hag e kendalc'h war un dro da skrivañ kantikoù. Diouzh un tu all, adalek 1990, e ro lañs d'un ti-embann divyezhek (nemet evit al levrioù relijiel hag a zo e brezhoneg pen-da-benn) gant kenlabour Bernard Tanguy, Yves-Pascal Castel, Fañch Morvannou, Pierre Tanguy, Jean-Pierre Boulic... Lakaat a ra ar gelaouenn Minihi-Levenez da zont er maez en un doare reoliek hag e skriv ingal er gazetenn sizhuniek Le Courrier du Léon - Le Progrès de Cornouaille ha nevesoc'h er gazetenn Ya. Kement-se hep derc'hel kont eus an aozañ pic'hirinaoù er broioù kelt hag aluzoneri skolañoù ha lise Diwan e Penn-ar-Bed.

Born in Bodilis in a Breton-speaking milieu, young **Job an Irien** was a Bleimor scout. From 1968 to 1982 he participated closely in the life of Bleun Brug and in the publication of Bleun Brug booklets. He wrote songs (the collection *Eun Deiz* with Michel Scouarnec and songs for children *Deus ganin*), cantiques (new Breton hymns *Hag e paro an heol* with Michel Scouarnec and René Abjean) and cantatas (*Ar Marh Dall*, *War varh d'ar mor*, with René Abjean and the choral group Du Bout du Monde). From 1984 on, with the creation of the Breton language center Minihi-Levenez by Mgr. Barbu, the bishop of Quimper and Léon, the orientation became more specifically spiritual. He wrote cantiques for children, *Klask a ran* and *Dremm an Aotrou*, the cantata *Kan evid ar peoc'h* and then *War heñchou ar bed* with Christian Desbordes and the choral group du Bout du Monde. Then in 2000 he created *Kalon ar bed* with Christian Desbordes and René Abjean at the Quimper cathedral, while still writing texts for cantiques. Between all this, especially since 1990, he created a publishing house which is mostly bilingual (except for liturgical work entirely in Breton) in collaboration with Bernard Tanguy, Yves-Pascal Castel, Fañch Morvannou, Pierre Tanguy, Jean-Pierre Boulic ... He edits the review *Minihi-Levenez* and since 1993 has regularly written for the weekly *Le Courrier du Léon - Le Progrès de Cornouaille* and more recently for *Ya* ... All of this without considering his organization of pilgrimages to the Celtic countries, and service as a chaplain for the Diwan middle and high school in Finistère.

Francois Le Quémener

Bet ganet eo d'ar 15 a viz here 1924 en un endro brezhoneger war ar maez. Gourdrour a ra oadourien evit o emzalc'h digristen kerkent hag an oad a 8 bloaz. Da 11 bloaz ez a tre e kloerdi bihan Santez-Anna-Gwened hag er c'hloerdi bras e 1941. Beleget eo e 1947. E bost kentañ a laka anezhañ da zaremprediñ metoù an hent-houarn e parrez Charlez

Bleiz, parrez ti-gar an Alre. Da c'houde e ra war dro ur parrez darempredet gant pesketourien en Oriant, parrez Santez-Anna an Arvor, eus 1957 betek 1966. Ar c'hoant gantañ a viskoazh da vont da veajiñ, evel e vreur henañ hag a zo beleg ivez, e c'houlenn da vont da Amerika ar Su. E Paris eo e vez kaset a-benn ar fin e 1966 e Ti ar Vretoned. Ti ar Vretoned a zo bet krouet e 1947 gant an tad Elie Gautier. Anvet eo da rener e 1970. E Ti ar Vretoned e ra war dro degemer ar Vretoned yaouank, paotred koulz ha merc'hed hag a erru e Pariz. Harpañ a ra d'ober o hent er bed nevez-se ha da vont hebiou da skoilhañ ar boeson, ar gistiarezhañ hag an dilabour. Strivañ a ra da gentañ-tout da zerc'hel an dud yaouank-se er feizh o en em harpañ war an ezhomm da virout o gwiziennoù. E Pariz eo e gwirionez e teu da vezañ splann dezhañ talvoudegezh an hevelebiezh ha pa vefe hini Breizh pe n'eus forzh pe hini. Lakaat a ra da bal kentañ derc'hel pinvidigezh sevenadur Breizh e-touesk kumuniezh ar Vretoned divroet da Bariz, kefridi bet kaset da benn gantañ betek 2003. Daoust d'e zistro d'an Henbont e kendalc'h da vezañ oberiant e framm Strollad Buhezekaad ar Parrez.

Born on October 15, 1924, in a rural and Breton-speaking community, the route for **Francois le Quémener** has been traced out. At the age of 8 he was giving sermons on the bad behavior of adults. He entered the Seminary of Sainte-Anne d'Auray at the age of 11 in 1935 and then the big seminary school in 1941. His first post at Charles de Blois, the parish of the railroad station in Auray, put him into contact with the world of railroad workers, and then he encountered the world of fishermen in Lorient in the parish of Sainte-Anne d'Arvor from 1957 to 1966. Desiring to travel abroad for a long time, like his older brother who was also a priest, he asked to go to South America, but it was ultimately to Paris he was sent in 1966 for the Mission bretonne (Ti are Vretoned). The Mission, of which he became the director in 1970, was created in 1947 by the Abbot Elie Gautier. In working with the Mission he welcomed young Breton men and women arriving in Paris, helping them to integrate into a new world, and he worked to combat alcoholism, prostitution and unemployment. He was engaged especially in helping young people keep their faith and their roots. It was in fact in Paris that he became conscious of an identity – Breton or otherwise – and gave himself the mission of protecting the richness of Breton culture in the Breton community of the capital city, a mission he assured until 2003. Retuning to Hennebont, he is no less active now with the Groupe d'Animation Paroissial.

What Future for Brittany and the Breton Language?

An Interview with Patrick Malrieu,
President of the Kuzul Sevenadurel
Breizh / Cultural Council of Brittany,

September 25, 2007

Lois Kuter

Note: I first met Patrick Malrieu during the summer of 1975 when I was in Brittany to look into the feasibility of doing university research on the topic of Breton identity and its expression in language and music. At that time Patrick was active as one of the co-founders of Dastum, an organization to collect and promote traditional styles of Breton music. He did his best to introduce me to the basics of Breton music and its diversity, and I spent some very interesting and enjoyable hours exploring the Dastum archives of music which was located at that time in his living room. I continued to explore the growing resources of the Dastum archives during research in Brittany in 1978-79, and by then it had largely outgrown the Malrieu living room. Today, Dastum has a number of very active branch locations throughout Brittany (see www.dastum.net). Most of my contact during the past 30 years with Patrick Malrieu has been by means of an on-going correspondence, so it was indeed a pleasure to meet once again. Although no longer heading up Dastum, Patrick Malrieu continues to be passionately interested in Breton music (and in many other music traditions of the world) and is actively researching the song tradition of Brittany. Since 2003 he has served as President of the Cultural Council of Brittany, and it is in this role that I interviewed him for Bro Nevez.

Lois – You are the President of the Cultural Council of Brittany. Can you explain what this organization is and what it does?

Patrick – The Cultural Council of Brittany is an association that was created in 1978 by the State and the Region of Brittany as part of the Cultural Charter of Brittany which was signed during that time by Giscard d'Estaing. The goal was and still is to regroup the

different cultural associations of Brittany to provide a meeting place for them to express their needs, propose projects, agree upon what needs to get done in Brittany, and what policies need to be put into place to support Breton culture. And it serves as a site where people convene to communicate with each other. There are about 55 federations and associations that make up the Cultural Council of Brittany. But some, like the federation Kendalc'h, are themselves made up of a hundred groups. The

Cultural Council serves as a conductor to enable communication between major Breton cultural organizations and public decision makers, especially on the regional level. That was the aim from the start and remains the mission today.

The Cultural Council is financed 100% by the Region of Brittany. The State was engaged financially when the Cultural Charter of Brittany was enacted but this has dropped away over time. The Region continues to give financial support. While the Cultural Council is funded 100% by the Region of Brittany it retains its freedom to express its own views. The Cultural Council can certainly critique the Region and say it is not in favor of what it does. And it can propose other actions.

Lois – By Region of Brittany, does that mean the four departments of Brittany?

Patrick – Five. The Cultural Charter addressed the integration of all five departments of Brittany. The Department of Loire-Atlantique was a signer of the Cultural Charter.

Lois – What are some particular goals and projects that the Cultural Council hopes to achieve?

Patrick – There are some ongoing permanent actions for the Cultural Council – Action for the language and for the administrative

reunification of the five departments. Those are ongoing. Also, action for regional media – Breton or bilingual radio and television – for the five departments of Brittany.

Besides that, there are more timely actions taken when events occur in the cultural life of Brittany. There are actions such as a campaign for the promotion of the Breton language that would be conducted through the Cultural Council. We might serve as an intermediary for the Region in organizing things. For example, in 2004, the Region voted for a linguistic plan, and when it did this it asked the Cultural Council to serve on a committee with Region members to evaluate the implementation of cultural policies of the plan, to see what gets accomplished, to see if it works well or not, and to see what else needs to get done. Those are ongoing functions of the Cultural Council.

Likewise there is the ongoing function of assisting associations. The Cultural Council keeps on top of meetings of the Region or other organizations – for example on topics like social assistance, hiring practices, guidelines for grants, etc. Then we can get back to our member associations to give them information and let them know about new laws or funding opportunities they might need to know or pursue. It's part of the work of the Cultural Council to help the associations when they need it and when opportunities come up.

The Council can also take on very specific projects. For example it helped to organize a big street demonstration when the State refused to integrate Diwan schools into the public education system. That was a response to a specific event in time. Likewise there will be a demonstration next week in Rennes [September 29] to protest the proposed separation of Loire-Atlantique from the other four departments in the judicial system.

Another example concerns a new look at the Cultural Charter that was enacted 30 years ago. The Region wants to get a better idea of changing needs and the current situation in Brittany. The Cultural Council is working now on a proposal for a new Cultural Charter to take into account ongoing needs in the area of language, and other aspects of culture – literature, history, popular culture, art, cultural life in general, the life of cultural associations, and knowledge of Brittany more generally. For all of these areas, the Cultural Council will look at support needed, at the place of Breton culture in schools and outside schools, the need for media – radio and television – in all the Breton departments, policies to promote cultural activity for adults as well as children.

Lois - What do you think are the biggest challenges for the Breton language and culture?

Patrick – The biggest challenges and the most difficult ones are to transform France into a democratic country. And the problem is vast because to the degree that France proclaims itself to the world to be a country defending the rights of man, it fails to respect the rights of peoples within its own territory – especially the rights of minorities in general and minorities who are native to France.

France presents itself as a place with a unique culture and language and it would like to serve as the model for everyone else. There are many people who have been conditioned to think in that manner who cannot conceive of anything else in France but *the* French culture, *the* French language. Thus, all the demands for recognition or simply just to have a normal public existence for Breton for example (or Basque for the Basques, Catalan for the Catalans) are looked upon as foul language which puts the Republic and the future of France in danger.

It has been the case with Sarkozy, Chirac and others before them to promote the

values of cultural diversity while not allowing it in France. It's for that reason that Breton can only be taught in a limited manner and that Breton taught in an immersion system is not allowed in the public school system. The Diwan schools are forced to keep the status of private schools, while they operate as public schools. And it's for this reason also that there is no radio or television on a regional level for the five Breton departments. There are local radios and television stations, and national radio and television stations, but regional stations do not exist in France.

In France you have the individual person and then the State. And in the French logic there is a relation directly from the individual to the State. Collective rights do not exist. France refuses to sign international conventions on minorities. There are no minorities. This was the case on conventions for the rights of children since this concerns a collectivity. France systematically refuses to sign any international convention recognizing collective rights for a group of people. Consequently, a "Breton" radio would be considered as a collective right accorded to a group of people. Thus it is anti-constitutional, anti-Republican, and thus it can't be French.

Lois – Are there things that give you hope?

Patrick – Right now, not much. With the government we have, one can't have much hope. But, there is hope that the teaching of Breton will continue to expand – even in the difficult situation in which it is placed. Diwan is stuck in a private school status where during the first five years the school itself must pay for all of the teachers' salaries. That limits Diwan's ability to meet demands for new schools. At the same time, in the public school bilingual programs where Breton is taught 50% of the time and French the other 50% (which is insufficient to truly learn the language) it is the Rectorat that refuses to open new classes. Despite this, the numbers continue to climb and one can

hope that once a significant level is reached it will be difficult to reverse the progress.

It is also important to note that all the European and international legislation for languages support the wishes of the Breton people and not the French State. France's actions are not at all in line with the international community's expectations.

It needs to be stated that when it comes to the Breton language we are in a critical situation. Of the 260,000 people who speak Breton there is a loss of 10,000 Breton speakers each year due to a gap between those native speakers who die and those who arrive as new Breton speakers. If action is not taken very rapidly we will lose a language and consequently a culture.

At UNESCO the international community asks itself about the duty to intercede when states practice genocide – for example, the case of Kosovo. Along the same line, I think the international community should intercede also when countries practice ethnocide – that is, the eradication of a culture, as is the case right now in France for regional cultures.

Lois – Are there things that the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL can do for the Breton language, or things that those outside of Brittany can do?

Patrick – Yes, of course. There are actions of good will one can do that cost nothing such as writing letters systematically. Even if the letters go into the trash can, it's necessary to point out to France that one knows that it does not respect the rights of regional minorities. And it's necessary to ask France to put into place - in France - the actions concerning human rights that it asks of the rest of the world. It's simple, but an important start. Denouncing France in a European and international context is important in creating an international consciousness. It's all well and good to say to the world – as Chirac did – that there are

cultures which are disappearing and we are turning our backs on them, but, yes he is the first to do it. It is necessary to make him face up to this, and look at the problems he is causing in his own country.

Otherwise, people can take individual action. Those who truly want to help – financially for example – can help Diwan to open new schools. These can be small grains that can add to a big pile of sand for the future.

I believe in the impact that international reactions can have. France does not like it when it is shown to be in the wrong - France, which claims to be the world champion of democracy and defender of human rights. When one shows France that she does not respect the rights of her own minorities, it can be in speaking of Brittany, but also of others such as the Romany people (Gypsies) who receive incredibly bad treatment. For example, in order to get registered to vote one is required to live in a community for six months. Gypsies must live in the same community for three years before they can register to vote. These are people with French identity cards. For anyone else who changes residence, they can vote after six months, but it is three years for Gypsies. Because they move about they never have the chance to vote. That's democracy! – just an example of the spirit of things.

Thus, France does not like to be shown in a bad light like that. I think there are appeals that can be made to the international community – UN, UNESCO, European Union, etc. That's important. That consciousness is important.

In the area of ecology, for example, there is a common consciousness of the need to respect ecological needs. In the same way, there must be a common front on the need for human respect, a type of ecology of human relations. There's a system of human relations that is comparable to ecological systems. Each time one damages an element of the ecological system, even the smallest,

one damages the whole. One introduces a disequilibrium into the whole system. As in the case of biodiversity, one has need for all forms of diversity to guarantee a strong balance for the whole system.

People have the idea that the loss of a language here or there is not serious. It may not be the end of the world, but it does provoke psychological and social damages in the population involved. Today there is much talk about the importance of language in linking generations of people. Language is the key tool in maintaining human relations. It creates an atmosphere of sharing and commonality among people in the same community which nothing can replace.

There are studies that show that in places where you find the strongest sense of identity, there is the least criminality because the sense of belonging to a group creates a sense of regulation. When people are uprooted they lose their bearings and respect for rules, and thus they do whatever. Psychologically they are upset and do not have a reference point in a coherent community.

There is an ecology of people just as there is an ecology in the natural world. We are in a system and we, and everyone on the planet, need to respect that system.

Tomorrow, if just one sole language remains – English, for example - there would be one single way of thinking and that would be a horror. It would be Hell.



A New School Year for the Breton Language

Lois Kuter

The following numbers are from the Dihun Breizh website (www.dihun.com/rentrees/rentree07.htm), although statistics for the public schools posted on the Div Yezh website (www.div-yezh.org) are slightly higher – with 6 additional students counted. Numbers always shift a bit after the actual start of school so you may see yet other numbers depending on the date and source. – Lois Kuter

A total of 11,750 students started school this fall in the three school systems where Breton is offered by immersion (Diwan) or bilingually (public/Div Yezh and Catholic/Dihun). This is up from 11,090 at the start of the 2006 school year – an increase of 660 students and a 5.95% growth.

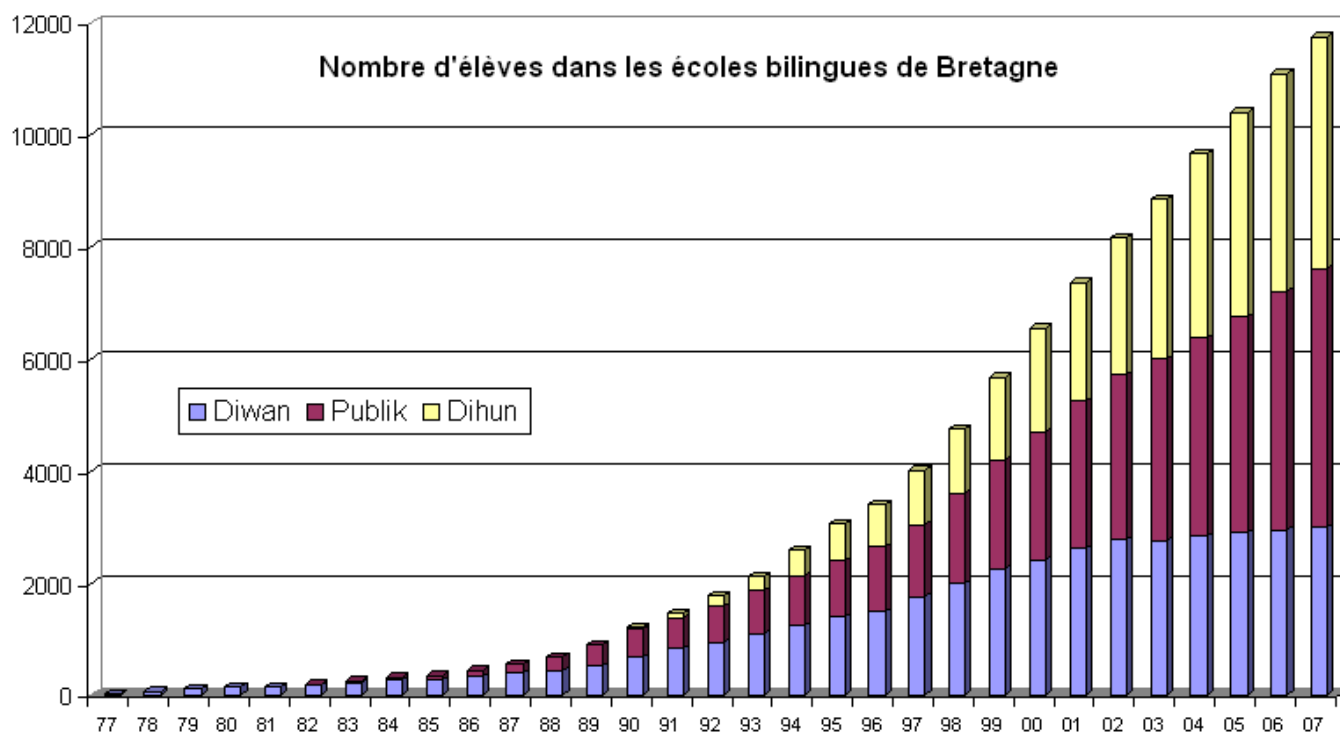
Diwan students total 2,991, up 1.63% from last year with an addition of 48 students.

Public bilingual classes total 4,623 - an increase of 8.42% with 359 additional students.

Catholic bilingual classes total 4,136 – an increase of 6.52% with an addition of 253 students.

The following chart shows the progression of the three different school systems since 1977 when the Diwan immersion Breton language schools were the sole schools offering Breton language. As is clear visually from this chart the number of students continues to increase in all three systems.

Evolution of students in the three Breton language school systems : Diwan, public (Div Yezh) and Catholic (Dihun)



Broken down by the five departments of Brittany (and Paris) one can see that in western Brittany where Breton is most widely spoken, schools also flourish, although eastern Brittany is by no means lacking in opportunities for children to learn Breton.

	Total	% of students	Diwan	Public	Catholic
Finistère	5,022	42.74%	1,708	1,898	1,416
Morbihan	3,587	30.53%	456	1,056	2,075
Côtes d'Armor	1,922	16.36%	496	1,024	402
Ille et Vilaine	815	6.94%	110	497	298
Loire-Atlantique	380	3.23%	197	148	35
Paris	24	.20%	24		
	<hr/>		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	11,750		2,991	4,623	4,136
% of students			25.46%	39.34%	35.20%

The following chart breaks down students by age groups

	Total	% of students	Diwan	Public	Catholic
Pre-school	4,972	42.31%	979	2,215	1,778
Primary School	5,053	43.00%	1,153	1,955	1,945
Middle School	1,402	11.93%	658	350	394
High School	323	2.75%	201	103	19

Note: The number of students in the Diwan high school grew from 157 last year to 201 this year, while numbers fell in the public and Catholic schools where policies to regroup students in fewer schools and the lack of Catholic high schools offering Breton have discouraged growth. Moving from middle school to the much more limited opportunities in high schools put a brake on learning at this level.

Yes, Breton language schooling continues to grow ... but not fast enough. Diwan and bilingual public and Catholic school students represent only 1% of the school population in Brittany. And the opening of new schools and classes does not meet the demand of parents. When Diwan opens a new school it must fund it entirely for the first five years of that school's life. Finding appropriate buildings for new schools is a challenge for all of the three systems and the national school system of France is reluctant to allow new classes to open and does a poor job in training and allocating teachers to meet growing demands on the part of parents. The challenges are many and parents are required to be aggressive in insuring that schools are available and development continues at the middle school and high school level so that children can continue throughout their education to master Breton.

Diwan celebrates 30 Years and needs financial support

Diwan is celebrating its 30th anniversary with a number of events culminating with a big festival on May 2, 3 & 4, 2008. An thirty different events will be incorporated into the celebration – some of them annual events where Diwan is already present like the Taol Kurun festival in Quimperlé or the fair for biologically healthy products in Landerneau. There are quite a few sportive events like a sail boat race where children parents and a Breton speaking skipper compete in various categories, a championship for “boules” and demonstration of Gaelic football, and numerous hikes of different lengths through the countryside. Diwan is borrowing the idea of the “Korrika” from the Basque country where a relay race will take runners over 500 kilometers from one Diwan school to another. There will also be art and photography exhibits, Diwan middle and high school students will be producing films, and thirty writers will be invited to write thirty lines each about Diwan. Diwan children will be writing mystery novels and rhymes, and participating in a scrabble tournament in Breton. Also part of the events is a colloquium on immersion language teaching, a Breton language book exhibition, an a number of festoù-noz. All of these events will offer new opportunities for creativity in the Breton language.

While Diwan has a lot to celebrate in 30 years of providing a high quality of education to children who master the Breton language (as well as French), there is a deep concern this fall with the financial situation and Diwan is facing a debt of some 87,000 euros. At its General Assembly this November Diwan delegates put the need to raise more funds at the center of work to be done. There is no question that the school would remain tuition-free so that anyone could enroll their children, but parents are definitely encouraged to contribute financial support and assist in finding donors.

With 2,991 children and teens in 36 pre and primary schools, 5 middle schools and 1 high school, Diwan employs 320 people as teachers, administrators, counselors, workshop leaders, and an additional 130 people are employed as non-teaching staff. So there is a big budget which is only partially funded through a contract with the National Education system. Support from the Regional Council of Brittany is strong, but there is a lot of money to be found – especially for newer schools where the National Education system funds nothing for the first five years of their life. Meeting budgets to hire teaching and non-

teaching staff and maintain buildings is always a challenge.

The U.S. ICDBL can help!! Many members already make a contribution to Diwan when they renew dues, but our monetary contribution to Diwan is just a small drop in a very large bucket. And our dollars do not go nearly as far as they used to. Please consider making a bigger contribution to Diwan (and if you haven't contributed before now is a good time to start). A special fund is set aside in the U.S. ICDBL bank account for Diwan contributions, and every dollar you contribute is sent to Diwan.

An Interview with Diwan Kemper parents: Pierre Mens-Pégail and Florence Magnanon, September 24, 2007

Note: I first met Pierre in the mid-1990s when he was living in the Philadelphia area for a few years working for a pharmaceutical company. He listened to a monthly radio program featuring Breton music that I was doing at the time for the public radio station WXPB. He called the station which put him in contact with me and the rest is history. He subscribed to *Bro Nevez* and we remained in contact after he returned to work in the Paris region and then to live on the island of Sao Tomé off the western coast of Africa. I was delighted to be able to spend two days in Quimper with him and his wife Florence and son Tristan during my trip to Brittany. Pierre arranged for a visit to one of two Diwan schools in Quimper where Tristan is enrolled, so I had the opportunity to see Breton immersion learning in action. And this served as an opportunity also to do an interview with newspaper reporters and a journalist with Radio Kerne where Pierre served to translate my English into Breton for this all-Breton radio station.

The following interview was conducted in English. I have condensed it only slightly below for the pages of *Bro Nevez*.

Lois - You are parents of a child who goes to a Diwan Breton language school so I want to ask you some questions about that as well as questions more generally about your views of the Breton language and what is happening in Brittany. First of all, why did you choose to put your son, Tristan, in the Diwan school in Quimper?

Pierre - The motivations are different for each of us. As for me, I would say that the Breton language is part of my family history, since I was exposed to Breton as a young child when I was with my grandparents in the Cap Sizun region. So I've always been exposed to the Breton language and otherwise I've always been interested in languages of all kinds.

So that's why it seemed quite natural for me to put Tristan in a Breton school when we returned to Brittany.

Florence – For me it was a little bit different. My family is from the southwest of France, although I have lived in Brittany for a long time – since being a very small child – in the Morbihan where I grew up. We settled in Quimper in 2002 and it has been Pierre who has been the driving force in putting Tristan in the Diwan school. And I have been completely in agreement because I think in this atmosphere of bilingualism Diwan brings lots of opening up in the spirit of a child.

And I think it's also because of all the faculties of development that are opened up when one learns a second language at a young age. Since we are in Brittany I think it is natural that he would learn the language here, but if we were living in another place such as Occitania then it would be the language there. Learning a language at a young age brings a love for a language but also an intellectual capacity and openness to the world.

Lois - Pierre, you speak Breton. Did you speak it growing up? Did you study it in school also?

Pierre - I was used to listening to the Breton language since I was a young child, but I hadn't been taught the language by my grandparents. So I took lessons when I was living in Paris – evening classes. Then when I moved to Brittany I had the opportunity to take a six-month training session in Breton which helped a lot.

Lois - Was there a possibility to learn Breton in school when you were a child?

Pierre - I moved to Paris with my parents when I was three or so, so I only stayed there [in Brittany] for one year of school, and at that time there were no bilingual schools at all. So even in Brittany it would not have been possible.

Florence - I was born in 1972 so maybe there would have been an opportunity for me to be in a bilingual school but my parents were not interested at all in Breton culture or the Breton language.

Lois – And it would have been rare in those days in any case. But now, are you studying Breton?

Florence – I'm not very brave. I attended a one-week course with Roudour which was very good and an interesting way of learning because it is based on an immersive method, which is the best. I tried to learn

Breton with regular night classes and I realized that for me it was very difficult to learn that way because you have just a one and one-half hour class and if you don't work at home it is useless to learn that way. But with Roudour you are exposed to a new language for one week, eight hours a day, and that's a good way. I should have continued with the next level. And with Pierre's 6-month course with Stumdi, the immersion is really good. We both learned the Portuguese language when we lived in St. Tome and we had never learned or heard it before. When you arrive in a country and you have to cope with a new language you learn it very naturally, and in a way, an immersive course would produce this kind of learning.

Lois – Back to Diwan a little bit. Have you seen changes in Diwan, and in the situation for the Breton language in the past ten years? What has changed?

Pierre – Talking about Diwan in general, if we look again at our motivations for putting Tristan in a Diwan school, what we have to say is that at first we put Tristan in a Div Yezh school (public bilingual program) because the concept of a free secular (non-religious) school mattered to us. Diwan was an organization about which we didn't know much. As is the case for many parents there were all kinds of rumors about Diwan like it is a sect or that people are a bit like hippies. In our case we changed our mind after a conference organized by Div Yezh when we asked a linguist what was the best way to learn a language and he told us that the best way was the immersive method like that of a Diwan school. And in addition, we met other parents who had already put their children in Diwan including one who teaches French in the public high school. We changed our mind about Diwan and then we figured out what it actually was.

Florence – That linguist explained that to be successful, a bilingual method must expose the children to enough of the language. There must be time to teach the language. Div Yezh is based on a bilingual system which means that half of the topics must be taught in French and the other half in Breton.

Pierre – Which is something artificial. There must be a lawyer somewhere who decided it must be half of each equally, but there is no scientific base as to why. It could be one-third or two thirds ...

Florence – And the linguist explained also that, in any case, children who live in Brittany are exposed to French all day long except at school and they spend only six or seven hours a day at school so the rest of the time with the family is in French unless they speak

Breton like Pierre does with Tristan. Most of the families speak French at home.

Pierre – So the way the children are taught in the Diwan schools is not meant to exclude French but is simply meant to find a balance between the languages, and to be more efficient in their learning of the Breton language. It's only a matter of finding a balance since outside school and even outside the classroom most children speak French, even in Diwan schools.

Lois – Tristan is almost seven so he's in the Diwan schools for his third year. Is his Breton is good? Does he enjoy speaking Breton?

Pierre – He enjoys it. But the more he goes, the more easily he can say sentences in Breton. It's coming along. I can see his level going forward. What I find great is that when we go and see old people who speak Breton to him in the Cap Sizun region he finds it natural to respond in Breton. It's great. So he's progressing. He will definitely have a good command of the language. The difference between Diwan and Div Yezh is not only that the children in Diwan have a better command – in general – of the Breton language, but it's more natural for them to speak Breton even outside their school.

Lois - What are the biggest obstacles for the future of Diwan and what gives you hope for the future of Diwan and for the Breton language in general?

Pierre – I would say that money is a problem and the lack of political will from the government, of course, and from the Bretons themselves. Something like 80% of Bretons are in favor of preserving the language, but once you said that, what else can you do? There are not enough people moving to defend the Breton language. So I would say that the Breton language has a pretty good image in Brittany now. People would rarely say they are against Breton; it's less frequent than it used to be. But, still, people don't move enough and there's the fact that the number of people who have spoken Breton since their childhood is decreasing dramatically while that of children in Diwan or bilingual schools is not increasing fast enough. Otherwise, the positive thing is that the Breton language is quite present in new technologies like the internet. Not enough in the media, but you can see that the Breton language is quite present on the internet. The image of the Breton language is a positive thing. We have to move quickly to preserve the language.

Florence – Let me add something which is along the same lines. From my point of view one of the obstacles is that apart from schools where kids can speak Breton, when they are in the street or any other place it's very difficult to speak Breton because it's not a very living language in public life. I think it's important to fight and to keep on increasing the number of kids in the schools, but it needs to be accompanied by other types of actions to really put Breton in all daily activities. There are some things which are done in Brittany like road signs and work of the Ofis ar Brezhoneg. It can be very small things. For example, if all townships translated their documents into Breton I think people would get used to being surrounded more by Breton and that would change lots of things.

Pierre – Road signs are everywhere in Brittany and Breton is pretty much accepted now. But all the rest needs much harder work, like organizing day camps for little children, opening new schools, developing radio programs in Breton. That's a lot of work, much harder work than simply putting up road signs. That's making Breton visible, but the rest is harder work, requiring a strong will.

Lois – Is it difficult to find enough qualified teachers for Breton language schools?

Pierre – So far, Diwan has always been able to find enough teachers, but it is harder to find people to help out in the schools – to take children to lunch or to nap times, for example. We lack people who have both the child care skills and ability to speak Breton. Not enough people get trained in Breton. It's coming, and more and more people are getting training, but it's not enough to meet the needs. Hopefully it will come. It's true that there are more and more positions for people who have a good command of the Breton language both to take care of children and elderly people.

Lois – Is there a role that people in the United States can play in supporting the Breton language?

Pierre - The Breton language and culture are probably less familiar to Americans than the Irish and Scottish people, so we need to maybe develop links to promote the Breton language. Maybe get people of Irish or Scottish heritage to get more involved in support of other Celtic cultures. Any support would be welcome. Publicity would help, that's for sure. Maybe if the French in general saw that there's interest in Breton culture outside France, they would see Breton culture from a different perspective.

Diwan welcomes its American godmother

The following is one of many newspaper articles in which I had the opportunity to express my positive views about Diwan and to present the work of the U.S. ICDBL

Ouest-France
29-30 septembre 2007

Diwan accueille sa marraine américaine

Lois Kuter défend la langue bretonne Outre-Atlantique. Déjà venue visiter à deux reprises Diwan Landerne qu'elle parraine depuis 1995, elle était de passage à l'école hier.

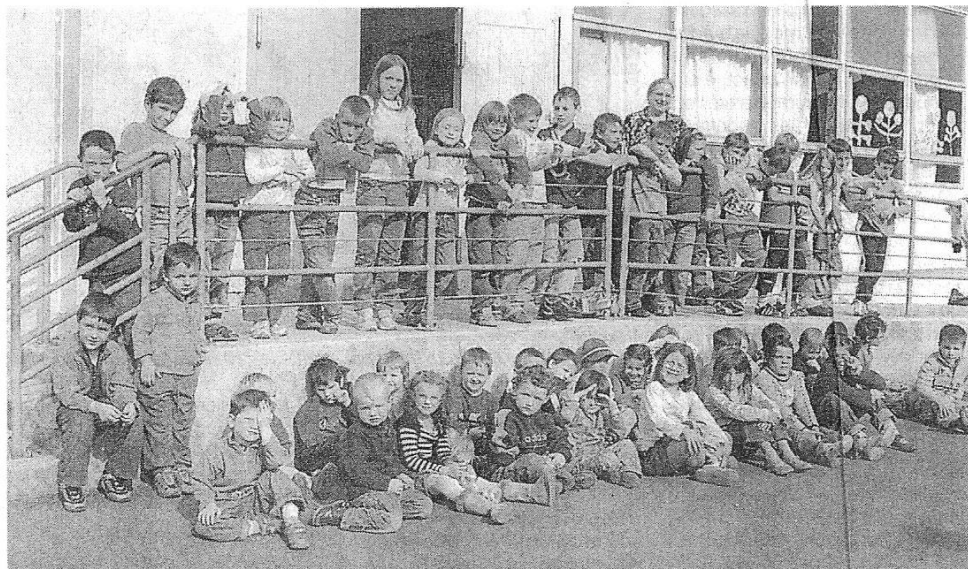
Elle s'en excuse devant les élèves qui l'interpellent naturellement. « Je parle très peu breton », sourit Lois Kuter, la marraine américaine de l'école Diwan. Une marraine américaine pour une école bretonnante ? « Oui, ça peut poser question quand on voit le mal qu'on a ici à survivre », relève Anne Caër, la directrice de Diwan Landerne.

Lois Kuter passe actuellement quinze jours en Bretagne. Au programme de son étape lander néenne : rencontre avec les élèves (elle a assisté à la classe, hier matin), échanges de petits cadeaux, kig ha farz avec les parents d'élèves, etc. « Diwan donne aux enfants les moyens de parler couramment breton, comme une chose faisant partie intégrante de leur vie quotidienne, apprécie la marraine. Le bilinguisme est quelque chose de positif pour l'apprentissage des autres langues et l'ouverture au monde. Toutes les langues donnent une perspective différente. Le breton est la langue du pays ; c'est important de protéger cela parce que c'est unique ».

La marraine américaine de Diwan Landerne vit à Philadelphie. Elle travaille dans un musée. « J'ai commencé à m'intéresser à la Bretagne grâce à la musique celtique, raconte-t-elle. Un musicien m'a dit que pour jouer de la musique traditionnelle, il faut connaître la langue ; il a raison. Une gwerz, par exemple, ça raconte une histoire. Pour ma part, je joue un peu de cornemuse écossaise. Mais seulement entre amis ! »

« Des gens d'ailleurs s'intéressent aux Bretons »

La branche américaine du Comité international pour la sauvegarde de la langue bretonne, dont fait partie Lois Kuter, défend la



Lois Kuter, au milieu des enfants scolarisés à l'école Diwan.

langue bretonne Outre-Atlantique. « Nous éditons une revue trimestrielle, nous avons un site internet. C'est fait pour les Américains, qui peuvent ainsi trouver des informations au sujet de la Bretagne, de la langue. Et c'est une façon de montrer aux Bretons qu'il y a des gens d'ailleurs qui s'intéressent à eux ».

Contrairement à New-York, il n'y a pas de communauté bretonne à Philadelphie. « Mais nous avons quelques Bretons dans le comité, qui rassemble une centaine de membres depuis l'Alaska jusqu'à la Floride », précise Lois Kuter.

Comme toute marraine qui se respecte, Lois Kuter correspond régulièrement avec l'école Diwan de Landerneau. Par le biais de son comité, elle envoie aussi un peu d'argent de temps en temps « pour soutenir les projets » (*). Anne Caër ex-

plique que cette aide américaine a permis « petit à petit de changer le mobilier de l'école ».

Catherine JAUQUEN.

(*). Pour son action en faveur de la Bretagne, en 1995, Lois Kuter a été décorée du collier de l'Hermine.



Lois Kuter (à droite), en compagnie de l'équipe enseignante de l'école Diwan.

Some Short Notes

Kerlenn Sten Kidna an Alre

During my trip to Brittany this fall I had the pleasure of meeting Daniel Carriou, the President of the Kerlenn Sten Kidna. The following information is based on my conversation with him and the materials he gave me about this organization.

This non-profit organization founded in 1985 has the mission to “maintain and enrich the Breton cultural patrimony of the Auray country.” It grew out of the Cercle Culturel Alréen founded in 1970, and has continued to grow in membership and in action. The Breton language is central to its work and it has organized classes in the Auray area since 1970. This does not just mean sitting in a class in front of a teacher, but meeting and having a conversation with Breton speakers of the area, listening to Breton recordings, and doing a variety of activities in Breton (walks to local historical sites, gardening, theater, knitting ...).

Using the newest technology to record and preserve oral and visual documentation, the Sten Kidna Circle has also been very active in researching and preserving local history, music, stories, oral histories, and these are made accessible to all. The Circle also organizes events called “filajoù” which are based on traditional evening gatherings where people shared work, stories, song, drink and song. Today these are organized on different themes and gather young and old, native Breton-speakers and learners. “Kanompl asamb!” (Let sing together) is a newer annual event where people of all ages gather to sing – songs for listening or dancing and cantiques from the very rich tradition of the area. The mens’ choir Kanerion Pleuigner insures a high quality for this very popular event.

Last but not least, the Sten Kidna Circle publishes a quarterly magazine called “An Dason” (The Echo). Published since 1986 by a team of volunteers, this bilingual journal presents interviews and articles to present various aspects of the history and culture of the Auray region. The latest issue (No. 66) is devoted to the trip by the Kevrenn Alre to New York and Philadelphia in March 2007.

In recognition of its varied and creative activity for the Breton language, this organization was awarded third prize at the “Prizioù rannvroel dazont ar brezhoneg” (Prizes for the future of the Breton language) by Ofis ar Brezhoneg in 2007.

For more information:

Kerlenn Sten Kidna an Alre
6 rue Joseph Rollo
56400 Auray
Stenkidna2@wanadoo.fr
<http://membres.lycos.fr/stenkidna/>

Devezh ar brezhoneg e Bro An Alre

Day for Breton in the Auray Country

The Sten Kidna Circle teamed with the organizations Douar Alre and Ar Vammenn to put together a day (and evening) to celebrate the Breton language which was attended by some 600 people. The morning was devoted to children with participation of pre and primary school children from six Catholic bilingual schools, one public bilingual school, and the Diwan school of Auray. A walking tour in Breton to study nature and history was organized in the afternoon for some 80 teens from two Catholic and two public bilingual middle schools of the area. The evening was focused a bit more on adults with an internet television program in Breton for Webnoz. Webnoz films programs live from different places in Brittany each month and these are available over the internet (the site Breizhoweb). This emission filmed in Brec’h featured a mini-conference on local housing issues, presentations of new publications, theater sketches, and song – a varied program all in Breton.

A few Websites about the Breton Language

Kuzul ar Brezhoneg

www.brezhoneg.org

The Breton Language Council was created in 1952 to support organizations and publishers for the Breton language. Its website is in Breton, French or English and presents new publications in the Breton language and provides a link to its member organizations, including catalogs for many of the publishers.

Skol Ober

www.skolober.com

For 75 years Skol Ober has been offering Breton language by correspondence to those who want to supplement school courses or who cannot take advantage of adult classes. Students work at their own rhythm and enrollment fees are kept as low as possible. Ever improving computer technology and learning materials make it easier than ever to take advantage of a correspondence method of learning.

Divskouarn

<http://divskouarn.free.fr>

This organization was founded in 2005 to promote the learning of Breton at the earliest ages (and even before birth!). The organization helps parents locate Breton language resources, child care centers and everything related to the care of babies.

Wikipedia

<http://br.wikipedia.org>

<http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portail:Bretagne>

You can find an enormous (and growing) amount of information about Brittany on the French language and Breton language wikipedia sites. The above addresses will take you to either.

DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL

16 - CELTIC FREEDOM

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Nowadays, the powerful peoples have a high opinion of freedom. They like to be considered as the inventors of this strange idea. It just so happens that they want to teach it to the foreigners; and they implement this noble project through forced conversion, colonization or constraints of their own special design. Anyway it is through these particular constraints that they have become a powerful people.



And what about us, the Bretons? In 1789, during the French revolution, we were integrated into the “Land of freedom and human rights.” We are of course grateful to the French for this splendid gift. But if we are their pupils, how, for God’s sake, did they become teachers?

The Franks appeared in the history of Europe during the third century. They were wandering tribes near the Rhine River. One of the biggest tribes, the Salians, surrendered to the Roman armies without a fight. Because of that, they were settled inside the Roman Empire under the status

of *Laeti*. This name comes from the German *Laeten*, which means the *people let*: let them go alive. The *Laeti* were looked upon as cattle, deprived of civic rights, put at the disposal of the army.

Contrary to the Salians, the fiery Breton tribes settled in the north of Gaul had a statute of *Foederati*. The victor respected and feared them; he agreed to home rule and civic rights for them.

In the declining empire, the status of *Laeti* allowed the Franks to climb within the army hierarchy. They were not sent to faraway borders, but into strategic places, where the Romans needed faithful and devoted soldiers. They became the Roman police in Gaul during the fourth and fifth century. The boisterous Bretons, emigrants or soldiers, were held to this western peninsula where we still dwell.

The *Salic law*, *lex Salica* in Latin, is that of the Salians Franks. It is known to prescribe the rules of succession to the throne of France. But, beyond this regulation, the Salic law is first of all a military code of discipline. The exclusion of the women is integrated into a vision of strictly male administration, which controls the civil society from outside.

French feudality followed the same path and reinforced the national culture during several centuries. The civil society is managed from outside by a warlike caste. The Counts and the Dukes (*Comites* and *Duces* in the Roman army) were above all military governors who controlled a geographical space.

During the sixteenth century, Protestantism appeared in Europe, asserting for everybody a direct link with God. In France, the violence of the religious wars is not understandable if you don’t know the need, in the French collective unconscious, for the normative institution. The priest, the civil servant or the elected official is a required intermediary between any collective problem and its solution. The priests and the civil servants are cherished and hated in France more than anywhere else.

The victory of the centralists against the federalists during the French revolution, and the

Napoleonic dictatorship, revealed this permanent tendency, the fatal path.

The *laïcité*, which can be translated grosso modo by *radical secularity*, is a French speciality. It struggles against any religious influence but maintains the old normative reflexes. It is not for new liberties, but for new laws. The French anarchist inclines more easily towards nihilism than towards permissiveness. The French author Maurice Barrès expressed this paradoxical culture in one sentence: "I am an atheist, but of course I am a Catholic".

The French idea of freedom is defined, structured, legalized. This is greatly different from the Celtic idea of freedom. The Celtic insurrections reveal the astonishing link between the Celts and the social order. Very few people in the world expressed such a high opinion about order and law. Since highest antiquity, they dreamed and they wrote splendid pages on that topic.

When Celtic chieftains acted in accordance with the natural and divine laws, they brought prosperity to the people and victory to the warriors. Otherwise, the land was wasted. Defeat was unavoidable for the knights and misery was thus unavoidable for the people. King Arthur and the legendary kings of Ireland embodied social harmony.

Deep inside their skull, the Celts always dreamed of social order. But very few people in the world showed such a despairing inability to obey the law, whatever it is.

The Celts were rebels by temperament, opportunity, need, pleasure, chance, deep thoughts, no thought, sometimes by error. They invented the boycott. During centuries, they joined all the armies and deserted them with the same savage enthusiasm. They refused taxes, incurred excommunications, opposed invasions, emigrated, went underground. Throughout history they always took on the task to struggle or die for order, but it was rarely for the present one.

They were never despisers of the law, they were never idealists of disorder. Among them, only very few were conscious heretics, social enemies, or libertarian theorists. Permanent insubordination is

not an ideal for them. It is rather a mania, a familiar demon.



The libertarian theorists are French or Russian, some are American. Like Thoreau, these people have little respect for the law, but nevertheless follow it. On the contrary, the Celts have a permanent difficulty in following laws, while having a deep respect for social order. They dream of human laws which would reflect divine prescriptions. But, in the face of divine or human laws, they remain incorrigible sinners, unforeseeable delinquents. They are the dunces of the order. In the concert of the people singing the charms of harmony, they are the most fervent, but they could never follow the same rhythm as the others.

In our world of high technologies, sophisticated calculations, controlled mechanisms, Celts remain hopelessly human.

Loses in the Breton Musical Family

Noted by Lois Kuter

Kristen Nogues (1952-2007)

In July 2007 Brittany lost one of its most innovative harpists, Kristen Nogues. As a youngster she studied harp with Denise Megevand and was part of the Telenn Bleimor. She learned traditional song from Yann Poëns. But Kristen Nogues did not simply sing or play traditional airs and arrangements of Breton tunes. While very familiar with the song and instrumental traditions of Brittany she was an innovator. In the 1970s she was part of the music cooperative Nevenoe (with Gerard Delahaye, Melaine Favennec, Yvon Le Men, Patrick Ewen and Annkrist). Later she would become a composer and tour widely, at ease in the world of jazz and open to influences from all parts of the world. Kristen Nogues will certainly be missed and remembered as a musician who took the Celtic harp to new places in innovative performance and compositions.

I had the opportunity to meet Kristen Nogues just briefly during the summer of 1975 and remember vividly her joyfulness and infectious laugh. She was a generous and caring person. She cared deeply about Brittany and the Breton language, which she spoke fluently and used in everyday conversation with neighbors. And she cared about people – fellow musicians and singers, elderly neighbors, friends and family. She was a generous person sharing her time and offering hospitality to a stranger like me who learned a great deal from her in a short visit as a young student just beginning to discover Brittany and its wealth of music.

Loeiz Ropars (1921-2007)

On November 3 Brittany lost one of its key leaders in the renaissance of traditional Breton song, Loeiz Ropars. Ropars was born in 1921 in Poullaouen in central western Brittany in a rural community where Breton was still very much the everyday language of farm work and community celebrations.

Studies at the University of Rennes reinforced his appreciation for the uniqueness of the Breton language song traditions of western Brittany and

in the late 1930s Loeiz Ropars began to actively work with others to promote Breton music and dance.

Ropars was very much aware of societal changes in the 1930s and 40s which threatened the Breton language and associated song traditions. This was a period when children were going to schools where no Breton was allowed and mothers were encouraging their children to speak French in order to get ahead in the world. There was a real danger that singers would abandon the older Breton language repertoire for “modern” French popular songs and dances.

Ropars was active on a number of fronts to encourage the performance of the Breton song tradition and mastery of the language so inextricably linked to it. He moved to Quimper in 1946 where he became a high school teacher of French, Latin and Greek, but he also organized classes for Breton in middle and high schools when possible. In 1949 he worked with Jean Lédan to found the “Kevrenn Glazik” which would later become the Bagad Kemper. He was also active in the founding of the Celtic Circle of Quimper and was involved in the early years of Kendalc’h. In 1966 he founded the organization Al Leur Nevez which would organize classes and workshops for the Breton language as well as for song and dance.

An excellent singer himself, Ropars is perhaps best known for his work to encourage a renaissance of kan ha diskan singing for dances of central western Brittany. With Pierre-Marie Huiban and Roger Le Béon he would launch a contest for kan ha diskan singers in 1954, and this annual gathering would be the occasion for singers to bring out an older repertoire of this response style singing for dance as well as songs just for listening. Ropars is equally known for his work to revive the fest noz, and this went naturally in pair with the encouragement of kan ha diskan since singers had been part of the dance circle before a larger and more public style of fest noz brought the use of microphones.

With the death of Loeiz Ropars Brittany loses a great voice and a key figure in the renaissance of Breton traditional song and dance.

New Music from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

50 ans de Kan ha Diskan avec Loeiz

Ropars. Coop Breizh CD 994. 2007 : CD1 59'35 / CD2 69'96.

One of the first long play (lp) records to become part of my collection is a little 10 inch in diameter record called "Deut da zanzal – gand Kanerien Brasparz had Poullaouen" produced in 1972 by Mouëz Breiz (no. 3350). Singers are identified by first initial and last name only, but you have on this little lp two gavotte suites and airs sung by masters of the art: Loeiz Ropars, Pierre-Jean Motreff, J. Broustal and François Menez. I would later add the 1979 lp "A-bouez-penn" which featured Pierre-Jean Motreff and Loeiz Ropars. Ropars produced a number of recordings featuring song masters of central western Brittany, of which he was one. This new double CD is a remarkable collection of recordings made from 1954 to 2005.

The CDs follow a chronological order and the first 16 selections on the first CD were recorded at three "Deveziou kan ha diskant" held in 1954, 1955 and 1956. These include kan ha diskant style songs for dance and just for listening which are at a slower pace than dances, as well as some ballads sung by a soloist. Some of the songs are long and others are very short – sung specifically to recall a melody and verses of songs that had been a bit forgotten. Recorded live, one hears the feet of dancers and the enthusiastic reaction of people gathered at performances. While the sound quality is not always perfect it is remarkable for the period. Singers included in this first batch from the 1950s include the strong voice of 80+ year old Katrin Gwern, as well as Mari Vegenn, François Jaffré, Fransou-Loui Gall, Lili Gwillou, Herri Rumen, Jean-Marie Long, Lorañs Roger, Iwan Joncour, Yann Morvan and Loeiz Ropars himself.

The second half of the first CD are from various "new style" festoù noz. The recording from 1965 features singers Ivonig Lavenant and Lorañs Roger with a selection of Lavenant paired with Ropars. The 1968 recording done at Locmaria-Berrien features Ernest Hourman and Mari Nedelec. While the crowd noise is at first quite distracting in this recording, one definitely gets the sense of being at a live and lively dance.

Other recordings from the 1960s feature singers Gwillou Rivoal and Fransou Menez, Loeiz Ropars and Fransou-Loui Gall, and Ropars in pair with Humphrey Lloyd Humphreys, a Welshman who moved to Brittany in the late 1950s to quickly master the Breton language and its song tradition.

The second CD includes a mix of kan ha diskant singing for gavotte suites at various festivals and kan ha diskant gatherings in the 1970s, 1980s and 2001 to 2005. Here you have the pairing of Loeiz Ropars with Fransou Menez, Pierre-Jean Motreff, Fransou Loui Gall, Gilbert Philippe and Jean Lochou. There is also a series of ten short tunes for gavotte, bals mod-koz and bals à l'ancienne played on flute by Erwan Ropars. Loeiz Ropars forms a trio with Kristof Kergourlay and Jean Billon for sung "rhymes" and some short songs, and he pairs with Yves Guilcher for two short songs. The CD closes with Loeiz Ropars solo on a "counting song" called "Ar voualh" – a test of a singer's dexterity with words and breathing as he adds to a long string of verses. Recorded in 2005 this shows that even in his mid-80s Loeiz Ropars had a strong and melodious voice and impressive command of words.

The CD notes are bound in a hardback book jacket with some 80 pages. Most of the text is composed of the song texts – in Breton with a French translation. Not all of the song texts are included, but there is a wealth of material here for those interested. The introductory notes are bilingual and provide a bit of context to understand when and where the music was recorded and to get a glimpse in to the work of Loeiz Ropars to support the renaissance of kan ha diskant singing.

Two pages provide biographical notes for some of the singers: Fransou Menez, Katrin Gwern, Fransou Loui Gall, Ernest Hourman, Pierre-Jean Motreff and Loeiz Ropars. There is a sprinkling of photos to show some of the singers as well. I would have appreciated biographical introductions to all of the singers, and for those who might not be very familiar with the song traditions of Brittany, an explanation of just what kan ha diskant is (and is not) would be a welcome addition.

Oddly enough, there seems no mention made of the name of "the dance" whose music and footsteps one hears throughout these recordings.

The lists of selections refer to "tamm kenta," "tamm kreiz" and "trede tamm" (first part, middle part and third part) but nowhere is the "gavotte" introduced and explained. One has to search hard in the 80 pages of text to even see the word.

Given the care put into this excellent recording both in the selections of music and documentation, it is too bad that just a little more was not done so that those who are not well versed in Breton music would get some needed background information.

This double CD is without doubt a very strong tribute to the singing and the lifetime of work Loeiz Ropars devoted to promoting traditional music and dance and the Breton language. While a number of master singers are featured throughout the two CDs, the voice of Loeiz Ropars is woven throughout for our great enjoyment.

Toud'sames. *Son an Den Dilabour.*

Coop Breizh CD997. 2007 58'47.

From the very line-up of musicians who make up Toud'sames one knows that this CD will be well worth a listen. Lors Jouin is the vocalist for the eight songs on the CD. Traditionally Breton would describe his voice and style, but there are some little slides and bends in his voice that add a Middle Eastern and bluesy touch. Jean-Michel Veillon on wooden flute is the other "voice" on the CD pairing with Jouin on songs for dance or innovating on the melody of slow airs. Alain Genty brings fretless bass guitar to the mix both for rhythmic effect and melodic lines. Dom Molard and David "Hopi" Hopkins bring a wealth of percussion from around the world to very effectively support the rhythm – and often provide a very interesting counter-rhythm. The presence of these instruments and guitar can be very subtle, but always effective in creating moods to support the song texts.

All five of these musicians are at the top of their game and there is no weak link in this collaboration of some of Brittany's best.

The eight songs on the CD – newly composed or part of the Breton song tradition – are all dramatic in theme and performance.

The CD opens with a very funky counter-rhythm to the slow verses of title song to the CD "Son an Den Dilabour" ("Song of the man out of work") before the music slips into a gavotte where voice and flute work in pair. Written by singer Jean-Yves Le Roux, this Breton text eloquently evokes the discouragement of the unemployed who seek but fail to find a job.

Lors Jouin is the composer for the haunting song text and melody for "Son ar mignon tremenet" ("Song for a departed friend") which reflects on the funeral of a loved friend and how one fills one's short life.

"N'eo ket en ho ti tavarnourez" ("Not in your tavern") is a traditional song that is widely known in Brittany, but this is quite an exceptional performance (11 minutes long) where Jouin and Veillon evoke the despair of a spurned lover before Alain Genty pick up the pace a bit with electric guitar as hope prevails.

Another traditional song text and melody "Gwazhañ micher 'zo war an douar" ("The worst job on earth") describes why being a fisherman at sea in the dead of winter can be considered the worst job on earth.

"Na deus e koste Treger" ("somewhere in Tregor") is of a lighter nature in text with a more energetic pace and concerns a woman's difficulty in choosing between three lovers.

"Mare dous" (Tranquil moment") with text and music composed by Lors Jouin is what it's title proposes – a song about quietly looking at the world around one.

The closing song to the CD "Roue an Eoged" ("The king of the salmon") is a text by Mr. Lukas of Châteauneuf-du-Faou which speaks of the threat of man to fish and to the health of rivers in Brittany (and in this song the king of the salmon speaks).

There are also two instrumental pieces on the CD. "Ridéés/dernière les fagots" is a suite for the dance ridée from the Redon area of Brittany, including two tunes composed by Jean-Michel Veillon whose brilliant flute-playing is featured. In the second selection "Ar we'enn avaloù" ("The apple tree") flute leads on this traditional song about a fallen apple tree. The tragedy of no more

apples for cider is fittingly evoked in a very plaintive arrangement of this well known song.

Notes to the CD include the Breton language texts to the eight songs with French translations for three of them. Good summaries of the theme of each song and the two instrumental selections are provided in both French and English. My thanks to the jacket notes designer(s) for providing an attractive booklet with highly readable black ink on a white background for texts. This is a pleasant break from the CD notes which may be highly artistic but unreadable with a small pale typeface on a grey or light-colored background.

This is a highly crafted recording where the contribution of each performer has a powerful impact on the whole. It is dramatic in the themes it presents and in the innovative and complex combination of voice and instruments.

HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD

The following short notes are based on reviews and short notes found in the following sources: *Ar Men* 160 (Sept-Oct. 2007) / *Armor* 452 (Sept. 2007) & 453 (Oct. 2007) / *Musique Bretonne* 203 (July-Aug. 2007)

Armens. Live 2.0. Aztec Musique / Coop Breizh / Avel Ouest.

This high energy rock group with a Celtic sound celebrates its 10th anniversary with 15 selections – some not previously recorded.

Bodadeg ar Sonerion. 58e Championnat national des bagadoù. BAS VOC 594.

A double CD and DVD capture the performances of bagadoù of Brittany competing at the first of two contests for 2007. The February contest at the Quartz Center in Brest focuses on the music of a particular region of Brittany. For the 2007 contest, the song and dance traditions of the “mountains” of central western Brittany were selected.

Le Chasse Marée. Tant que le vent soufflera.

Chasse-Marée. Solidor, Pathé PAT 01. CD & DVD This production combines a 124 minute DVD with a CD of 11 selections of maritime song. The DVD is documentary in style and includes interviews but also concert performances. Combining traditional styles with newer compositions this

offers a good cross section of performers of maritime music.

Dastum. Mil micher, mil kanaouenn / Mille métiers, mille chansons. Société et tradition orale en Bretagne No. 1. Dastum DAS 151. 2CDs & 164 page booklet.

While rhythmic work songs are easily found in Brittany’s maritime tradition, they are not commonly documented in other areas of work. But in the past Bretons definitely used music to give rhythm to work and to simply pass time more pleasantly on tedious jobs. This CD includes songs that have accompanied work such as milking, harvesting, cutting timber, and a number of other solitary and group tasks. The CD also contains songs about work or particular occupations – millers, tailors, lawyers, sabot-makers, etc. 70 songs in Breton and French (with a touch of Gallo) are included, performed by masters of the Breton song tradition. As is always the case for Dastum productions, this one includes excellent notes and song texts (www.dastum.net).

Frères de Sac. Tout n’a qu’un temps.

Musiques Traditionnelles de Demain MTD 733. Jean-Loup and Christophe Sacchetini perform on button accordion, flutes and bagpipes with a repertoire of melodies and dances from Brittany, Auvergne and Sweden.

Hervé Grall. À l’Ouest de Brest. Self-produced.

This is the second CD by Hervé Grall, composer and performer of the song texts and music. Songs are about world issues, the fragility of love, and the poetry of life.

Manu Kerjean – Chanteur du Centre-Bretagne. Dastum. Grands Interprètes de Bretagne, Vol. 2. Dastum 2007.

Due out in October, this 72 minute CD has been produced by Dastum for the tenth anniversary of the death of Manu Kerjean, a master of traditional song of the pays fisel of central western Brittany. Recordings include Kerjean in pair with Lomig Donniou with whom he paired during the 1950s through the 1970s when kan ha diskant and the fest noz were undergoing a renaissance. Not only a fine singer, Kerjean was also a generous teacher who had a strong influence on many younger singers who would become masters of traditional song in following generations (for example, Erik Marchand, Yann-Fañch Kemener, and Annie Ebrel who can be

heard in pair with him on the CD). The recording includes songs for the dance *fisel*, but also a suite for *plinn* and *gavottte pourlet*, as well as slower melodies. 92 pages of CD notes include biographical information, reflections by some of his students, song texts and their translation in French, as well as photographs. Another great production by Dastum for those who love traditional song of Brittany.

Bernard Lasbleiz. *Ma 'm bige bet kreion: Chroniques musicologiques du Tregor et autres pays de Bretagne*. Coop Breizh. CD & 208 page book.

This book collects some 40 articles written by Bernard Lasbleiz, an accordion player and teacher, and scholar of traditions of the Tregor region of Brittany. Many of these are drawn from twenty years of writing for the magazine *Musique Bretonne* produced by Dastum. They examine dance and song and musical instruments and their players (accordion, fiddle, *vielle à roué*, and clarinet). A CD accompanies the book including songs and melodies collected by and performed by Lasbleiz.

Pat O'May. *Pat O'May*. CD Milan. Distribution Universel 32990 399146-2(5)UN873. Longtime resident in Brittany this master of acoustic and electric guitar pulls from various sources in this CD. A blues-rock style dominates, but there are influences from Chinese and North African music as well as Celtic sources. O'May is joined by the Bagad Brest Sant Mark.

Phare Ouest & Musiques de Gens de Mer. *Chants de Marins Bretons – de Cancale à Paimpol*. Phare Ouest & Musiques de Gens de Mer PO-12 3505.

This CD includes 24 selections by musicians and singers with maritime songs spanning over a century. Performers include Michel Collet, Pierrick Lemou, Arnaud Maisonneuve, Erik Marchand, Etienne Miossec, Charles Quimbert, Gaël Rolland, Bernard Subert, Vincent Morel as well as groups Cabestan, Fortunes de Mer, Kanerien Pempouill, Les Lif Fredaines and Les Pirates. The CD is accompanied by a richly documented booklet.

Plantec. *A-raok*. Aztec Musique CM 2185 This is a group with a high tech edge arranging Breton song and dance with a rock and rap beat. Musicians include Yannick Plantec (guitar), Odran Plantec (bombarde), Christophe Hellec (bass),

Nicolas Le Millier (biniou), M-Kanik ("machines"), Maël Lhopiteau (song and Celtic harp).

Rio Cinéma Orchestra. *Shawnee Guitars*. Rumbanova Ghosts RCO-01.

A CD of compositions that evoke movie music of different moods and themes. Musicians include Gil Riot (guitar), David Euverte (keyboard), Jac Intartaglia (bass), Tonio Marinescu (percussion), and Philippe Tessier (saxophones).

37e Festival Interceltique. Keltia Musique KMCD 189. CD & DVD The 2007 Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient featured Scotland and this CD and DVD includes performances by the Red Hot Chilli Pipers and Karen Matheson. From Ireland you hear Sinead O'Connor and The Dubliners. Truly inter-Celtic, the festival also included performers from Galicia and Asturias (Spain), Wales and Brittany: Fia na Roca, DRD, Flint Male Voice Choir, Dan ar Braz, Didier Squiban, Marie-Laine Lagadic and Klervi Rivière, among hundreds of other performers.

Enzo Vacca. *Evoa*. Zedde editore R-G 20006. Association Piemont-Breizh. Enzo Vacca is a harp player from the transalpine region of Italy who is joined here by the Breton string ensemble Arz Nevez, Celtic harp player Dominig Bouchaud, Françoise La Viage and Yves Ribis. This CD includes innovative arrangements and combinations of instruments to present a taste of several European music traditions.

COMING SOON

The first CD from bombarde master Georges Bothua

Bombarde player Georges Bothua has been the champion of Brittany fourteen times at the Gourin annual contest in pair with Philippe Quillay on biniou kozh and with Pascal Guingo on biniou braz. In 2007 both of these pairs were once again the champions – no small thing when you consider the number of great competitors for this prestigious title. Bothua will pair with these two piping masters as well as with organist Pascal Marsault for melodies, marches and dances as well as the beautiful cantiques (hymns) from the Vannetais region of Brittany.

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