

BRO NEVEZ

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE
NEWSLETTER OF THE U.S. BRANCH



Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh
Skol-Uhel ar Vro
Bodadeg Ar Sonerien
Breizh Unvan
Kendalc'h
War 'l Leur
Gouelioù Breizh
Divek, Div Yezh, Dibun
an Englevioù bro

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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

Breizh + (Brittany Plus)

A call to demonstrate and celebrate

On the occasions of its 30th anniversary and that of the creation of the Cultural Charter for Brittany the Cultural Council of Brittany (Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh) has called for a massive demonstration on September 20th in Nantes. But this is not just a protest march in the streets; this is also a celebration of the vitality of Breton culture. The demonstration/festival will include information stands by a number of Breton organizations, food and drink (necessary for any festival), and

concerts and a strong presence of the Breton bagadoù (uniquely Breton bagpipe bands).

What better way to make the point that Loire-Atlantique must be reunited with Brittany than to hold this festival in Nantes where Breton culture is alive and well and people consider themselves true Bretons. Other issues to be addressed are the "devolution" of power to Brittany so that it can take better care of its languages (Breton and Gallo) and culture, and the need for France to live up to European standards for human and cultural rights, and the protection of Breton cultural expression in all its diversity (which is under attack with proposed new laws – as you will read in this newsletter).

The French Constitution and Regional Languages – Part 2

Lois Kuter

The May issue of Bro Nevez outlined discussion during the month of May in France's National Assembly and Senate concerning the inclusion of a mention of "regional languages" in the French Constitution. When we last left off with this story, the addition of wording to Article 2 of the Constitution: "French is the language of the Republic" to acknowledge that regional languages were also part of France's patrimony had been defeated. But a new amendment – this time to Article 1 – had been passed by the National Assembly on May 22. This Article would read:

France shall be an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It shall respect all beliefs. It shall be organized on a decentralized basis. The regional languages belong to its patrimony.

On June 16th, by a vote of 216 to 103 the Senators voted against this inclusion in the first amendment. Those voting against the added wording had the blessing of the Académie française, first established in 1635 by Cardinal Richelieu, the chief Minister to King Louis XII. This 40-member body of scholars acts as the official authority on the French language – an advisory group to rule on proper French use - and now it seems a group with a political lobbying role as well. In a declaration voted unanimously by the French Academy on June 12, they scolded the National Assembly Deputies for voting on the addition of regional languages to Article 1, stating that this was an attack on French national identity. The Academy stated flatly that a mention of regional languages does not belong in the French Constitution anywhere.

This statement by the French Academy and the debate in the Senate demonstrated continuing intolerance of anything but French for France as well as incomprehension of the value of linguistic diversity on the part of people presumed to be scholars and political leaders. The fear that recognition of regional languages in the Constitution will bring an end to the unity of France - indeed, to France - is difficult to fathom.

Efforts to get recognition of regional languages in the French Constitution, nevertheless continued.

The Cultural Council of Brittany addresses the Senators

The following letter was written by Patrick Malrieu, President of the Cultural Council of Brittany, to 331 Senators of the French Senate. It summarizes well the odd disconnect between French leaders and the French population and world opinion when it comes to linguistic diversity.

Medames et Messieurs les Sénateurs,

One hundred and three Senators, in the first round, voted for the amendment to integrate regional languages into the Constitution. We very sincerely thank you here for that.

The National Assembly has confirmed its first vote in this second round in adopting again nearly unanimously a compromise resolution that affirms "the regional languages belong to the patrimony of France."

In moving this amendment to Title 12 [of Article 75], while many would have liked to see regional languages recognized in Article 2 alongside French, the National Assembly nevertheless acknowledged the concern of Senators who did not wish to see them mentioned in the Constitution before French was even noted.

There is no doubt that the result of the first vote [by the Senate], along with the position of the French Academy have been perceived as manifestations of an archaism and conservatism from a different age by the French population itself as well as in international opinion. Supporting this is the CSA survey of June 18 and 19 for the largest French daily newspaper, Ouest-France, in which it was shown that 68% of the population – especially the younger part (81% of those 18-24 years old) - are favorable to the recognition of regional languages in the French Constitution. In addition, contrary to the way of thinking of the members of the Academy, 70% of them consider that this in no way concerns an "attack on national unity." We all know that unity rhymes

with diversity and not uniformity. For the vast majority of our fellow citizens wherever they live, this is something obvious that must be recognized and not restricted to occasional discourse.

Besides this, on the international level, the vote by the Senate provoked dismay and sometimes derision. For example, one of the most read scientific journals in the world, the English language magazine Nature, devoted an editorial in this June 26th issue to the "hypocrisy of France" and "conservatism of the Senate," especially in light of the scientifically recognized intellectual advantages of plurilingualism for which the regional languages can be a remarkable key element.

How can the French Republic, which was in the forefront for two international conventions of UNESCO which it ratified immediately (the Convention for the Safeguarding of Immaterial Cultural Patrimony in 2003 and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005) justify its refusal to recognize the principle of linguistic diversity in its fundamental text [the Constitution]?

Our languages belong in fact to the patrimony of humanity and France has responsibility for them. Our friends in Quebec at the Observatoire des langues dans le monde (Observatory of Languages of the World) at the University of Laval affirm: "the credibility of France would appear stronger, and certainly much more coherent, if the State took on a real recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity in its own territory. For the moment, on the level of linguistic protection, France appears as a 'backward country.'" They conclude: "France has an interest in engaging in institutional reforms which, rather than counter these new tendencies, would support them; if not, France risks letting itself be bypassed." ... "For the moment, this position isolates France more and more from comparable countries."

Your [Senators'] responsibility is thus great today to allow the French Republic to evolve to a true recognition of its cultural and linguistic diversity.

Like the rest of the organizations throughout all of France who have supported a constitutional recognition of the regional languages, we anticipate that you will respond to this expectation by your fellow citizens and that you will not disappoint them another time.

On July 21st the Senators of France did vote favorably to include mention of the regional languages in the Constitution. Although somewhat buried in this document, this is a step forward. But it is just a step and further action needs to be taken to truly support the regional languages and to insure that Article 2 of the Constitution – "French is the language of the Republic" – is no longer used to block advances.

The following article, reprinted with the permission of Eurolang from their website www.eurolang.net, expresses the need for France to meet European and international obligations to protect its own patrimony – now constitutionally including its regional languages.

Regional' languages recognized as 'part of France's heritage'

Brussel/Bruxelles, 22 July 2008 by Davyth Hicks

The clause that "Regional languages are part of France's heritage" will be included in Article 75 of France's Constitution following a vote in the Senate yesterday. The Senate's decision followed a second vote last week in the National Assembly calling for the introduction of the clause. The move has been given a qualified welcome by 'regional' language supporters, with the NGO EBLUL calling for France to go the extra mile and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

As reported on Eurolang, recognition was previously voted down by the Senate in June following a vitriolic response from the French Academy, which had called for the withdrawal of the proposed clause because recognition of 'regional' languages would, it said, "undermine national identity". This provoked a huge outcry from language supporters, many of whom have seen their languages become endangered because of an ongoing French state policy of eradication.

Marc le Fur, the Breton UMP deputy who pressed for the clause, expressed his "great satisfaction" yesterday on the Senate's decision.

In a press release EBLUL President, Neasa Ní Chinnéide, while welcoming the move, added that, "EBLUL stresses that the regional languages of France also belong to a European and global linguistic heritage. It is hoped that this recognition will

reinforce the European policy of meaningful linguistic diversity on the continent. On this point, EBLUL also expects that France, which currently holds the Presidency of the European Union, ratifies the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which would give its languages a concrete and pragmatic European framework, for their development.

The statement continued that, "EBLUL believes it is high time that France puts an end to its policy of destruction of its autochthonous languages that has undermined its credibility both in Europe and internationally, and that concrete measures be taken quickly to translate this recognition into realities."

The President of the Academy of the Basque Language, Andres Urrutia, hailed the reform as an "important and significant", but adding that this is only a "first step... It is not enough to recognize the heritage of the Basque language, it more important that this heritage is alive," he said. (Eurolang 2008)

On Another Front – Breton Culture Under Attack

A project for laws to control the employment of amateur performers (musicians, singers, bands, theater groups, choirs, etc.). is cause for alarm in Brittany where thousands of performers would be impacted.

The law is intended primarily to insure that amateurs do not undercut the work of professions in replacing them with a free or very low paid performances. Without being familiar with labor laws of France, it is a bit difficult to understand the details of the proposed changes, but major Breton organizations that support Breton culture have made a strong statement against the imposition of such a law. The Cultural Council of Brittany, Bodadeg ar Sonerion, Kendalc'h, War' Leur, and Gouelioù Breizh have sent a joint letter to Breton Deputies, Senators and local elected officials requesting that they reject this law to be considered this fall.

Breton festivals (large and small) in particular would be decimated should these laws be put into effect since they would severely impact the ability of festival organizers to include the participation of Celtic Circles (dance troupes), bagads, theater groups, choirs, and

a number of other cultural organizations. New laws would require that each individual member of such a group would have a contract to perform and a payment in line with labor laws. While festivals may often provide a payment to a group to offset travel expenses or to go into their treasury to purchase new instruments or costumes, members of a bagad or dance group do not get paid individually. The opportunity to participate in numerous parades, concerts and festivals is the reason young people join such groups. And performing for free is a fair trade for the experience and exposure received by a group. Festival organizers simply do not have the means to pay each individual member of a group a set fee stipulated by labor laws. Thus the opportunity to perform for some 40 to 50,000 individuals who are part of an estimated 400 to 500 musical/cultural organizations in Brittany will simply disappear.

The first to suffer would be professional musicians who are the headliners at festivals where the variety and wealth of offerings (professionals and amateurs who contribute their performance) are what bring people to that event. Professional musicians are not in competition with amateurs – indeed, they often serve as teachers (to supplement performance income) or make a living by crafting instruments purchased by amateurs.

As festivals and other public performance events wither, the impact does not stop with fewer employment opportunities for professional performers. It will also impact sound technicians, and all the support industries for the participants and audiences that flock to Breton festivities – hotels, restaurants, food services, all those who advertise in program booklets, transport services, etc.

Both the financial burdens and the paperwork burdens imposed by the new laws (imagine individual contracts for the thousands of participants at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival) – not to mention restrictions imposed on how advertising is done – will severely threaten the future of Breton festivals and other performance venues where amateur groups have most willingly participated. And this will end the engagement of thousands of Bretons – especially youth and children – who have joyfully joined in festivities as a celebration of their cultural heritage.

It appears that these laws will not serve to protect anyone but will do great harm in stifling cultural performances and expression so richly developed in

the bagads, Celtic Circles, theater troupes, choirs, and other amateur performance groups of Brittany.

If this seems a bit confusing, think of the following scenario for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Although professional musicians, singers and Broadway performers are a big part of the parade and paid for their performances, this parade (and most parades and festivals across the U.S.) is composed also of a dozen or more high school and college marching bands, and another dozen or so performing groups (choirs, dance groups, cheerleading squads, etc.). These bands and performance groups fill out an application and you can bet that the competition to get into this prestigious parade is tight. What would happen if Macy's or any other parade organizer had to put together a contract for and pay every individual marching band member or choir member for their participation – and it had to be minimum wage, and all sorts of paperwork needed to be completed to comply with Child Labor Laws for those under 18. Do you think Macy's would be able to manage this for over 1,000 individuals who are part of these groups? How would the Macy's Parade be without marching bands. Would as many people go to see the parade? How would this impact the hotel business and shopping in New York City?

Even in a consumer society like the U.S. we enjoy the performances of talented amateurs who willingly join thousands of events like parades and city festivals for the opportunity to be heard and seen by a wider audience. They certainly do not threaten the livelihood of professional performers. While some of these events are organized by businesses who might be able to cope with added paperwork and contract obligations as well as greatly increased monetary needs, the majority of smaller festivals, parades and events throughout this country are organized by volunteers or small non-profit organizations (think of your local 4th of July events or any festival celebrating an ethnic group in your area) who could not afford added costs and labor such as those imposed by the new French laws under consideration.

Would such laws impoverish the performance and enjoyment of music, song and dance in the U.S.? – immeasurably!



Festivals in Brittany

While you can find festivals (one day to a week long) throughout the year in Brittany, the summer months of July and August are when you can find dozens – not just celebrating Breton culture, but also world music traditions, jazz, rock, classical music, theater, and film. Here are just a few of the biggest (and not so big) festivals of the Breton Summer.

Festival Interceltique (Inter-Celtic Festival)

of Lorient

www.festival-interceltique.fr

2008 is the 38th edition for the festival, spanning August 1 through the 10th. This festival includes some 4,500 performers and is attended by over 700,000 people. It includes concerts, parades, informal music sessions, exhibits of art and sculpture, sports, literary events, and dancing. This is also the occasion for the championship competition for Brittany's top level of bagads. This year some headliner performers include Loreena McKennitt, Moving Hearts, the Chieftans, and a number of best known Breton bands are included along with top performers from Wales, the featured country.

Fêtes de Cornouaille in Quimper

www.festival-cornouaille.com

This is one of Brittany's oldest festivals and 2008 is the 85th year for the festival. It is known for its show of Celtic Circles and a spectacular display of Breton costumes, but this festival also showcases new innovative acts. Some 3,500 artists participate in 180 performances. This year the festival ran from July 18 through the 25th and attracted over 260,000 visitors. Performers included Alan Stivell, Urban Trad, Red Cardell, Gerard Delahayte, Les Goristes, Chorale du Bout du Monde, Ozon Trio, Churchfitters, I Muvrini and Loreena McKennitt.

Vielles Charrues festival in Carhaix

www.vieillescharrues.asso.fr

This "rock" festival took place this year July 17 to 20 and this was its 17th year. Some 90 groups from various parts of the world are included and there is always a place for local talent of Brittany. Among the headliners this year were Ben Harper, Motorhead, and ZZ Top. This year's attendance was 215,000. 6,000 volunteers assure that all goes smoothly and that people have a good time but a safe time.

Terre-Neuvas festival in Bobital (Côtes d'Armor)

www.festival-terre-neuvas.com

This festival started in 1998 and features three days of pop, rock and jazz performers. During its three days this year (July 4-6) it attracted 140,000 music lovers.

Le Bout du Monde festival in Crozon
www.festivalduboutdumonde.com

This three-day festival (August 8-10) includes 35 concert performances from all over the world – blues, jazz, rock, pop, song, dance music. Some 60,000 people converge on the Crozon peninsula for this festival.

Saint-Loup Festival in Guingamp
[Www.dansebretonne.com](http://www.dansebretonne.com)

This festival dates back to the 19th century as the *pardon* celebrating Saint Loup. Since 1957 it has taken on a larger scope with the inclusion of an annual competition for the championship of Breton dance groups who are part of the Kendalc'h federation. Held this year from August 9 to 17 the festival also includes piping competitions and concerts of various styles from performers from Brittany and other countries (Gwennyn, Soldat Louis, Les Goristes, Pat O'May, Mary Black, The Rapparees, Leilia, to name a few). Some 2,500 dancers and musicians are part of this festival.

Fêtes Maritimes in Brest and Douarnenez
From July 17 to 20 over 2,000 sailing ships and smaller boats with 15,000 sailors from 25 countries will converge on the city of Brest and then move to the town of Douarnenez offering spectacular views of a wide variety of old ships. These festivals also offer lots of on-shore activity with concerts, exhibits and food.

Gouel ar Filmoù in Douarnenez
www.festival-douarnenez.com

This film festival celebrates its 31st year. Each year a different culture or minority group is featured – and this year it is Lebanon. The festival offers the chance to also see new films by Breton filmmakers.

Rencontres internationales de harpe celtique in Dinan
www.harpe-celtique.com

While not one of Brittany's biggest festivals, this one focuses on Celtic and other folk harps from around the world. It runs from July 9 to 15 this year and includes concerts, contests, exhibits, lectures, and everything a harp-lover could desire.

Polig Monjarret's Statue Unveiled at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival

On August 3, 2008, a statue of Polig Monjarret (1920-2003) was unveiled in the presence of several hundred people who have been touched by his pioneering work for Breton culture. Monjarret was one of the founders of the Bodadeg ar Sonerion, the Kan ar Bobl music festival and the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival, and was a leader in establishing cultural bonds between Ireland and Brittany. Those were just a few of his initiatives, and one cannot imagine what Brittany would be today without the work of this musician and indefatigable supporter of Breton culture and identity.

Three years ago a square in the city of Lorient was named for him and at that time it was decided that a statue was needed. The association "Mignoned Polig Monjarret" (Friends of Polig Monjarret) was formed to see the project to fruition. The sculpture was done by Bernard Potel and is a bronze work representing Polig sitting on a bench – so that friends and admirers can take a seat next to him.

Besides his three daughters – Gwenola, Nolwenn and Soazig - his many friends, and political and cultural leaders of Brittany, the ceremony was attended by many pipers and bombarde players representing the bagadoù of Brittany who provided a musical tribute to him.

For more information about this pioneer of the Breton cultural movement, see Bro Nevez 89 (February 2004).



A List of Festivals from the Gouelioù Breizh website

www.gouelioubreizh.com

The following list gives an idea of the year-round schedule of festivals in Brittany. Note that these are just the festivals that focus on Breton music and dance. And these are just those that affiliate with the Gouelioù Breizh organization. There are dozens of others that feature other styles of music, theater or arts.

If you are interested in learning more about any of the festivals listed below, go to the Gouelioù Breizh site and find the map. You can then click on to cities on the map and get links to festival websites for the details. Because they present a variety of artists and almost always include the chance to dance at a fest noz, planning a trip to Brittany based on festivals is a great way to insure you will enjoy the wealth of music Brittany has to offer.

Note: The cities and towns where the festival is held is in capital letters and departments of Brittany are noted by number: 35 = Ille-et Vilaine, 56 = Morbihan, 44 = Loire-Atlantique, 29 = Finistère, 22 = Côtes du Nord

March

Festival Place aux Garçailles (War'I Leur 35) - VERN-SUR-SEICHE (35)

April

Kan ar Bobl - PONTIVY (56) (1 week with many other preliminary eliminator contests)

May

Emvod enfants Kendalc'h Loire-Atlantique - GUEMENE-PENFAO (44)
Emvod enfants Kendalc'h Ille et Vilaine - LE RHEU (35)
Emvod Kendalc'h Côtes d'Armor - SAINT-BRIEUC (22)
Emvod Kendalc'h Morbihan - VANNES (56)
Emvod Kendalc'h Penn ar Bed - PLOUGASTEL-DAOULAS (29)
Fête B.A.S. Penn ar Bed - QUIMPER (29)
Emvod enfants Kendalc'h Morbihan - GRAND-CHAMP (56)
Emvod Kendalc'h Loire-Atlantique - SAINT-BREVIN (44)
Kañfarded (War'I Leur) - PERROS-GUIREC (22)
Emvod Kendalc'h Ile de France - RAMBOUILLET (78)

June

Gouel Ar Vugale (War'I Leur) - CARHAIX-PLOUGUER (29)
Emvod Kendalc'h Ille et Vilaine - FOUGERES (35)
Festival "Dañs" (Kendalc'h) - QUIMPER (29)
Emvod enfants Kendalc'h Penn ar Bed - CHÂTEAULIN (29)
Emvod enfants Kendalc'h Côtes d'Armor - GRÂCES (22)
Da Bep Tu (War'I Leur) - PLOEMEUR (56)
Concours Menez-Meur - HANVEC (29)

July

Les Mercredis du Thabor - RENNES (35)
Bugale Breizh (Kendalc'h/Saint-Loup) - GUINGAMP (22)
Fête du Pays Blanc - LA BAULE-ESCOUBLAC (44)
Folklores du Monde - SAINT-MALO (35) (8 days)
Festival Kann al Loar - LANDERNEAU (29) (5 days)
Fête des Brodeuses - PONT-L'ABBE (29) (4-days)
Bagadañs - CARHAIX-PLOUGUER (29)
Faltaziañ (Prix de la Création Kendalc'h) - LANDERNEAU (29)
Championnat de Bretagne des Chorales Bretonnantes - LANDERNEAU (29)
Les Assemblés Gallèses - PLUMIEUX (22) (6 days)
Festival Kastell Paol - SAINT-POL DE LEON (29) (7 days)
Festival de Cornouaille - QUIMPER (29) (9 days)
Festival Folklorique - DOL DE BRETAGNE (35)
Fête des Islandais - PAIMPOL (22)
Soirée B.A.S. Penn ar Bed - QUIMPER (29)
Lagad Tan (War'I Leur) - QUIMPER (29)
Fête Celtique en Pays de Rhuys - SARZEAU (56) (3 days)
Fête de la Crêpe - GOURIN (56) (2 days)

August

Festival Interceltique - LORIENT (56) (10 days)
Festival des Quatre Clochers - CONFORT-MEILARS (29) (2 days)
Fête des Fleurs d'Ajoncs - PONT-AVEN (29) (2 days)
Les Celtiques de Guérande - GUERANDE (44) (6 days)
Festival Mouezh ar Gelted - PONT-CROIX (29) (2 days)
Festival des Hortensias - PERROS-GUIREC (22) (2 days)
Festival Plinn - DANOUËT-BOURBRIAC (22) (5 days)
Festival de la Danse Bretonne et de la Saint-Loup - GUINGAMP (22) (9 days)
Fête des Bruyères - BEUZEC-CAP-SIZUN (29)
Gouel an Eost - PLOUGOULM (29)
Festival du Menez-Hom - PLOMODIERN (29) (3 days)
Fêtes d'Arvor - VANNES (56) (3 days)
Festival des Genêts d'Or, Noce Bretonne - BANNALEC (29) (2 days)

August – continued

Festival Traditionnel des Côtes d'Armor - GUINGAMP (22)
Fête de l'Aven - NEVEZ / PORT-MANECH(29)
Festival des Filets Bleus - CONCARNEAU (29) (2 days)
Celtival du Don - GUEMENE-PENFAO (44) (2 days)
Championnat de Bretagne de danse (Kendalc'h) – GUINGAMP (22) (2 days)
Mondial'Folk - PLOZEVET (29) (6 days)
Journées Culturelles Bretonnes - Pardon de - LA BAULE - ESCOUBLAC (44) (5 days)
Festival Penn ar Bed - PLOUGONVELIN (29)
Festival du Sillon de Bretagne - MALVILLE (44) (4 days)
Festival Fisel - ROSTRENEN (22) (4 days)

September

Fête de la Saint-Gilles - PORNIC (44) (2 days)
Championnat de Bretagne de Musique Traditionnelle – GOURIN (56) (3 days)
Gouel War'l Leur - MOELAN SUR MER / RIEC SUR BELON (29) (2 days)

October

La Bogue d'Or - REDON (35) (7 days + preliminary Contests throughout October)

November

Festival Yaouank - RENNES / BRUZ (35) (spans much of November)
Concours de Kas Abarzh - LARMOR PLAGE (56)

December

Breizh a Gan (Kendalc'h) - RENNES (35)
Cornemuses - QUIMPER (29)



The U.S. ICDBL at Celtic Festivals in the U.S.A.

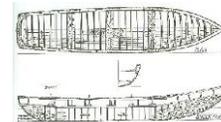
It has become an annual event for the U.S. ICDBL to set up an information table and a display of informational posters and books at two annual inter-Celtic festivals in the spring: The Southern Maryland Celtic Festival & Highland Gathering and the Potomac Celtic Festival.

Held April 26, 2008, we were once again a presence at the Celtic Festival of Southern Maryland which is

organized by the Celtic Society of Southern Maryland, Inc. We were also a strong presence at the Potomac Celtic Festival held in Leesburg, Virginia, on June 14, 2008.

At both festivals a small but hard-working group of U.S. ICDBL members insured that Brittany was highly visible. Philippe Berthier carried the Breton flag in parades of Scottish clans and Celtic nations. Susan Baker did workshops for those interested in learning Breton dances. Roger Gossement - proudly displaying the flag of Nantes, his home town – helped with the information tent.

At the Potomac Festival Lois Kuter presented the Breton language in a workshop on the Celtic languages – focused on their current status and challenges and successes each is having. U.S. ICDBL members Liam Ó Caiside moderated the panel and spoke about Manx, and Cheryl Mitchell spoke about Welsh. A thunderstorm with torrential rain insured a captive audience huddled under the workshop tent (which did little to keep us very dry) and we were able to have an extended discussion with the workshop attendees.



“Celts and Currachs” – A New Festival Presence for Brittany in the U.S.

<http://newlondonmainstreet.org>

On August 23 the U.S. ICDBL will be participating in a festival called “Celts and Currachs” held in New London, Connecticut. Once again we will have an information table (hosted by Lois Kuter and Jacky and Soni Fauchoux) with handout materials about Brittany and the Breton language and posters and flags. Lois will do a short workshop during the course of the day about the Breton language.

Next to the U.S. ICDBL table will be an information stand for BZH New York, a very active organization of Bretons in New York City (www.bzh-ny.org). They will also share information with festival visitors and do a workshop during the day about Brittany. Festival goers will also get a taste of Breton music from the American band Trouz Bras (based in Boston) www.trouzbras.com.

While Celtic Festivals in the U.S. are very small affairs compared to the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival, there has been a growing tendency among festival organizers to try to include representation from as many Celtic countries as possible. It is always easy to find Irish and Scottish musicians and dancers. And in this case, currach racers. Finding those ready and able to represent Wales, Cornwall, Brittany or the Isle of Man is much more challenging, and impossible in some parts of the country. Since smaller festivals (usually all-volunteer in their operation) have very limited budgets it is rare that they can bring performers across the Atlantic or from across the U.S. But the desire is clearly there, and many festival organizers would be delighted to have all six of the Celtic speaking nations as well as Galicia and Asturias represented if it were possible.

And festival attenders who have mistakenly thought that "Celts" were just Irish or Scottish are often delighted to discover for the first time a much wider world of Celts.

Note: If you're wondering what a "currach" is, visit the website www.currach.org which will give you information in both Irish Gaelic and English.



New Music from Brittany

Heard of, but not heard ... by Lois Kuter

The following short notes are based on reviews and notes found in the following Breton magazines: *Ar Men* 164 (May-June 2008) / *Armor* 460 (May 2008), 461 (June 2008), 462 (July-August 2008) / *Ar Soner* 386 (April-May 2008) / *Bremañ* 319 (May 2008) / *Musique Bretonne* 208 (May-June 2008).

Michel Aumont. *Armorigène Trio*. An Naer Produktion 910.

Master of the clarinet, Michel Aumont is joined by Laurent Genty (piano and accordion) and Dominiuqe Le Bozec (percussion) for a CD rooted in Breton tradition and bursting with new sounds and personality.

Annie Ebrel Quartet. *Roudennou*. Coop Breizh CD & DVD. CD 1001.

Singer Annie Ebrel performs traditional Breton songs as well as her own compositions and those of Lors Jouin and Louis-Jacques Suignard – in Breton. The quartet includes Bijan Chemirani, Pierrick Hardy and Olivier Ker-Ouzio, with guitar, clarinet and harmonica as well as other instruments. This is one of the great singers of Brittany.

Calico. *Faire le jeu*. Armada Productions – Avel Ouest GMP 001.

This group includes the voice of Jean-Marie Le Goff, guitar by Vincent Crenn, bass from Fabien Autret, and keyboard by Hervé Le Goff. They perform contemporary songs and texts described as "poetic and surrealist" with an original sound with folk-rock accents.

L'Épille. *Veillées chez Léone à Bovel*. L'Épille EPL 012. www.epille.org

Chez Léone is a cafe where generations gather to share traditions of Gallo Brittany at regular veillées – evenings resembling a traditional ceili where singers, storytellers and musicians perform in an informal setting. The organization l'Épille has worked in this area of eastern Brittany to collect traditional music and encourage its performance through veillées as well as the annual Bovel festival. For this double CD L'Épille has tried to give a flavor of this remarkable gathering. 26 songs and 16 stories are included from among 3,000 songs and 250 stories collected from over 400 performers in the past nine years. An 80-page booklet includes song texts and summaries of the stories as well as background and lots of photos.

Festival Plinn du Danouët 2007. An Naër Productions. Association pour la restauration de la chapelle Notre-Dame de Danouët.

One can find dozens of great festivals in Brittany – big ones like the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient or the Fêtes de Cornouaille in Quimper, or smaller ones like the Festival Plinn in the little town of Danouët where the dance called plinn is celebrated and musicians and dancers compete to be the best at it. This is a two-CD set from the 2007 contests where you will hear some of the best of Brittany's traditional singers, sonneurs de couple, accordion players and other ensembles.

Follen. *Joli Petit Joli*. Kerne Production FOL 06.

This is the sixth CD by this fest noz band with ronds, waltzes, mazurkas – à la bretonne – as well as other Breton dances.

Armelle Gourlaouën. *Harpes plurielles*. GOU 005.

Armelle Gourlaouën performs on three types of harps – the large classical harp, the Celtic harp, and the very small troubadour harp with just 22 strings. Her repertoire includes traditional tunes from Brittany, Ireland and Galicia, side by side with works by Handel, Vivaldi or Fauré.

Ihnze. *Noz toujours*. CD Le Label CD AH31

This group has been performing for 15 years and has four recordings. Jean-François Froger, singer for the group, has a Gallo repertoire, and instruments include accordion, flute and bombarde.

Katé-Mé. *Katé-Mé Live*. Trad'Mark KM 02 / Avel Ouest.

This group is focused on Gallo tradition with singer Sylvain Girault performing traditional songs as well as new compositions. The group is joined by guest performer Marc Anthony on hurdy-gurdy as well as by a brass ensemble.

Kej. *La Danse du feu*. Hirustica HIR 200702

Kej is a trio made up of flute, bass fiddle and guitars where the musicians create “sound sculptures” and combine the sounds of these instruments in all possible ways. This is improvisational music with influences from Breton and other world traditions. The melody is often hard to find in this free combination of sounds and rhythms.

Erwan Keravec. *Urban pipes*. Buda Musique 86160.

To master the Scottish style bagpipes, Keravec went through the typical training of a piper in a Breton bagad and he dabbled with other innovative uses of this instrument with the group Nioubardophones. With this CD he strips the bagpipes of any reference to Scottish or Breton style to take it into free jazz and avant garde musics – the bagpipes free of its roots.

Daniel Le Féon and Michel Bodec. *Barrad Avel*. Self-produced.

Bombarde player Daniel Le Féon pairs with organist Michel Bodec for a varied repertoire rooted in Breton tradition.

Arnaud Le Gouëfflec. *A Dreuze*. Last Exit Records LER 002.

This musician from the rock scene in Brest follows in the foot steps of Alfred Jarry, Max Jacob and Erik Satie with inventive compositions and poetic texts. The music is described as a mixture of baroque and surrealism. His “Prehistoric orchestra” includes a variety of instruments – plastic tubes, rocks, and other normally non-musical objects as well as banjo, mandolin and guitar. A highly inventive and interesting performance.

Luskan. *Noz-terre*. Luskan LSK 008.

This group includes hurdy-gurdy, bombardes, guitars and flues among other instruments. This CD includes 13 selections with music from the Vendée, Poland, Ireland and Brittany. The CD did not receive a glowing review, but there's a future for this group.

Patrick Molard. *The Waking of the Bridegroom*. Macmeanma SKYECD 47.

Patrick Molard is a master of many types of bagpipes, and the Scottish Highland bagpipes are certainly one of them. He has studied in Scotland and mastered the challenging art of piobaireachd – the complex “classical” style of piping where a simple theme is developed into much less simple variations. Many of these compositions

are quite old and Molard includes some from the 17th and 18th centuries as well as more recent compositions. If you like piobaireachd, then you have a master here to enjoy.

***Musiques au Pays de Dol-de-Bretagne*.** Kerig KCD 192.

This is a collection of 14 groups, musicians and singers from the area of Dol-de-Bretagne (Ille et Vilaine). Singers, musical groups and a bagad present their best selections for a diverse and engaging collection of sound and styles.

Bertran Obrée Trio. *Olmon e olva*. Production DEDD-LA DL 02.

Bertran Obrée composes and sings songs in the Gallo language to show that this language of eastern Brittany is not just a rural survival of a past age. He is joined by Erwan Bérenguer on guitars and Julien Stévenin on bass. A carefully composed production by a trio that creatively makes use of its roots for contemporary songs.

Maxime Piolet. *Les rendez-vous qu'il ne faut pas manquer*. VOC 819.

Piolet is a “singer-songwriter” with texts on contemporary joys and sorrows set to music by Patrick Audrain, Pol Quefféléant, Dominique Rivière and others.

Red Cardell. *Le Banquet de Cristal*. Keltia Musique KMCD 195.

To celebrate its 15th anniversary, this rock group has reworked 15 of its best pieces – inviting a variety of musicians to add a little different flavor. Guest artists include Miossec, Dan ar Braz, the Bagad Kerné, Farid Ait Siamear, Louis Ebrel and the Guichen brothers – a wonderful mix of talents for a very popular band.

Startijenn. *Pakit holl!* Paker Production / Coop Breizh.

This is a group of five young men who have been performing together since starting the band when they were in the Diwan high school together. This is their second CD which includes 11 dance tunes and one gwerz – in Breton, evel just. Musicians are Kaou Gwenn, Konogan an Habask, Tangi Oillo, Youenn Roue and Tangi ar Gall-Carré. Instruments include guitars, bombarde, accordion, percussion, biniou and other bagpipes.



KENTEL 12 / LESSON 12

By Natalie Novik

GERIADURIG / VOCABULARY

PE

Pe (ped) when the following word starts with a vowel) translates as “which” and “what” and used in conjunction with other words, is part of a host of prepositions used to ask and answer questions:

- **Pegeit:** how much time, at what distance?
- **Pegement:** how much?
- **Pegen:** so ...! (before an adjective, as an exclamation)
- **Pelec’h:** where?
- **Penaos:** how?
- **Peogwir:** since, because
- **Perag:** why?
- **Peseurt:** what kind of? Which?
- **Petra:** what?

Pe also translates as “or”

Santig “**tu pe du**”: in the Breton religious tradition, some saints (“santig”) can work one side (tu) or the other side, in other words, they can perform miracles and heal you, or not. It is very similar to the double faced deities of the Celts, which were at once good and evil.

YEZADUR / GRAMMAR

PLURALS

There are various ways to form the plural of words in Breton:

1. The most common: add **-ou** or **-iou** at the end of the word.
Aval (apple) – avalou
Kador (chair) – kadoriou
2. Some words use a **-ed** ending, mostly people, animals, trees and feminine words that end in **-ez**.
Paotr (man) – paotred

Pesk (fish) – pesked
Bretonez (a Breton woman) – Bretonezed.

3. With a variety of ending: words ending in **-er**, **-our** will use the **-ien** ending. Sometimes endings in **-er** and **-ez** will also be used.
Kaner (singer) – kanerien
Ti (house) – tier (sometimes tiez)
4. By changing a vowel or more in the singular form of the word.
Dant (tooth) – dent
Troad (foot) – treid
5. In an even more complex way, with consonant changes or two vowel changes, or even a completely different word.
Hent (path) – henchou
Mab (son) – mibien
Kaz (cat) – kizier
Ki (dog) – chas (from the French “chasse”, “hunt” because that’s where you need more than one dog!).

Have a nice day! The endings in # 1. and 2. are by far the most common, but you will still need to learn as you go when to use **ou** or **iou**. Endings in # .3, .4 and .5 are much less common. Breton dictionaries will give you the proper plural form.

Also remember that although Breton has been written for a very long time, its present form was fixed in the middle of the 20th century, and therefore dialectal differences might still easily be found in the literature.

NEW BOOKS FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Philippe Bonnet, Vincent Courtin, Yoran Delacour. Deux siècles de bières en Bretagne.

Yoran Embanner. 2007. 151 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-08-7.

“Brittany and Beer – a long history of love” is the introductory phrase you first see entering this book. Beer can be dated back to prehistoric times and written records show that it was produced in Mesopotamia in 4,000 BC. The ancient Gauls were known for their “cervoise.”

This book traces the history of beer making in Brittany from the abbeys and small commercial enterprises in towns and cities of the Middle Ages. The mystery of fermentation and how it was mastered is also explored with an explanation of how variety in fermentation produces the different types of beer we know: pils, bocks, porter, etc. This book not only introduces beer makers of Brittany, but also beer making itself – a sort of beginners guide to varieties of beer and the process of brewing.

Beer making as an “industry” is documented in the early 17th century in Brittany and grew through the 18th century. Breweries were often started up by foreigners living in Brittany – Irish, Belgians, Germans, Austrians and others. By the early 20th century small breweries were found throughout Brittany, but changing tastes for beer and a changing economic climate would mean that most would disappear by the middle of the 1900s and the last of the earlier breweries would close in the 1970s.

It would not be long before a renaissance would be launched and today one can find Breton beers of many varieties, often with Breton names or names inspired by Celtic and Breton history, mythology and culture: “bier ar soner,” “mor braz,” “Excalibur,” “blanche hermine,” “la korriganne,” penn gwenn,” to name a few.

Leading the revival was the Brasserie des Deux Rivières with the label “Coreff” (old Breton for “cervoise” or “beer”). The Lancelot brewery was launched in the mid-1980s by Bernard Lancelot who would produce a series of beers of various characters – “Telenn du” (black harp) which was made with locally grown blé noir or buckwheat, or “Duchesse Anne,” a blond beer.

Nearly half of this book is made up of a guide to beer makers – past and present – broken down by departments and then by town or city where they were/are found. There are over 70 former breweries listed and over 35 currently operating ones described.

Appendices to the book include a French-Breton vocabulary of beer terminology as well as a brief description of different types of beers brewed in Brittany today. The fabrication of beer is briefly and visually presented and you have four recipes to try which include beer as a major ingredient. You’ll also find information on beer expositions in Brittany, a few pubs to try, websites and a bibliography. Those traveling to Brittany will find a listing of addresses and telephone numbers for 29 breweries in all five departments of Brittany.

While there is a great deal of interesting information on the history and current state of beer making in Brittany, this book is especially rich in illustration. Posters, beer labels, beer bottles, advertising of all kinds and photos are found on every page – and make up some 40 full pages of the book. If you love beer, these colorful illustrations will definitely give you the urge to race to Brittany to try a glass. If you’re not a beer drinker at all, you will find the illustrations, advertising and labels artistically interesting and sometimes amusing.

The postface to the book by the authors is an interesting reflection on the role of celebration and festivals (and drinking) in the social life of Brittany where this is tied to a strong sense of identity which is not at all absent in the new breweries and beers of Brittany. The authors remind us that this identity has often been under attack by France. Not all is rosy in Brittany where there is a higher than average rate of suicides and where alcoholism has been a problem. But, this book clearly shows that Bretons are enterprising, imaginative, and even in beer-making, remain true to their heritage and identity as Bretons.

For its beautiful graphic presentation and varied and rich content in just 150 pages, this is an interesting book for any one, and a must-have book for beer lovers.

Viviane Carlier, illustrations by Loïc Tréhin. Plantes des dunes bretonnes. Yoran Embanner. 2008. 127 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-06-1.

“Plants of the Breton dunes” is a practical guide to identify plants, but I would be hesitant to take this book on an outdoors excursion where its beauty could be marred by wind, water or sand. Nevertheless, despite its

size (7 ½ by 10 ½ inches) and heft (127 pages with a thick hard cover) this is a book you would want with you to identify and learn about plants you encounter on a walk to explore coastal dunes of Brittany. And a careful hike it would be to insure protection of these plants which are key to the continued health of the dunes which are found primarily on the southern part of Brittany's 2,860 kilometers of coastline (1,773 miles).

Before plunging into descriptions of fifty different plants, the book briefly introduces you to the geology and geography of Brittany's coastal environments. Plants are broken down by particular types of dune environment. Each plant is given two full pages. The description includes vernacular and scientific names for the plant (including Breton language names), the period in which it flowers, and a paragraph on its history and naming, specific habitat, and size and characteristics. Also included is a description of leaves, flowers and fruits and the range where it is found world-wide. Similarities to other plants with which it could be confused are also noted. Indication is given as to its frequency or rarity by departments of Brittany and whether it is classified as endangered regionally, nationally, or on other levels. Symbols show if it is a medicinal, edible, or poisonous plant.

A full page is given to watercolor illustrations of the plant in its full form and in detail. In some cases an insect and/or butterfly associated with the plant is also depicted. Diverse shades of greens used by the artist for leaves and stems of the plants are surely as important as the colors of the flowers in using this book for identification. Even if you did not care about identifying every plant you encountered on the dunes of Brittany, this book is beautiful artistically.

Besides the descriptions of fifty plants, a chart in the back of the book lists additional plants by family with individual plants given by common names and scientific (Latin) names with a note on the type of location where they could be found. For those not well versed in botanical terminology (or French vocabulary related to plants) a lexical listing of terms is helpful, as is a drawing to label the different parts of plants. The book includes a bibliography and list of useful internet sites to find more information.

This is both a practical guide to plants and a lovely presentation of dune environment. It will help plant lovers identify and learn about plants of the dunes of Brittany and it will hopefully inspire a respect for the diversity, beauty, and importance of these plants.

Michel Politzer. Maisons de Bretagne – À découper-coller. Yoran Embanner. 2008. 32 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-07-8.

This book is best described as a packet of seven house designs on stiff glossy paper to be cut out, glued together, and enjoyed. This is not a cut-out kit for children. Those who should tackle the building of this Breton village are those skilled with sharp tools like an exacto knife and those endowed with patience and the ability to work very carefully with cuts and creases.

But in the end, you will have seven lovely reconstructions of grand and lowly homes traditional to different areas of Brittany:

- The “Avancée” or “Apotez” farm house of well-to-do farmers of the Are Mountains of central western Brittany.
- A “Pan de bois” (half-timber) home of a successful merchants in towns like Dinan, Morlaix, Quimper, Saint Brieuc or Vannes built from the Middle Ages to the 19th century.
- A country manor house (mini-chateau) that the truly wealthy might have constructed in various parts of Brittany.
- A mud brick farm home that is found in rural areas around Rennes.
- The “penn ti” – a tiny cottage of stone for workers found especially in the Cornouaille area of western Brittany.
- The “longère” of the Vannetais region – a long farm house where a barn is adjacent to the human dwelling.
- A thatched roof house of the Brière in southeastern Brittany where marshes supplied all the reeds necessary for roofing.

Eighteen pages of this large-size book (9 ½ x 12 inches) describe these houses and their history and characteristics, including notes on the interior furnishing and out buildings of a farm that are not included in the house to be constructed. Lots of illustrations are used to show details and regional variations.

The author Michel Politzer, is a painter, sculptor and illustrator of books for youth (www.michelpolitzer.com). His artistry is shown in the details of the stone, slate, thatch, doorways, stairs, chimneys, etc. of the houses to be constructed. These are wonderfully detailed in colors to evoke the real thing. And Politzer credits the Breton organization Tiez Breizh for counsel in getting things right. This non-profit organization has worked for a number of years to encourage the study and respectful rehabilitation of old rural dwellings of Brittany (www.tiez-breizh.org).

Besides an introduction to the architecture and setting of each house, the book's text also includes "advice for construction" to give you direction on the correct tools and techniques to cut and glue the houses. Each house comes with one or two pages of instructions – connecting 1 to A or B and how to sequence the construction of various pieces. The simplest and smallest house, the penn-ti has just three pieces to put together. Most houses have eight to ten pieces, but the most complex houses – the manor house and the half-timber – have 16 and 19 pieces respectively.

Instructions are sparse and it is not always clear exactly where cuts are to be made, but once you work your way up from simple to more complex houses, some things will become obvious in the construction process.

The houses are from four to eight inches tall and some are up to ten inches in length, so once you get all your houses constructed you will need a good amount of space to display them. And they will be well worth displaying.

Divi Kervella & Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez. Guide des drapeaux bretons et celtes. Yoran Embanner. 2008. 192 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-12-2.

This guide to Breton and Celtic flags is a compact little paperback (4 1/3 x 8 1/2 inches) packed with information. It is written for those interested not only in flags – their design and evolution – but also Breton and Celtic history and geography. And this book is fun for those who just enjoy color and design. Throughout the text references are made to numbered illustrations of flags and banners, so that you can very clearly follow the evolution of symbols and colors and their redesign through time. The numbered illustrations run up to 546 and the book includes 42 full pages of color illustrations to complement the text.

To understand the colors, symbols and design of modern flags it's best to go back as far as you can in the historical record. And this is what the authors do in starting with ancient Celts and the Britto-Romans and their banners and symbols. You move next to the banners of the 5th to 10th centuries to get some idea of the key symbols like the lion and red dragon that will reappear in later times. You move through the 10th to 16th centuries to learn about the banners of the noble and royal families of Brittany and how these evolved.

On page 34 you begin to learn about the "ermine" and how it was first adopted – what it did and did not symbolize and how it came to be used by Dukes of Brittany to become a symbol of Brittany itself, a role it definitely continues to play today.

If you are not familiar with Breton history the listing of names and families may get a little confusing, but the authors do their best to present history in a concise and interesting manner that explains nicely how symbols were used politically by Bretons throughout time.

The authors also present "legendary and imaginary" flags attributed to knights of the Round Table and other early illustrious Celtic heroes. And the portion of the book devoted to the earlier history of Breton flags closes with a review of military flags and banners from the 16th century through the French Revolution, War of 1870-71, and World Wars I and II.

The modern flag of Brittany which is now seen everywhere in Brittany – even in front of restaurants or stores to draw in tourists – was created in 1923 by Morvan Marchal. It flew for the first time in 1925 at an international exposition of decorative arts in Paris. A chapter in the book describes its creation and symbolism and its adoption over time. There were periods when the flying of the "gwenn ha du" ("white and black") was viewed to be a seditious attack on France itself, and it was banned from public use. It was perhaps its adoption by supporters of Brittany's successful soccer teams who waved it at soccer matches that tipped a balance. But it has been used widely by cultural organizations, bagadoù, and Breton dance troupes, as well as by protestors rallying for workers' rights, freedom for Breton political prisoners, or any number of causes. In the past few decades the gwenn ha du has lost some of its radical symbolism, but has definitely remained a symbol of pride in Breton identity.

The next three chapters of the book look at flags both historically and geographically, starting with the flags of

the nine historic “bro” (“pays” in French): Cornouaille/Kernev (Bro Gernev), Dolois/Bro Zol, Léon / Bro Leon, Nantais / Bro-Naoned, Rennais / Bro-Roazhon, Pays de Saint Briec / Bro-Sant-Brieg, Pays de Saint-Malo / Bro-Sant-Maloù, Trégor / Treger (Bro-Dreger), and Vannetais / Bro-Wened.. Colorful maps show where these nine historical areas are found and you continue to find maps for the chapters to follow which present flags and emblems for even smaller geo-cultural “broioù” and then cities of Brittany. Here you find old and newer flags – some no longer in use and others widely used. And here the knowledge you gained from the earlier chapters on the history of symbols and heraldry are put to good use.

Flags are not just important political-geographical markers, but they are used by a rich variety of cultural organizations, musical ensembles and dance groups, scholarly organizations and sports clubs in Brittany. A chapter gives a sample of some of these.

Brittany is a maritime country and flags and banners are key identifiers for ships. A chapter is devoted to the use of flags for Breton ships, yacht clubs and shipping companies of Brittany – again presenting just a sample of the many flags used.

While most of the book is devoted to Breton flags, some 12 pages present a condensed but very helpful introduction to flags of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, the Isle of Man and Cornwall. You learn the story behind the three-legged “triskell” on the Manx flag and about the different flags you see today used for Ireland and Scotland and their counties. These pages also present flags with political significance and flags for Celtic saints – Patrick, Andrew, Piran, David and Erwan (Yves). A variety of inter-Celtic flags are also presented.

The book closes with some more “practical” information, including a guide to the different sizes and proportions, shapes and official uses of flags. And useful to all of you who possess a Breton flag is a chapter on protocol: how to properly display the Breton flag and hang it respectfully. If you have the urge to design your own flag after looking at all the wonderful colors and designs of flags in this book, the authors give seven tips for good flag design, and you can see the flags they designed for themselves.

Divi Kervella and Mikeal Bodlore-Panlaez are both Breton speakers and they note in the book that this was the language they used during the process of designing and producing the book. While the text of this book is in

French, the names of towns, cities, regions, etc. are found throughout the book in both French and Breton. Appended to the text is a six-page French-Breton vocabulary list of words related to flags and their symbols, design and use.

Divi Kervella is president of the organization Bannieloù Breizh which studies flags and emblems of Brittany. And this is certainly a source for more information for anyone who wants to learn more and Breton flags and their history: <http://www.banniel.com>.

Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez has created a number of colorful posters on minority peoples of Europe, the 60 smaller “pays” of Brittany, the 9 historical “pays” and 1,500 communes of Brittany, as well as a genealogical poster of the dukes and kings of Brittany. These posters can be found on www.geobreizh.com or www.euromnorty.eu.

The mixture of scholarship and artistry in this pocket guide to Breton flags makes it a basic reference work for anyone building a library of works about Brittany.

Christophe Carichon. Scouts et guides en Bretagne (1907-2007). Yoran Embanner. 2007. 448 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-10-8.

This is not a book one picks up to casually read just for fun. This is a dense work of history – rich in detail and full of names, dates, and footnotes. Christophe Carichon, its author, has a doctorate in history and is a specialist on youth movements with an interest more generally on religious history of contemporary times.

This book presents the fruit of years of research on scouting in Brittany – and in particular Catholic boy and girl scout programs. The book is broken down into three sections, each covering a different period in the history of scouting in Brittany: the beginnings from 1910 to 1939, the World War II period and post war reconstruction (1940-1945 and 1945 to 1950), and the post war period of 1950 to the present. One meets dozens of the individuals active in promoting scouting in Brittany to get a good idea of the personalities, politics, social atmosphere, and religious and secular philosophies that shaped the way scouting developed.

One particular question of interest to the author was the adaptation of scouting to Brittany in particular. Why didn't Bretons use scouting to foster a strong sense of Breton identity and to support the unique culture of Brittany. With a few exceptions – especially the case of the Bleimor group in the Breton emigrant community of

Paris – the scout experience was not particularly different in Brittany than anywhere else. The history is primarily one of *scouts in Brittany* where the development of unique *Breton scouts* was limited, although certainly not absent.

The annexes to the main text include a chronology of the development of Catholic scout groups in Brittany, texts for five scout songs, and a list of one hundred names of Bretons who had been scouts or are still active in scouting – political leaders, people active in the Resistance movement during World War II, writers and journalists, religious leaders, Breton militants, university professors, artists and musicians, etc. Perhaps the most famous name here for Americans is Alan Stivell who was part of the Bleimor scout experience. Those familiar with contemporary Breton history and the cultural movement will find many other familiar names. Thirty-two pages of photos, maps and illustrations add yet more information – interesting visual images that cannot be easily conveyed in text.

The author meticulously lists the sources of this research – over twenty archives, numerous scout publications, newsletters and magazines, biographies, and hundreds of books and articles about scouting. These are broken down by type of publication and by the topic (particular types of scout groups). A list is provided of over 200 individuals interviewed.

For those who are not satisfied with the very rich reading in this study, an eleven-page bibliography is also provided. An index of names is extremely useful for those who might want to locate or re-find information on a particular individual cited in the book – and there are hundreds!

I cannot pretend to have absorbed the wealth of detail in this book. It is not a work one sits down to read cover-to-cover in a few days ... or a few months. This is not light reading, but it is an important work of reference for the history of scouting and its strong development in Brittany during the past 100 years.



symbol used by the Bleimor scouts

DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL 19 – PIBROCH OF DISTANCE

Jean Pierre Le Mat

It must have been a meeting of the Cultural Institute of Brittany. Maybe...

Sure enough, the people who gathered there, in a small village of the Are Mountains, looked like scientists, all of them. Their faces bore wrinkles of knowledge, those lines which give rise around the eyes by constantly scanning the unknown and smiling about it. Their glances went right through anybody and anything. Their brains were made of a sparkling substance.

They were men who tackle the most difficult problems in a thrust. Even their exchanges of "*Demat!*" and "*Mat an traou ganit?*" echoed like rattlings of swords. Impassioned and jubilant fencers were these sirs of Brittany!

Around them were screens and glowing machines. Little coloured bulbs were flickering on the metal. These lights modestly challenged the learned assembly with their flutters, and thus testified to their intense electronic efforts. Some engines allowed a light whistle, a slight coughing, probably to draw attention to an outstanding result.

The room, with all those devices here and there, looked like a laboratory. Nevertheless a keen observer could not guess for which scientific research this human and electronic concentration was intended.

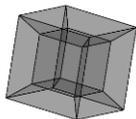
Outside, the rain launched its javelins against the house. The cars, along the road, shone in the dubious light of the storm. Further on, around the meadows, the trees leaned ceremoniously, and sat upright again in an elegant and unforeseeable movement, like the algae of a marine aquarium. The laboratory, like a lighthouse beaten by the sea, worked to shoot out its light to stars.

Surrounded by their apparatuses, the Breton fellows sat down around the central table. On their faces was the fixed glance of the welder, opening the safe of a mysterious king with a blowtorch. Outside, the rain whipped against the door of the house, slapped the walls and the roof. Some ghosts of the Mountains of Are, at a loss in front of the violence of nature, probably took refuge in the house, as frozen shivers passed on the shoulders from one scientist to another.

However, nothing could have ruined their intense thought. I could not say how long this common work

lasted; but it came to maturity, and one of the men rose. The others, while staying in their chairs, moved back slightly, their spinal columns comfortably settled.

Thus spoke the Breton mathematician:



"The straight line is the shortest way from one point to another. This is true in a two dimensioned plan, and also in a three dimensioned space. I searched in books and I aligned the equations. Nevertheless

I could not manage to know what happens in a space with four dimensions. Actually, I do not know which of these two ways is the smallest: between two points close in space but distant in time, or between two points close in space but near in time. That problem torments me, because the question is important. I feel that the absence of an answer is an imperfection of mathematics; and I fear that imperfect mathematics is worthless."

Like an echo, the musician answered him:

"Music is very close to mathematics. It is easy to measure the distance between two notes, by tones and semitones. In the same way, the duration of the sounds is measurable. Handling these figures, and some others, I create harmony or dissonance. However, a mystery remains. These figures cannot be mixed or added. I do not know which of these two distances is the nearest: that which separates an eighth note on C and a sixteenth note on D, or that which separates an eighth note on C and another eighth note on F. Was Pythagoras misled, and all the musicians together with him? The question can appear a secondary one, but it is not. A lack of an answer makes music an approximate art; and I fear that an approximate art could be derisory... "

When he became silent again, the Breton historian spoke:

"The study of History brings me to evaluate how the men influence one another. It is common for me to establish hierarchies between characters who had a great historical weight and characters who had a lesser weight. At first sight, this hierarchy is linked with the use of power. But this answer remains very superficial. To locate this in the four dimensions, here is my question. Who, at the end, was the most influential? Is it the powerful lord, who handled men and treasures, and who acted much? Or is it the anonymous one, who had many descendants? The question is far from being negligible. An absence of answer makes of History a dazzling exercise, that can only dazzle people."

Then spoke the Breton sociologist:

"I study the question of social utility of everyone. When the social utility is outstanding, we consider this one, or this other one, as "People's Friend". This distinction can be given to a scientist, to an artist, to anybody else. It seems easy to see, but it is difficult to calculate a social utility. Is it possible to compare social utility of a musician, of a teacher, of a soldier, of a workman? The wages they get brings us back to economic mechanisms, and not to social data. That is very irritating because, when I tighten the question, the answer does not appear more clearly. Thus, among the doctors, who is the most useful one? Is it the specialist, who clearly knows a restricted field? Or is it the general practitioner who, in the jungle of the symptoms, can roughly find the roots of the disease? This is a small example of a very vast question. The absence of an answer makes of sociology a frivolous and, consequently, dangerous discipline... "

The politician expressed himself as follows:

"I constantly decide questions concerning thousands of people. Organizing a society is a difficult job, which requires passion and subtlety. But there is a lack of benchmarks. One day, I believe I am in the right direction... And I go to sleep with the impression of being misled. Sometimes, I feel I am an innovator, and I awake with the feeling of being the last prince of a declining dynasty. The question is: what is most urgent? To give precise answers to old questions? Or to give imperfect but fast answers to immediate questions? Thousands of men like me commit their whole life in one or another way. The first ones are ideologists and idealists. The second are managers. Who is right and who is wrong? Politics is an odd assortment. Such eccentric activity can lead us to bankruptcy..."

The philosopher answered him:

"Your categories of men are rather uncommon. It is more usual to make a difference between large and small ones, rich and poor, leaders and lead. But it is true that traditional distinctions are not very interesting; they lead only to banality. Let us return to the fourth dimension. My goal is not to calculate the importance of people, but the distance separating them. This problem is fundamental. Is there a larger distance between me and my ancestors, or me and my living fellows? The answer would enable me to know if the right way is fidelity or fraternity. I did not have any definite answer for that. A philosophy without definite answers looks like a bad joke."

They are depressed, all of them. They do not believe in anything any more, not even in themselves. They look for a truth, whatever it is. They cry with anguish:

"O hidden Celtic Gods, help us! We are tossed by all the winds of the universe. You are more stable than the cardinal points. Your non-scientific truths are rocks of stability in the ever renewed flood of our scientific truths. Before being drowned, we cling to your shadow and we shout: Help us! Help us to find the right way in the four dimensions! "

The gods stayed silent.

After one moment of disappointment, the Breton fellows were back at work to break the mystery of the tacit attitude of Heaven. They launched all the twisted power of their electronic machines. They subjected the settings of godly taciturnity to the algorithms they found in all the theologies. The most sophisticated technologies were requested to decipher the data.

The quiet non-answer of the divinities was translated initially in Breton language, for reasons which would be too long to expose. Here is what it was:

"Humans, and you Bretons especially, you become more and more unbearable. Formerly, you asked us to pour rain on a dry land, or to give child to the sterile woman. These wonders were part of our attributes. You trusted in us, and that was a treat for our hearts.

Today, your prayers are unpleasant. We are less and less concerned. You tie complex knots, and then you ask us to untie them. It is not our role. Your sciences are not perfect: Well, it is your problem. You conceived them by yourselves, not with us.

You claim getting divine knowledge through them. Don't worry. We will not curse you, we will let you go.

We acknowledge that your method is very clever. When you meet a question which allows ten answers, you keep them all. You share them. Then you build ten sciences around these ten answers. From the question "Who are we?" you invented biology, psychology, sociology, philosophy... From the question "From where did we come?" you replied with the invention of embryology, genetics, paleontology, cosmology, history. When each one of your ten sciences meets a new question allowing ten answers, you apply the same method. You thus establish ten times ten new sciences. Sometimes the questions intersect, like those of the distance and the fourth dimension. Then, you redefine your sciences, you

redistribute the knowledge to better set out again. You speak about "cross-examination," "bridges," "confrontations," and you think you are very bold. Anyway, you progress.

In the end, you will benefit from countless sciences. Of course, the number of unsolved questions will also be countless. Thus, you will simultaneously reach infinite knowledge and bottomless ignorance. That is the fate decreed for you, not by us, but by yourselves.

The best of luck to you!"

A Traveler's Account of Douarnenez in 1882

"Three days in Brittany" Chambers Journal of Popular Literature, Science & Art. Volume XIX, No. 972. August 12, 1882

The train passes through the depths of the forest of Crannon. So thick is the foliage that the branches of the oaks and elms brush against the windows. My friend Davis and I are traveling through Brittany to Cape Finisterre, where lies the little town of Douarnenez. Our eyes catch a glimpse here and there of a moss-grown Druidical stone, an encampment of charcoal-burners, or a hastily retreating rabbit. The forest is passed, and we are crossing a moorland covered with gray rocks. From this high ground we distinguish the indentations of the coast around the harbour in Brest; the sea sparkles in the sun, and to the left is the undulating blue line of the Montagnes Noires. Viaducts are thrown over deep valleys, solitary and savage; beneath, streamlets wind through green meadows, where the small black cows of the country are grazing. There is a melancholy joined to tenderness in these *landes*, or moors, the cause of the home-sickness which the inhabitants feel when they leave them for a while. We are in the wild country of Armor, with its Breton poetry, its solitary manor homes, its hamlets shaded by trees, and the perfume of the oak forests and the sea.

A long steep street, badly paved, lined with poor shops and blackened facades – such is Douarnenez. A square, where congregate groups of sailors, servants, and peasants, and in the middle of which stands a fountain, cuts the high street in two; and to the right and left, crossing like meshes of a net, are small outlets, exhaling a penetrating odour of bad fish. We seek our hotel, and find it is a resort for artists, who are just returning for



dinner; the men with gaiters up to the knee, a long pole in their hands, and stooping under the weight of their easels. The ladies, dressed in plaids, with hair flying, and limp petticoats, are escorted by boys, who carry their colour-boxes. Pleasant talk beguiles the dinner-hour; and then we find that in the large room belonging to the hotel there is a marriage festival going on, and thither we adjourn.

The young people here all get married, we are told, though the girls in every family are numerous. All are workers. From the earliest age, the crochet-hook or knitting-needle is put into their hands, and they wander on the seashore counting their stitches. At fifteen the poorest go to the *friturerie*, where the sardines are preserved. It is amusing to watch them when they become *sardinières*, alert and sharp, ready with their saucy replies. They walk down the street at noon in files of five or six, their wooden shoes sounding on the uneven pavement, and gazing at strangers with bursts of laughter. The daughters of the next class work as embroiderers of shawls, or the frontals of altars, and execute flower-garlands on muslin or crape of an astonishing and very original colour. Every one is busy, and wants for nothing. Our hostess, who is a buxom figure, has ten children, five of whom are daughters. Three of these are already married; and the other two, slender and fair, are dancing at the party tonight.

On these occasions, the girls empty their savings-boxes for their adornment. In this long whitewashed room there is a display of toilets such as have rarely been seen. The girls are in white dresses, with muslin or China-crape embroidered shawls. The picturesque cap is of light lace, made up with something like a horn at the back of the head. The white dresses are relieved by silk aprons, with bibs of the most delicate colours – pale blue, sea-green, lilac, and gray mingling with charming grace. We especially noticed one young recently married woman, for the almost eastern luxury of her toilet. A dress of white satin, rose-coloured stockings, ribbon of the same colour round her waist, trimmings embroidered with roses, a muslin shawl and apron, lace dead-dress, and silver ornaments. She was pretty as well, with a delicate complexion and fine brown eyes.

The men are much less conspicuous. Their coats are of a very somber hue, and they wear broad-brimmed hats. The two violinists who formed the orchestra played the old air of the *branle*. The dancers took each other by the hand in files of twelve, and executed a dance of the country known as the *gavotte*. Each file, led by a man,

gravely described half-circles in the form of the letter S. All these garlands of men and women move lightly, crossing, turning, gliding around each other, and never departing from the most ceremonious gravity. In this country, manners and customs are deeply rooted; nothing has changed; they dance as they did in the days of Louis XIV.

The next day is that of the yearly regatta – a holiday for this little town, where the population live on the sea. The sardine constitutes the riches of Douarnenez. In the days of the Romans they would have consecrated a temple to it; now they are content to carve its image in front of the churches. It reaches this coast in the month of May; from that time to December, eight hundred boats are employed in the sardine fishery, and if the season is good, catch many thousands of fish daily. At the hour of departure, the port presents an animated spectacle. Down the numerous flights of steps the men arrive, carrying their baskets, and wearing cowls of oiled yellow cotton. Their wives, knitting in hand, accompany them to the beach. Provisions, nets, and bait are laid in the bottom of the boat, where each crew consists of a captain, two rowers, two or three fishermen, and a boy. The pulleys creak; the sail is run up; the boats double the point of the jetty; and an hour after, the whole flotilla is out on the sea, and looking no bigger than a flight of swallows.

During the fishing, profound silence is observed. The captain throws out the long net to right and left. The bait, or *rogne*, is composed of the roe of the cod steeped in sea-water. The sardine rushes upon it, and is caught in the meshes, where its silvery scales sparkle. When the net sinks with the weight, two men raise it, and shake it adroitly into the boat, so that the fish falls without being touched – a condition indispensable to its good preservation. When the boats return, the curers who wait to buy hoist a flag on the rocks; the captains reply with other well-known signals, and the bargain is concluded before the port is reached.



To-day, the fête has drawn all the multitude to the port. The chances of each boat in the race are eagerly discussed. Compact groups of men and women, peasants and citizens, station themselves round the *mât de cocagne*, or before the orchestra, where the drums are beating their loudest. All the costumes of Brittany

are represented – large round hats with velvet ribbon streamers mingle with the muslin *coiffe* of the *sardinières*, or the gophered frills of Quimper, and hood-like collars of Chateaulin, or the white-winged caps of Concarneau. Here and there, a man shows his numerous waistcoats embroidered with bright-coloured wools. The women display an oriental love for colour, large yellow or scarlet bodices, sleeves braided with silver, green petticoats bordered with gay flowers. Among them the children swarm, the girls dressed like little women; the boys covering their fair, curly hair with a blue cap, and showing the bronze skin through the holes of their waistcoat or trousers; bold, quarrelsome, ragged, but handsome, fresh, smiling, with the agility of squirrels, large blue eyes, and rosy cheeks.

Some of these juveniles give themselves up to a game which is dangerous, though lucrative. On board one of the ships, a sail-yard attached to a mast hangs horizontally over the sea; to this are tied red belts, waistcoats, and cravats. Some urchins astride, others standing on the well-soaped spar, advance slowly to the yard-arm. One turns round half-way; *plouf!* He has fallen into the water; but diving, he reappears at the side of the ship. Another reaches the extremity, chooses a fine red belt, shakes it with an air of triumph, seizes it between his teeth, and plunges head-foremost into the water. In half an hour the yard-arm is bare. But the gamins are not tired; they dive for sous, wrapped in white paper, thrown by spectators, and fight under water for possession of them. One carries on the game for half an hour, swimming like a frog; he never rests, his eyes starting out of his head, and secreting his coins in one corner of his mouth, crying, ‘Have you no more?’

The brass band calls the crowd to the end of the jetty, for the boats have returned, amid loud cries of encouragement, clapping of hands, and altercations as to the winner. We leave the port, and visit the field where they are dancing. Two musicians in Breton costume, long hair, and droll countenances, are perched on a platform, playing on the bagpipes with great energy. At their feet the sailors and peasants are executing a kind of gavotte with great gravity to a monotonous tune. The girls form a circle round them but do not mingle in the dance; and so the day closes.

The next morning, some acquaintances at the hotel join us, and we hire an omnibus to take us to the Pointe du Raz. The road is steep, till it reaches the high plateau of the *landes*. The tower of the church of Pont-Croix rises through the trees, and at length we reach Audierne, a

dirty, dull fishing village. As we advance, the road becomes more arid, the country bare and uninhabited. Trees are rare, as also are houses. As we mount upwards under the hot sun, the blue waves of the bay sparkling like so many diamonds, the corn disappears to give way to rushes. At Lescoff, the last village before reaching the Pointe, some women are spinning with distaff outside their huts. We ask them some questions, but they look at us with a frightened air, and disappear quickly under the black porches of their ruinous homes. Numbers of ragged children follow our carriage. Now to the right as well as to the left we see the bright sea, and in the middle of the red heather rises the white tower of the lighthouse. The great voice of the ocean is the only sound, and here are the formidable gray crags of the rocks at Raz, before which the lighthouse stands like a mysterious sentinel. One of the keepers offers to be our guide, for the path is somewhat dangerous. The land recedes from our view; fine pointed rocks are heaped obliquely one on another, leaving but a narrow border of turf between them and the abyss which opens beneath our feet. We advance in Indian file; and to increase our difficulty, the children, naked or ragged, rush in between our feet, climb the rocks like monkeys, and offer us bouquets of ferns for a few sous.

All round, an immense space of sea dazzles our eyes. To the left is the extended semicircle bounded by the misty rocks of Pen-March, and the Bay of Audierne spreading its blue waters. To the right, the Bay des Trépassés is encircled by menacing reefs, and the Pointe de Van stretches out its white promontory. Opposite is the Raz and its dangerous shoals; then the legendary Ile de Sein, a piece of land lying so low that the waves seem as if they would engulf it. No traces of human life; not a sail in the wide horizon of waters, nothing by the continual roar of the waves and the sharp cries of the gulls sweeping round the rocks. It is the end of terrestrial life, the beginning of a wild and solitary infinity. Our guide leads us by a narrow path at the edge of the rocks to the Enfer de Plogoff, as dangerous as the name denotes. We sometimes lie down on our faces, and creep between blocks; or place one foot on ledges the size of a hand, or descend the irregular steps formed in the stony crevasses. But when we reached the granite gulf, we felt recompensed by seeing the formidable assaults of the waves against the dripping rocks which form the walls of the abyss. They rush from all sides through channels worn in the interior of the Pointe, meeting and beating furiously with the sound of thunder. The dark billows boil as if in a magic cauldron, throwing up vertical spouts, which scatter into sheets of white foam; and

then, as a contrast to this deep shade and fearful noise, we gaze upward to a serene blue sky and a bright sun shining over us.

The ascent is less perilous than the descent. At the end of a quarter of an hour, we are on the edge of the bay, where we perceive the Lake of Laonal, separated from the sea by a narrow strip of land. We are told the legend of the city of Is. On the site of the present lake, there stood in the fifth century a fabulous city, the Sodom of old Armorica. The fishermen who ply their craft on its still waters see the palace and towers in ruin beneath. King Gradlon reigned over it, defended, as it then was, against the inroads of the ocean by high banks with a strong sluice. The silver key that opened it was always hung round the king's neck. The reigning beauty at court was the Princess Dahut, Gradlon's daughter, with long tresses that shone like gold. She reigned over all hearts, as her father did over the sea; but she was herself the slave of her own passions, and her conduct made her a public scandal. The old monarch alone shut his eyes against the errors of an only child. One night the demon that possessed her suggested that she should steal the key and open the sluice. But St. Guennolé appeared to the king in his sleep and cried: 'Gradlon, make haste to save yourself, for Dahut has opened the sluice, and the sea is pouring into the city.' The good man, filled with a father's pity, refused to mount his horse until his daughter would also ride on the croup; and loaded with this dangerous burden, he galloped out of the gates. Just at that moment a fearful roar sounded behind them. The great city of Is was overwhelmed by the inrushing waves. In terror, the king rode all night, followed by the menacing waters. In the morning, when near Douarnenez, he heard a voice saying: 'Gradlon, if you do not wish to be lost, throw over the demon who rides on your croup.' Dahut, terrified by the fearful noise, lost her balance, and rolled over into the stream, which stopped as soon as she was engulfed. The place is still called Dahut's Pit, now corrupted into Poul-Davit. We discuss the legend as we get into our carriage. It is the old story of the siren with the golden hair and the voice of the charmer, fatal to all those who listen.

It is seven o'clock before we reach Audierne. The quay, so deserted this morning, is now gay; the fishing boats have returned; and the visitors, English and French, are on the shore. Delighted, but very weary, we regain our hospitable quarters to enjoy a good supper.

The next day we take a charming walk to the Valley of the Riz. Every step gives you a fresh surprise. Through

the splendid trees, you see the sparkling bay; cottages with moss-covered roofs are scattered along; the women in their white coifs are busy washing at the fountains, and talking incessantly. Wild flowers grow abundantly, and the red-throats sing their sweet notes. We reach a long avenue of ancient moss-grown oaks; at the end is a ruinous wall, covered with ferns, and an arched doorway with a sculptured construction. Within are farm buildings in every stage of decay. It is the old manor of Keratry, compared with which, the melancholy dwelling of the Maser of Ravenwood was a palace. The ancient family of Beaumanoir once lived here; and as we wandered through the garden, now a wild uncultivated scene, we thought of the days when the fair ladies used to come out in the evening and gather the roses and honeysuckles that are still flowering amidst the weeds.

We climb a hill, from which we see the country. There are manor houses on all sides – Kerillis, Kerdouarnec, Coat-an-aer, buried in groves of oak or chestnut. It would seem as if, like the Breton peasant, the better classes wished to hide themselves from the eyes of strangers; and if you would get nearer, you must plunge into secluded roads, overshadowed by lofty trees, whence you can see the gray tower of a pigeon-cot, and hear the inhospitable barking of many fierce dogs. Issuing from one of these, we enter a solemn, winding alley of aspen-trees, leading to the church of Ploa-Ré. The grass, strewn with the whitening foliage of the trees, rustles under our tread. It was a quarter of an hour before we reached the end of these severe rows of trees; and the sight of the cemetery made us all melancholy. Upon the whole, that is the impression which Brittany leaves upon the mind. The great silent tracts without culture or villages; the dark deep forests; the brooks, which issue from every quarter, sobbing and moaning; the grave, wild peasants, who speak an unknown language, and distrust the stranger – all these things act upon the nervous organization. It is like a melancholy mist falling drop by drop, yet penetrating to the very heart.



An Introduction to the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)

The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 240,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

Some U.S. ICDBL members are of Breton heritage, but the U.S. ICDBL is intended to be a group of “anyone and everyone” showing support for the Breton language rather than an organization for Breton-Americans like so many other “ethnic” organizations in the U.S. We do have quite a few members with Irish, Scottish or Welsh heritage, so there is a strong inter-Celtic element to our work. Most of our members speak neither Breton nor French and most have never been to Brittany. But we all have some reason to help fight for the survival of the Breton language.

What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed in 356 of the 51 States of the U.S. -- from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between—we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 25 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. In November 2006 we published our 100th issue.

In the 3,000+ pages of **Bro Nevez** produced so far, over 800 books from Brittany have been reviewed or noted, and over 300 Breton music recordings have been reviewed and an additional 550 new releases briefly described.

The U.S. ICDBL Web Site: www.icdbl.org

On our website we have published a guide to Breton music (updated in 2006), a guide to learning materials for the Breton language, an introduction to and map of the Celtic languages, a presentation of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools, and two documents presenting the Breton language and why it is endangered and what is being done about it. Bretons themselves have created many great websites to present their country and its culture, and we provide links to a large number of excellent and reliable sites created by Bretons themselves.

Other Action

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. We have had an annual information booth at the Potomac Celtic Festival (Washington D.C. area) since 1994. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

More direct support for the Breton language ...

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan – Breton language immersions schools – for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Member. We have maintained a personal link with the children on one particular Diwan school – Skol Diwan Landerne – since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school’s “godmother.”

As is the case for all branches of the ICDBL, our support of the Breton language is mostly symbolic—the fact that outsiders care at all offers encouragement to people in Brittany who are working to sustain the Breton language and find new and creative ways to use it. And we know that this has been noticed and much appreciated in Brittany.

PLEASE JOIN US. YOUR SUPPORT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

A yearly membership (including subscription to our newsletter) is just \$20. If you would simply like to subscribe to our newsletter, without becoming a Member, that is also \$20. Make out a check to “**U.S. ICDBL**” and mail it to the address below.

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