

BRO NEVEZ

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



GOUEL BROADEL^{AR}
BREZHONEG

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Jalez ar Bourc'h-Mona Isouan

Notwenn Korbel
Bernez Tangi-Le Bour/Bodros Quintel
Trouz An Noz-Talec/Belhard-Termalik

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Bagad Gwengamp-Trio Enora

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21-23 MAE

Mabessouñ Festic-dar/Festic-Maz Marz'had C'hoariva-Skizhoù-Filmoù-Rara ar Yugal

www.gouelbroadelarbrezhoneg.org

The Spring and Summer in Brittany bring lots of festivals – including one for the Breton language.

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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NEW ADDRESS (June 20)
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to do this. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above.

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

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Ar Redadeg

This 1,200 kilometer relay took off on a soggy day in Rennes to trace a path through all five Departments of Brittany before a joyous finish in Carhaix. Gweltaz Adeux and Dom Duff performed for the launch in Rennes and all along the route of the run, numerous musicians and singer celebrated this event to support the Breton language.

Ar Redadeg was organized for the first time in 2009 and covered a shorter run from Nantes to Carhaix. This year the route has doubled, and children and adults alike have participated as they did the first year.

Those contributing 100 euros to this fundraiser (supporting 1 kilometer) included several U.S. ICDBL members. David Pugh supported kilometer #441 between An Henbont and Banaleg. Yours truly, Lois Kuter, supported kilometer #293 between Gwenrann and Gwened. Although I could not find them in the list on the website, Richard and Valerie Herr also supported a kilometer. The U.S. ICDBL as an

organization supported two kilometers, #639 & 640 from Kastellin to Landerne.

The diversity of people supporting this fund-raising run is certainly indicative of the support in Brittany for the Breton language. There were bilingual and Diwan schools, cultural centers, Breton language radio stations, Celtic Circles and bagadoù, as well as a number of different businesses – a veterinary clinic, café-bars, bakeries, book shops, a fire station, etc. And there were many individuals and families. There were musical groups and even the An Avant Guingamp soccer team – winners of the French championship in 2009!

Check out the website www.ar-redadeg.org for pictures and more details and listen to the official song for the Ar Redadeg sung by middle school students of the Diwan School in Vannes with the rock band Ramoneurs de Menirs.

Lois Kuter

A Milestone to be Noted Yann Fouéré at 100

Yann Fouéré has worked for the cause of Brittany and the right of Bretons to decide their own future for most of his 100 years, so it is worth presenting this important figure in the history of the Breton movement.

First it is perhaps a good idea to present some ideas that are at the core of the many books and articles Yann Fouéré has published. Fouéré has been not only a participant in and scholar of Breton history and culture, but he has also traveled widely within Europe meeting with leaders of minority language communities. Based on this Yann Fouéré has always fought for Brittany's right to be a nation within the state of France. This is certainly a workable model in many countries of Europe where culturally distinct peoples have been able to determine their own destiny while being part of a larger political entity.

Yann Fouéré has observed during his lifetime – and this is no secret – that the obstacle for Brittany and other peoples within France is that France has defined itself (and continues to do so) as a “nation-state” where everyone living in France must be “French” to the exclusion of anything else. This is accomplished by the centralization of decision-making in Paris. And the imposition of a French nation-state is supported especially by the education system which tries to “put all citizens of France in the same mold, no matter what their color race, religion, language of civilization may be.” (my translation, Yann Fouéré, *De la Bretagne à la France et à l'Europe*, Edition COB, 1956). To insure that all citizens of France become “French” – whether they live in France's African or Pacific/Caribbean island colonies, or in Brittany or Corsica - they are taught one standard version of the history of France and they are expected to speak French. Yann Fouéré has asked why can't one have a federation of nations within France ... and just as importantly, within Europe as a whole?

Yann Fouéré was born on July 26, 1910. His father, who worked for the French State Revenue administration was from a farming family in the region of Dinan and his mother's family was from the Trégor area. While actually born in Gascony, he spent most of his childhood and youth in Brittany. He developed his passion for Brittany and its history and culture as a college student and became the president of the Association of Breton Students in Paris (1933 to 1937) while in that city to study Law and Political Science. During this period he would get to know many militants in the Breton Movement and Celtic world.

In 1934, when just 24 years old, he helped to create the organization Ar Brezhoneg ar Skol to petition for teaching Breton in school. Thanks to Brezhoneg ar Skol, by the

end of 1939 some 500 municipal councils of Brittany had adopted a petition asking that Breton be officially taught in all the schools of Lower Brittany. The three general councils of Lower Brittany would also adopt the petition. While the plan was to gradually introduce Breton into the schools, the government conceded only to allowing the organization of Breton classes outside of school hours. Fouéré's active role in Ar Brezhoneg ar Skol would lead to his recruitment to serve as vice-president of the Union Régionaliste Bretonne (1939-45).

In the 1930s Yann Fouéré would also begin work with a number of organizations that would take him to other countries to learn about minority peoples. He took on a leadership role with the youth section of the Federal Union of Veterans in 1934 for which he participated in international youth congresses in Geneva (1936) and New York (1938). He became the director and main contributor to the publication *Peuples et Frontières* and worked with the Ligue des Amis des Basques to assist Basque exiles in France. In the 1980s his international contacts would be renewed and Yann Fouéré became involved with the Federal Union of Ethnic Communities of Europe.

Yann Fouéré was employed with the Ministry of the Interior of France in 1936 and worked with the Sous-Préfet in Morlaix for a short period in 1940. In March 1941 he changed careers and founded the newspaper *La Bretagne* with the hope that this would give voice to Bretons just as other minority peoples of Europe had newspapers to express their aspirations. In 1942 he took over ownership of the newspaper *La Dépêche de Brest*.

During World War II and the German occupation of Brittany Yann Fouéré felt it was important to speak about Breton interests, but also do as little as possible to provoke the wrath of either the Vichy government or German occupiers. Already noted as a leader of the Breton movement Fouéré would be appointed as General Secretary (1942 to 1944) of the Comité Consultatif de Bretagne, an advisory group to speak to Breton concerns and advance cultural projects and initiatives for the Breton language.

The immediate post-war period in Brittany is very complex and a large number of Breton militants and cultural activists were arrested and accused of German collaboration simply based on their outspoken defense of rights for Brittany to decide its own future. Yann Fouéré was certainly outspoken about his desire for a decentralization that would allow Bretons to remain Breton but did not advocate separatism. He served a full year in prison from August 1944 to August 1945 before being released on bail. Shortly before his trial in March 1946 he sought exile in Wales. In absentia he was sentenced to a life sentence of hard labor. He would begin a new life in Wales – thanks to the generosity of

fiends made through participation in Celtic Congresses, like Gwynfor Evans. He then moved to Ireland and settled eventually in Cleggan near Galway where he would take up a new occupation as a fish and shellfish wholesaler. It was not an easy life for him and his family who joined him in Wales and Ireland.

In 1953 a law was passed in France granting amnesty to Bretons stripped of citizenship rights in the post-war years. In 1955 Yann Fouéré gets a new trial and is acquitted of all charges. After ten years of exile he returns home to Brittany. He has not forgotten dreams and practical plans for Brittany's future. In 1956 he helps to draft a *Projet d'Organisation de la Bretagne* and in 1957 he helps to launch the *Mouvement pour l'Organisation de la Bretagne (MOB)* and its journal *L'Avenir de la Bretagne*. This organization would focus particularly on social and economic development of Brittany.

Even though active back in Brittany in working with others to strengthen the Breton movement for self-determination, Yann Fouéré maintained strong ties with those active in the defense of Celtic cultures. In 1961 he would be part of the founding of the Celtic League and he would spend much time each year in Ireland in years to come.

The MOB would disappear ... and reappear in other organizations in the late 1960s. One of these was *Strollad ar Vro* which continued publication of *L'Avenir de la Bretagne*. In the late 1960s Bretons impatient with the road-blocks set up by the French government for even the smallest measures for self-determination and cultural advancement set off a number of bombs through the FLB, *Front de Liberation de la Bretagne*. Symbolically targeting government buildings, statues, and even the Versailles Palace, the bombs are carefully planned to avoid harm to people.

Suspected of being a part of the FLB, Yann Fouéré is arrested in October 1975, along with many other Breton militants. After 105 days in prison he is released thanks to pressure from a number of organizations including Amnesty International. In efforts to discredit Breton militants it has been the practice to haul as many as possible into jail, and every effort was made to make FLB actions appear to be linked to past collaboration on the part of a handful of Breton separatists with Nazi Germany.

In the early 1980s Yann Fouéré helped to found the *Parti pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre (POBL)* and the publication *L'Avenir de la Bretagne* would once again come out. While this party faded out in 2005, this journal continues to be published and Yann Fouéré had a regular column in it until the end of 2004. He wrote innumerable

articles for this and other newspapers and journals as well as a number of books.

Wounds from World War II period and the post-war period in Brittany are yet to fully heal and different people will have different – and strong – feelings about Yann Fouéré as a Breton and as a Frenchman. If you want to hear from this Breton militant himself, read his books or go to his website: www.fondationyannfouere.org/english where you can find a wealth of information and learn more about his work for Brittany.

A few books:

De la Bretagne à la France et à l'Europe, 1956
La Bretagne Ecartelée, 1962
L'Europe aux Cent Drapeaux, 1968 (published in English as *Towards a Federal Europe – Nations or States?* in 1980)
En prison pour la libération de la Bretagne (En prison pour le F.L.B.), 1977
Histoire résumée du mouvement Breton, du XIXe siècle à nos jours (1800-1976), 1977
Ces droits que les autres ont ... mais que nous n'avons pas, 1979
L'Histoire du quotidien La Bretagne et les silences d'Henri Fréville, 1981
Les Régions d'Europe en quête d'un Statut, 1982
Problèmes bretons du temps présent, 1983
La Patrie Interdite, Histoire d'un Breton, 1987
La Maison de Connemara, 1995
Europe ! Nationalité Bretonne ... Citoyen Français?, 2000
Yann Fouéré .. des mots pour l'Avenir de la Bretagne – biographie et sélection des textes, 2008

Adults Learning the Breton Language

The "Observatoire" of Ofis ar Brezhoneg keeps statistics and monitors progress (or lack of it) in all areas of the use of the Breton language. In April they reported that during 2009 some 5,000 adults were learning Breton in weekly classes, more intensive workshop, or through correspondence courses – up 2.5% from 2008. For the second consecutive year the number of adults enrolled in evening classes increased – in 2009 up 4.2% from 2008. A complete report on adult Breton learning can be found on the Ofis ar Brezhoneg website: www.ofis-bzh.org.

Measuring the Success of High Schools of France

Here in the U.S. one sees rankings for both high schools and colleges all the time, and like the ranking done by the Ministry of National Education in France, the criteria used doesn't always measure quality. But, statistics can show some significant things about a school, and for the French ranking it shows primarily the success rate for students taking the baccalaureat exams. So congratulations are to be given to the Diwan High School / Lise Diwan in Carhaix for their ranking in second place

for high schools of France. Clearly immersion learning through the Breton language has not held any of these Breton students back.

Keleier ar vro – Radio Network for the Breton Language

At the end of 2009 an organization called Brudañ ha skignañ was launched to create a network of local radios to work in common to develop Breton language programming. In April a press conference was held to update people on the progress of this work by Arvorig FM (Landerneau), Radio Bro Gwened (Pontivy), Radio Kerne (Ploneis) and Radio Kreiz Breizh (St. Nicodème). From a Breton language news program jointly produced for the evening, they have added a morning broadcast and a mid-day program. Check them out on the internet site: www.stalig.com

A Website about Breton Language Events: www.kaouenn.net

This is a nice little website posting a diversity of notes related to Breton language events – festivals, new books, job offers, etc. Short notes are in Breton with French translation, and this is a great way to learn a bit of Breton. To give a flavor for the site, I found the following information when I checked it out on May 1.

Announcements of concerts and festoù noz in support of a variety of organizations including Skol Diwan Louaneg, Skol Diwan Karaez and Skolaj Diwan Bro-Dreger.

Dastum's petition to have the fest-noz and other cultural expressions of Brittany's immaterial cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO.

A new website <http://labourzo.ubapar.org> to list jobs of all kinds where the Breton language is a welcome skill. Also found was a listing of jobs open for Breton teachers and office administrators where fluency in Breton was needed.

Kreizenn Sevenadurel Vreizhon Gwengamp noted an opportunity to borrow traditional Breton games for events, and there were numerous announcements of events sponsored by this Breton cultural center in Guingamp.

Various notes from UBAPAR (Union Breton d'Animation en Pays Rural) including a nature camp for kids in Breton and Gallo and a CD of songs in Breton and Gallo by camp counselors

A call to support Ar Rededeg

Lists of workshops and classes for the Breton language, theater and sports

A note on the music group Gweltz Adeux and their first CD

Activities coming up at various cultural centers such as Ti ar Vro e Kawan.

A poster and contact information for the Gouel Broadel ar Brezhoneg May 21-23 in Cavan.

Announcement of the Skrivadeg writing contest for various age levels.

KENTEL 16 - LESSON 16

YEZADUR - GRAMMAR

By Nathalie Novik

As I was checking sources for the rules presiding over the mutations or inflections of the adjectives, I came upon this website and its lessons on the above topic:

http://www.kervarker.org/en/grammar_01_kemmadur.htm !

The enormous advantage of this website for our readers is that it is available in English! On the other hand, I have a feeling that it is being re-worked or updated, so you might not yet find there everything you want to know about Breton. But still, it is a wonderful site!

Back to our adjectives, to summarize what happens: just like we have seen with other words, adjectives, which are usually placed after the noun in Breton, mutate the first letter depending on the gender of the noun and sometimes with the consonant that ends the word.

So here are the examples you will find at www.kervarker.org:

Y2. Inflections of the epithetic adjective

The epithetic adjective of a noun feminine singular or masculine plural inflects (by softening). Examples :

- B / V- Ar **baotred vras**
- M / V - Tud **vat**
- K / G - levezon **greñv** / Mamm **gozh**

But there are some **exceptions** :

1. Plac'h which does not itself inflect, has its epithet change by softening. Examples : Ur plac'h **vat** / ur plac'h **vrav**
2. The consonants **K,P,T**, in front of an epithet *only change when the noun that precedes ends with L,M,N,R,V or a vowel*. Thus you have: an **dud kozh**, but ar **vugale glañv**

ar **b**aotred pennek, but ar **v**istri **b**invidik
ar soudarded trist, but ar **g**elennerien **d**ev
ar plac'h koant, but ar plac'h **v**rav

GERIADURIG - VOCABULARY

Nouns:

You already know “paotr” (guy) and “plac’h” (girl), now you need to learn:

Tud (does not have a plural) – *people*
Levez – *influence*
Mamm goz – *grand'mother (literally “old” mother)*
Bugale – *children*
Soudard – *soldier*
Vistri – is the inflected form of “mistri”, which is itself the plural of “mestr” – *master*

Adjectives:

Vras – inflected form of “bras” – *big, large*
Vat – inflected form of “mat” – *good*
Greñv – inflected form of “krefñv” – *strong*
Vrav – inflected form of “brav” – *beautiful, pleasant, good, OK*
Kozh – *old*
Glañv – inflected form of “klañv” – *sick*
Pennek – *stubborn*
Binvidik – inflected form of “pinvidik” – *rich*
Trist – *sad*
Dev – inflected form of “tev” – *fat*
Koant – *cute, nice*
Vrav – inflected form of “brav”

So please learn the letters and their inflected equivalents in adjectives:

K P T turn into G B D

And the endings that trigger an inflection:

L M N R V and all the vowels.



Assimil Language Learning Publisher Turns 80

Starting with the book *Anglais sans peine* with its famous phrase “My tailor is rich.” Assimil has published hundreds of books to help speakers of one language learn dozens of others using short phrases and a basic vocabulary base. While the books are more limited for English speakers, French speakers have access to learning materials for some seventy languages and language dialects, including Breton, Irish and Welsh. Today you can learn languages using the latest computer technology.

While Americans may be familiar with this company, you probably did not realize (and I did not) that its founder and current directors are Bretons. The following is an introduction from the Assimil website (www.assimil.com) to these remarkable people:

The founder: Alphonse Chérel, who was born in Rennes (Brittany) in 1882, developed the Assimil principle. As a young graduate and tireless traveler, he roamed all over Europe, learning English, German, Russian and Portuguese in the countries where they were spoken. Drawing on his language learning experience, he designed a desk calendar where each page contained a short lesson and a cartoon. The principle of the short, fun and, above all, intuitive daily lesson was born.

From father to son - Yannick took over from Jean-Loup who came after Alphonse. The founder's grandson now runs the publishing house with its atypical focus and catalogue. The family business has been built on the success and effectiveness of the "[With Ease](#)" methods and on an unwavering willingness to adapt to demand from customers.



Produit en Bretagne's 2010 Prizes for Culture and Creation

Since 1999 the organization Produit en Bretagne has awarded prizes for books and music produced in Brittany. As the name of this organization implies its role is to promote products from Brittany – whether that be foods, textiles, books, or furniture. In selecting books and music for their quality of artistry as well as production, Produit en Bretagne helps to promote authors and musicians in a practical way. The winners for this year are as follows:

For Beau Livre (beautiful book)
Costumes de Bretagne by Yann Guesdon Palantines (Ouest France publication)

For Novels
La Maison de l'île by Louis Pouliquen (Coop Breizh)

For Breton language book
Lizherenneg al lutun glas by Christophe Babonneau (Keit Vimp Beo)

Grand Prize for a Recording
Sous le tilleul by Erwan Hamon and Janick Martin (An Naer Produktion)

Breton Music Prize
Dièse 3 by Dièse 3 (Coop Breizh)

For Young Artist
Moongai Foile Zenpark (self-produced)

Gouel Sant Erwan – Celebrated in New York City

May 16-23, 2010

For the fourth year BZH-New York has celebrated Saint Yves / Sant Erwan with a wealth of activities in the “Big Apple.” This year’s events focus on Youenn Gwernig, an artist, sculptor, poet, writer and musician who spent many years in New York in the 1950s and 60s. As a defender all his life of the freedom to be Breton and Celtic, he returned to Brittany in 1969 and lived, created, and fought for the Breton language until his death in 2006 (see Bro Nevez 63, August 1997 for biographical information).

The very active association of Bretons in New York rightly celebrates this individual who was so influenced by his years in their city. The following are the events scheduled. Check out the BZH New York website for more details and information about all of their activities (www.bzh-ny.org):

Poetry Reading of Youenn Gwernig

Wednesday, May 16, 7 to 8 pm at Beethoven Hall (210 E. 5th Street)

Breton, French and English were languages in which Youenn wrote and all three will be presented in poetry readings which trace his life.

Documentary on the life of Youenn Gwernig

Thursday, May 20, 7 to 9 pm, Cantor Film Center at New York University (36 E. 8th Street)

“Gant Youenn Bras” was made by Jean Charles Huitorel (co-produced by Aligal Production and France Télévisions) and traces his life and celebrates his songs through their performance by a variety of Breton artists. The screening will be preceded by a presentation of it by France 3 producer Bernez Rouz and some of Youenn’s songs will be sung by Louise Ebrel and Ifig Flatres.

Concert by Dièse 3

Friday, May 21, 9 to 10 pm – Zebulon Café (258 Wythe Ave., Williamsburg, Brooklyn)

Dièse 3 is a trio of Breton musicians innovating with Breton traditions. In this group are Pierre Droual on fiddle, Antoine Lahay on guitar and Etienne Cabaret on clarinets (www.myspace.com/diese3trio)

Big Fest Noz

Saturday, May 22, 7 pm to 2 am – Connolly’s Pub Times Square (121 W. 45th Street)

Breton music and dance will be featured at a big fest noz with performances by Louise Ebrel and Ifig Flatres (kan ha diskant masters) as well as Dièse 3 – all traveling here from Brittany - as well as the Bagad NY.

Kendalc’h Celebrates its 60th Anniversary

Created in 1950 Kendalc’h is an overarching federation of over 100 smaller groups which all promote the traditional culture of Brittany – engaging some 12,000 individuals. At the heart are the Cercles Celtiques – Celtic Circles – based in towns and cities throughout Brittany which perform traditional dances and recreate costumes of their region. But, the Celtic Circles are not just clubs where people put on old costumes and learn to dance. These are very active organizations where members learn about their cultural heritage – including language and history - and engage in it as an evolving part of their modern lives. There cannot be dance without music so Kendalc’h has also fostered the performance of song and instruments.

There are a number of exciting events planned throughout Brittany for this anniversary year which link the artistic display of costumes with the beauty of dance movement and musical performance. These are described very briefly below.

Tradi’deiz – Vannes

April 11, 2010

1,200 dancers from close to 50 Celtic Circles will engage in dance competitions and show off their costumes in a parade and performances. This will become an annual event for the city of Vannes.

Quels Spectacles par les Enfants? – Guingamp

July 3, 2010

Kendalc’h has always involved children and young people in the exploration of cultural roots and on this day a colloquium will explore how to involve children in performance.

60 ans, 60 modes – Pontivy

July 10, 2010

This festival centers around the costume and its great variety and history in Brittany. 60 couples will show off costumes in an innovative performance.

Breizh Omega

Quimper - July 24 & Lorient – August 8

The streets of these two cities will be the scene for performances by the seven top dance groups of Brittany – 320 dancers and 80 musicians who will combine forces and then move out through the streets engaging the public in dance.

Treizell, La Passerelle – St. Herblain

September 2010

This event combines a colloquium on the artistry of putting traditional dances on stage with a performance where innovative dance performances – linking traditional and contemporary dance – will be presented.

Kendalc’h Noz – Mûr-de-Bretagne

September 25

This fest noz will bring together all the musicians who work with dance groups to celebrate their talents. Both traditional styles and more innovative mixes of instruments will be featured.

Breizhiloù – Rennes

October 9, 2010

While Kendalc'h organizes many gatherings for children to learn and perform dances, this event will take on the air of a fest noz where children can just enjoy dancing and meet each other. Some 1,500 children from 6 to 12 are expected at this free event.

Gouel Bro Gozh Ma Zadoù Brittany and Wales and a festival for the Breton National Anthem

This festival will take place from May 19th to 30th in Lesneven and will include exhibits, conferences, games and sports, and concerts by Nolwenn Korbell and Dom Duff as well as 4 choirs. A number of partners are involved in its organization: the Comité Bro Gozh, the City of Lesneven, the Lesneven Festival Committee, the Cultural Institute of Brittany, the Kanomp Breizh federation of choral groups, the Brittany Wales Association, the CREDIB of Saint-Nazaire and the art association Speread Kelt. Details of this festival and all its events can be found on the website:

www.brogozhmazadou.com

The festival will not only celebrate the 107 years of this anthem inspired by the Welsh national anthem, but will celebrate the long link between Wales and Brittany. This is evidenced in numerous exchanges and over 40 twinnings of towns/regions between the two countries. Just this past May 1 a concert at the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff brought singers and musicians together as part of a kick-off for the Interceltic Festival of Lorient which celebrates its 40th year.

At the May 1 concert the Bagad Kevrenn Alre led off the concert and Breton singer Nolwenn Korbell who spent a number of years in Wales paired with Welsh singer Lleuwen Steffan who is now living in Brittany. Both sing in both Welsh and Breton. They were joined by Meic Stevens who is well known in Brittany. The concert also included performances by Y Glerorfa, Wales Folk Orchestra, and singer Sián James. As a grand finale the Bagad Kevrenn Alre came back on stage to join Y Glerorfa and the other performers in the two national anthems Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau and Bro Gozh ma Zadoù

Forum Ar Re Yaouank – A gathering of Youth in Song - May 7, 2010 in Carhaix

While one thinks of Wales as the land for choral music, this is an art that has been growing in Brittany where traditionally song has been unison – solo and in a response pairing of voices. But, just as the Scottish pipe bands inspired the creation of the bagad, so too, Bretons have looked to Welsh choirs for inspiration in creating a “new” ensemble.

The Forum Ar Re Yaouank (Forum of Youth) is organized by the federation Kanomp Breizh which promotes choral Breton music through the organization of events for choral expression. The Forum was held for the first time last year and attracted 100 singers. This year some 300 young people will participate with students from various schools and choral ensembles. Seven ensembles will perform at the concert and then together as one big group.

Festivals in Brittany

During the summer there are hundreds of musical events in Brittany – concerts, parades, fest noz and fest deiz and weekend or week-long festivals. For the tourist – or anyone - festivals offer a great opportunity to sample lots of different music and dancing. A great way to locate festivals is through the website of Gouelioù Breizh (www.gouelioubreizh.com) which posts a calendar for the year and provides contact information and websites for the festivals. This does not capture every single festival in Brittany, but does include the major ones.

I have listed below just a selection of festivals and websites from that site and from other sources. They are listed by the month in which they take place but I highly recommend that anyone interested in attending a festival go to the website to get details and exact dates and locations. The town where they normally take place and Department are listed. 35 = Ile et Vilaine, 44 = Loire-Atlantique, 22 = Côtes d'Armor, 56 = Morbihan, 29 = Finistère.

In most cases these festivals include not only music (contests, fest noz, concerts) but also workshops, theater, films, exhibitions, or sports. Usually there is a mix of events over a weekend or week. This by no means covers all the possibilities for finding music and dance in Brittany. And while, the festivals listed below are annual events, they can disappear or move to a new month.

A number of regional festivals and competitions for dance, bagads and other music are organized by the federation Kendalc'h (www.kendalc'h.com) and the Bodadeg ar Sonerion (www.bas.com) and especially the Finistère section of BAS (www.bas29.com). These sites

will give you calendars for events they sponsor which are not listed below.

May

Fest Yves / Gouel Erwan

www.fetedelabretagne.com

Annual celebration of Brittany's patron saint. Like Saint Patrick, Sant Erwan is celebrated with lots of music and festivities found throughout Brittany and in Breton emigrant communities worldwide

Trophée Roñsed-Mor – Locoal-Mendon (56)

www.ronsedmor.org

Contests for piping, activities for children, Breton language theater, concerts and dancing

Rencontre Internationale de la clarinette populaire – Glomel (22)

www.clarinette-populaire.org

Festival centered around the worldwide use of the clarinet.

Fête de la Bretagne – Concarneau (29)

10-day festival of varied activities organized by Tud Bro Konk, a federation of cultural associations of the Pays de Concarneau. (May 13-23 this year).

June

Gouel Broadel ar Brezhoneg - Cavan (22)

www.Gouelbroadelarbrezhoneg.org

Festival for the Breton language with music, information stands, sports, and mini-conferences

C'hoarioù Breizh (Jeux Bretons) - Pontivy (56)

www.falsab.com

Contests and demonstrations of Gouren and traditional games and sports of Brittany

Concours Menez-Meur – Hanvec (20)

www.bas29.com

Contests for traditional Breton styles set in the beautiful Parc Natural Régional d'Armorique

Festival Dañs

www.kendalch.com

Features contests for dance ensembles.

Festival Anne de Bretagne – various towns of Loire-Atlantique (44)

Large festival with a mix of events.

July

Fest Bro Pagan

www.festbropagan.aveldro.org

A festival set in the Pagan Country on the far northwestern coast of Brittany with a mix of music and events.

Festival Folklores du Monde – Saint Malo (35)

www.ville-saint-malo.fr

An international festival of world musics

Les Tombées de la Nuit – Rennes (35)

www.lestombeesdelanuit.com

Mix of musics of all styles

Fête des Brodeuses – Pont-L'Abbe (29)

www.fetesdesbrodeuses.com

An old festival focused on embroidery and costume

Festival Kann al Loar - Landerneau (29)

www.kann-al-loar.com

A large festival with a variety of styles of music

60 ans, 60 modes (Kendalc'h) - Pontivy (56)

www.kendalch.com

A festival to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Kendalc'h (see more in this newsletter)

Les Assemblées Gallèses – Plumieux (22)

www.assembles-galleges.net

a week of festival events celebrating the Gallo traditions of eastern Brittany

Fête de la Gallésie – Monterfil (35)

www.gallesie-monterfil.org

Another festival celebrating Gallo music and culture

Festival des Vieilles Charrues – Carhaix (22)

www.viellescharrues.asso.fr

A huge festival of rock and pop music from around the world

Festival de Cornouaille – Quimper (29)

www.festival.cornouaille.com

One of the oldest and biggest festivals of Brittany with a variety of events and music celebrating Breton tradition for an 87th year

August

Festival du Chant de Marin – Paimpol (22)

www.paimpol-festival.com

A maritime festival – tall ships and maritime music from around the world

Celtival du Don – Guémene-Penfao (44)

www.celtival.fr

Festival Interceltique - Lorient (56)

www.festival-interceltique.com

Brittany's biggest festival spanning 10 days and including some 4,500 performers

Festival du Menez-Hom – Plomodiern (29)

www.festival-menez-hom.com

Les Celtiques de Guérande - Guerande (44)

www.bro-gwenrann.org

Festival Plinn du Danouët – Bourbriac (22)

www.danouet.free.fr

Features the dance plinn with contests, concerts, dancing.

Fêtes d'Arvor - Vannes (56)

www.fetes-arvor.org

Festival de la Danse Bretonne et de la Saint-Loup - Guingamp (22)

www.dansebretonne.com

Competitions for Breton dance groups

Festival des Filets Bleus - Concarneau (29)

www.festivaldesfiletsbleus.com

Mondial'Folk - Plozevet (29)

www.mondialfolk.org

Festival Fisel – Rostrenen (22)

www.fisel.org

Features contests for one of Brittany's more challenging dances, the fisel.

September

Championnat de Bretagne de Musique Traditionnelle - Gourin (56)

www.championnatdessonneurs.com

Championship contest for paired biniou and bombarde

October

Festival les Celtomania - throughout Loire-Atlantique (44)

www.celtomania.fr

November

Festival Yaouank – Rennes / Bruz (35)

www.skeudenn.eu

Festival with a focus on youth

Concours de Kas a Barzh – Larmor-Plage (56)

www.bokderlann.com

Focus on the dance called kas a barzh

Bombardes en Fêtes – Ergue-Gaberic (29)

www.bas29.com

Bombardes and bombarde-like instruments world-wide are featured.

Fête de la Ronde de Loudéac – Loudéac area (22)

Features traditional dance of the area.

December

Breizh a Gan (Kendalc'h) – Saint-Pol de Leon (29)

www.kendalc'h.com

A competition showcasing Breton language choirs of Brittany.

Cornemuses - Quimper (29)

www.bas29.com

The bagpipe is at the center of this festival with some 80 solo performers.

January

Taol Kurun – Quimperlé (29)

<http://taolkurun.free.fr>

A festival with a theme (such as "folklore") to explore as well as lots of music

February

Truite du Ridor – Plémet (22)

www.latruideduridorplemet.blogs.letelegramme.com

A festival for Gallo music and culture

Trophée Roue Waroch

www.petra-neue.com

March

Kan ar Bobl contests take place in a number of towns throughout Brittany

April

Kar ar Bobl – Pontivy (56)

<http://kanarbobl.org>

Final contests and other musical events for traditional and less traditional styles.

Printemps de Châteauneuf – Châteauneuf-du-Faou (29)

www.printemps-de-chateauneuf.org

Planètes Musiques – Nanterre (92)

www.planetemusiques.com

Traditional music from many regions of France in new ensembles. Brittany always has a strong presence here.

Festival de danse en Pays d'Iroise – Milizac (29)

<http://luskerien.free.fr>

Festival centered on traditional dances

Fête de Chant Traditionnel – Bovel (35)

www.epille.com

A celebration of Gallo song, storytelling and dance

Printemps des sonneurs – Brest (29)

www.brestsantmark.org

A weekend of piping in the city of Brest organized by the Kevrenn Sant Mark

Festival de Boquého – Boquého (22)

www.festivaldeboqueho.com

Finding Music and Musicians

www.Tamm-kreiz.com

One of the best places to find concerts, festou-noz and other musical events in Brittany is the website called tamm-kreiz.com. It is very easy to use and you can

discover the vast wealth of music using a search taking you to hundreds of musical groups, titles of music recordings, individual artists, or you can search by musical instrument. Once you find an individual or group you can link to their recordings and upcoming performances (and the website very often) and you will find photos and sound bites.

There's a detailed calendar of what's coming up with a map that links to the calendar and performers. The website also has a useful section on the dances of Brittany, describing some 100 traditional dances – their varied names, history, usual musical accompaniment, description of steps and rhythm. This might not be sufficient to actually teach you to do the dance, but it's a great starting point.



New Recordings from Brittany Heard of, But Not Heard

The following information was gleaned from notes and reviews in the following Breton magazines: *Ar Men* 175 (mars-avril 2010), *Armor Magazine* 482 (mars 2010) & 483 (avril 2010), *Musique Bretonne* 219 (mars-avril 2010), and the website *Agence Bretagne Presse*

Al K Traxx. Propagande. Massive Centrale MC 002. A trio from the Côtes d'Armor with a rock style that sometimes hints of Breton tradition in its melodies but demonstrates how Bretons feel quite at home in a variety of musical styles.

Allah's Kanañ. Frouez nevez. Studio de Faune. This is the second recording by this choir of some 20 young singers. This CD includes 12 selections – some in Breton – with a variety of musical styles. Included are several Breton cantiques, but also spiritual music from other world cultures.

Jean-Luc Cappozo and Erwan Keravec. Air brut. Innacor INNA 11001
The pairing of voices or instruments is at the heart of Breton tradition (biniou-bombarde, kan ha diskan singing ...) but here you have horns (bugle and trumpet) paired with reeds (bagpipes) in a jazzy interplay of compositions and improvisations.

Renaud Detressan. Airs de famille. Epicure EPI 02. Théodore Botrel (1865-1925) was a very popular song composer and performer at the turn of the century and beyond. His sentimental songs stereotyped Bretons in the best and worst ways, and through the years tourists would snap up records of his songs to the dismay of those felt this was a travesty to traditional Breton music. Renaud Detressan is a founding member of one of Brittany's most popular rock bands, Soldat Louis, and he

happens to be a grandson of Botrel. Here the songs are slightly modified and the music is dusted off.

Les Gardons de R'don. Tant qu'il y aura des rêves. This is a brand new recording of maritime music by a group with some outstanding singers of the Redon area. All six of the performers in this group sing but there is a nice mix of instruments as well, including fiddle, flutes, clarinet, guitar, accordion, bombarde, harmonica and oboe. The group is composed of Jean-Yves Bardoul, Yves Huguel, Joël Bosc, Alain Le Nay ("Calix"), Pierrick Hercelin and Claudine Joubaud. The CD includes 13 titles with a number of texts composed by Jacques Le Tallec.

Armelle Gourlaouën. Musiques de Celtie et d'ailleurs. Le Label COA140
A performer of classical, Celtic and troubadour harps, this unaccompanied CD includes the Celtic and troubadour harps and is centered around a piece in five movements called "La danse des korrigans."

Lena Jonson and Martin Coudroy. Vagg. Bemol Productions BEMO 034.
This is a duo of Lena Jonson on fiddle and Martin Coudroy on accordion with traditional tunes and dances as well as compositions. Nice interplay of instruments.

Kreiz Breizh Akademi. Izhpenn 12. Innacor INNA 20909
A unique ensemble from the Kreiz Breizh Akademi directed by Erik Marchand. The group uses a variety of instruments, including flute, guitars, fiddles, oud, bagpipes, Celtic harp and a variety of percussion. Here Breton ballads and tunes are performed with a focus on modal music by a dozen up-and-coming Breton singers and musicians. Familiar Breton melodies are heard in a new way with Mideastern and Asian flavors.

Dominique Moison. Les Roses d'Ouessant. Boulevard Studio BS 1709.
This is an ensemble led by Dominique Moison where the accordion is king and the predominant style is "musette" with popular dances from "bals populaires" like the waltz and bolero as well as gavottes and a bit of tradition unique to Brittany.

Ormuz. Le Bambocheur. Bemol Productions BEMO 034.
This is a group interpreting traditional song as well as presenting their own compositions. One is reminded of Tri Yann in their sound.

Ribl ar Mor. Musique bretonne et sacrée. Vocation Records VOC 1470.
This is the second CD by Logann Vince (bombarde) and Mathieu Bellec (chromatic accordion). It includes Breton cantiques as well as some "foreign" music – L'Ave Maria

by Schubert and some gospels. It also includes a composition by Logann Vince from this duo's concert performance.

Tevenn. *Entrelacs*. Self-produced.

This group includes Joseph Kerdeillant on flutes, Christian Lemaître on fiddle, with clavecin player Kevin Le Saint and viole de gambe by Julie Dessaint. Also added is percussion of various kinds by Dom Molard. Included are tunes and melodies from the Celtic world with a side trip to Rumania and some jazzy twists to the jigs and reels.

Titom. *Un cri dans l'ébène*. L'Oz Production. L'OZ 61.

Thomas Lotout is normally found in a bombard-biniou pair with his brother Joseph Lotout. Here he goes "solo" with his own compositions and back-up by notable musicians such as Yannig Alloï on flute, Pat O'May on guitar, with some song by invited artists Brendan Le Corre and Gael Lorcy.

Le Trio Virtuel. *Le Trio Virtuel*. Self-produced.

www.letriovirtuel.ift.fr

This is a trio composed of Julien Vrigneau on sax and bombarde, Malo Morvan on accordion, and Mathilde Chevrel on cello. With five titles they combine Breton dances like the ridee or laride with South American beats and jazz improvisation.



DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL - 26 Pigs !

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Brittany is one of the European champions in the pig industry. In 2008 more than 14 millions hogs were slaughtered here. 1,340,660 tons of pork meat was produced.

The technical results of Breton pig farming are very good, according to world standard. The global consumption index is around 3,03. It means that the Breton pig producers can make 1 pound of pork with 3 pounds of feedstuff. Here, 31% of the pig farms produce yearly more than 22 piglets per sow.

Those are nice numbers. Meanwhile, in Brittany, the pig industry is not a neutral human activity like supermarkets, restaurants or business schools. Here, you have to be for or against the pig industry. It is a mark of political identity, like to be for or against Chinese toys made by child labor,

genetically modified corn or Israel oranges. You must choose one side or another.

Why do these pink animals raise such a passion? It is not the case for other animals bred on farms. Yet, cattle, poultry or sheep have the same digestion processes as swine. They produce waste, droppings, excrement, faeces or whatever you call it.

When there is a protest about bad smells in the Breton countryside, it is about pig droppings. I am an agronomist and I can immediately make a difference between poultry droppings or pig dung. But, as a scientist, I don't make a true difference between "nice" and "nasty" animal smells. My fellow countrymen are able to make such a difference. In their aesthetic value, pig droppings smell is the bottom grade of their olfactory scale. Pigs stink.

When a sense of vision is requested, pigs are not regarded any better. For a long time, I believed that judgments about animals were linked with the fluidity of their droppings. On a farm, the nicest animals are the rabbits, whose dung is hard. Then come sheep, goats, horses. Then poultry and cows. At last, pigs. But I never found any psychologist or philosopher to work on and deepen my discovery.

Environmentalists blame intensive farming for pollution, but concentrate their attacks on pigs. The statisticians calculate that they are responsible for 14% of total animal nitrogen in Brittany, whereas cattle are responsible for 60%. Nevertheless, heavy cows ruminating in grassy lands keep a good reputation, and pigs are found guilty. They are said to pollute the water system and feed the prolific algae of the sea with nitrates, which are then washed in to shore. That phenomenon is called "green tides" here.

For a foreign ethnologist studying an ancient people as ourselves, this Breton passion about pigs can be a way to scrutinize what is deep inside our skulls. It is obvious that the swine is a symbol and an archetype. But a symbol of what?

In the Greek literature, the Crommyon sow is a harlot. His son is the Calydon boar. About Phaia, Plutarch said that she was considered as a sow according to her moral behavior.

In ancient Greece, the Pharmakos is a human or an animal being, whose function is to gather the disease and evils. Then, the people of the city get rid of him and his burden. The members of the community are purified when the pharmakos is killed or exiled. In the mysteries of Eleusis, the pharmakos is a young pig.

In their calendar, the Chinese have cycles of twelve years, linked with revolutions of Jupiter. Each year is represented by an animal. The last cycle is the pig or

boar year. In Chinese tradition, the pig is associated with prosperity. Dreaming of a boar is an omen of abundance.

In the book *Alice in Wonderland*, there is a scene that combines images of earthly happiness: the woman and her child, someone cooking, a cat sleeping. But things get crazy. The cook launches her kitchen tools anywhere, the cat growls and smiled continuously. The woman abandons her baby, which turns into a piglet ...

Well, the link between these stories of pigs and the Breton people is not obvious, is it? Let us give only a vague conclusion. In various civilizations, and probably here also, the pig is linked with earthly satisfactions. In Brittany, it is rather strange to find in old churches sculptures relating swine with music or dance, through the image of a boar playing bagpipe.



Pigs are related with human pleasures, but not necessarily with selfishness. A Breton historian living during the 14th century, Guillaume de Saint André, described

swine as the symbol of both Breton people and solidarity:

"Car les Bretons, très bien le sçay,
The Bretons, that is well known

S'entredoiivent tous d'un accort
Are allied by a common agreement,

Aimer et craindre jusque a la mort.
Love and fear until death

Pour ce sont ils en général
That is why, usually,

Nommez Pourceaulx, non pas à mal
They are called swine, not in a bad way

Car pourceaux telle nature ont
Because swine have such a nature

Quand l'un fort crie, les autres vont
That, when one of them scream, the others go

Tous ensemble pour l'aider ;
Together to help it

Il ne faut point les en prier."
They have not to be prayed for that."

(Chronique de Jean le Vaillant, duc de Bretagne. 1380)

In the Merlin's poems, transmitted orally from the 6th century and laid down in the Welsh Black Book of Caermarthen, the poet considered the pig as his disciple:

*"But listen, little pig! On the Thursday will come
Happiness for the Kymrys and their mighty battalions..."*

In the Merlin's prophecies, the boar is the symbol of sovereignty. Arthur is depicted as the "Boar of Cornwall." And the second Arthur, the warlord who will free the Celtic people, is depicted as the Armorican Boar. *"The mountains of Armorica shall erupt and Armorica itself shall be crowned with Brutus diadem. Kambria shall be filled with joy, and the Cornish oaks shall flourish. The island shall be called by the name of Brutus and the title given to it by the foreigners shall be done away with. From Conan there shall descend a fierce Boar, which will try the sharpness of its tusks in the forests of Gaul; for it will lop down all the larger oak-trees, taking care however to protect the smaller ones."*

In the Arthurian legends, the boar hunt seems to contradict that symbolism. How is it possible to represent the king as a boar, and to have him leading a boar hunt? The contradiction is only superficial. The hunt is a way to gather everybody in an almost eternal stampede. The king realizes the union through the boar. Twrch Trwyth is a magic boar. Between its ears are the instruments which will lead to the wedding of Culhwch with Olwen, and to the fall of the giant Ysbaddaden.

The Breton interest for the figure of the swine is not linked only with bestial satisfactions. Our humanity can include individual pleasures but is linked also with solidarity and collective celebrations. We must be an archaic people, worshipping terrestrial gods through animal symbols. People venerating celestial gods have a strong repulsion against the figure of the swine and pork meat. In the Egypt of the pharaohs, the conflict arose between supporters of Seth, represented as a black boar, and those of eagle-headed Horus, the son of God Osiris. When the cult of Horus triumphed, swineherds were forbidden to attend temples.

In Brittany, earthly and heavenly gods coexist. Sometimes they fight each against the others. As reported in the *Barzaz Breizh*, the old bard Gwench'lan depicted a battle between the boar and the horned white horse. The second animal, like the unicorn in medieval symbolism, is the animal of Heaven.

I see a boar, out of the wood
Limping his way, with injured foot,
With open, bleeding mouth, at bay.
With is hair by old age turned grey,
And his young wild boars all around
Him, out of hunger snort and grunt .
Now, a seahorse is drawing near:

The whole shore quivers out of fear.
His white coat dazzling all over,

On his head horns of silver.
The water boils below him from
The thunder blaze by his nose blown.
Other seahorses are around,
As many as reeds on a pond.
Stand fast! Stand fast! Stand fast, sea horse!
Hit him on the head with brute force! (...)

Gwenc'hlan did have the vision of the battle, but cannot tell us which of the two beasts was the winner. The two of them must have survived. That coexistence probably explains our permanent spiritual search, our paradoxical traditions of festivities and austerity, and the versatility of our weather.



Travels in Brittany

An account from 1885 – “Through the Côtes du Nord” *The English Illustrated Magazine*, Vol. 3, December 1885

With the 20th anniversary of the changing of the name of the department of Côtes du Nord to Côtes d'Armor, it seemed fitting to feature a travel account focused on this region. This article from a popular English magazine of 1885 does not give an author, but writer of the text often speaks of the subjects he sketches – “It was there that I sketched ...” – and the illustrations in this article are all noted as being from drawings by H. R. Robertson. Some of this nicely detailed article was previously printed in Bro Nevez 69, February 1999. We pick up where that left off now twenty years later! - LK

Before leaving this interesting district [Carhaix and Huelgoet, as the writer spells it] it may be as well to call attention to its old name of Cornouaille, which is supposed by antiquaries to have given us the name of our country Cornwall. “This Cornouaille is equally celebrated with our own for wrestling matches, held annually, at which the true Cornish hug is said to be given; and for wreckers, whose infamous trade is promoted by the ever-raging sea and iron-bound coast. From other parts of Brittany, if we believe the native

tradition, we derive our most popular romances, our nursery and fairy tales. Arthur here held his court with the Knights of the Round Table; and the cradle of Merlin was on the Ile de Sein, a low sand bank in that stormy sea, la Baie des Trépassés.” [no source for this quote is given]

Another half day by diligence takes us to Morlaix, where we find ourselves again on the railway route. By the by I am sorry to say that the time is presumably not far distant when a new railway will connect Guingamp and Morlaix passing through the primitive district I have been telling about. The line to be taken is already marked out with parti-coloured poles, but I understand that it will not be immediately proceeded with, the government having for the present rated the project as of third class importance, and not to be attended to till other more pressing claims are disposed of. The principal freight on this route would be cattle, and I fear that daily transports of beasts as required would soon supersede the weekly markets, which are so interesting to the artist and to the traveler generally. I would, however, advise those who may wish to see the Bretons in their old-world style not to delay longer than they can help, for such superstitious observances as the “Pardon des Chevaux,” and much else of the same nature cannot be expected to long survive contact with steam power and the electric telegraph.

Morlaix is rich in old houses, and we had no sooner settled down at our hotel, than the waiter offered to pilot us to the two ancient staircases, whose carved work has made them the recognized sights for the visitor. They are both interesting remains of sixteenth century work, and at one of the houses occasion is taken to display for sale old carved cabinets, sideboards, &c. There are other shops in the town where old fragments of carved work are utilized as panels in cabinet doors, &c., this Wardour-Street sort of work being carried through with much taste, and in perfect accordance with the old Breton style.

The town has two good hotels, and makes excellent headquarters while one is exploring places of interest in the neighbourhood. By taking the rail to Roscoff in the morning, and by breaking the return journey in the afternoon at St. Pol de Leon, these two places may both be seen in the day. In similar manner St. Thegonnec, Guimiliau, and Landivisiau may be seen hurriedly by those who wish to make the most of a short stay. When the time can be spared I would, however, advise the tourist who wishes to see the country and the people properly, to walk occasionally some dozen miles or so instead of always taking train or diligence. The wayside crosses which are so commonly met with can then be examined at leisure, and the traveler is sure to see curious old farm buildings, and much else that would interest him.

There are often two roads for the pedestrian to choose from – the old road which is generally very straight, going up hill and down dale regardless of what incline the land may take, and the new road which by going round the hills rather than over them, has rendered the way longer but more easy for burdened horses. It is the old road that the tourist should everywhere take, though as the new one is always in the better state of repair, he will most likely be carefully told to avoid the old one. It was on the old roads that I lighted on two of the most picturesque subjects I have met with – pottery-making in a cottage, and sabot-making in a sort of mud hut with no window, but only a hole in the roof, which also served for chimney.

Morlaix has many old-fashioned and narrow little streets leading up to the hill above the town, and it was in one of them that I saw the small maiden that forms the subject of my sketch on the opposite page [sorry not to be able to reproduce that here!]. She had fitted up a tiny altar on the steps of an uninhabited house, and had managed to get it to look wonderfully like the real thing, which, with its tawdry decorations, often enough suggests a very childish taste. Firstly she had laid down a white napkin or towel, and on it had placed a small plaster cast of the Virgin under a glass shade, a little cross of black wood, some vases of artificial flowers, and a pair of brass candlesticks. Instead of real candles in the candlesticks, which were doubtless quite beyond her means, the child had made believe very much, and had stuck in pieces of newspaper, which she had twisted up with a very plausible effect. Some green boughs at the back, and a cracked jug or two of real flowers of the commonest kinds, gave the requisite touch of nature to the *mise en scène*.

The fact of my sketching her handiwork pleased the little girl immensely, and she particularly requested that I should insert in my drawing the sou which she had begged from me for “*la bonne Vièrge*,” and which she had with due formality laid on the step in front of the little image. On my doing what she wanted she fairly danced with joy, and then ran off to fetch all her kindred to admire the masterpiece in which could be visibly distinguished the coin in question. Before I had finished my sketch, an old priest came by, who seemed highly to approve of the evidence of devotional spirit on the part of the little girl. She was not unknown to him, for he addressed her affectionately by name (it sounded like Soisette) and patted her on the head, to her manifest delight.

From Morlaix I took rail to Lannion, which must not, however, be identified with “the Lannions,” rugged islands described in the romance of *Gwen* as being off the west coast. For the sake of those of my readers who may not have met with this touching story, I would say that of all the books about Brittany which I have read, it seems to me to reflect the most faithfully the lights and shades of Breton character. It was when starting off to walk from

Lannion to Perros-Guirec that just at the outskirts of the town I noticed some rude pottery unbaked and standing in the sun on the top of a wall adjoining a cottage. I made bold to enter the building, and found two women at work with the most primitive of potter’s wheels that could be imagined. There was no treadle, nor indeed any band at all attached to the wheel which was simply turned round by hand, being in fact a revolving stand or table. ... On the required shape having been given to the clay it was first stood in the open air, and thence removed to shelves in the chimney to complete the drying process, and eventually fired in a kiln or oven at the back of the cottage. This kiln or oven was the very oldest specimen of the kind ever seen, consisting chiefly of broken potsherds plastered together with fresh clay, from which various weeds were boldly sprouting. The kiln was in such a tumbledown condition that it had to be propped up to leeward with a couple of great boughs, and looked so dangerous that I hardly liked standing by it. On my mildly suggesting the existence of danger it was not disputed, but I was consolingly assured that it was “not likely to fall to-day.” – they evidently would not answer for to-morrow.

Along the coast westward from Perros-Guirec, about three miles, is the weird little village of Ploumanach. The immense masses of granite that lie scattered about in every direction, are frequently grotesque in form, suggesting squatting toads of gigantic proportion; indeed, the whole place impressed me as being about the most uncanny-looking spot I had ever set eyes on. The cottages of the inhabitants that are dotted about are so dwarfed by contrast with the monstrous rocks amongst which they are situated, as to look like the toy houses of children. The sole industry of the village is fishing, and the absence of anything like gardens to the dwellings gives the place a very poverty-stricken appearance. The neighbourhood, moreover, is haunted by a mad beggar-woman, whose wild gesticulations cannot fail to terrify, in spite of the assurance that the poor creature is really harmless.

The only buildings visible at Ploumanach besides the poor cottages, are likewise of an extremely sombre character, such as the church of Notre Dame de la Clarté, the Calvary at Tregastel, and a convent away to the west. As a site for a convent, I can hardly fancy any spot more completely suggestive of seclusion from the world than this desolate piece of sea-coast, and the thought of a life to be spent here is enough to make the boldest shudder. Though the aspect of the place is so *triste*, and many of the cottages squalid even for Brittany, yet the inhabitants are by no means badly off, an able-bodied fisherman earning ten pounds a month, and frequently having a share in the profits of the seine-net fishing, which are often very considerable.

The Calvary at Tregastel presents an imposing appearance when viewed from the distance; it is of

unusual size, and looks as if ornamented by sculptured figures of heroic proportions. By the expenditure of considerable time and trouble, I managed to visit it, but should not advise any one else to go out of his way to do so. On nearing it I found that the quasi-sculptured figures were only flying buttresses, the whole thing being provokingly new and commonplace. It is, however, I believe of substantial service to the mariners, as it furnishes the most conspicuous landmark for many miles.

The coast at Ploumanach is indented by several narrow bays, which the amphibious youngsters of the village utilize to sail their toy boats upon; this sailing of a fishing boat either in sport or earnest, seems to be their sole idea of work or play. In one of these small bays stands the shrine of St. Guirec, looking not altogether unlike a boat turned up on end; its architect, no doubt, was some old sailor who could not quite get away from the idea of boat building. It is supported by four Romanesque pillars, built on a rock with large boulders about it, which are submerged at high water. On these occasions the effect of its complete isolation is very striking, particularly if seen when a heavy sea is breaking over it. It reminded me of the somewhat similar kind of erection in the lagoons at Venice, and it struck me that the difference of the peoples was well typified by the contrast observable in their shrines – the southern one prettily constructed of wood, painted red and white, and decorated with paper flowers, while its northern counterpart was of granite, seaworn, solid and sombre.

Just as I had sat down to my sketch the coastguardman happened to come by, and he inquired of me politely what my nationality might be. On my telling him that I was English he said he guessed so as all the English would naturally wish to see a portrait of St. Guirec, he being a saint who had originally emigrated from England, the shrine having been erected on the spot where his feet first touched the Breton soil. I did not attempt to undeceive him as to the motive of my work by stating anything so wildly improbable as that there were Englishmen benighted enough never even to have heard of holy Guirec, the saint of all the calendar the most familiar to him.

The statue of the saint thus enshrined is carved in wood, and is between three and four feet in height. It represents him in the costume of a bishop and wearing his mitre; his cope is blue and his under robe white. There is a peculiar virtue traditionally ascribed to this particular image which has made it renowned far and wide. It is currently believed by the peasantry that a young woman desirous of being married may secure the beneficent assistance of the saint by the act of sticking a pin into this wooden figure; some go as far as to say that she is sure to get a husband within the twelvemonth. Though of course each of the young ladies of the neighbourhood strenuously denies ever having performed this rite, yet the surface of

the figure has everywhere as many small holes as a sieve. There are, however, very few pins to be seen sticking there, it being the custom of the small boys to appropriate them when the damsels have retired. I could not learn at all why St. Guirec was thus invoked nor what was the origin of the superstition. A similar practice is alluded to by Horace Walpole in his notes to the *Memoirs of Lord Chesterfield*, as having been in vogue at one time among our own people. It was the effigy of the much-married King Henry the Eighth in the Tower that was thus treated, and Archbishop Secker, on receiving a mock-modest letter on the subject from George Augustus Selwyn, “desired Lord Granby, Master of the Ordnance, to see the stone of offence taken away, which was done.”

My seat when making my sketch was just under the shelter of some rocks that hid me from the path to the village. Two young women sauntered slowly up to the shrine, or the grotto as they call it; but one of them happening to catch sight of me they both precipitously retreated. I had to manoeuvre by ostensibly retiring from the bay, and then it was only by returning as much as possible under cover of the rocks that I was enabled to see the rite actually performed.

Perros-Guirec was the last point of our tour, the return journey being made without any delay of importance. We have thus traversed the greater part of the Côtes du Nord, but have perforce left for the present many places of interest unvisited. Of the Bretons generally I would say, in conclusion, that I found them everywhere kindly and hospitable, and that they seem to regard an inhabitant of La Grande Bretagne as almost having the right to claim some distant kinship with them. The manners of the peasantry are exceptionally courteous – a point as to which an artist who travels has the right to an opinion, for his comfort while sketching depends considerably upon how he fares at the hands of the sons of the soil.



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 800 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 SHOWS THE PEOPLE OF BRITTANY THAT THEIR LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORLD

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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