

BRO NEVEZ

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



LANDERNEAU
10 et 11 mars 2012
Saint-Ernel



our skol diwan
diwan
CREDIT
COOPERATIF
Cust. An. 1.40
ESTABLISSAMANT
WEJAM
MUSEUM

Santé et
Eco-habitat
FOIRE BIO

A fund raising event organized by the Skol Diwan Landrene, the Diwan School of Landreneau, in March.

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 122

May 2012

BRO NEVEZ 122

May 2012

ISSN 0895 3074

EDITOR'S ADDRESS & E-MAIL

Lois Kuter, Editor
605 Montgomery Road
Ambler, PA 19002 U.S.A.

(215) 886-6361
loiskuter@verizon.net

U.S. ICDBL website: www.icdbl.org
Also available via: www.breizh.net/icdbl.htm

The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, May, August and November. Contributions, letters to the Editor, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor.

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to do this. 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.

For information about the Canadian ICDBL contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, PO Box 14611, 50 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M8L-5R3, CANADA (e-mail: jdkoneil@hotmail.com). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.



From the Editor

It has become a bit of a pattern for *Bro Nevez* to reach you in the month following the one on its cover, so here it is June and you are receiving the "May" issue. I will not try to give you all the great excuses I have for this tardiness in mailing. I will say that a tiny bit of the delay was to take advantage of contributions forthcoming from Natalie Novik, one of the U.S. ICDBL's Board of Advisors members, and David Brûlé, the U.S. ICDBL President. Both have been traveling and both have offered very interesting accounts of their travel. We'll start with the account from David, who reflects on his May in Brittany. - Lois

Brittany Journal May in the Ar C'hoat 2012

David Brûlé

First, the weather! Mornings in the gray fine mist, or, suddenly wind blowing from all four directions—*ar pevar ave!-*, then brilliant sunshine brightens rain-soaked fields, early green wheat and corn glistens, then a downpour, and again bright sun. All this weather in one day, most days. And not to forget the vintage *startijenn*, a slap in the face of sharp cold air, just after golden sunsets on fields of colza on the far hill opposite the farm. Seems like everybody's planting that daisy-yellow crop these days out here, more than likely headed for a future as a fuel additive, rather than green fertilizer or cooking oil.

The river Oust flows full and sullen just below the house, as the wooded Brittany where we live moves through an elusive spring. The cuckoo calls incessantly like a broken Bavarian clock, all morning. First time was the novelty of it and we all made sure we had coins in our pocket to assure a spring season of good fortune. But that got old fast. The cheeky robin and melodious blackbird call out in a cascade of inspired song, occasionally drowning out the other singer of only two endlessly, repetitive notes.

En eur foetan hent. Notebook entries.

6 May. Our week here starts on a Sunday, this being a place where Sunday still means something. Not so much church but rather the local farmers' market at the Abbaye De Bon Repos. Interestingly, as the Breton language recovers some of its lost territory around here on the border of Morbihan and Aoudou an Arvor, the new road signs call this Abbey "*Verre Pos*"(?), while older signs in the districts near Guingamp and Coray still indicate "*Diskouez Mad.*" Which one would be the more accurate?



The ruins of the abbey are situated along the shores of the Blavet River, at the foot of the vast ancient forest of Quénécan. First established around 1153 by Alain III of Rohan, who was proprietor of the forest and most of the land worth owning in these parts, the monks who were invited to live at the abbey pledged a life of extreme poverty, simplicity and prayer. Over its history however, the abbey lived through turbulent times, and eventually the monks forgot their vows and spent their days and nights in revelry and pillage, terrorizing the surrounding villages. By the time the French Revolution was over, what was left of the abbey was burned over and many of its walls removed for building material elsewhere. Some of its structures have been restored, and are the setting for frequent *son et lumière* programs during the tourist season. It now overlooks our Sunday destination on the opposite bank of the Blavet, long ago channeled into the Canal of Nantes to Brest.

At the market we focus on purchasing vegetables, farmers' pâté, chestnut blossom honey, and rabbit for our Sunday dinner. Then it's over to a table at the *guinguette* that does a healthy business hosting thirsty market-goers stopping by for a drink—cider, beer, or a kir in the bright sunshine.

8 May. Encouraging news came in the *Ouest France* this morning dropped off early by the rural paperboy. It features an article about the Diwan school system that is expecting to post a 5% increase in enrollments for the fall of 2012. According to the article, this is the third consecutive year of close to a 5% annual increase. In addition, the article mentions that three new schools should be opening in September. Currently, it is reported that there are 3,528 pupils enrolled K-Baccalaureat. Some positive news, in terms of growing popularity and enrollment, yet enormous problems persist, especially concerning the financing of new teaching positions, as well as the costs of renting space for some of the schools. This is a challenging problem for Diwan Landerne in particular.

12 May. *Ar Redadeg*, the fund-raiser in the form of a non-competitive road race/run sets out today from Brest, and will pass through a number of Breton departments before finishing on the 19th in Douarnenez. (Later, towards the end of the run, expectations were that the amount raised for the Diwan system would surpass the 100,000 euro mark.)

16 May. One of the main national French television stations—*TF1*—features a primetime four minute visit to our Diwan Landerne to interview current principal Guylene Hostiou, who comments on the 5% increase in enrollments, and on the hard work required by parent groups to support their school. Children too are interviewed, and are shown in action during fundraisers in Landernau, distributing and selling language posters to merchants and businesses in the city.

16-28 May. *Ouest France* is now featuring daily articles on the *Gouel Breizh*—la Fête de la Bretagne. This two week festival has rapidly grown into an international happening. At the beginning, somewhat criticized for being a bit too much of a copycat effort of St. Patrick's Day, the *Gouel Breizh/ Gouel Erwan*, to celebrate St. Yves Day, now features music, dance, theater, all aspects of the Breton culture and heritage with more than 250 events programmed throughout Brittany, as well as in far-flung places like New York, Montréal, Beijing, Bratislava, Tokyo, and Ho Chi Minh City!

26 May. Nearing the end of our stay, a few days in Paris for a change of pace, getting ready to catch the plane, and trekking over to the 14th arrondissement around Montparnasse, where Bretons in exile from their *Bro Goz* are gathering to celebrate the day of St. Yves. I head steadily up the Avenue du Maine, and then follow signs to the Mayor's offices and the park where the *fest deiz* is starting up. There's no mistaking the piercing sound of the bombarde that cuts through the city air, and before long I'm standing with père Bernard of the *Ti Ar Vretoned*, savoring a glass of Lancelot [a Breton label of beer], and chatting briefly about my days in his Breton classes back at 22 Rue Delambre. He of course doesn't remember me, and we're both philosophical about the fact that that was almost thirty years ago! I had but to mention *Bro Nevez* however, and our good Bernard exclaimed "Of course! Lois Kuter!" I drifted around the square, where various organizations had their stands, *Skol an Emsav, Diwan Pariz, An Tro-Breiz*, hag all.

But my time was dwindling, the lines for the galettes, the oysters, and the Lancelot were getting too long, I had to leave, or I'd be tempted to be there all night! Besides, I needed to be in another part of town, getting ready to wing it back to the Bro Nevez across the Atlantic. A full month spent, *en eur foetan hent* from

Cap Fréhel to Pointe St. Mathieu, Pontivy to Paris. And now, heading home.

Editors' Note: David is now safely back in Massachusetts, and you can read a bit more about some of the events and organizations he cites in his notebook entries in this issue of *Bro Nevez*, starting with the Diwan schools.



Readers of *Bro Nevez* should be very familiar with the **Diwan** schools by now since the U.S. ICDBL has supported them since our beginnings in 1981 and we have frequently carried news in the pages of *Bro Nevez*. But it never hurts to have a re-introduction.

The Diwan Breton language immersion schools were founded in 1977 as an independent school system to fill a gap in the public education system of France where the Breton language was given only a token place in schools of Brittany, taught as an extra-curricular activity outside of regular class hours, if found at all. In a society where French had become the dominant language in all public life and the media of Brittany, it was felt at that time that an immersion style of teaching Breton was necessary to give children the chance to master it as a living language. This remains true today, although Breton has gained some space in media and public visibility since the 1970s.

Immersion means that Breton is used as the predominant language for teaching especially at the preschool and primary school levels. French and a third or even fourth language are added as children progress to upper levels. Immersion also means that Breton is encouraged in everyday activities of a school outside of formal class times such as play time and lunch.

Far from stunting students' abilities in French, tests show that Diwan student's competence in French is as good as if not better than the average for monolingual French schools. The benefits of bilingual education is no longer questioned, and the success of Diwan has certainly served to encourage the growth of bilingual programs (not immersion, but half Breton, half French) in the public and Catholic schools of Brittany.

Today the Diwan Breton language schools educate over 3,500 students in 41 pre- and primary schools, 6 middle schools, and 1 high school. 341 teaching staff are employed and an additional 120 non-teaching staff work in the schools.

Diwan has proven that its pedagogical system is a success. The challenge for continued growth is financial. Many teachers' salaries are covered in a "contract" with the French State which puts Diwan in a "private school" category despite the fact that it charges no tuition and operates as a public institution open to anyone who wants to enroll. Whenever a new school is opened it must wait for five years before it can come under the "contract." Because of its "private school" status, there have also been legal limits placed on the contribution of building space and public monies to support Diwan schools – no matter how willing and able a particular town and population may be to support a Diwan school.

The financial challenges continue to limit Diwan's ability to open new schools to meet the demand of parents and children, but there has been steady growth.

The U.S. ICDBL has sent very modest contributions to Diwan, especially in support of special projects at the school in Landerneau, Skol Diwan Landerne, since Lois Kuter was named a *maeronez* (god mother) in 1992. ICDBL members are encouraged to continue to be generous. Checks can be sent to Lois Kuter (address at the front of this newsletter) made out to U.S. ICDBL with a note that the contribution is for Diwan.

For more information about Diwan check out their website: www.diwanbreizh.org – You will find a version in Breton and one in French.



The **Redadeg** is a 1,500 kilometer relay run held every two years in Brittany to raise funding for various Breton language projects and organizations. This was launched in 2008 as the initiative of the Diwan schools which celebrated their 30th anniversary that year. Today the run is organized by a not-for-profit organization called "Ar Redadeg a di da di." This is an all-volunteer effort and counts on the involvement of thousands of people – not just runners and those who sponsor kilometers with a contribution, but also those who organize events along the way and the big party at the end!

From May 12 to 19 this year runners covered the 1,500 kilometers non-stop, night and day, passing through all five Breton departments – starting in Brest and ending in Douarnenez For details of the run, check out the website: www.ar-redadeg.org

Fest Breizh / Fest Yves – New York Style

Since the creation of BZH New York in 2007, this organization has organized dozens of events to bring Bretons living in this city together, to foster inter-Celtic friendships, and to introduce and share Breton culture with Americans.

This March, BZH-NY supported the visit of the Bagad Plougastel for the Saint Patrick's Day Parade in the Big Apple. As reported on their website (www.bzh-ny.org)

54 musicians and dancers from Bagad Plougastell and Bleuniou Sivi spent 6 days in NYC as ambassadors of Brittany for St Patrick's day.

The 251st St Patrick's Day parade in New York City will go down not only as a day of great pride for Irish diaspora but also one for Bretons everywhere as New Yorkers witnessed the largest Breton delegation ever on 5th Avenue with the participation of Bagad Plougastell and Bleuniou Sivi.

3.5 million spectators witnessed the power of the bagad and the splendor and grace of the cercle with millions more watching live on NBC TV across America.

These young musicians' days and nights were filled with numerous events from a fest noz in Times Square, a guest performance for the 50th anniversary Chieftains concert in Carnegie Hall, concerts for students at Lycée Français and French American Charter School, jamming in Harlem, outdoor concert in Tomkins Square Park, nightly dinners and celebrating at Tout va bien restaurant, a chance meeting of Occupy Wall street, and memorable free styling in the NYC subway.

Each May, BZH-NY celebrates the Fest Yves with a week of events and this year they lined up a number of evenings to dance and listen to music, but also to enjoy art and food, and to learn about efforts to reunite the Loire-Atlantique with Brittany.



May 19 – Fest Noz at Connolly's Pub on Times Square.

May 22 – Brittany in East Village – The evening featured a conference on the Loire-Atlantique in Brittany today followed by a Breton dance workshop and music to close the day and practice dancing.

May 23 – Brooklyn to a BZH rhythm – The Zebulon

Café in the Williamsburg district of Brooklyn hosted Breton music by 44 BZH Street, a group from the Loire-Atlantique composed of Sylvain Girault, Erwan Hamon, François Badeau, François Robin, Fred Bouley, and Guillaume Blain.

May 23 – The Novotel Skydeck on West 52nd Avenue hosted an exhibit of Breton art and photographs by Mik Jegou and Ronan Le Pennec followed by a sampling of Breton food and drink and music.

To follow all the events organized by BZH-NY year round – from gatherings to play the card game belote, to sporting events and Breton language classes or workshops – keep an eye on their website: www.bzh-ny.org

Manif langues régionales : 12 000 demonstrators in Quimper

On Saturday, March 31, an estimated 12,000 people hit the streets in Quimper to show support for Breton and Gallo, and the regional languages of France. This included politicians, those working actively in support of Breton and Gallo, and those who simply love these languages and want them to be a part of their future. They came from all corners of Brittany and were of all ages to demand more public presence for Gallo and Breton. Demonstrations were held simultaneously in Toulouse (25,000 people), Strasbourg (1,500 people), Perpignan (6,000 people) and also in Bayonne, Lille, Annecy and Ajaccio.

Stumdi: Intensive Breton Language Sessions for 2012-2013

Each year the organization Stumdi welcomes over 300 students in its training classes at its sites in Arradon (Morbihan), Guingamp (Cotes d'Armor), Landerneau (Finistère) and Ploemeur (Morbihan) or at other work places. Two types of long-term study are offered – one for six months for beginners and one for three months for those who already speak Breton who want to improve their mastery. At the end of their studies students pass the National Education Department's DCL tests (Diplôme de Compétences en Langues).

Stumdi has as its mission the training of 100 people each year with the idea that their mastery of Breton will give them the means to find a job after they complete their studies. Surveys of students have shown that a high number actually succeed in finding work and their language skills are important in this.

Dates for training coming up in the next year are as follows:

For the 6-month training:
September 13, 2012 to March 28, 2013
January 10, 2013 to July 12, 2013

For the 3-month advanced training:
April 2, 2013 to July 5, 2013.

For more detailed information check out the Stumdi website: www.stumdi.com

A University Study of Breton Language Revitalization

The following information was passed along to me, and although I do not know if there is a deadline to respond, I imagine that responses would still be very welcome.

Jason Sanderson is a doctoral candidate in Sociolinguistics at Georgetown University. His research focuses on language awareness and regional language revitalization efforts in Brittany. After field work in Brittany, he recently launched a survey on perceived importance of regional languages to contemporary Breton identity. This constitutes the last stage in data collection for his dissertation which he hopes to finish in the coming semester. All those who consider themselves Breton, whether by birth or choice, are welcome to take part.

To take part in survey click the following:
<https://docs.google.com/a/georgetown.edu/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dGFZWERhZkiPSVZ4TGg5YWIVY0gxcnc6MA#gid=0>

KENTEL 17 / LESSON 17

A Breton Lesson from Natalie Novik

GERIADURIG / VOCABULARY

NUMBERS / NIVERENOU

We have seen the basic numbers (unan, daou, tri, pevar, pemp, c'hwec'h, seizh, eizh, nav, dek), let's go a little further: you need to add "dek" to the numbers, but the dek will mutate because of the word before it. It turns to **zek** in most cases, but with unan, it becomes **unnek**, with nav, it becomes **naontek**, and then the Bretons being Celts, they think in multiples (you see this inheritance in French as well): eighteen is three times six. And we will see it's not the only one to do that.

11	unnek
12	daouzek
13	trizek
14	pevarzek
15	pemzek
16	c'hwezek
17	seitek
18	triwec'h
19	naontek

and then we reach 20:

20	ugent
21	unan warn-ugent
22	daou warn-ugent

etc. warn = war + an (on the)

until you reach

30	tregont
31	unan ha tregont
32	daou ha tregont

etc. ha= and

This form is repeated for all following dozens, which are named as follows:

40	= daou-ugent
50	=hanter-kant
60	=tri-ugent
70	=dek ha tri-ugent
80	=pevar-ugent
90	=dek ha pevar-ugent
100	=kant

Several things about these numerals:

- the Celtic thinking: 40 is two times twenty, 60 is three times twenty and 80 is four times twenty (if you think of it, in French it is *quatre-vingt*, but in Switzerland they say *octante*). That's for the even decades, the ones that correspond to the fingers of both hands.
- The odd decades just add ten to the number, so 70 is ten and three times twenty, and 90 is ten and four times twenty. The exception is 50, half-hundred.
- To count within each decade after 20, you do the same as for 31, 32, etc., **unan ha daou-ugent** (41), **c'hwec'h ha dek ha tri-ugent** (76) etc.

So now, you can practice writing down things like 25, 54, 72 or 86...

Note: you will see dek also spelled as **deg**, it depends on the region, but in all cases the g at the end of deg is pronounced k.

YEZADUR / GRAMMAR

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES

The basic possessive adjectives are as follows:

- ma/va	my
- da	your (sing.)
- e	his
- he	her
- hon	our
- ho	your (pl.)
- o	their

This is greatly simplified, because these forms will change depending on the words that precede or follow them. But it is still worth learning them as the base.

The rules for the 3rd person (his and her) are like in English, not like in French. So to say *his dog*, we will say: **e gi** (from ki, dog), if the owner of the dog is a guy, and **he c'hi** if the owner is a woman. *His dog and her dog...*

The next place where these adjectives will come in handy is for the possessive pronouns, because they do not exist as such in Breton. They combine with the word **hini** (this) in the singular and **re** (these) in the plural.

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

If you are talking about one thing only:

Ma hini	mine
Da hini	yours
E hini	his
He hini	hers
Hon hini	ours
Ho hini	yours (pl.)
O hini	theirs

If you are talking about several things:

Ma re	mine
Da re	yours
E re	his
He re	hers
Hor re	ours
Ho re	yours (pl.)
O re	theirs

This is a distinction that is done in a slightly differently in English. You will say: these shoes are mine and this hat is yours. The Bretons will do the equivalent of saying: *these shoes are mines and this hat is your.*

Please learn these forms. They are very commonly used in Breton, which, not having a verb “to have”, nevertheless uses a great variety of forms to indicate possession. It is not very complicated as you see, and you will have fun speaking in true Breton forms. By the way, the same forms are found in the other Celtic languages as well.

Brittany Mourns the Loss of a Two Voices for the Breton Language and Culture

Lois Kuter

Chanig ar Gall (1922-2012)

Born May 5, 1922 in Saint-Cadou-Sizun, Chanig ar Gall died this April. With her husband Charlez ar Gall (1921-2010) she was a pioneer in Breton language radio and television for broadcasts in the 1960s for Radio-Brest and for Télé-Bretagne during the 1970s. In her broadcasts Chanig ar Gall made listeners aware of Breton poetry and music and performed herself in many recitals of Breton and French language poetry with a number of Breton musicians. She published articles in the journal *Brud Nevez* as well as a bilingual anthology of poetry by Per Jakez Hélias (*Lagad an tan – L'Oeil du feu*). During the 1970s she was active with Teatr Penn ar bed, one of the earliest of the many now active Breton language theater troupes. In 1992 she published memoirs of her childhood in Argol (*L'Argolienne*) which won several literary prizes. With her husband Charlez, she was inducted into the Order of the Ermine in 1990 for her lifetime of work for the Breton language and culture. She was active as well in the campaign to fight cancer. A victim herself of this disease, she was worked with the Ligue nationale contre le Cancer to support others fighting for a cure.



François Morvan (1923-2012)

I had the good fortune to hear and dance to the kan ha diskan singing of the Morvan Brothers twice during trips to Brittany. The first time was at a fest noz in Belle Ile en Terre (July 1975). If I recall correctly, I had been visiting the Dastum collection during a summer stay in Brittany and was tagging along with Patrick Malrieu that night. During the fest noz a speaker took to the stage and made a long speech about social justice and the high price of fest noz entrance fees. The Morvan Brothers reclaimed the stage shortly after and

noted briefly in Breton that they were there simply to sing. One could count on that for good dancing.

The second fest noz where I had the pleasure to hear the Morvan brothers was in the fall of 1995 in Tremargat at the annual Fest Noz des Femmes. I have no reliable notes about this so the year could be later, but I recall vividly a fest noz packed into a very small hall where all the singers and musicians were to be women. The Morvan Brothers crashed the party and came dressed in drag. And there were some women who turned the joke around by dressing in the characteristic checkered shirts sported by the Morvan Brothers. No one could accuse these singers of lacking a sense of humor.

While in 1975 the Morvan Brothers stated they came "just to sing," this does not mean that they were not engaged in actively supporting the Breton culture. Certainly just by singing and encouraging young people to sing and dance, their contribution to the Breton music scene is invaluable. But they have been generous in their appearances at festou noz to support the Diwan schools, and perhaps other organizations and causes as well. Their small farm in Botcol certainly did not make the Morvan brothers rich men, but they were generous in sharing their wealth of song.

The following is a posting from the Skol Uhel ar Vro (Cultural Institute of Brittany) website from May 21, 2012 (www.culture-bretagne.org). This expresses well the sense of loss felt in Brittany with the passing of this fine singer. – my translation

A National Treasure of Brittany is no more: François Morvan, the oldest of the Morvan Brothers

François Morvan, 88 years old, the oldest of the famous quartet of kan ha diskan singers died May 19, 2012, on his farm in Botcol, in Saint-Nicodème (Côtes d'Armor).

Since 1958 he participated with his brothers Yvon, Henri and Yves (deceased 2004) in the wide sweep of the renaissance of the fest-noz. In 2004 he was forced to stop appearing on the stages of villages and cities of Brittany due to health reasons.

In 2002, along with his brothers, he was made a Chevalier des Arts et Lettres.

Their mother, Augustine Le Creff, deceased in 1976, played a determinant role in their calling to pass along an irreplaceable tradition which highlighted the Breton culture and the genius of its language. Three recorded albums edited by Coop Breizh along with videos and their presence on a dozen other recordings capture the vocal work of the four brothers and their mother.

The President of the Cultural Institute of Brittany, Patrick Malrieu, paid homage to François in his departure for Tir-n'an-Og (Land of Eternal Youth) in the following address:

It is with great emotion that we have the sad task of announcing the death of François, the oldest of the Morvan brothers.

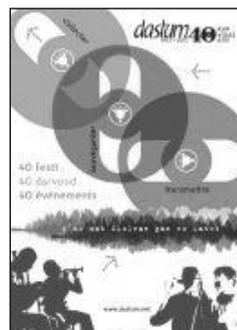
Sadness and compassion for Henri and Yvon above all.

Sadness also in thinking of what the great singers of that generation symbolize, their influence on Breton society, its vitality and its cultural originality, their concern and their pleasure to bring to life the patrimony they inherited, and their desire to transmit this to new generations.

The Morvan Brothers are among the four names chosen by the Cultural Institute of Brittany to be inducted into the Order of the Ermine on this coming August 19 in Guingamp at the Saint-Loup Festival.

François will no longer be with us, but his memory will remain alive.

dastum 40 aun vloaz ans



This year the organization Dastum celebrates 40 years of work to promote the transmission of oral traditions of Brittany. Since its very modest beginnings in 1972 this organization has served to encourage the people of Brittany not only to collect and preserve traditions, but most importantly, to get actively engaged in singing, dancing, telling stories, and passing along a rich heritage.

Dastum is a professionally run archives with a treasure trove of recordings and documents – located in a number of towns and cities throughout Brittany and affiliated with a number of local cultural organizations and music schools. But Dastum is also a very large network of people working on a grass-roots level to insure that music has a place in peoples' lives.

The work of this organization is best presented by Dastum itself, and I have copied introductory material that you will find on the Dastum website www.dastum.net. This website has a wealth of information about Breton music and a full listing of the many events lined up in the coming year where Dastum

will celebrate its 40th birthday – concerts, exhibits, festivals ... Check it out! - Lois Kuter

Dastum Oral Heritage Archives for Brittany.

Since 1972, Dastum (the name means 'collect' in the Breton language), a non-profit organization, has assumed its mission of collecting, safeguarding and diffusing the oral heritage of all parts of the historical Brittany region (including Loire-Atlantique) : songs, music, stories, legends, proverbs, sayings , anecdotes and oral history sources...

Dastum structures its actions around three main orientations:

Collecting: Dastum initiates, encourages, and provides a framework for collecting projects, in order to identify and bring together the different collections built up over more than fifty years by hundreds of unpaid collectors, individuals, associations or cultural institutions: sound archives, of course, but also songbooks, broadsheets, photographs, etc. Each deposition of material leads to the establishment of a deposit file, as well as the signature of a deposit contract which indicates essentially the conditions laid down for the use of the collection deposited, and the means used for restoring the documents.

Safeguarding: Dastum guarantees the physical safety of the assembled documents (through inventories, digitization, duplication of media, and multiple localisation of the collections), description, analysis of the contents, transcriptions which make up a data base of which the catalogue is consultable universally via Internet.

Transmitting and enhancing the value of this immense heritage: Dastum's objective is to make this oral heritage available to the largest possible population, particularly through:

- On-line access to the data-base catalogues,
- Setting up a network of physical consultation points, in our associated centres, and in music schools, archives, libraries, bilingual schools, and recognised university networks thus permitting access to all digitized documents. The collections entrusted to Dastum are accessible to all musicians, researchers, students, or simply to interested parties. Access to all documents is free and unlimited, but to obtain any copy or reproduction , it is required to join the association [membership fees vary between 8€ and 40€ per annum].

- An editorial policy for publishing books and CDs,
- The organization of conferences, seminars, and exhibitions, on subjects arising from the publishing and documentary activity
- Training courses

In a few figures, Dastum is:

- A sound library of 90 000 documents recorded from 5 000 different performers by about 400 different collectors.
- A collection of manuscripts (250 different songbooks).
- A library of 30 000 written songs, broadsheets, and stories.
- A library of 4 600 records and other sound media.
- A collection of 27 000 iconographical documents
- (post-cards, family and wedding photographs, local festivals and customs, architectural heritage, etc...).



Produit en Bretagne Prizes for music

Produit en Bretagne is a federation of Breton companies with the aim of promoting quality products from Brittany that reflect its unique heritage. The Prix à la Création given annually by Produit en Bretagne aims to bring light to innovative creations from Brittany – visual arts, literature and music.

Four awards are given in the category of music, and the 2012 winners were as follows:

Prix Musique Bretonne



TiTom. *Second Souffle* (Vocation Records, VOC 2770)

The TiTom Project is based on compositions by virtuoso bombarde player Thomas Lotout. He has used bombarde both for traditional Breton dances and melodies but also in very innovative ways to show the

full potential of this very powerful reed instrument. Compositions on this new CD are based on traditional song melodies and Breton dances but there is also a jazz-rock beat. He is supported by a number of excellent musicians including Stef DeVito on bass and Yannick Allory on flute.

Prix Musique Actuelle



Tristan Nihouarn. *Sauf erreur de ma part* (Upton Park/L'autre distribution/ Idol)

This is the first solo album by Tristan Nihouarn who is accompanied by musicians he has met during his musical

journeys in Brittany and elsewhere including Jacky Bouilliol on piano and Benoit Fournier (ex Matmatah) on drums. You' also find a string quartet and other instruments.

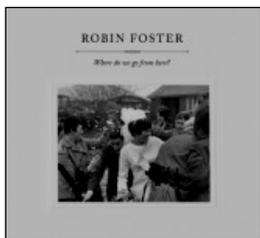
Prix Jeune Artiste



Wankin' Noodles. *Tu dormiras seule ce soir* (Wankin' Noodles Company)

A quartet from Rennes with a high energy rock sound with hints of the sixties but also a foot firmly planted in today's rock world.

Prix Coup de Coeur



Robin Foster. *Where do you go from here* (Last Exit Records).

This CD by Robin Foster – inspired by the city of Brest - is described as “cinemagraphic rock” with a subtle mix of

melody and energetic guitar performed by the Never Meet Your Heroes collective with two invited musicians Dave Pen and Ndidio. This is Foster's second album of electro-pop.



A Welsh Composer and Breton Music

A CD Review Keith Davies Jones

Mansel Thomas (1909 - 1986) - a Welsh composer and conductor, is best known for his choral music and some 150 solo songs, setting poetry, often by his contemporaries, in both Welsh and English. These

include some of the finest vocal works written during the twentieth century. He also wrote many orchestral and instrumental pieces. Breton Suite, written in 1949, appears on British Light Music Premieres : Vol. 6; Dutton Epoch CDLX 7283 (2012); Gavin Sutherland conducts the Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

The Breton folk-songs comprising this suite are found in 'Trente mélodies de Basse-Bretagne', collected and annotated by Louis-Albert Bourgault-Ducoudray; Lemoine & Cie : Paris-Bruxelles : (1885). They are : La petite robe - (The Little Dress); Disons le Chapelet - (Let us recite the Rosary); & Le Sabotier - (The Clog-Maker).

As a student at Cardiff University during the 1960's, I had opportunity to talk to Mansel Thomas about a composer's approach to arranging folk-songs. He was of the opinion that you should write idiomatically for the medium you are composing for, and not feel restricted by the idiom and limitations of the source. In compiling this suite, he has chosen three contrasted pieces, and orchestrated them with consummate skill and beauty to make a satisfying whole. He did not include the Breton titles, and they are not on the CD. I have added them to this review – #'s refer to the original collection.

1. Ar Vrozig Ruz - The Red Dress (#20) : Me meus choazet eur vestrez/Eur plac'hig a zanvez/P'oun et d'he vizita ho!/Ar plac'hig' doa netra.//Nemet eur vioc'h biskorn/Ha kam ha treut a born,/Ha c'hoaz a loen kornek/A voa d'eun amezeg!//Hag eun tamig brozig ru/Diskolpet a bep tu,/Staget ouz eur berchen/ Ha karget all a c'huen.

I chose a mistress/A young and wealthy woman :/I went to visit her!/And young woman was there none.// Only a cow with one horn/Scrawny, and blind in one eye/Already a worthless animal/Belonging to a neighbour!//And a little red dress/Torn and ragged/ Hanging on a post/All full of fleas. (translation by kdj)

Apparently marital deception was possible long before the internet. The melody, which is quite infectious, and clearly meant for dancing, is in the minor mode.

2. Lavaromp ar Chapeled, - Let us Recite the Rosary (#9) : written for strings only, and the most extended selection in the set; a reflection on Christ's agony on the cross. In the Dorian mode, it is a profound and meditative hymn of great austerity and beauty.

3. Ar Boutaouer – The Clog Maker (#6) - A clog-maker, alone in a hut, deep in a forest, is befriended only by a woman who takes him meagre rations of food; when he sells his clogs he says he will treat her to “fat bacon and some wine.” This song is in the major mode, ending the suite on an optimistic note.

The remainder of the CD comprises 6 Welsh Dances, also by Mansel Thomas; 2 Welsh Nursery tunes by Alun Hoddinott (1929 – 2008), Music for Children by David Morgan (1933 - 1988), an English composer of Welsh extraction who moved to Canada in 1981; and pieces by Anthony Hedges, Philip Lane, Carey Blyton, John Fox and Richard Addinsell.



Heard of, but not heard Short Notes on New Recordings from Brittany

The following short notes are gleaned from websites for various musicians, Coop Breizh and the magazines *Musique Bretonne* (231, April/May/June 2012) and *Ar Men* (187, March/April 2012). – Lois Kuter

Badume's Band & Selamnesh Zemene. *Ale gene – Ethiopia.* Innacor 41112.

Described as “Breizh-Ethiopian groove,” this CD features Ethiopian singer Selamanesh Zemene (and singer Zenash Tsegaye) with the Breton septet Badume's Band. Members of the band include Xavier Passet, Stéphane Le Dro, Rudy Blas, Olivier Guénégo, Stéphanie Rama, Johnathan Volson and Antonin Volson, and instruments you hear include saxophones, electric organ, guitars, bass and percussion.

Bon Matin. *En avant quatre.* Bemol Productions. This group is a quartet of four young women : Hoëla Barbedette on 31-string harp, Birgit Bornauw on Flemish bagpipes and fiddle, Marinette Bonnet on accordion, and Juliette Colloche on 36-string harp and song. They interpret dances, marches and melodies from the Breton, Vendéen, Poitevin and Flemish traditions.

Arnaud Ciapolino & Roland Conq. *En arbenn de ...* Coop Breizh

Flute player Arnaud Ciapolino pairs with guitarist Roland Conq for a performance of melodies, dances and songs from Brittany, the Hebrides and Ireland. They are joined by Youenn Le Cam on trumpet, Ronan Pinc and Alasdair White on fiddles, and Nolwenn Runigo for song.

Annie Ebrel & Lors Jouin. *Tost ha pell.* Coop Breizh This CD features 11 Breton language songs performed by two of Brittany's best traditional singers. The “disput” is featured where there is a humorous exchange between two rivals, competitors, disputants – the sun and rain, mother and daughter, sailor and his mistress, water and fire, or Bretons from the Tregor and Cornouaille. Performed solo or in pair, the selections

include slower melodies as well as songs for dancing. Jacques Pellen on 12-string guitar and Patrick Péron on keyboard join in for two of the selections.

Elie Guillou. *Paris-Brest.*

This CD includes 16 songs (in French) evoking a 30-day walk from Paris to Brest where this singer stopped along the way to perform in bars, on farms, in fields, gas stations, etc. The music is of a folk style with influences from a number of sources.

Eostiged ar Stangala. *Eostiged ar Stangala en musique.*

This is a dance group from Quimper that has always been one of the most creative in its mix of traditional and modern dance. This CD captures the music of their performance with traditional dances like the gavotte, kas ha barh, plinn, fisel, an dro and ronds in some untraditional settings.

Gerard Jaffrès. *Mystérieuses landes.*

(www.gerardjaffres.com)

This singer from the Léon region travels to the Morbihan to present 12 songs (in French) inspired by the melodies and dance rhythms of this area.

Yann-Fañch Kemener & Eric Menneteau. *Vive la liberté.* Buda Musique.

Kemener is famous in Brittany (and beyond) as a master of traditional Breton language ballads and kan ha diskan singing for dances, and he has paired with a number of musicians for unusual interpretations of Breton song. Here he gets back to the “roots” in pairing with Eric Menneteau with more traditional kan ha diskan for suites of dances from central western Brittany (kreiz Breizh) as well as melodies and marches. The ambiance of a fest noz is captured as well in some sound bites. The CD is accompanied by lots of good documentation about the songs.

Gwenael Kerleo. *Quai No. 7.* Coop Breizh (myspace.com/gwenaelkerleo)

This singer who accompanies herself on electro-harp performs 12 selections of songs in French (and Breton) – compositions with traditional and less traditional musical settings. She is joined by Kevin Camus on uilleann pipes and whistles, Jérôme Le Tareau on flute, Mathilde Chevrol on cello, Yann Quefféléant on guitar and Yvon Molard on percussions.

Klegereg – *Pardon de Sant Andréù.*

This is a recording of the 2011 Pardon (saint's day celebration) at the Chapel of Saint André in Cléguérec in the Vannetais region of southern Brittany. Included are 21 short cantiques and other religious songs/ceremonies making up the day's events.

Timothée Le Bour & Youenn Bodros. *Deus pelec'h e teu an avel.* Hijaal Production. Hijaal 001.

Well known on the fest noz "circuit," Le Bour & Bodros are a duo on saxophone and accordion who perform on this CD dances such as the plinn, suite de Loudéac, waltz, dañs tro, and gavotte.

Serge Le Louarn & Louis Thomas. *War hent ar festoù-noz.*

As one might expect from the CD title, "On the road to festoù-noz," this is a CD of music for Breton dances. These two kan ha diskan singers from the Tregor present a variety of dances – suites for the plinn and fisel, cercle circassien, rond de Loudéac, Scottish, laridé, avant-deux, pas de sept – but also include two gwerz. The CD includes a 40-page booklet with the Breton language song texts and French translations.

Eric Liorzou & Thomas Bocher. *An dre nevez.*

Singer and guitar player Eric Liorzou (a main-stay of the group Bleizi Ruz) pairs with sax and flute player Thomas Bocher for songs of a traditional Breton theme and compositions where Celtic, rock, and afro-jazz beats are happily combined.

Soïg Siberil. *30 ans de scène.* Coop Breizh

This is a two CD set of performances by Soïg Siberil including arrangements of Breton airs and dances, compositions, and Celtic tunes from Ireland, Scotland, and Galicia. All but one have been previously recorded, but this gathers the "best of" this master of acoustic guitar, who is joined by a number of other master Breton musicians in this 30 year retrospective.

Tayfa & Bagad Cap Caval. Self-produced.

Berber singer Farid Aït Siameur and the group Tayfa work here with one of Brittany's top bagads, the Bagad Cap Caval. Berber and Breton melodies and dance rhythms are combined effectively and innovatively, retaining the unique sounds of each tradition.

Termajik. *An nisel erc'h.* Coop Breizh (www.termajik.net)

This trio has been performing since 1998 and includes Guillaume Le Guern on clarinet (treujenn gaol in Breton) Christian Duro with song and clarinet, and Jean Le Floc'h on accordion. Their repertoire of traditional dances and melodies is drawn from the fisel area, and four compositions are also included on this CD.

Trévidy. *Au cul du camion.* Libertaires Productions.

Olivier Trévidy performs songs on a variety of topics, from soccer to bicycles, evoking a variety of moods – tender and more terrible. Trévidy is joined by a large cast of Breton musicians and singers (including Lors Jouin, Ronan Pensec, Manu Lann Huel, Didier Dréo, Didier Squiban, to name just some) with accordion, guitars, percussion, piano, voices and choirs.

Tri Yann. *Le Concert des 40 ans.* Morgane Productions/Marzelle Productions. www.tri-yann.com Available on DVD and/or a double CD, this is a live performance recorded at the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient in August 2011. In its longevity and continued popularity and creativity, Tri Yann might be characterized as the "Rolling Stones" of Brittany.

Correction to note:

In Bro Nevez 12 (November 2011) a CD by *Krenigenn* was noted. This should be *Krenijenn* – a fest noz band with trumpet electro-harp, flute, percussion, and an electronic beat.

And a new DVD of note

La Bombarde et ses cousines. Editions BAS Penn ar Bed
This 3 DVD set put together by Bodadeg are Sonerien Penn ar Bed (Finistère) presents the Breton bombard as well as similar "oboes" of popular traditions of France (Occitania), Italy, Armenia, Africa and Asia. The DVDs shows different playing techniques, varied music, and the cultural context in which these instruments are found. If you love the bombard, you'll love all its equally vibrant "cousins."



**Deep Inside a Breton Skull 34
Breton Roof Timber Carvings**

Jean Pierre Le Mat

My ancestors were great carvers. They carved their grain chests, and we have kept some of them which date as far back as the XIVth century, with fantastic interlaced design. They carved the wood of their beds, the wood of their chairs and the handles of their spoons.

But the very place where they can express their carving spirit was our country churches. Oh, they did not carve the hieratic statues and great scenes of the Bible that can be seen immediately by tourists in a hurry. That job was usually dedicated to professional and devout carvers, chosen by the highest ranks of the clerical hierarchy.

The rural carvers had the right to carve the beams, and also the eaves purlins. These planks of wood, fixed horizontally at the top of the walls, make the junction

with the roof. The triangular spacing limited by the top of the wall, the tilted roof and this plank inside the church, is usually filled with sand, to prevent the insects from coming in. Usually, above the eaves purlins, the framework of the roof is hidden by a blue wood panelling spangled with golden stars, representing the vault of heaven.

When the church had been built and consecrated, the architects and prelates left the place quickly to come back to their comfortable houses, in big cities. Life went on with the local inhabitants, proud of their carvings, and with the local priests, proud to see the church crowded with people. At this time, there was no electric light. In the shadow, it was difficult to see the scenes illustrating the eaves purlins.

The first character of these carvings is rusticity. The artist did not look for pure lines or elegant proportions. According to the long and narrow place he can carve, he must bend all his characters strangely. He did not seek to wake up an individual or aesthetic emotion. He wanted to wake up a common fervor or, very often, a popular collusion.



Whereas the architect is an educated man, coming from outside, the woodworker is a local craftsman, poor and anonymous. To get the honor of offering his work to the local church and to the local Christian community, he must have a distinct talent and a strong will. This craftsman gave to the characters and to the scenes he carved liveliness or tenderness he found deep inside his skull. Together with his fellow artists, he painted his works. The colors followed unexplainable criteria. The dragons are always green. The miters of the bishops are always gilded. The horses are always dapple-grey. The topics can be those of the Bible, but also those of a unique hagiography linked with the animals. Saint Herve is always pictured with a wolf, Saint Herbot with cows, Saint Alar with horses. Saint Edern is riding a stag. You must know that formerly, in the valleys of Brittany, there were countless hermits, abbots, bishops and even popes unknown from the clerical hierarchy and from learned people.



My ancestors did not decorate the churches only with religious scenes. In some places of Morbihan, mischievous woodworkers carved pigs or boars playing bagpipes. In the church of Chatelaudren, they pictured a fight of Dragons and scenes of hunting. In other places, there are indecent or comic scenes like the farting man in a church of Roscoff, or naked people dancing in the church of Lannedern.



The popular art of the carved eaves purlins sprang from the people, with violence, liveliness, sometimes coarseness. From the people, it gets also passion, generosity, movement. Drunken or funny people were pictured, but also dead ones, mermaids, giants. In some churches, the artists

pictured the face of many of their friends, like our modern comic strips.

Our carvers and woodworkers also mixed their scenes with marvels of nature. Real or holy characters meet with legendary animals, emerging from a collective memory. The strong feeling of the natural and mystic environment had more importance than tracking any limited reality.

Deep inside my skull, I look for the lost history linked with this pig emptying a barrel, or with this ploughman unaware that his oxen were trampling a poor man underfoot. I wonder about the signification of this guy handling two unicorns or of this fish eating a horse.



Clearly, the carved eaves purlins were accepted but not controlled by the clergy. Some scenes are even a sharp criticism of the priests and the monks. In the church of Graces, near Guingamp, you can see three monks driven to hell by devils on a wheelbarrow. In the church of Saint Aignan, a priest is being devoured by a monster. In Treflevenez, a pig is preaching to birds from a pulpit.





This strangeness of the carved eaves purlins shows that the Bretons love freedom. But I belong to a people for which freedom is not linked with open war. In the big cities, people defend their freedom through rebellion. Each of them has a clear view of who are the hated masters. They have a lot of theories about that. They say that it is a good thing to break chains. When they rise, they seem sure that they are breaking the very chains of their dependence. Their heroes are warlords.

In old cultures like the Breton one, the most solid chains are those tying the people with bad weather, poor crops, wild nature. Against that, the solution is not rebellion. It is to hide and to follow unusual ways. When you live in a natural environment, everything cannot be controlled. So, welfare is linked with opportunities and not with institutions. When times are hard, rather than hate and open war, Breton people are able to mock, disobey, desert, embezzle, find new paths.

The carvings on the eaves purlins express that old way to freedom.

CAPE BRETON: IS IT BRETON?

by Natalie Novik

With a few days to kill this spring between jobs in Newfoundland and Quebec, I took a short trip to Cape Breton (Nova Scotia, Canada) to try and find out what was so Breton about it. I have to say that, before that, I had some exposure to Breton history in Newfoundland (Terre-Neuve, Bro Nevez in Breton...) with the history of the "terre-neuvas", or the fishing fleet that used to come to the Grand Banks from Brittany and Normandy for the cod, until it was all fished out. They were coming year-round to Newfoundland, where some place names refer to Brittany, and Bretons represent a solid percentage of the population on the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon just east of Newfoundland. The Breton fishing fleet was coming mostly from Saint-Malo in eastern Brittany, which means that the names are French and Gallo. Some terre-neuvas used to come from Paimpol in northwestern Brittany as well, but whatever Breton the crews might have used, it has not impacted the toponymy.

So it was very interesting as soon as I crossed into Cape Breton to note the huge panel wishing me welcome in Scottish Gaelic! I took the road called the Ceilidh trail, along the west coast, because the villages on it are the homeland of some of the best fiddlers in

the world, and music is present everywhere. What struck me at every corner were the bilingual signs: road signs, village names, panels announcing cultural events, everything was in English and Scottish Gaelic. One exception: the post offices, no bilinguism, it's all in Gaelic! Tigh Litrichean (Ti al lizer, in Breton)... The English/French official sign is lost in small characters somewhere on the side!

If you are there in the summer (things do close down after September 15th and before May 1st), it's worth visiting the Celtic Music Center in Judique. Besides a very complete wall display of panels about the various musicians who have contributed to the fame of the region, a few walks down memory lane with vintage instruments, it also features a number of interactive sections using videos to teach you to dance the jig or play the fiddle, and large reproductions of sheet music with Cape Breton music and a button to play the corresponding air. The Center serves as a rallying point for the fiddlers all summer long.



After a couple of days, I managed to drive over to a tiny hamlet on an island in the Bras d'Or Lake, called Iona. There, at the Scottish Cultural Center, every Tuesday afternoon, the locals gather around a cup of tea to speak Gaelic. I was very honored to be invited to listen to the conversation between a dozen absolutely fluent speakers, who proceeded after a couple of hours to sing in Gaelic and asked me for a song, which I gave in Breton of course.

So where are the Bretons? It turns out that while the southwest part of Cape Breton is Scottish and the eastern part is mostly Irish, the French settled in the north of the island.



Nonetheless, even the Scottish area where I was had a number of French-sounding names like Judique or Mabou, which is a Native Mik'maq word distorted by the French, named An Drocheaid (the bridge) on the sign at the entrance of the village. The name Cape Breton might have stemmed from the fact that in the early years, in the 16th and 17th century, the terre-neuvas were indeed primarily coming from Saint-Malo (we should not forget that at the time, the Breton fleet far exceeded the French fleet). However, other theories abound, like for instance the Basques who are also quite numerous in the area would have named the island after one of the

caples in their region, Cabo Breton, also named because of the presence of Breton sailors.

Whatever the origins of the name, I was on a hunt to find Bretons. And I did! A short conversation with the waitress at "The Mull" restaurant in Mabou brought out the fact her grandfather was a sail maker from Saint-Malo who had emigrated to the eastern coast of Cap Breton in the 1900's! In another conversation with a lady in Judique, I learned that her ancestors also came from Brittany (she was not very sure where from) at the end of the 19th century. So while there is probably no systematic record of all the Breton descendants who people Cape Breton today, there is definitely a presence and a memory. But since the overwhelming majority who came here were using French rather than Breton as a vernacular, the language has not left a mark.

No matter what, Cape Breton and Nova Scotia in general are graced by the presence of active Scottish and Irish communities, which impart a very Celtic identity to the area. There is every year in early October a festival on the island called Celtic Colors, which features the best fiddlers and other musicians in the area and guests from many other parts of the world. Tourism here is well developed, you will find plenty of great places to stay, the food is really very good and fresh, and the scenery is to die for! It's a little cool, which is fine for my Alaskan tastes, but you might want to grab a sweater and a raincoat before heading over to the Cape.



On the way back to Halifax, I stopped in Pictou, a fishing harbor on the north coast of Nova Scotia. After a delicious lobster chowder at a local café, I was walking down the main street when I spotted a couple in full Scottish Highland

regalia, carrying a basket full of candy. As I came closer to ask if I could take a picture, they obliged, but also noted that I was wearing a tartan scarf, and complimented me for observing Tartan Day. I had forgotten what day we were, so other than keeping warm there was no intent in my wearing this scarf, but it entitled me to a piece of candy for being so traditional!

Halifax is replete with pubs and Irish pubs for that matter, with excellent music and Guinness on the tap. This is where most musicians from Cape Breton transit before going to make a name for themselves in larger venues, but it serves as a hub not only for Cape Breton but other communities with a strong musical tradition in

Nova Scotia, like the Acadian villages on the south coast. The mingling of musicians today means that groups like Grand Derangement (from the Acadian village of St. Mary's) or fiddlers like Natalie MacMaster feature Breton music in their repertoire. It is interesting to note that Brittany comes to them from two sources: either they are Acadians, whose ancestors might have come from Brittany so this is a part of their ancestral traditions with a repertoire coming from Eastern Brittany, or they are Scots and Irish and they got the Breton airs from rubbing shoulders with Breton musicians who come regularly to Nova Scotia.

What I found during my short incursion into the Maritimes was that people not only knew the name Brittany, they also knew where Brittany was and did not confuse it with Britain. There are about 100,000 people on Cape Breton (10% of the whole of Nova Scotia), so it seems that regular visits by Bretons for 500 years or so have engraved the name in the minds of this small, but amazingly hospitable community.



May Almanac

Bernard Le Nail (1946-2010) was a scholar who was a master of biography. His publications on the history of Breton explorers remain key resources and a reminder of the world-wide range of Bretons. While Bretons defending their culture have been accused of being interested only in their own "little" country, in fact, Bretons are international travelers and have been for many centuries. Bernard Le Nail also collaborated on a number of dictionaries (with his wife Jacqueline) presenting writers of Brittany – equally practical and fascinating sources of information on Breton authors. One of the more "popular" books Le Nail produced was *L'Almanach de La Bretagne* (Editions Jacques Marseille – Larousse/VUEF, 2003). Day-by-day for a full year the book presents people and historical events, tidbits of information, proverbs, the Saint associated with the date, and a few events that happened on that day, so that each day you would learn a little about Brittany. I have chosen to translate a few entries from May and June. - LK

10 Mae -Saint Isidore, Patron of Laborers
The Breton Cow, La Pie Noire

The Breton Pie Noire is the smallest of cow breeds in France. Its coat is "pie-noire (like the bird of that name), that is to say, white and black. Its coat is short and silky with very supple hide; its head is black with a white splash on the forehead. In other times called "Morbihannaise" or "Cornouaille" the cow's origins are in poorer agricultural zones of southern Brittany – the

Cornouaille country straddling the border of the Côtes d'Armor, Finistère and Morbihan. It was in 1885 when this breed counted some 500,000 head that the Herd-Book for the Bretonne Pie Noire was created. Around the year 1955 this cow began to lose ground. From 300,000 the number of Pie Noire went down to 70,000 in 1969. A plan to save the breed was launched in 1976 when no more than 300 cows were counted. Today it seems saved from disappearing.

19 Mae

Saint-Yves, Patron of Bretons and Lawyers

For a long time in Rome Bretons had their own national parish, Saint-Yves-des-Bretons. In Paris Bretons built a church dedicated to Saint Yves very early on. During several dozen years the festival of Saint-Yves was a very important event for Bretons of Paris. For a long period of time Yves was one of the most popular first names found in Brittany, with derivations and the Breton versions Erwan, Youenn, Iwan, etc. Several years ago the Saint-Yves or Fest'Yves became a large secular festival held on May 19, following the example of St. Patrick's Day.

Born on October 17, 1253, in the Manor of Kermartin in Minihy, near Tréguier, Yves Hélocour left for Paris at the age of 14 to study philosophy, theology and canon law. He then studied ecclesiastical and civil law in Orléans, and then went to Rennes in 1280 where he became an ecclesiastical judge. In 1285 he was named ecclesiastical judge in Tréguier and then was ordained a priest and named rector of Trédrez and then of Louanec. On the death of his parents he transformed the family manor into a hospice for the poor.

He himself led an austere life, sacrificing personally to give to those who were poorer. It was his sense of justice and concern for the most poor that made him popular, especially after his death, May 19, 1303, a popularity that grew as miracles attributed to his intercession would increase. The Duke of Brittany solicited the Pope for his canonization, and the process started June 23, 1330 and led to his canonization by Pope Clement VI on May 19, 1347. For all the Catholic world, Saint Yves is the patron of jurists, lawyers and judges, and many come each year to Tréguier for the big pardon which marks his feast day.

23 Mae -Sainte Candide, companion of Sainte Ursula in the 4th Century

Sonneurs

On May 23, 1943, Bodadeg ar Sonerien (BAS), the assembly of pipers [including bombard players] was founded, even though only some 30 biniou players remained in Brittany, most of whom were elderly. Thanks to patient work to collect traditional tunes which

allowed for the safekeeping of over 2,000 folk melodies, and to the work to teach new musicians, traditional Breton music went through an extraordinary revival which continues through the beginning of the 21st century. BAS includes over 3,000 members who get together in ensembles comparable to the Scottish or Irish "pipe bands" – the "bagadoù" – and the level of instrumental quality has not stopped progressing.

2 Heven - The Blessed Jean de l'Isle, Priest

A Native of Rennes, Inventor of the Assimil Method: Alphonse Chérel

Son of a flour dealer of Romazy, Alphonse Chérel was born in Rennes on June 2, 1882. Seized by the desire for discovery, he left for England and then Russia where he was a tutor in the home of a Russian nobleman. He naturally learned Russian and then left for Germany where he learned German. Upon return to France he was mobilized as an interpreter [in the military]. In 1928 he met Emile Busson, a printer, who proposed that he create a manual to teach oneself English. It was destined for success: for the first time a method was created to learn language with short daily lessons, with a directly readable pronunciation, without grammar rules. To top it off, humor was found throughout with a tone that one would qualify today as convivial. A veritable revolution compared to the classic manuals of the period. The name Assimil added to its success. A creator, but not much of a businessman, Alphonse partnered with his brother George to create the Assimil company in 1929. Other trips followed during which a method was created: Italy, Spain. Certainly Russian and German appeared to contribute to a considerable catalog.

The death of Alphonse in 1956 slowed the pace of work and it was not until 1975 that publications picked up.

P.S.: Assimil published *Le Breton sans peine* by Fañch Morvannou in 1975 and then *Initiation au breton sans peine* in 1980.

5 Heven -The Blessed Ermengarde, Duchess of Brittany in the 12th Century

Charles Lindbergh

Born in Detroit in 1902, Charles Auguste Lindbergh was world known as the first to successfully cross the Atlantic by airplane on May 20-21, 1927, solo aboard the Spirit of Saint Louis. Charles Lindbergh married in 1929, but his son Charles was kidnapped and murdered March 1, 1932. In 1935 he Lindberghs decided to leave the United States. They bought the island of Illiec in Penvénan, on the northern coast of Brittany. They lived there for a long time, then with the menace of war in Europe, came back to the U.S. in 1939.

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 35 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 700 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 immersion schools— for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Members. We have maintained a personal link with the children of 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.

Lois Kuter
Secretary, U.S. ICDBL
Editor, Bro Nevez
605 Montgomery Road
Ambler, PA 19002 U.S.A.

loiskuter@verizon.net

For more information please check out our website:
www.icdbl.org

11/20/2010

Bro Nevez 122

May 2012

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Brittany Journal – May in the Ar C'hoat 2012, by David Brûlé	1 – 3
Diwan	2
Ar Redadeg a di da di	3
Fest Breizh / Fest Yves – New York Style	4
Manif Langues régionales: 12,000 demonstrators in Quimper	4
Stumdi: Intensive Breton Language Sessions for 2012-2013	4 – 5
A University Study of Breton Language Revitalization	5
Kentel 17 / Lesson 17 – A Breton Lesson from Natalie Novik	5 - 6
Brittany Mourns the Loss of Two Voices for the Breton Language and Culture: Chanig ar Gall and François Morvan	6 – 7
Dastum 40 Years	7 – 8
Produit en Bretagne Prizes for music	8 – 9
A Welsh Composer and Breton Music – A CD Review of Mansel Thomas, by Keith Davies Jones	9 - 10
Heard of, but not heard – Short Notes on 19 New Recordings from Brittany	10 – 11
Deep Inside a Breton Skull 34 – Breton Roof Timber Carvings, by Jean-Pierre Le Mat	11 - 13
Cape Breton: Is it Breton?, by Natalie Novik	13-14
May Almanac – Short Notes from Bernard Le Nail's L'Almanach de La Bretagne	14 - 15