

# BRO NEVEZ

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



**BRETAGNE...  
CELTIQUE!**

DE L'ANCIENNE ARMORIQUE À LA BRETAGNE MODERNE

**4/08/2023**  
**AN ORIENT / LORIENT**

PALEZ AR C'HENDALC'HIOÙ  
PALAIS DES CONGRÈS

9e30 > 5e noz  
9h30 > 18h

Digoust  
Gratuit

**CONFÉRENCES  
DÉBATS  
INTERVIEWS**

avec  
**ALAN STIVELL,**  
grand témoin

Gouzout hiroc'h / Renseignements :  
bretagneceltique.bzh  
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KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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# Bro Nevez 166

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Back issues of Bro Nevez can be found on the U.S. ICDBL website

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



## Saving Breton Language Place Names

News always comes in just as I mail out an issue of *Bro Nevez*. While the March issue was sent before I could report on the following issues, the de-Bretonization of place names and names of streets or buildings is certainly not a new one. And Bretons will need to continue to fight efforts to bury their history and the Breton language.

### The Community of Plouégat-Guérand and Breton Language Names for Places

In mid-March a victory was declared for the commune of Plouégat-Guérand which fought to retain names in the Breton language attached to small roads and named places ("lieux-dits"). Located in the north of Finistère, the mayor of this community of 1,084 inhabitants defied the demands of the postal service to use French names (allée, chemin, route, etc.) for the pathways through the community whose Breton names carry the history of generations. Likewise, its 140 "lieux-dits" – named places – were to be numbered.

Brittany has some 24,000 of these named places which are not equivalent to houses lined up along a street. Old maps show that every woods, field and farm in Brittany had in the past a name in Breton or in Gallo. Brittany is not so huge that the postal service cannot manage to learn the names of delivery destinations.

(Information for this note was drawn from a posting by Philippe Argouarch on *Agence Bretagne Presse*, March 16, 2023)

### De-Bretonization of the Kerhallet Middle School in Brest

This spring Bretons rose in protest to plans to change the name of the middle school Kerhallet to Josephine Baker. Jean-François Riou de Kerhallet (born in 1746) was a ship builder and trader with a prominent place in the port development of Brest. Josephine Baker was an exceptional singer, dancer, and actress (1905-1975) who well deserves a public presence. Born in St. Louis, Missouri, she spent years in Paris, but seems to have no relationship with Brittany. Bretons protesting the name change recognize the deserved fame of Josephine Baker, but feel her name should not replace Kerhallet on the middle school as it is scheduled to with the new school year in the fall of 2023.

In March a letter of protest was sent to the Departmental Council of Finistère, who proposed the name change, by leaders of Koun Breizh, Sked, and Skol Uhel ar Vro (Cultural Institute of Brittany). In April Jacky Flipot for the Cultural Institute of Brittany and Yvon Ollivier for Koun Breizh sent an open letter to the

Minister of National Education, Pap Ndiaye, with a copy to the “communauté éducatif” of the Kerhallet middle school. This “community” is found in the schools of France and includes students, parents, teachers and staff of the school and others engaged with the school to oversee policies.

The following is my translation of the open letter – apologies in advance for any misinterpretations. - LK

Mr. Minister,

We have learned from the press that the middle school of Kerhallet in Brest will be de-Bretonized to take the name of Josephine Baker, pending approval by the Educative Community of the middle school.

If we are aware to what degree Josephine Baker was an exceptional woman, it does not take away from the fact that this name substitution is yet another manifestation of the insidious de-Bretonization taking place in our territory. If it is important to give our schools names of celebrated women, why is it necessary to do this at the expense of a minority language in danger of extinction?

Is it necessary to remind one that urbanization extended to agricultural tracts which still carry Breton names lasting for millenniums has brought new names as significant as “rue des jonquilles”?

Is it necessary to remind one that following the 3DS law relative to the differentiation, decentralization and devolution which carries diverse measures for simplification of local public action, all the communes with less than 2,000 inhabitants will be required to facilitate the job of the postal service by giving a designation to each pathway and named place?

It's a true steam-roller which crushes Brittany. Called on by the public about the de-Bretonization of the Kerhallet middle school, Maël De Calan, sitting president of the Departmental Council of Finistère, did not bother to respond.

Certainly, this concerns just the name of a middle school, but that name has the advantage of being ancient and to recall to the very young that they do not come from just anywhere or from Paris, but from Brittany. This name is additionally closely linked to the territory and its history.

We know, Mr. Minister, that in your personal orientation you are extremely favorable to cultural diversity.

Instead of de-Bretonizing this middle school, it is necessary that teachers open up students' minds to their past, to their territory, as well as to the existence of the Breton language. They might even think of

teaching in a bilingual stream. Multilingualism is an opportunity for all the students, an opening to diversity, to living together, and a means of combatting the terrifying inequality of opportunities in this Republic.

The fact that the Kerhallet middle school integrates a large number of youth of foreign origins is in no way a justification for hiding from them the history of the territory in which they live and the existence of its remarkable language.

The heritage of the place names of Brittany is in great danger. Its preservation falls within the international engagements of France which signed the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of immaterial culture. Children have the right to have access to their cultural origins according to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Thus, we ask of you, Mr. Minister, as well as of the Educative Community of the middle school of Kerhallet, to not substitute, but instead add the name of Josephine Baker to that of Kerhallet. This can be the opportunity to explain to middle schoolers the origins of the name Kerhallet and to reflect on the idea of diversity.

We think the reputation of the middle school will come out of this stronger.

The Breton people have a long memory and carry in it the violence done to them in schools for generations by their educative community of the epoch – by means of the famous sabot, slates, and hazing to make their language an inferior and despised language.

Josephine Baker, an exceptional woman of courage, would not accept to be mixed in a dehumanizing undertaking as is constituted in de-Bretonization. She would have a big enough heart to find herself next to François Riou De Kerhallet.

We are at your disposal to exchange ideas on this subject and to seek all solutions susceptible to best protect our cultural patrimony.

For Koun Breizh, Yvon Ollivier  
For Institut Culturel de Bretagne, Jacky Flipot

## Gallo, the language of Upper Brittany

While everyone in Brittany these days speaks French there are two other languages which are truly native the Brittany – Breton / Brezhoneg and Gallo / Galo. As the newsletter for the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, *Bro Nevez* has featured the Breton language, but our

members have always been interested in and supportive of a wide diversity of the world's languages.

The following is a very brief summary and adaptation of some information in an excellent article by Bértran Ôbrée (of the organization Chubri) published in November 2016 in the online becedia of Bretagne Culture Diversité: <https://bcd.bzh/becedia/fr/le-gallo-la-langue-de-la-haute-bretagne>

Gallo is spoken in Upper Brittany (Haute Bretagne) in the departments of Ile-et-Vilaine, Loire-Atlantique, and eastern portions of Morbihan and Côtes d'Armor. It dates back to the period of Roman occupation in Armorica (1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries) and is a Romance language in the oïl branch with traces of Gaulish, and influences from Breton, especially in the western areas. Like all languages it has been influenced by languages with which it has had contact – brought by the Franks, Vikings and neighboring oïl language speakers of France.

Until the 1950s Gallo was the main language of the people of Upper Brittany. Like Breton and other regional languages of France its decline was spurred by the exclusive use of French in the schools and other institutions and a very limited presence in media. Gallo speakers like Breton speakers were given the idea that their languages were “patois” fit only for backward peasants. Some believed that but, thankfully, many did not. Gallo has been largely an orally transmitted language with a very rich heritage of stories and expressions, although there is a growing body of written literature.

A renewal of interest in Gallo in the 1970s encouraged the development of new written literature and media as well as opportunities to celebrate the expression of an oral heritage at festivals and informal gatherings.

Teaching in Gallo began in the 1970s and 80s from pre-school through the university although resources remain very limited. As has been the case for Breton, much teaching is done in workshops, evening classes or programs offered by different organizations. More recently (at the beginning of the 2000s) media presence has been developed with radio (Plum FM and France Bleu Armorique) as well as videos and web presence.

Both Breton and Gallo were recognized in the Breton Cultural Charter (Charte Culturelle Bretonne) in 1977. In December 2004 the Regional Council of Brittany recognized Breton and Gallo officially as languages of Brittany.

Gallo speakers have been challenged – as have Breton speakers – by a France that believes that good citizens and progressive modern people must speak French, and only French. The idea that bilingualism, or

even multilingualism is a positive thing has only more recently become mainstream. Gallo speakers have also had to fight a notion that they are not “true” Bretons. Indeed, when I was in Brittany in the late 1970s I encountered some Gallo speakers who told me that the real Bretons were those in the west of Brittany where Breton was spoken. While not denying Breton identity people seemed to feel that their Bretonness was somehow less than that of “true Bretons.” But, I also met many who were very proud of their Breton identity and the rich cultural heritage to be found in Gallo Brittany.

There are several very active organizations that research, teach, and work to encourage the use of Gallo.

- L'Association des enseignants de gallo (<http://www.gallo-es-ecole.net/>), based in Rennes is made up of teachers, and focuses on expanding the teaching of Breton.
- Bertegn Galèzz (<https://www.bertegn-galez.bzh/>) works to promote Gallo through a range of activities for the public.
- Chubri (<https://www.chubri-galo.bzh/>) is focused on researching the use of Gallo in the oral tradition.

A more recent organization for Gallo is Academi du Galo / Academy of Gallo (<https://www.academie-du-gallo.bzh/>) . As stated on their website – which has an English language option – the following are their goals:

*The Academy of Gallo is a pledge for the survival of Gallo. We want it dynamic and progressive. In that respect, the use of digital tools along with a rational approach of the language is a huge step forward to see it adopted and recognised by the public. We firmly believe that Gallo can become a communication language (again!) and that this website will play its part in this and will work towards developing its literature.*

*... in 4 Objectives*

*Give Gallo the status of a modern language,  
Give everyone the opportunity to reach a basic understanding of Gallo thanks to free lessons already available to individuals,  
Provide and distribute standardized references for the use and development of Gallo,  
Support anyone who wants to take part in developing the Gallo literature.*

Gallo Speakers on the Attack?

A less productive action in defense of Gallo has been undertaken by a group called the Albert Poulain Brigade. This past April this group removed Breton language names from bilingual French/Breton signs for towns/cities in Upper Brittany and deposited them at

the Mayor's Office in Carhaix with a note demanding that Gallo be given priority in bilingual signage of eastern Brittany.

A case can be made that it makes more sense to place bilingual French/Gallo signs rather than French/Breton signs for places where Breton has not been used or where there has been a Gallo name used that was replaced by a French name.

"Vandalism" of road signs is not new in Brittany. In the 1980s Stourm ar Brezhoneg waged a war against monolingual French road signs – tarring them or sticking Breton names on them – and this was effective in raising a demand for bilingual signage. The attacks on Breton signage by the Albert Poulain Brigade rightly raised the question of considering more use of Gallo in Upper Brittany where appropriate, but it has been criticized for pitting the Gallo language against Breton. More disturbing – to me and others- is that the Brigade has taken on the name of Albert Poulain.

Deceased in 2015, Albert Poulain was a singer, storyteller, collector of oral traditions and expert on traditional architecture of Brittany (see *Bro Nevez* 136, December 2015). He was a champion of both Gallo and Breton. From my personal knowledge of Albert Poulain I find it highly unlikely that he would approve of his name being used for this "brigade."

For more about this issue the following articles provide more detail.

Erwan Chartier-Le Floch, "Des militants du Gallo déposent des panneaux en Breton à Carhaix" *Le Poher*, April 10, 2023 (lepoher.fr)

Jean Boidron, "Langues – Cher Albert Poulain" *Le Peuple Breton*, May 11, 2023 (lepeuplebreton.bzh)

Action Pays de Redon. "Ils utilisent le nom d'Albert Poulain pour détruire des panneaux bretons !" *Agence Bretagne Presse*, October 24, 2022 (APB.bzh). This is especially good in showing Albert Poulain's positive view of the Breton language and its presence in the history of Upper Brittany.



## Ongoing Fight for the Reunification of Brittany

In June Paul Molac, Deputy from Morbihan in the French National Assembly, presented a law proposal supported by 25 Breton deputies (from five departments) which would allow the

inhabitants of Loire-Atlantique to vote as to leaving Pays de la Loire and rejoining the Region of Brittany.

This is not the first initiative of this kind. In 2018 Bretagne Réunie gathered 105,000 signatures of Loire-Atlantique residents on a petition to bring reunification to a public vote. In 2022 À la Bretagne spearheaded a demand by over 200 elected officials of all parties and over 1,000 individuals active in various organizations of Brittany to ask presidential candidates to put together a vote for the reunification of Loire-Atlantique with the Region of Brittany. Since 2020 municipal councils of Nantes, Rennes, Saint-Brieuc, Saint-Nazaire, Lorient, Quimper, Vannes and Brest as well as other collectivities have expressed the desire for a vote on reunification. The Regional of Brittany expressed the same desire in a unanimous vote in October 2021.

Over the past decades there have been dozens of large demonstrations to call for reunification, as well as petitions, stickers and posters, and festivals for reunification. Organizations have been created to mobilize public support. Books, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles have been widely available to convincingly argue that historically, culturally, and economically, Loire-Atlantique should be part of Brittany. See *Le Livre Blanc de l'unité bretonne*, edited by Yvon Ollivier (Yoran Embanner, 2018) for an especially good collection of articles on all topics – reviewed in *Bro Nevez* 147, September 2018.

## A Bit of History

The Vichy government of occupied France during World War II is often depicted as the villain who separated the department of Loire-Atlantique (then called Loire Inférieure) from Brittany. In fact, the history is much more complicated. The following summary has been drawn from two articles by Philippe Argouarch for Agence Bretagne Presse: "Les dates essentielles de la partition de la Bretagne" (February 17, 2020) and "Qui a créé la région Pays de la Loire?" (April 27, 2023). I take full responsibility for any errors in this summary – LK

In 1789 the États de Bretagne and Province de Bretagne were dissolved and in 1789 the Duchy of Brittany was partitioned into five Departments. In 1859 the Archdiocese of Rennes was created which excluded Loire-Inférieure.

In September 1938 a decree created "Economic Regions" and this included Loire-Atlantique in a area named "Pays-de-la-Loire." In 1940 Vichy created Super Prefectures and Loire-Atlantique was detached from Brittany and was part of an area with Angers as its center. This was not called Pays-de-la-Loire, but Regional Prefecture of Angers. This was supposed to



be just for the duration of the war after which the old provinces would be restored.

In 1945 the provisional government of France created *Commisaires de Régions* which kept the regions created by Vichy. With the end of the provisional government in 1946 the *Commisaires* were gone. But in 1955 the idea of economic regions was relaunched and in July 1956 the government of Guy Mollet created a region of Brittany with just four departments. In November 1956 the name *Pays-de-la-Loire* was used once again for a region that included Loire-Atlantique, Vendée, Maine-et-Loire, Sarthe and Mayenne.

Various plans by France for regional organization in the years to follow maintained a Brittany of just four departments. Of note is the fact that the 1977 Breton Cultural Charter signed by French President Giscard d'Estaing included Loire-Atlantique.

The demands for reunification will continue.



### **Carnac Menhirs Destroyed for a Mr Bricolage do-it-yourself store**

Koun Breizh has filed a legal complaint against the destruction of 39 menhirs in Carnac that were destroyed to make room for a new store. And they have been joined by many other voices to protest this loss of heritage. Located in the Morbihan department on the south coast of Brittany, Carnac has long been a tourist attraction – especially for the Ménéac and Kermaria sties. The 39 stones in Montaubin are off the main beaten track for tourists, and perhaps of lesser archeological interest, but nevertheless are part of the oldest of menhir constructions in the world.

As noted in an article by Philippe Argouarch for Brittany News (news.bzh): *Carnac has more than 10,000 Neolithic standing stones. Also known as menhirs (from Breton long stone), the Carnac stones were erected during the Neolithic period which lasted from around 4500 BC until 2000 BC. The stones were hewn from local rock sand erected by pre-Celtic people of Brittany. The Morbihan department has 550 megalith sites. Twenty-six municipalities came together to try to have them classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.* This designation is yet to come which would have protected this site.

A good review of this issue and the need for Bretons to be provided with more education about the history and prehistory of their land can be found on <https://penn-bazh.bzh/2023/06/13/la-lecon-des-menhirs-de-carnac/>

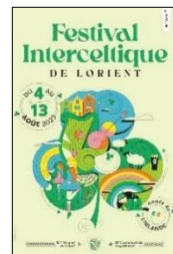
## **Inter-Celtic Action**

For over 100 years Celts have organized conferences and festivals to share knowledge and inspire collaborative work to support economic, cultural, social and environmental health. I will not try to give an in-depth or complete history of these, but as people re-organize after gaps due to the Covid crisis, it is worth noting some events for 2023.



### **The Celtic League**

The Celtic League was founded in 1961 and has branches in Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, as well as Nova Scotia, Patagonia, and the U.S. It has published *Carn* since 1973 which includes articles on a variety of subjects and issues in English and all the Celtic languages. The Celtic League is unapologetically in favor of independence of the six Celtic nations and “campaigns for the political, language, cultural and social rights of the Celtic nations.” See *Bro Nevez* 161 (March 2022) for more on the work of the Celtic League.



### **The Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient**

An outgrowth of a bagpipe festival held in Brest, the Inter-Celtic Festival was begun in 1971 and has continued to grow every year. The ten days of the festival – this year August 4-13 – feature hundreds of concerts, workshops, informal music sessions, dancing, as well as art, sports and conferences. It is attended by some 850,000 people. Each year a different Celtic nation is featured (this year it's Ireland), but all are well represented and Brittany certainly has a big share of the spotlight. Beyond the six Celtic speaking nations, the festival has included Galicia and Asturias in Spain, as well as Celts of the diaspora for a number of years.

### **Celtic Summit**

This March 2023 gathering of political leaders is just another example of long term inter-Celtic collaboration. After a Covid pause the 2023 summit was held in Lorient, hosted by the President of Brittany's Regional Council, Loïg Chesnais-Giraud. Also participating were the President of the Republic of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, the First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon, and the First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford. While there was a strong media coverage of the planning of this gathering before it was held, I was challenged to find reports of the summit's agenda or outcomes. Nevertheless, it was a strong indication of

interest of the Celtic nations to strengthen the ties between them.



## International Celtic Congress

The International Celtic Congress will be held this year from May 22-26 in Waterford, Ireland with a theme of Nature and the Celts. Founded in 1917 to link the six Celtic-speaking nations it rotates in location each year to a different Celtic nation. While there have been some gaps in the meetings, they have long been an occasion to gather experts from the Celtic nations to trade ideas and knowledge and reinforce Celtic identity and languages. The six branches of the Congress are:

*A' Chòmhdhail Cheilteach* (Scotland)

*An Chomhdháil Cheilteach* (Ireland)

*Yn Cohaglym Celtiagh* (Isle of Man)

*Y Gyngres Geltaidd* (Wales)

*An Guntelles Keltiek* (Cornwall)

*Ar C'hendalc'h Keltiek* (Brittany)



## Interceltic Business Forum

The third Interceltic Business Forum will be held during the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival in

Lorient on August 8. While the forum has been created at the initiative of Charles Kergaravat and Breizh Amerika, co-organizers for the event are the Lorient Agglomération, Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Western Development Commission in Ireland, the Scottish Business Network, Le Club : Wales-France Business Forum and the CCI du Morbihan. The Honorary Sponsor for the Forum will be Jean-Yves Le Drian, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Europe for France. The event is open to the public.

The Forum will focus on innovation, technology and entrepreneurship with a full day of conferences, round tables and networking with speakers from Celtic countries. Speakers will share their experiences in economic development, inter-Celtic collaboration, movement to green practices, internationalization and the engagement of Celts from the diaspora, and development of rural communities, among other topics.

For more information as the event approaches keep an eye on the Breizh-Amerika.com website – also a source of interesting news on cultural as well as economic links between Brittany and the U.S.

## Bretagne Celtique !

On the opening day of the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient, August 4, a colloquium will be held called



“Bretagne Celtique!” organized by the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro), the Université Rennes 2 Celtic BLM lab, and the Inter-Celtic Festival. This is a follow-up to the controversial “Bretagne Celtique?” exhibit held at the Musée de Bretagne in Rennes in 2022 (see Bro Nevez 163, September 2022) engaging a variety of Bretons

from different fields, including Alan Stivell. The colloquium will explore ancient Celtic society in Brittany as well as more contemporary inter-Celtic relations, and will delve into Breton and Celtic identities and their relation to Celtic languages, among other topics.

The program includes a number of scholars of Breton and Celtic history.

Morning sessions: Barry Cunliffe, Fabien Réginer, Patrick Galliou, Hervé Le Bihan and Simon Rodway with presentations on historical relations between Celtic peoples in Armorica and Britain, the Breton language, and literary relations between Brittany and Wales in the Middle Ages...

Afternoon sessions: Corinne Poulain, Erwan Chartier, Joël Cornette and Rozenn Milin with presentations on the history of inter-Celtic relations, Breton and Celtic identity.

The program also includes an interview with Alan Stivell and a round-table on inter-Celtism today with Jean-Philippe Mauras, Rozenn Leroy, Malo Bouëssel du Bourg, Nolwenn Faligot and Erwan Chartier

See the Ni Hon Unan website ([nhu.bzh/Bretagne-celtique-colloque-festival-interceltique-lorient](http://nhu.bzh/Bretagne-celtique-colloque-festival-interceltique-lorient)) for a good introduction to the colloquium. The website for the colloquium ([bretagneceltique.bzh](http://bretagneceltique.bzh)) provides information in French and English on the colloquium with an introduction to the participants.



## Cultural Institute of Brittany Skoluhelarvro.bzh

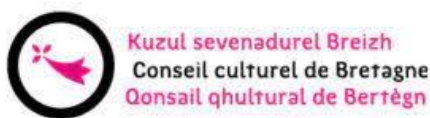
The Cultural Institute of Brittany was founded in 1982 following the signing of the Cultural Charter of Brittany. Simply put, the Cultural Institute's mission is the promotion of the Breton culture. It does this in many ways but is perhaps best known for the annual induction of Bretons into the Order of the Ermine in recognition of life-long service to Brittany.

The Institute is staffed by just two individuals and with a tiny budget, the work of the Institute is carried out by volunteers who work in subcommittees focused on

different themes: history, nature, oral literature and expression, language and linguistics, written literature, art and architecture, music and dance, sports and games, religion, youth and education, economy and culture, rights and institutions, and Inter-Celtic relations.

Besides the upcoming *Bretagne Celtique!* exhibit and conference noted above, the Cultural Institute organized a successful colloquium on Armand de la Rouërie who served in the U.S. War of Independence and a roundtable and book on Berligou, a wine prominent in the history of Brittany (see Bro Nevez 164, December 2022).

The Institute maintains a media center/library at its location in Vannes and has hundreds of short articles posted on its website on a range of topics. With very limited resources the Institute has produced a wealth of documents, books and exhibits to help Bretons learn about their history and culture.



## Cultural Council of Brittany

Bretagne.bzh/region/assemblees-consultatives/ccb

The Cultural Council of Brittany is a consultative body for the Regional Council of Brittany (governmental body for the four departments of Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan, Côtes d'Armor and Finistère). Composed of some 70 members from a full range of arts and cultural organizations it meets four times a year to prepare reports for the Regional Council and to provide feedback on the Regional Council's initiatives related to Breton culture and identity.

Cultural Council members work in four commissions focused on: languages of Brittany / cultural transmission and creativity / patrimony, sports and tourism / and cultural rights, including linguistic rights. Before each meeting of the Regional Council the Cultural Council prepares reports to address agenda items. These have often addressed budgeting, but also issues such as the State-Region Plan for Education, conventions on language transmission, reunification of the Loire-Atlantique Department with the Region of Brittany, audiovisual development, among other plans.

The Cultural Council has also been a partner in colloquia and gatherings focused on cultural and linguistic diversity in France and Europe. And they have published studies and papers on a variety of

topics such as the Gallo language, ties between culture and economy, archives and historical patrimony, cultural ties between the Region of Brittany and Loire-Atlantique, and the transmission of Brittany's traditional dances, songs and instrumental; practices.

The website for the Cultural Council gives a good explanation of its work and provides a listing of all its members.

## Prizioù ar Brezhoneg 2023

Each year France 3 Bretagne and Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg awards prizes for creation and innovation in work for the Breton language to individuals, associations, businesses or institutions. Besides the recognition for their work the winners receive a cash award which surely helps in continuing their initiatives.

The winners this year in the different categories were:

### Rummad Brezhoneger.ez ar bloaz / Breton speaker of the Year

Priz kentañ / First Prize: **Alvan hag Ahez** who composed a song in Breton and appeared at the Eurovision contest.

Eil Priz / Second: **Jean-Patern Ars**, a teacher of Breton in Noyal-Muzillac engaged in theater

Trede Priz / Third: **Loeiza an Duigoù**, a young writer in the Breton language.

### Rummad Strollegezh tiriadel / Diazevadur public / Public Collectivity

Priz kentañ / First: **Plougastell-Daoulaz** for enhancing its offer of bilingual education and for signing on to Level 3 of the Ya d'ar brezhoneg charter.

Eil Priz / Second: **Rostrenn** for making the presence of Breton a priority in the community.

Trede Priz / Third: **Pempoull** for developing teaching in Breton and signing on to Level 3 of the Ya d'ar brezhoneg charter.

### Rummad Intrudu gwellañ er bed ekonomikel / Business

Priz kentañ / First: **Breizh Odisea / Breizh Odyssee** a cultural center in Landévennec which translated its internet site into Breton.

Eil Priz / Second: **Ouest-France** who launched a podcast in Breton called Eus ur remziad d'egile (from one generation to another)

Trede Priz / Third: **Skol vroderezh Pascal Jaouen** for its design "A galon" and for offering Breton classes at the business site

### Rummad Kevredigezhioù / Association

Priz kentañ / First: **Bannoù-Heol** for publishing the cantata Ar Marc'h Dall for a new generation of youth



Eil Priz /Second: **Kevre breizhat ar vell-droad ouezelek** for insuring advertizing in Breton of Gaelic football  
 Trede Priz /Third: **Les Chats cosmiques** for the creation of Brezhle, a Breton word game similar to Wordle

#### Rummad Levr gwellañ e brezhoneg / Fiction book

Priz kentañ / First: **Kan ar mel** by Yannig Audran (Al Liamm).  
 Eil Priz / Second: **Fulenn** by Yann-Charlez Kaodal (Al Liamm).  
 Trede Priz / Third: **Planedenn paotr e bluenn** by Mich Beyer (An Alarc'h Embannadurioù).

#### Rummad Gwellañ krouidigezh kanet e brezhoneg / Album sung in Breton

Priz kentañ / First: **Elodie Jaffre, Awena Lucas, Yann Le Bozec** *Kanour Noz* (Coop Breizh).  
 Eil Priz / Second: **Modkozmik** *Volume 1* (Embroduet).  
 Trede Priz / Third: **Startijenn** *Talm ur galon* (Paker Prod)

#### Rummad Gwellañ sevenidigezh kleweled/ Audiovisual

Priz kentañ / First: **E Jardrin ur Stourmer** by Mikael Baudu (France 3 Breizh). Documentary from interviews and archives evoking the life of Martial Ménard, notable Breton linguist who died in 2016.  
 Eil Priz / Second: **Disoñjal** by Madeleine Guillo (All In One Production, Abordage Films). Short feature film evoking the loss of the Breton language in the relationship between a mother and son.  
 Trede Priz / Third: **Buhez ar Sant** by Riwal Kermarrec and Yann-Herle Gourves (France 3 Breizh). The lives of Breton saints rewritten in a humorous style.

## Breton Language Classes for Adults in Brittany

Bretons have long organized formal classes, correspondence courses, and less formal opportunities for adult learners to practice the Breton language. In more recent years a number of organizations have developed longer-term (3 and 6 month) training courses which allow a mastery of Breton that qualifies one for teaching or using it in a business.

The Regional Council of Brittany (Bretagne.bzh) recently posted an introduction to five organizations offering professional training in the Breton language. These are noted below with a brief introduction and links for those who might want to explore further.



Kelenn.bzh

**Kelenn** offers 9-month courses for those with a beginner level of Breton to move to a competence necessary to teach in primary or secondary bilingual school programs. They also offer a Masters in Education for those with a higher level of Breton to prepare them for teaching in Breton immersion programs. And continuing education classes are offered for Diwan staff to perfect their Breton.



Mervent.bzh

Created in 1994 and located particularly in the Cornouaille area of southwestern Brittany, **Mervent** offers different lengths of training, including evenings, vacation times and at work sites. There's a 6-month course for beginners who want to master Breton for personal pleasure or professional use in teaching or businesses. A 3-month course is offered for those with some proficiency. There are also courses to train those using Breton in early childhood education allowing certification for teaching and caretaking.



roudour.bzh

**Roudour** was created in 1995 and offers training at centers in Carhaix, Hennebont, Lannion, Lesneven, Morlaix, Pleyben and Quimper. Depending on proficiency there are courses spanning 3, 6, or 9 months which can combine online and on site training. Roudour uses an innovative approach to learning with use of Breton in experiences and conversation, games, gestures and oral and written media.



**Skol an Emsav**  
brezhoneg evit an holl !

skolanemsav.bzh

**Skol an Emsav** was founded in 1969 and is based in Rennes with training also in Nantes and Dinan. It offers weekly, long-distance and more immersive 3 and 6 month courses to allow one to attain a professional level of mastery. There are also workshops on different themes and for different levels of learners in the summer especially. Skol an Emsav publishes the magazines *Bremañ* and *#Brezhoneg* which enhance learning, and they publish the method Oulpan with CDs which emphasizes oral learning. Their illustrated book *100 premiers mots en Breton* is a lexicon arranged by themes



stumdi.bzh

With courses offered in the Côtes d'Armor, Finistère and Morbihan,

**Stumdi** emphasizes learning through participation in activities and conversations as well as more formal lessons. Like the other organizations there are intensive 3 or 6 month courses which allow students to master Breton. Stumdi also offers support for those seeking jobs where Breton is used and Breton speakers are needed. Short workshop of 3 days to a week for different levels focus on different topics (plants and animals, early childhood education, job preparation, etc.)



## Audubon in Rennes

The Institut Franco-Américain of Rennes (ifa-rennes.org) organized an exhibit from May 15 to June 23 and a conference on May 25<sup>th</sup> focused on Jean-Jacques Audubon. American readers of Bro Nevez are probably

quite familiar with John James Audubon (1785-1851), an ornithologist renowned for his realistic drawings of birds of America which have been reproduced widely as posters and in books.

The Audubon family had its home in Couëron located just to the west of Nantes on the Loire River. However, Jean-Jacques Audubon was born in Les Cayes, Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) April 28, 1785, the illegitimate child of Jean Audubon who made his fortune in Saint-Domingue as a merchant, planter and in the slave trade. Jean-Jacques mother was a chambermaid, Jeanne Rabin, who was originally from the town of Les Touches, 15 miles north of the city of Nantes, from which Jean Audubon sailed and traded. She died several months after the birth of Jean-Jacques. Jean Audubon had several other "natural" children and one of them, Rose, was brought back with Jean-Jacques to "La Gerbetière," the Audubon home near Couëron, in 1790 when he was five years old. Jean Audubon and his legal wife Anne Moynet Audubon adopted Jean-Jacques in 1794 to give him legitimacy and named him at that time Jean-Jacques Fougère Audubon.

Jean-Jacques was sent to school with the idea he would follow in the foot-steps of his father and become a naval officer. But he got seasick and hated formal study. When he was 15 he was sent to Paris to study art. To avoid conscription in the Napoleonic wars in 1803 which followed upon the French Revolution, 1792-99, Jean-Jacques was set to America to work at Mill Grove in Pennsylvania, land that his father had bought when the plantation days in Saint-Domingue looked much less promising. Haiti would become

independent from France in 1804 after the Haitian revolutionary war of 1791 to 1804. France recognized Haiti as an independent nation in 1825.

Jean-Jacques would return to Coëron in 1805 for a year and during this time he studied with the naturalist Charles Marie d'Orbigny (1770-1856) who was also from Couëron, a naval surgeon and botanist. It was during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century that Audubon would complete his best known work, *Birds of America*.

Did Audubon identify himself as Breton? We don't know, but in the wider world he has been identified as French. And still today anyone from the country of France is almost always labeled "French" here in the U.S., and rarely identified more precisely as Corsican, Basque, Occitan, or Breton... While annexed to France in 1532, Brittany remained largely independent of France until the French Revolution (1792-99) and at that period Nantes and the Loire-Atlantique area was still unquestionably Breton. The Audubon family of Couëron knew they lived in Brittany.



An added note - *Birds of America* was printed over an 11-year period from 1827 to 1838 as an elephant-folio which allowed even the

largest of birds to be depicted life-size, and prints were distributed in sets of five to subscribers as they were produced. During the years I worked as Director of the Volunteer program at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia (1990 to 2017) I had the pleasure of seeing many of the 435 plates since the library there had a complete set – in 5 volumes – and would turn the volume on display to a new page each weekday. Reproductions rarely do justice to the color of the originals. For a period of time, staff at this natural history museum would have the honor of turning a page and speaking about the image on display. While I am no expert on birds, I was able to say something about Audubon and his family roots in Brittany. - LK

## Breton Place Names Throughout the World

In 2001 Bernard Le Nail published the book *Noms de lieux bretons à travers le monde* (Breton placenames throughout the world) with the publishing company he founded called Les Portes du Large (portesdularge.com). Bernard Le Nail (1946-2010) was a scholar of Breton history with a particular interest in Bretons as world travelers, with a 1998 book called *Explorateurs et grands voyageurs Bretons* among other portraits of Breton explorers. He was also a

biographer of Bretons and with his wife Jacqueline published several “dictionaries” of authors of novels and children’s literature. These offered a biographical overview of writers with a listing of publications. Les Portes du Large would also publish books by other authors on Breton world travels, including ones on Bretons in the early history of Louisiana, as participants in the Gold Rush in California and more generally emigration to North America. For more about Bernard Le Nail see *Bro Nevez* 113, February 2010).

The book *Noms de lieux bretons à travers le monde* is a “dictionary” of sorts with place names listed alphabetically. And each entry provides a wealth of information about the Breton for whom a place is named. While a large number of names in the book are for places in Canada, and especially Quebec, or other world destinations where Breton explorers left a mark such as islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, a number of sites in the U.S. are also included.

I have chosen to translate entries related to the Le Ray family in northern New York State – places I have seen (most of them) seen since my sister lives in that area. There is repetition in the entries you find below – all the better to link the Le Ray history and impact on town and village names in that area. I have included several maps to locate the names cited. I take full responsibility for any mistakes in translation from the French text. LK



### Alexandria Bay

Alexandria Bay is found in Jefferson County in the north of New York State on the south shore of Lake Ontario from which the Saint Lawrence River flows toward the Atlantic Ocean. It is also the name of a village (1,194 inhabitants in 1990) and of a small town (3,949 inhabitants in 1990) situated at latitude 44° 19' 08" north and longitude 75° 52' 37" west. This locality was named in honor of Alexandria, one of the daughters of the Breton Jacques (James in English) Le Ray, son of Jacques Donatien Le Ray whose ancestors were originally from Saint-Même-le-Tenu near Machecoal in the Pays de Retz in Loire-Atlantique [to the south of the city of Nantes].

Jacques Le Ray had acquired thousands of acres in this region of the far north of New York State with the hope that they would become of value in attracting numerous immigrants. But the digging of the Erie Canal which opened October 25, 1825, linking Lake Erie to the Hudson took a hard toll on his projects in favoring economic and demographic development of regions situated more to the west.

Ref.: Thomas J. Schaeper. *France and America in the Revolutionary Era – The Life of Jacques Donatien Leray de Chaumont 1725-1803*. Providence-Oxford. Berghahn Books. 1995. 384 pages.

### Le Ray

The town of Le Ray in Jefferson County has a surface area of 190 square kilometers and its population was 17,973 in 1990. It is situated at latitude 44° 04' 46" north and longitude 75° 47' 46" west. It owes its name to a Breton family with origins in Saint-Même-le-Tenu in the Pays de Retz, Jacques or James Le Ray, son of Jacques Donatien Le Ray (Nantes 1725-1803). This latter sunk a large part of his considerable fortune into furnishing arms, munitions, uniforms and supplies to American Colonialists in revolt against England. He sought reimbursement once independence of the United States was proclaimed and peace regained in 1783. Given a deaf ear to his requests by the new government, he sent his son Jacques, who became James in crossing the ocean, to obtain the reimbursement.

After four years of efforts and thanks to the personal intervention of Benjamin Franklin who had been housed by his father in Passy during his stay in France, James obtained a sum of 9,000 dollars from the American government. He returned to France also with an American wife, Grace Cox, who belonged to a rich family from Sydney (New Jersey), and with a certificate from American authorities allowing him to be considered a citizen of the U.S. which enabled him during the [French] Revolution to keep vast lands of his family from confiscation of goods by the nobility and clergy.

Conscious of the immense potential of development of the United States, James Le Ray bought a large share of the capital of the Company of New York which were proposed for use to give value to thousands of acres around the future city baptized Castorland. This enterprise ended in fiasco and James Le Ray lost over a million francs in the affair. But that didn't prevent him from investing directly himself in other development projects, notably in Pennsylvania. His wife having returned to the United States in 1799, he went in 1802 to take up residence in Burlington, New Jersey.

He later resold 32,000 hectares (320 square kilometers) which he possessed in Pennsylvania to Madame de Staël and her father Jacques Necker, former Finance Minister to Louis XVI who was retired in Switzerland.

James Le Ray engaged in major investments in the north of New York State, becoming in large part proprietor of four vast counties, one of which being St. Lawrence County. In total he possessed over 400,000 acres – 160,000 hectares or 1,600 square kilometers.

In 1802 he built a beautiful home, the Le Ray Mansion, in French Renaissance style and six years later he brought his family to Leraysville. His daughter Thérèse who had become Theresa de Gouvello, was accompanied by a friend from Lorraine [France], Jankia de Fériet who soon became the companion of James Le Ray. She first lived in a little house nearby, then in a beautiful home named L'Hermitage in which she stayed for fifteen years. After the death of James Le Ray in 1840 she returned to France in 1841 and died in Versailles in 1843.

Another Leray played a role in the United States – François Xavier Leray, born in Chateaugiron April 20, 1825. He was archbishop of New Orleans when during a trip to Brittany to see his family he died in Chateaugiron September 23, 1887.

#### Castorland

Castorland is the name of a locality in Lewis County in the north of New York State which was to be the center of a huge real estate project in which the Breton Jacques/James Le Ray was one of the principal investors. Unfortunately, the operation ended in bankruptcy, and he lost large sums of money. This village with 292 inhabitants in 1991 is situated at latitude 43° 53' 03" north and longitude 75° 31' 03" west. [Castor is the French word for beaver]



#### Chaumont

Situated in Jefferson County in the north of New York State, Chaumont is a locality that owes its name to Jacques or James Le Ray, whose father Jacques Donatien Le Ray added the name Chaumont to his name after acquiring the château of that name. The Le Rays had acquired a large part of Lewis and especially Jefferson Counties in the north of New York State. Chaumont which had 620 inhabitants in 1980 and 593 in 1990 is now a small fishing port and tourist site on the shore of Lake Ontario (this lake with a surface area of 18,800 square kilometers is larger than half of Brittany or of Belgium). Chaumont is found at latitude 44° 03' 55" north and longitude 76° 08' 00" west.

#### Chaumont Bay

This bay of Lake Ontario is found in Jefferson County in the north of New York State.

#### Chaumont River

As with the locality of Chaumont and the bay of the same name, the Chaumont River which flows through Jefferson County and ends in Lake Ontario owes its name to the Breton Jacques or James Le Ray de Chaumont whose ancestors were from Saint-Même-le-Tenu in the Pays de Retz.

#### Theresa

Situated in Jefferson County in the north of New York State, this location gets its name from one of the daughters of the Breton James Le Ray de Chaumont (1760-1840). James Le Ray and his son Vincent built churches, bridges and roads with the hope of attracting numerous immigrants to invest in the region. Thérèse Leray who married the Marquis Pierre Armand de Gouvello de Keriavel (Kerlevan 1782-1870) came to visit her father in America in 1816 and it is in her honor that this town carries her name. Theresa is found at latitude 44° 14' 35" north and longitude 75° 46' 32" west. 169 square kilometers in size, the community of Theresa had 2,281 inhabitants in 1990.

#### Cape Vincent

The village and town of Cape Vincent is found in the north of New York State on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River where it ends in Lake Ontario. A car ferry allows cars to rapidly reach the Canadian side of the river from Cape Vincent.

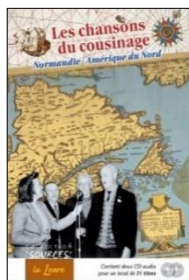
Situated in Jefferson County this village was founded April 1, 1849, and got its name in honor of Vincent Le Ray, son of James Le Ray and grandson of Jacques Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont.



The town of Cape Vincent is found at latitude 44° 07' 34" north and longitude 76° 19' 51" west and the small village of the same name which has a surface area of 146 square kilometers is at latitude 44° 70' 39" north and longitude 76° 16' 57" west.

The village of Cape Vincent had 785 residents in 1980 and 683 in 1990. The "town" of Cape Vincent counted 1,310 inhabitants in 1900 but had not more than 770 in 1960. In 1965 its population grew to 898, to 1,828 in 1980 and 2,768 in 1990.

## Songs of "cousins" of Normandy and North America



**La Loure. Les chansons du cousinage, Normandie-Amérique du Nord.** La Loure (laloure.org) 176 pages

Bretons have long fostered exchanges between musicians and singers of Brittany and Quebec. And there are a number of studies of Breton emigration to North America.

This new publication is the outcome of many years of research on the French language song traditions of Normandy and North America (Quebec especially) with insight on how the oral transmission has worked to maintain and transform song brought across the Atlantic.

The study presents 61 song texts as well as transcriptions of melodies with a detailed look at performance and transmission through time and space. The research by Yvon Davy, director of La Loure of Normandy, historian and ethnomusicologist Éva Guillotet, and former director of Dastum Robert Bouthillier gives insight into the history of emigration from Normandy to North America enhanced by maps and numerous illustrations.

The book is accompanied by two CDs with performances from earlier and more recent collections of exceptional traditional singers.



**Joli Gris Jaune. La longue errance – De la Normandie à l'Amérique du Nord. Les chansons du cousinage.** La Loure.

On the occasion of the publication of the book cited above, the group Joli Gris Jaune has released a CD which also compares songs from both sides of the Atlantic, but in a more "contemporary" style with arrangements and instrumental accompaniment. Some of the songs

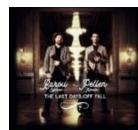
are found in the CD set accompanying *Les chansons du cousinage*, others not.

Joli Gris Jaune is composed of two experts on the repertoire of Quebec - Emmanuelle Bouthillier (song, fiddle, feet and rattles) and Robert Bouthillier (song and Jew's harp) - and two specialists on the Normandy song tradition – Étienne Lagrange (song, fiddle) and Nadège Queuniet (song, accordion).

More detail about *Les chansons du cousinage* as well as the Joli Gris Jaune CD can be found in articles and reviews in *Musique Bretonne* 274 (jan.-fevr.-mars 2023).

## Heard of, but not heard – new recordings from Brittany

Information for the following quick notes were drawn from information in *Musique Bretonne* 274 (jan.-fevr.-mars 2023) and *Ar Men* 253 (mars-avril 2023) and 254 (mai-juin 2023), as well as some internet searching where samples of CD content are available.



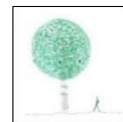
**Barou-Pellen. The last days of Fall.** Glazad/Sirnya GLAZAK 01.

Bretons have long demonstrated their mastery of Irish traditional music with a long list of masters of the wooden flute, uilleann pipes, fiddle, and other stringed instruments. Here are two of Brittany's best paired up to present dance and melodies of Ireland – Sylvain Baron on flute and uilleann pipes and Ronan Pellen on cittern.



**B.R.E.T.O.N.S. B.R.E.T.O.N.S.** (bretons-legroupe.com)

This group is a collective of singers and musicians from some of Brittany's best loved groups – Soldat Louis, EV, Kervigans, Digresk, Armens and others. With some 15 musicians on stage with vocals, electric and acoustic guitars, percussion, flutes and whistles, fiddle, bombarde, bagpipes and keyboards – they put on a high energy performance. They draw from the Breton, Irish and Scottish traditions with a definite rock beat.



**Laurent Genty. Naïf.**

Pianist Didier Squiban has fostered several up and coming pianists on his record label L'Hôtel de la grève, and here he produces a solo piano album by Laurent Genty. Trained in classical music, Genty draws on a variety of genres – jazz, rock and folk – in 14 selections.



**Clarisse Lavanant. Ici**

New album by singer Clarisse Lavanant with 21 selections of songs mostly in French. Most are composed by her or in

collaboration with other musicians met during a long career. Included on the CD is a vocal duet with Irish composer Phil Coulter for “The Shores of the Swilly.”



**Gilles Le Bigot. *Bale***

Gilles Le Bigot, a master of acoustic guitar, has been a part of some of Brittany's best known groups – Barzaz,

Kornog, Skolvan, l'Héritage des Celtes – and has played with numerous stars of the Celtic music scene. This is his first solo album with 17 selections. These are compositions and arrangements of Breton melodies, dances and marches. “Bale” is Breton for “walk” or “march,” and they are somewhere in between with the rhythm of a slow dance whether sung or played on an instrument.



**Morwenn Le Normand and Roland Conq. *Daou*.**

This is the second album by singer Morwenn Le Normand and guitarist Roland

Conq featuring three of their latest performances for children: Plik ha Plok, Allô Tad Nedeleg, and Ar gwenan. The Cd has 13 selections, primarily in Breton with a few in French and other languages.



**Jean-Jacques Mel. *Étrange étranger*.**

Breton singer/song writer Jean-Jacques Mel has put out an album of 10 songs in French on a range of topics and

emotions.



**Marquis. *Konstanz*.** LADTK/Virgin Records.

The Breton rock band Marquis de Sade from Rennes made a major impact on the French rock scene in the late 1970s, early 80s. It did not last long and plans to

regroup in 2017 were delayed with the death of their lead singer Philippe Pascal. A new singer from Belgium, Simon Mahieu, was found and a new album has come out: *Konstanz*. Described as a “post-rock album full of punk energy” it includes 11 songs in French, English, and German with one with a chorus in Breton.



**Pierrick Pédrón – Gonzalo Rubalcaba. *Pédrón/Rubalcaba*.** Gazebo GAZ 217.

This CD is a selection of jazz performed by Breton saxophonist Pierrick Pédrón and Grammy winning Cuban pianist

Gonzalo Rubalcaba. Both have long experience in the jazz world including time in the U.S.



**Kevin Le Pennec. *À distance*.**

Kevin Le Pennec is a singer, song-writer and harpist. This is his first solo album with 11 songs in French and performances on

the harp which draw from Breton and Irish traditional

melodies and dances with arrangements influenced by pop and jazz.



**Toutā. *Hybride*.** Paker Productions.

This CD has nine selections of compositions rooted in Breton tradition and open to a world of musical influences.

Guitarist Tibault Niobé is the composer and he is joined by Gabriel Faure (fiddle and tenor guitar), Yeltaz Guenneau (pipes, flutes, dudek), Kentin Juillard and Jérôme Kerihuel (percussions) and Erwan Volant (bass).

## Prizes for Music 2023 – Produit en Bretagne

Produit en Bretagne (Made in Brittany) states as its mission “to support the economic and cultural dynamic for employment in Brittany in a responsible fashion. A Brittany which is beautiful, prosperous, with solidarity, responsibility and openness to the world.”

Each year awards are given in various categories and the panel of judges selected 'Ndiaz for their album *La Brune*.

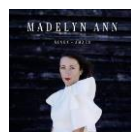


**'Ndiaz. *La Brune*.**

This is a CD with 7 selections of dance inspired by the Breton dance tradition but with a jazzy swing. The seasoned

members of this group are Youn Kamm (trumpet), Jérôme Kerihuel (drums), Timothée Le Bour sax) and Yann Le Corre (accordion, electrovox). (briefly noted in Bro Nevez 165, March 2023)

But fans also have the opportunity to cast their votes for their favorites. This year the popular vote went to the Group Madelyn Ann for their album *Nevez-Amzer*.



**Madelyn Ann, *Nevez-Amzer*.** Aztec

Musique CM2877.

This is the first album by this group with 10 songs in a pop-rock style composed in Breton by the singer Madelyn Ann. The

group also includes Gaëtan Fagot (guitar, bass, synthesizer, piano...) Olivier Le Hir (guitar, synthesizer, piano) and Brendan Costaire (drums, percussions). Beginning her singing career in folk groups using English or Gaelic, Madelyn Ann began her study of Breton in 2017.

Three other albums were nominated by public acclaim:



**Descofar. *Chimera*.**

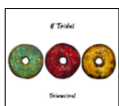
This is a trio from Brest with electric harps, synthesizer and percussion with selections described as “post-rock.” They draw on

traditional Breton themes and rock music with a highly improvisational style. (Briefly noted in *Bro Nevez* 164, December 2022)



#### **Emezi. *Tentadur*.**

This is a duo of young women: jazz pianist Elise Desbordes and singer and percussionist Perynn Bleunven. who compose and sing in the Breton language. This album includes 6 of their compositions of songs in the Breton language influenced by jazz and pop for a new sound with polyphonic layers of voice accompanied by piano, bass, and percussions to carry the swing. (briefly noted in *Bro Nevez* 163, September 2022)



#### **O'Tridal. *Triumvirat*.** Paker Production

This is a trio formed in 2016 with roots in work with bagads and with Kreiz Breizh Akademi #7 as well as a number of other ensembles. The group is made up of Yeltaz Guenneau (flutes), Kentin Juillard (percussion), and Thibault Niobé (guitars). The CD features Breton dances with a mix of influences from blues, jazz, funk, folk-rock, and Irish and Middle Eastern traditions. All are composed by the group except one which is a performance featuring the Duduk, an Armenian “bombarde” on the theme of the Breton classic song “Eliz Iza.”

## **A Tourist in Brittany in 1910**

In most issues of *Bro Nevez*, travel accounts from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries have been included as a way to present the sometimes astute observations and sometimes strangely negative views of American and English travelers. The following account is by Eustace Reynolds-Ball (1858-1928) who published travel books on Cairo, Paris, Rome and Jerusalem.

**Eustace Reynolds-Ball, “In Brittany” *Travel & Exploration – An Illustrated Monthly*, (London) Vol. IV, No. 234, December 1910.**

Perhaps there is no district in Western Europe which offers so delightful a hunting ground for the tourist as Brittany, especially if he be a cyclist or pedestrian, and is not without some feeling for the past, and what has been called the historic sense. Indeed, in the Department of Morbihan in particular, one is transported into a world which seems two or three hundred years behind the twentieth century – dress, language, customs, etc. are unique.

That Brittany is an integral portion of the French Republic is indisputable, but a sojourn in this quaint and picturesque peninsula makes one inclined to say that its inclusion in France is mainly political and factitious. Indeed, the peasantry, like the Piedmontese

in their relation to Italians, frankly regard the French as foreigners. As is well known their language has no affinity with that of France, but bears a striking resemblance to Welsh.

One must, however, at the onset disabuse oneself of the erroneous though popular, notion that St. Malo and its satellites are Brittany. St. Malo and Dinard, through undeniably charming resorts, are but the Gallicised, or one might almost say – in view of the numbers of English residents - Anglicised fringe of Brittany. To see Brittany of the Bretons – *la vraie Bretagne Bretonnante* – we must go to St. Brieuc or Morlaix or south to Auray, Carnac, or Quimper.

St. Malo might be called the marine gateway of Brittany; nine out of ten approaching it by this port. The position of the town is singularly picturesque, but there are few sights or antiquities. Indeed St. Malo lives on the memories of Chateaubriand, its tutelary genius – as does Dinan on those of Du Guesclin. His tomb on a lonely rock in the bay is a conspicuous object from the steamer. There is, indeed, a certain resemblance between this romantically situated grave and that of R. L. Stevenson at Samoa, or that of Cecil Rhodes in the “grand and lonely Matoppos.”

St. Malo and its three satellites, St. Servan, Paramé and Dinard, though delightful resorts for summer's stay, do not offer much scope to the tourist on sightseeing bent, as there are few attractions of the guide-book order beyond the Pont Roulant, which the inhabitants seem to regard with special affection as their chief lion. This is a kind of wheeled ferry on stilts which crosses an arm of the harbour separating St. Malo from St. Servan. To these stilts (some twenty feet high) are fixed wheels which run on rails actually laid on the bed of the ocean, so that at high tide the effect is startling, and reminds the visitor of the now dismantled marine railway from Brighton to Rottingdean. No tourist, however short his holiday, should forego the steamer voyage from St. Malo to Dinan through the exquisite reaches of the Rance River – one of the most beautiful river excursions in Europe.

Indeed, the oft-quoted comparison between the Rance and the Dart or the Rhine (for guide-book writers are fond of calling it the Breton Rhine) does not seem so far-fetched as most geographical parallels.

The best view of Dinan is from the river. The general effect of the town with its towers and gables springing from the rocky and wooded heights is decidedly picturesque and stately. Indeed, the view suggests a little that of Quebec from the St. Lawrence.

From Dinan the tourist will either go west to St. Brieuc, Guingamp or Morlaix, or south by way of Ploermel to

Auray and Quimper, and in this circular tour all that is best worth seeing in Brittany is comprised. It is true that he might turn aside for Rennes, which is sometimes included in a Brittany tour. But unless the traveller comes direct from Paris – in which case Rennes is conveniently situated for breaking the journey – he will be well advised not to make this detour.

Rennes, a painfully modern town, which has, indeed, earned the reputation among artistic travellers of being the third ugliest city of Europe, need not delay the visitor long. It is at all events the most disappointing town in Brittany. It has no antiquities. Its cathedral is an architectural eyesore, while its depressing streets with painfully modern houses of dingy granite are commonplace and uninviting. In short, all the beauty of the town was destroyed in the great fire of 1720. Since then it has had comparatively no history, and to nine out of ten travellers is remembered only as the scene of the cause célèbre of Dreyfus.

When the visitor has inspected the museum, the library, and the fifteenth century Porte Madeleine, he may conscientiously and thankfully resume his pilgrimage.

St. Brieuc is about two hours by train from Dinan. The Cathedral here, though disappointing externally, is well worth a visit, and so are the quaint Fountain and Chapel of St. Brieuc. These, with some of the older streets, lined with singularly picturesque wooden houses, exhaust the sights of the city. One cannot help noticing the prevalence of the ecclesiastical atmosphere. There seem as many convents as at Valetta. And the sight of nuns in their white robes fluttering through the streets like gigantic moths is one of the most striking features of St. Brieuc.

St. Brieuc makes a convenient starting point for a particularly interesting circular tour of Brittany. Indeed, since the completion of the railway from Morlaix and Guingamp to Rosporden and Concarneau at the extreme south, the interior can now be visited easily and expeditiously by rail. In fact, Brittany is now admirably served by railways. ...

No doubt the opening up of South Brittany to travellers by railways is slowly but irresistibly changing the character of the country and its inhabitants. Quimperlé and Quimper are beginning to be frequented tourist resorts, while Pont Aven is the seat of a flourishing art colony – something on the lines of Newlyn in Cornwall.

A few years ago the Quiberon Peninsula (now reached by a light railway from Auray) was seldom visited by the ordinary tourist, and strangers were apt to be regarded with considerable suspicion. Indeed, about a dozen years ago when wandering, an innocent

pedestrian in this region, I was myself actually arrested by some over-zealous petty functionaries as a German spy! It was true my detention was short, but it occasioned inconvenience. At the same time I must admit that the circumstances (which could not easily be explained away) were a little suspicious. I was on a walking tour with my brother, and had left my last stopping place, Vannes, early one morning, bound for Quiberon. To “beguile the tedium” of the long walk I jotted down the time occupied between each kilometre stone on the fly leaf of my Joanne Guide, the idea being that my brother and I should guess the time taken, and the nearest would win a small bet.

When passing a small fishing village an observant customs official, noting these suspicious entries, stopped us and demanded an explanation, which was obviously not easy to give – it would have sounded too puerile or far-fetched. Thereupon he ordered us to show “*vos papiers*,” by which it appeared he meant an authorization to “circulate” in the Department. Not possessing such a permit, I produced instead my passport. Even this, however, failed to appease the irate functionary, who declared it invalid on the following grounds: – (1) the text was in English; (2) the word “continent” did not include France; and (3) it was too old. My remonstrances were cut short by a peremptory order to follow him. It appeared that our captor wished to take his valuable quarry to the Mayor. We followed him submissively, with all the jeering rabble of the village at our heels, in search of this important official. Monsieur le Maire, however, could not be found – it seems he was engaged getting in his harvest or some other bucolic labour.

During our detention we served as sport for the Philistines to the villagers, and were subjected to a running fire of personal remarks in Breton and bad French. Afterwards we were marched under protest to the nearest gendarmerie, escorted by a couple of *douaniers* fully armed. Here we underwent a searching examination as to our own antecedents, age, parentage, etc., and also those of our immediate ancestors, male and female. Finally the brigadier solemnly declared that the charge of espionage had not been proved and we were released. I made afterwards a formal protest to the Prefect, but this was ignored till, by a happy inspiration, I sent a copy of *The Times* containing a letter in which I had described the circumstances. This effectually drew this exalted functionary, and in a few days I received a formal letter and apology in which I was informed that the official had been reprimanded for *excès de zèle*. This closed the incident, though I shrewdly suspect that the over-zealous official was complimented rather than reprimanded by his superiors – and probably promoted! \*



My readers will, I trust, excuse this personal digression. To return to our itinerary.

The ideal short circular tour, which would comprise the most interesting as well as the most picturesque towns, would be one starting due west from St. Brieuc, stopping at Guingamp and Morlaix, then south via Carhaix to Quimperlé and Auray, and finally direct via Pontivy to the starting point. By following this route one can see more of *la vraie Bretagne* in a short time than by following any other itinerary.

But without laying down the law as regards a set itinerary, the places which should on no account be omitted are: Dinan, Auray, Carac, Quimperlé and Morlaix. Carnac is in short to Brittany what Thebes is to Egypt, or the Acropolis to Athens, the one great antiquity of the country. Indeed, there is a curious, but, of course, accidental, etymological analogy to Thebes and the Breton ruins in an identity of the name between Carnac and one of the famous Theban temples.

A whole day might profitably be spent in Quimperlé in examining the fine church of St. Michel, one of the most interesting in Brittany, and the round church of Sainte Croix, modelled, like most "Templar Churches," on the holy Sepulchre. But probably the most interesting lay building of Quimperlé is the hotel, where the traveller should put up, the Lion d'Or. This is a genuine mediaeval inn, and for historic interest can be compared with the George Inn of Winchester or the Bell Inn of Gloucester.

The excursion from Quimperlé to Carhaix and Huelgoat is a delightful one. The pleasantest method is to devote a couple of days to it, and drive or bicycle there (good road) and return by rail.

Those unable to go so far afield should at all events visit Locquenolé only some five miles north, though curiously enough the guide-books ignore it. The scenery here may best be described as romantic – cascades, gorges, precipitous cliffs, ruined castles, all on a small scale, and perhaps to the critical traveller a little of the Comic Opera order. The Quimperlé people call this district the Breton Switzerland, though this is a title which might with more appropriateness be applied to the region round Huelgoat, in the very centre of Brittany. Such a comparison is however, a little far-fetched. ...

At Locquenolé the Devil's Rock is thought to be the great attraction. This is an isolated mass, in which, *teste* the local guide-book, are a number of perforations made by the Devil when sharpening his claws. The legend declares that an intrepid peasant once seized him by the tail, whereupon Satan sent him

flying into the valley, when, as a not unnatural result, "all his bones were broken."

The variety and beauty of the national costumes in Brittany deserve a separate paragraph. It is in the south, especially in the Quimperlé and Quimper region, that the richest costumes are seen. The most distinctive features are the caps, of which there are an extraordinary variety; indeed, a Breton will be able to localize a countrywoman by her cap alone, which will usually indicate not only the Department but even the commune or village. A connoisseur in these matters recognizes the difference in the size and shape of the loops and streamers, which denote the place of origin as clearly as do the facings and badges of our regiments of the Line.

One of the most striking and picturesque costumes is that worn by the peasantry near Rosporden. The caps of the women have some resemblance to those of Quimperlé, but are more finished and decorative, while the quaint double-breasted bodices are richly embroidered, and the large quilted collars rather resemble ruffs. The men wear black jackets trimmed with black velvet, long richly embroidered waistcoats, and the characteristic Zouave-shaped trousers (*bragonbras*).

Auray itself is of no interest to the traveller, but offers good headquarters for visiting the famous shrine of St. Anne d'Auray and the Chartreuse d'Auray, and also for excursions to Carnac and Quiberon, not easily reached by a branch railway. The church is architecturally of no account, though the spire (245 feet) is fine. It is modern, and the style is pretentious. It is, however, the most venerated and most highly endowed shrine in Brittany, St. Anne being the patron saint of the Bretons. It contains many relics and a curious replica of the Scala Santa at Rome.

At the Chartreuse d'Auray a rather gruesome monument is shown, the ossuary containing the bones of the seven hundred members of the unfortunate Quiberon expedition of the Emigrés under English auspices in 1705, who were taken prisoners and shot by General Hoche. The guide lets down a lantern through an opening in the vault of the sepulchral chapel, and the curious can see the piles of skulls and bones heaped together pell mell.

\* Editor's Note: Oddly enough, the experience described brought to mind a "traffic stop" I had when driving through Brittany in 1979. I had not been speeding and did not violate any driving laws, so I never knew why I was pulled over. Although I could provide an international driving license, I was chided for not having my passport with me. A very serious matter. I think the word used was "*délicat*." I was not ticketed or threatened with arrest, but the gendarmes seemed to take pleasure in making the encounter as intimidating as possible.

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