

BRO NEVEZ

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



KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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BRO NEVEZ

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General Editor:

Lois Kuter
169 Greenwood Ave., B-4
Jenkintown, PA 19046

(215) 886-6361

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 of 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 Editors. Suggested deadlines for receipt of contributions for Bro Nevez are: January 20, April 20, July 20, and October 20.

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

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\$20.00 overseas by surface mail
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The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany; in some instances we are also very happy to establish an exchange of publications.

EDITORIAL

My apologies for the lateness in getting this "February" issue of Bro Nevez out to you in March. Things have been hectic at my job and I have not had the free time I needed to work on Bro Nevez. Things should ease up with the Spring. I welcome your contributions--how about a few Letters to the Editor. Are there things you would like to see presented in the pages of Bro Nevez? Have any of you had the chance to "surf the net" to look at the many Breton sites on the Web. Let me know what you think.

Don't be shy about contributing to Bro Nevez, or about letting me know how we could improve it!

CULTURAL COUNCIL OF BRITTANY

1996 Report

The following is a translation of a short report from the President of the Cultural Institute, Jean-Louis Latour. It is part of the Cultural Institute's publication of proceedings of its General Assembly held in December 1996. I would be happy to send more details about the work of this organization to anyone interested. LK

The Cultural Council is composed of six representatives of the Regional Council of Brittany, three from the Economic and Social Council of Brittany, fifteen from the five General Councils (of the Departments), ten from cities with a population over 30,000, two from the Cultural Institute of Brittany, the four presidents of Brittany's universities, representatives from 39 Breton cultural associations and federations, and four co-opted individuals.

Its role is "to contribute to the expansion of the Breton culture," with a mission of representation, and of bringing people together for reflection. To accomplish this, it organizes conferences and meetings addressing issues of today's cultural situation, in addition to its annual general assembly and monthly meetings of its directing council. Of note was the "Assises Bretonnes de la Culutre," held in Rennes and presided by M. Quesnel, which marked a historical moment for the Cultural Council.

Inter-regional Meetings

Since 1990, with the help of European funding, the Cultural Council has initiated a series of annual meetings of cultural leaders from the regions and departments of France where a strong identity is expressed: Brittany, Corsica, Alsace, Languedoc-Roussillon, Midi-Pyrénées, the Basque country, Provence-Côte-d'Azur, Finistère, Côtes d'Armor, Aveyron, Rouergue. These meetings have been to share accomplishments, problems, projects and initiatives.

The 6th meeting took place in Brittany, June 19-23, 1996, in St. Malo, with representatives from the region of Lille and the Cultural Adjunct from the city of Nimes. A final document from this meeting was distributed to the various regions of France and all members of the Cultural Council of Brittany.

An Observatory for the Breton Language

Following major meetings held in Lorient, the Cultural Council has worked on a feasibility study to initiate an Observatory for the Breton Language. Fulfilling its role as a federator of the cultural movement, it will work with this federation and its institutional members to define the minimal measures necessary for the development of Brittany's cultural identity, including Gallo. The commission of the Observatory (from the Cultural Institute and Cultural Council) met again in November 1996 and decided how to give continuity to the work begun (conducting surveys and gathering statistics).

External Relations

The Cultural Council has taken part in numerous conferences on linguistic planning and the "Assises de la Culture Bretonne" in Quimper. It has participated annually in "Expolangues" in Paris, the "Festival des Minorités" in Douarnenez, the "Fete de la langue bretonne" in central Brittany, audiovisual workshops, the International Celtic Congress in Lorient, and November 2-4, 1995, it organized a European colloquium on minority languages in the university, with representation from various European communities. The Acts of this colloquium will be published early in 1997 (a dossier of 500 pages, trilingual in Breton, French and English).

Meetings

The Board of Directors of the Cultural Council have established a permanent contact with directors of Radio-France (conducting a round table in September 1995 with representatives from the Breton cultural community). A Radio Commission has been put in place (January 1996) following this round table which meets monthly to work on the development of local radios which broadcast in the Breton language. In the same spirit of cultural organization, the publication of a directory of designers of "BD" (comic strip/animation art) living in Brittany is in the planning.

Products and Publications

With its own funding, the Cultural Council has published interesting studies, including:

- in 1988 "Mouvement culturel breton et développement économique et social" (The Breton cultural movement and economic and social development). November 1988.
- in 1991: Proposition for the XIe Plan, "Culture et langue bretonnes".
- in 1992: "Reflexion sur la situation culturelle en Bretagne"
- in 1993: A preliminary study "Télévision en Bretagne" (done with assistance from the General Council of Finistère).

- in 1996: A dossier and presentation of motions from the colloquium "VIème Rencontre Inter-régionale" (July 1996), and "Actes complets de la VIème Rencontre Inter-régionale"
- in 1997 Acts from the university colloquium of Lorient, "Les langues minorisées à l'université en Europe"
- Projected: "La radio et le mouvement culturel breton"

Function

The Cultural Council of Brittany has its base office with the C.E.S.R. and is staffed Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The operation of the office, the management of dossiers, and assistance to commissions and organization of meetings are all done by a Coordinator who has had help from a 2/5 time secretary since October 1996. The accumulation of work has led to the consideration of creating a permanent full-time general secretary position.

Address: Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh/Conseil Culturel de Bretagne
7, straed Jeneral Guillaudot
35069 Roazhon/Rennes cedex

A MOTION FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, CULTURAL COUNCIL OF BRITTANY December 7, 1996, St. Brieuc

The Cultural Council of Brittany contends that the rights, the needs, and requests of the Breton population concerning Breton language and cultural matters--in both the areas of education and the media--are not being taken into account by the public institutions which have charge of them.

It demands that all children of Brittany have the right to access to the Breton language, following the choice of the family, through the three educational options (initiation to Breton, partial immersion, total immersion) with a coherent and attractive teaching program.

This means:

1. training and recruitment specifically for Breton language teachers
2. a clear definition of programs and objectives of the three teaching options
3. followup and scientific evaluation of the results.

The efficacy of such a teaching program is linked to the development of social use of the language which means its normal and everyday presence on radio and television. In this regard, the Cultural Council of Brittany urges that a priority be placed on the creation of a specific fund for the development of audiovisual resources in the Breton language.

In a more general fashion, the Cultural Council of Brittany demands that the promotion of the Breton language in teaching and social spheres be registered from now on as a priority of territorial and State institutions, and that it be included in the business of the next "Contrat de Plan Etat-Région-Départements." Neither the plans of the Rectorat of Education nor the place given to the Breton language on radio or television respond in any manner to the urgency of the situation.

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UNION OF BRETON TEACHERS

Motions from the General Assembly of November 16, 1997

The Union of Breton Teachers (Unvaniezh ar Gelennerien Brezhoneg/Union des Enseignants de Breton) held their annual meeting in November and issued a long report as part of their regular newsletter called Kannadig (no. 44, miz Kerzu 1996). the following is just a very brief overview of the motions from their annual meeting. If you have been following news of the Breton language situation, you will find little new in the issue areas identified by the Union of Breton Teacher. P.S.: In this case "union" does not mean a labor union, but more of a federation of teachers, unified in seeking a better place for Breton in the schools of Brittany. I would be happy to make the fuller report (Breton/French) of the UGB available to anyone interested. L.K.

Motion 1: For a choice of coherent teaching programs for Breton as part of a public service.

While the announcement of a plan by the Rectorat for the Breton language and culture is positive, nothing has been done to insure that students have access to bilingual education from one year to the next. The UGB insists that all children of Brittany be granted the right to choose between public education programs that give them the choice to take a minimum of 3 hours of Breton per week in an introductory program or more intensive bilingual and immersive programs.

Motion 2: For a specific exam to recruit teachers for bilingual programs for all schools of Brittany (public, private, Diwan).

Motion 3: For a monolingual CAPES for Breton

This will end the dilution of teaching degrees where Breton teachers must also prove competence in some other teaching area unrelated to their ability to teach Breton language and culture. The idea of insisting on several areas of competence was to insure that teachers would find a post teaching something, if their skills in Breton were not in demand (which is clearly not the case, given the demand from parents for more Breton programs). The extra burden of a second area of expertise is unnecessary and makes it possible to send Breton teachers to schools outside of Brittany.

Motion 4: To transfer teacher training in Breton to the IFM site in Quimper.

UGB's argument here is that the geographic location is better for most candidates and that Quimper has more resources to offer than St. Brieuc.

Motion 5: On short term needs at the high school level.

As has been stated for several years, the space and time given to Breton in the middle and high school levels does not meet the demands of students and parents. This needs changing so that students have access to Breton classes.

Motion 6: For pedagogical research and a scientific evaluation of teaching of and in the Breton language.

Twenty years after the creation of the first Diwan schools, 14 years after the first public school bilingual classes and 10 years after the opening of bilingual classes in the Catholic schools, there is still no structure in place to systematically judge the results of bilingual and immersion schooling in Breton.

Motion 7: Support for Breton language programming on television

The weekly one-hour of Breton language program has been cut to 45 minutes and French subtitling has now been imposed on viewers without any consultation. Further cuts are threatened with additional time for French language advertising. The UGB calls for modest additions to the Breton language programming, including programs for children.

SHORT NOTES -- WHAT'S HAPPENING IN BRITTANY

The notes which follow cannot begin to document the many activities initiated and continued over many years by Bretons to support the development of their language and culture, but they will give you some idea of some action. These are pulled from over the over 180 pages of Keleier Servij ar Brezhoneg no. 17 (January 1997), published by the Cultural Institute of Brittany. This hefty publication of news clippings documenting events related to the Breton language and culture is available by subscription: 100 francs for five issues:

Skol Uhel ar Vro
1, straed Raoul Ponchon
35069 Roazhon cedex

Bilingual Road Signs for Quimper

The City of Quimper has decided to make all of its signs bilingual French/Breton. The project will take five years and some 3 million francs. Quimper is the first major city of Brittany to make this decision and will be working with Servij ar Brezhoneg of the Cultural Institute of Brittany.

Emgleo Bro Douarnenez

Eleven cultural organizations in and around the town of Douarnenez have formed a federation to better coordinate their work which includes music and dance, Breton language classes, cinema

and sports. This new federation follows similar initiatives in the Bigouden area and in the cities of Brest, Lorient and Quimper.

Centre Culturel Roparz-Hemon

This is one of the most active cultural centers in Brittany, with some 250 members who take part in and help organize a number of events: Breton dance classes, Breton languages classes at various levels, theater, kan ha diskan classes, lectures, and exhibits. The center also maintains a library of 800 books on Brittany and the Celtic countries.

Keit Vimp Bev

For 15 years Keit Vimp Beo has supported the Breton language through the publication of comic books (bandes dessinées), games, and recordings for children and young people. They are now undertaking an international project—a recording which will include songs from different places of the world recorded by children themselves (8-12 year olds). A booklet accompanying the recording will include the text in the original language and in Breton—a text which will be sung by Breton children. The recording will be used to stimulate exchanges between the children involved.

Gouel Broadel ar Brezhoneg

This annual festival for the Breton language has been held for the last five years in the town of Spezet and has attracted some 15,000 visitors. This year the festival moves to Louargad (17-18 May) in the Côtes d'Armor. Breton is the language heard at this festival which includes information stands as well as 18 concerts, two fest deiz and two fest noz, and a Breton wrestling championship match.

The Coop Breizh turns 20

The Coop Breizh store in Rennes marks its 20th birthday, but Diffusion Breizh dates back to 1957 when a handful of militants affiliated with the cultural federation Kendalc'h decided to help make sure Breton writers' and musicians' works found their way to the public. In 1957 one would not have predicted the success of such a risky enterprise. Diffusion Breizh now employs 22 people and also serves as a publisher. The Coop Breizh store in Rennes (17 rue de Penhoët) has some 5,000 titles available for shoppers and serves as a hub of information. Congratulations to Diffusion Breizh founders Yann Goasdoue and Yannick Baron and to all those who have invested in the Coop Breizh.

The Diwan High School

The growth of the Diwan schools has meant that more and more children are reaching high school age and want to continue their education in a Diwan school. Choosing a site for a high school has proven to be a challenge with several cities in competition: Brest Quimper, Carhaix, Lannilis and Landeda (Léon). To be considered are the basic facilities of the buildings themselves, relations with the city government, the presence of a Diwan Middle School nearby, and travel for students that would commute.

BOOK REVIEWS

by Lois Kuter

Jakez Gaucher. Historia Cronolóxica dos Países Celtas. Edited and translated by Carlos Sixirei Paredes. Coruña: Edicions do Castro. 1996. 467 pages.

Jakez Gaucher. Histoire Chronologique des Pays Celtiques. Guerande: Association Keltica International. 1990. 395 pages.

These two books by Jakez Gaucher are each remarkable presentations of the history of the Celtic countries. The bulk of the French language Histoire Chronologique includes a running chronology of six Celtic countries from the 8th century to 1987 laid out side by side across two pages: the Isle of Man, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany and Cornwall. The period from the 8th century B.C. to the 7th century A.D. combines the Celts and the chronology is compared to other world events. Throughout this large book (8 1/2 by 12 inches) are over 200 photographs of historical documents and notable individuals in the history of the Celts. And the book includes dozens of excellent maps. An appendix includes genealogies of royal families, a listing of Celtic Congresses, an introduction to the Celtic languages, linguistic census information, a list of twin cities, addresses for political and cultural organizations, and for libraries, archives and museums. I suppose one could dispute some of the specific elements in the 2,500 years of history Gaucher has presented in this chronology, but this book presents a wealth of information. Remarkably, Jakez Gaucher seems to be the only one to take this inter-Celtic approach to history. It is an extremely interesting book for anyone interested in understanding just how the histories of the Celtic countries are interwoven.

It is too bad Jakez Gaucher has not yet found a publisher for an English language edition of the Chronology, but he has succeeded in finding a publisher in Galicia, Spain, for a brand new edition of the Chronology which adds Galicia to the side-by-side listing of historical events. Also added are the years 1988 to 1994. While this edition of the Chronology does not include the wealth of photos and appended information of the first edition, it does add some good maps of Galicia and includes a short bibliography for further reading. Written in Gallego, this is clearly a book for Galicians who want to better understand their own link to the Celtic countries. And *when* an English language edition of Gaucher's chronology is finally printed, I hope it will include Galicia. If English-speaking Celts are to recognize Galicia as a "Celtic" country, they surely need the good introduction to the history of Galicia that this book provides.

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La Bretagne chez Madame de Sévigné, Texts chosen, presented and annotated by Florence Arzel. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1996. 142 pages.

Marie de Rabutin-Chantal lived from 1626 to 1696 and became Madame de Sévigné in 1644, marrying into an old Breton family. Henri de Sévigné died in a duel in 1652 leaving his wife with a son and daughter. The daughter marries the Comte de Grignan in 1669 and moves to Provence, far from the Paris home of Madame de Sévigné. This distance provokes a very large correspondence which has provided a rich first-hand account of 17th century life in the court of France as well as in the homes of Breton nobility. Madame de Sévigné spent time in Vitré, Rennes and Nantes, and most of her letters are written at the family chateau Rochers which is found near Vitré.

The letters span a very interesting period of Breton history when Brittany had its own parliament, but was beginning to lose its independence and be drawn into a more centralized government. Madame de

Sévigné's letters give a first hand account of how these changes affected the Breton nobility, but unless you have a good knowledge of 17th century French history the details will be lost. Despite the very clear introductions provided by Florence Arzel, I found that I needed a much better understanding of French and Breton history to fully appreciate the commentary Madame de Sévigné gives in her letters. But, pulling out the "Breton material" from the vast collection of letters written by Madame de Sévigné which make up some 12 volumes is a great service to those studying this period of Breton history. Florence Arzel has done a good job of presenting this material and making it accessible to students of Breton history.

* * *

Edmond Rébillé. Brocéliande(s) - sur les traces du roi Arthur et de ses Chantres. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1996. 156 pages.

This is a very interesting voyage through Brittany which describes hundreds (thousands) of sites related in some way to King Arthur and the characters of Arthurian literature. But it is not really a travelogue. This book is just as much about all the Breton authors, poets, musicians and painters who have been inspired by the Arthurian legends and the sites of Brittany where they are set.

Nearly every page of the book includes at least one photograph and the sites and people featured are highlighted. The first thing you find in the book is an excellent map showing all the places mentioned in the book. The book is organized geographically with each chapter focused on a particular place—particularly forests, but also castles, or particular regions of Brittany. The Forward of the book gives a nice summary of major writers who have followed the steps of Arthur in Brittany as well as traces of Merlin, Morgan, Lancelot, and other knights of the Round Table who can be linked to places in Brittany. Each chapter includes fascinating accounts of how a particular site is linked to the heroes of the Round Table and biographical information about the many artists and writers who have been inspired by those sites and legends. Indexes to places and names are quite useful, including lists of towns and cities linked to respectively to Arthur, Merlin, Morgane, Viviane, and the various knights of the Round Table. And characters evoked in the book include early Breton kings and saints and legendary figures and animals.

While the Forest of Paimpont and Brocéliande are the best known Arthurian sites in Brittany, this book demonstrates that King Arthur and his court have been alive and well throughout all of Brittany. For those traveling to Brittany who have an interest in Arthurian literature this would be a great guide to bring along or to use in planning your visit.

* * *

Pierre-Jakez Helias. Ventre-à-Terre l'aventurier. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1996. 45 pages. (Breton language version: Ruz-kor ar foeteres-vro. Brest: Emgleo Breiz. 1996. 48 pages).

This is the last fiction piece written by the famous Breton author and poet Per Jakez Helias. It is a follow-up to a tale of how the snail (ventre-à-terre) beats the fox in a race. In this story the snail-hero seeks a better garden. In his travels he meets a variety of animals, birds, and insects before taking a voyage to the moon. The story was written for and is illustrated by ceramic artist Dodik. While the tiles depicting the many characters of the story lose some of their luster and color in their reproductions, they nicely illustrate this tale of adventure which, like all good tales, will be enjoyed by both children and adults.

Fulub Jakez. Diccionario Básico Español-Bretón/Geriadur Diazezh Brezhoneg-Spagnoleg. Rennes: TermBret, Servij ar Brezhoneg Skol-Uhel ar Vro. 1996. 152 pages.

One might well ask why one would need a Spanish-Breton/Breton-Spanish Dictionary. And the answer is certainly quite obvious given the strong participation from both Galicia and Asturias in Inter-Celtic festivals and cultural exchanges. And, as the press release accompanying this paperback book notes, now Diwan students learning Spanish can work directly from Breton. Indeed, this enables any Breton speaker to avoid a detour through French or English to learn Spanish. And it is also a means for Spanish speaking tourists to Brittany to learn a bit of Breton.

With approximately 4,000 entries in each section (Spanish to Breton, Breton to Spanish), this book gives a basic vocabulary for most everyday needs. It includes an interesting map of the Spanish speaking world to remind us that while many tourists to Brittany from Spain are likely to find this dictionary useful, it can also be of service to the large population of Spanish-speakers in South and Central America, Mexico and the southwestern states of the U.S.

The dictionary can be purchased directly from the Cultural Institute of Brittany for 60 francs plus 20 francs postage:

Service de La Langue Breton
Institut Culturel de Bretagne
1 rue Raoul Ponchon
35069 Rennes

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NEW BOOKS IN THE BRETON LANGUAGE: A FEW NOTES

The following information has been pulled from Bretagne des Livres nos. 31 and 32 (December 1996 & March 1997).

Jeffrey Shaw. Er Vro nevez. Brud Nevez no. 197. 1996. 136 pages.

Toronto resident and ICDBL supporter, Jeffrey Shaw learned Breton from the books. And anyone who has tried to learn a language on their own knows how much discipline and work this takes. And to master a language to the degree of actually publishing a novel takes an unusual talent. Although Jeffrey Shaw's mastery of several other Celtic languages already has given him a head start on Breton. This short novel tells the tale of poor Scottish farmers who emigrate to Canada to find a better life.

Per Denez. Dek rimodell logodennek. Lesneven: Hor Hezh. 1996. 26 pages.

This is a nicely illustrated book with a dozen children's rhymes about the adventures of then mice.

Per Denez. Da rouz an noz. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1996. 120 pages.

This is more Per Denez's style--six short stories which explore the human spirit--stories of intrigue, deceit, humor and love.

Erwan ar Moal. Roue al laz. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1996. 154 pages.

This novel by Erwan ar Moal (1874-1957), who used the pen name Dir-na-Dor, is placed in the period of the Chouannerie, the resistance to the French Revolution which had such a large following in Brittany and the Vendée.

J. H. Rosny Henan. Brezel an tan. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1996. 249 pages.

This is a Breton translation by P.J. Keraveg of Rosny Henan's novel La Guerre du feu.

Various authors. Lavar 09. Preder. 1996. 535 pages.

As the Preder publishing house has done throughout the years, this publication focuses on the development of new Breton language terms--in this case, in the fields of biology, medicine, art and philosophy.

Yann-Ber Kemener. Brezhoneg 2000. Morlaix: Editions Skol Vreizh. 1996. 68 pages.

This is a text for Breton students in the middle school level learning Breton as a second language option. The text includes 13 sketches depicting events in a young teen's life--vacation, sports, festivals--and an introduction to Breton history and culture.

Mikael Madeg. Renabl anioù kêriadennoù Bro-Leon hag o distogadur. 3 volumes. Ar Skol Vrezoneg. 832 pages.

These three volumes are the results of a detailed study of Breton place names in the Leon region of Brittany.

Islwyn Williams and E. U. Breeze Jones. Laboused ar c'hoadoù, Laboused an aberioù hag an aodoù. Translation by Padrig an Habask and Tudual Huon. Brest: Al Lanv. 1996. 44 pages.

Wales is not so far from Brittany that the bird population of these countries does not overlap. These books discuss common birds of the forest and the coast of Wales (and Brittany).

Koulizh Kedez. Komen Gweenour. Lesneven: Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 1996. 200 pages.

This book includes thoughts on contemporary Breton life by a young Breton writer.

Fanch Peru. 60 pennad e brezhoneg bev. Skol Vreizh. 1996. 40 pages.

This book includes sketches and short stories for young Breton learners.

Renea and Polig Kombot, Erwan Al Louet. Ar pezh a lavar ar c'houmoul. Skol Vreizh. 1996. 24 pages.

This is a story of a boy bored with being one of the few children in his village. He turns to clouds in the sky for entertainment and conversation.

Marthe Vassalo and Daniel Giraudon. Skoulag ar Goukoug. TES. 1996. 48 pages.

This is a study of how people imitate bird song in stories and folk sayings. This is accompanied by a compact disc.

Yann-Fañch Kemener. Carnet de route de Yann-Fanch Kemener--Kannaouennoù Kalon Vreizh. Skol Vreizh. 1996. 357 pages.

This book is the result of many years of collecting songs and folklore by one of Brittany's best traditional singers. It includes 166 Breton language songs with French translations and an accompanying CD.

Various authors. Les relations entre la Bretagne et l'Irlande 1970-2000. Rennes: Skol Uhel ar Vro. 1996. 114 pages.

This is not a book in Breton, but an interesting collection of papers from a March 1996 conference on Breton-Irish relations held in Lorient. Topics include history, economy, culture and twin cities linking the two countries.

FINDING BRETON BOOKS

For those trying to learn the Breton language or locate the few books available in English, finding books can be a major obstacle. But there are two distributors in the U.S. who list in their catalogs a very good selection of books on the Breton language and Breton history.

For those trying to study Breton on your own, these distributors list Delaporte's Breton-English/English-Breton dictionary (published by Mouladuriou Hor Yezh) and Per Denez's English language beginner's lesson book, Brezhoneg Buan hag Aes. I did not see this listed by either distributor, but those trying to learn Breton might ask about Roparz Hemon's Breton Grammar. The tenth edition of this has been translated, adapted and revised by Michael Everson, published by Everson Gunn Teoranta (Dublin) in 1995.

Here are the addresses:

Schoenhof's Foreign Books
Catalogue Department
76a Mount Auburn Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Telephone: (617) 547-8855
Fax: (617) 547-8551
e-mail: info@schoenhofs.com

Schoenhof's listing for "France-Regional Languages Reference" (kindly sent to me by Robert Felix) includes a large number of dictionaries, grammars, and linguistic studies for Breton (Breton/English and Breton/French). As a major distributor for foreign books, they can probably order other books not listed in their catalog. It's just a matter of asking.

Books for Scholars, Inc.
7013 Genoa Drive
Chattanooga, TN 37421-5747
Telephone and fax: (423) 855-9633
e-mail: 730-1230@mcimail.com

This distributor produces catalogs for Irish Studies, and in their 41-page catalog for Welsh Studies they include 21 titles on the Breton language and history (as well as 16 on Cornish language, literature and history). The focus is on publications in the English language. Ask for the catalog on "Welsh Studies, Including Breton and Cornish Studies" which provides descriptions of the books they carry and ordering information.

And if you are in the market for books on Celtic Studies (= early Celtic languages, literature and history), then there is another distributor which offers a wide listing in its catalog:

Ford & Bailie
P.O. Box 138
Belmont, MA 02178
Telephone: (617) 489-6635
Fax: (617) 489-6388

While a large portion of the books in this catalog focus on literature and history of the Middle Ages (with a focus on Ireland and Wales), Ford & Bailie also have a good selection of learning materials for modern Welsh and Irish, with a bit for Scottish Gaelic. I saw nothing for Breton in their Winter 1997 catalogue, but you can always ask.

NEW RECORDINGS FROM BRITTANY

Lois Kuter

Les Ours du Scorff. La Maison des Bisous. Keltia Musique KMCD 70. 1996. CD. 46'20 minutes.

The "Bears of Scorff" is made up of a dazzling lineup of some of the best singers and musicians of Brittany who put their talents to work for a CD intended for children, but thoroughly enjoyable for adults. Gigi (Gilbert) Bourdin is a master of traditional Gallo song who puts his compositional skills to work on ten of the 14 selections on the CD. Laurent Jouin is also a fine traditional singer (Breton language and Gallo) who has penned two of the texts to the songs. One traditional Breton song is included ("Jean Renaud a sept pommiers") and the only instrumental selection on the CD is a traditional Irish tune ("The Little Sack of Potatoes"). The heroes and heroines of the songs include an old parakeet who has the hiccups, a mouse (Mademoiselle Lulu en tutu), Father Ruru and his donkey of various names, a chicken who unsuccessfully combats a mussel, three little bears and a barefooted bear. The title song for the CD is "The house of kisses" where little girls and boys go to dance, play, dream, and love.

The musical accompaniment is provided by Fanch Landreau (fiddle, piano, gadulka, guitar) and Soig Siberil (guitar) who have composed many of the tunes. Also providing accompaniment are Jacques-Yves Rehault (banjo, dobro), and Frédéric Lambierge (accordion, guitar and "pouliphone"--which is featured in the song "La poule et la moule"). While the Breton tradition serves as a clear inspiration for many of the tunes, one can also find influences from Cajun Louisiana and the Middle East. And, while there is an impressive line-up of different instruments, the accompaniment is kept simple to enhance each song nicely.

Jacket notes are suitably colorful--in fact each page is a different color with simple drawings to accompany each text. All the song texts are provided for those who might want to sing along, and the wonderful rhymes in some songs will make this almost irresistible. A delightful photograph of the "Bears of Scorff" (six 40-something men) dancing in the woods is a nice addition to the notes (see the reproduction on the cover of this issue of Bro Nevez).

* * *

Chant choral breton--Breizh a Gan. Kendalc'h/Drop Studio DS748-070. 1996. CD

Kendalc'h is a federation of cultural groups founded in 1950 and among their many initiatives in support of the Breton culture (music and dance especially) has been the organization of an annual contest called Breizh a Gan for choirs using the Breton language. This CD features nineteen performances by twelve choirs who have participated in this competition. Brittany does not have an ancient choral tradition and most of these choirs have been around for only ten to twenty years. But, this CD clearly shows that Brittany has a number of excellent choirs who use the Breton language for newer compositions by 20th century Breton composers and poets, traditional Breton hymns, or in arrangements of Welsh and Cornish hymns.

The choirs included on the CD come from all corners of Brittany and are: Choeur Féminin de Bretagne (Montfort sur Meu), Chorale An Avel Vras (Arradon), L'Ensemble Choral du Porzay (Plonevez-Porzay), Ensemble Choral Fa Si Nantes and Kan ar Vro (both from Nantes), K'helch Keltiek Roazhon (Rennes), Kanerien Sant Karanteg (Carantec), Kanerien Sant Meryn/Kenvroiz Dom Mikael (Plomelin and Plouguerneau), Kanerion Pleuigner (Pluvigner), La Pastorale (Lannion), Mouezh Paotred Breizh (Moëlan-sur-Mer), and l'Orchestre et Choeur de Brocéliande (Montfort sur Meu). The CD provides remarkable variety with a mix of all-women, all-men, mixed choirs, soloists and choir, and choir and orchestra combinations.

While the notes to the CD are plentiful. Each choir is presented in Breton with French translation and an address and telephone number is provided. Texts are given for each selection, but only in Breton. The choirs are presented in the notes in alphabetical order with the text for the one or two selections included on the CD. This makes it necessary to cross check with the listing of selections on the back of the CD case to follow the notes. I found this a bit cumbersome, but not nearly as annoying as the microscopic size of the print which forced me to get out a magnifying glass.

If you like choral music, or if you just like good performances, you will enjoy this excellent presentation of some of the best choirs of Brittany.

* * *

Ensemble Vocal Féminin Colortalea. Messe de Kernascleden, Libre Vermel de Montserrat. Escalibur CD 866. 56'11 minutes.

And while we're on the subject of choral music, this CD also testifies to the considerable choral talent in Brittany. This CD is both beautiful musically and quite interesting for music historians as a recreation of music from the 15th century. The Mass of Kernascleden is based on angel musicians who are part of some of the 40 frescos of this church painted in 1430. The Mass is attributed in part to Saint Vincent Ferrier who traveled to Brittany in the 15th Century to convert. It is thought that he is the composer of much of the Mass which has survived in various manuscript forms (including a copy of the beginning of some of the texts and music painted with the fresco angels). Agnes Brosset, the musical director of Colortalea, has used put together the Mass heard on this CD based on research done on the Mass and its music and texts. Based on this research the Mass is sung in three parts, accompanied like the angels in the Kernascleden fresco by a harp, hurdy-gurdies, and percussion. Also added is oboe and veuze, and the 16th century "bell wheel" from the chapel of Saint-Nicolas en Priziac where the recording was made.

The second part of this recording includes songs from the Vermillion Book of Montserrat. In contrast to the angelic vision of the Mass, this reflects the fire and brimstone approach to conversion that Saint Vincent Ferrier would have used and which is depicted in scenes of Hell in the Kernascleden church frescos, including a macabre "Dance of Death." Saint Vincent and pilgrims travelling to and from Brittany to the Montserrat Abbey in Catalonia would have sung the songs found in the Vermillion Book of Montserrat which also have a more tender tone with a focus on the Virgin Mary.

The 25-pages of notes to this CD outline the research done on the Mass of Kernascleden and the composition of the Mass, with a shorter text on the Vermillion Book of Montserrat. These are in French, English and Breton, with texts to the songs provided in Latin and French.

* * *

HEARD OF BUT NOT HEARD

The following are just a few new releases noted in the pages of Ar Soner no. 341 (jan.-fevr. 1997) and Ar Men no. 82 (jan. 1997).

Bagad Cap Caval. Bagad Cap Caval. Pixie 50503-2. 1996

This bagad from Bro Vigoudenn has risen quickly in the ranks of these typically Breton "pipe bands" to the elite first category. This is their first recording, sure to please all who like the music of the bagad.

Kevrenn Brest Sant-Mark. Ocean Liberty. KBSM 002. 1996.

This bagad has always been on the cutting edge, and this is another welcome release for those who love the bagad.

Bagad Moulin Vert. Spered Fest. Pluriel GRI 19084-2/Sony Music. 1996.

Best known as a "children's bagad," Moulin Vert (the Green Windmill) has grown up since its founding in the 1950s. This bagad is now among the ranks of the best bagadoù—a young bagad, but very mature.

Les 4 Jeans. Entends-tu ma blonde le tonnerre qui gronde. BP 9361. Mélodie Distribution. 1996.

The Four Johns (not to be mistaken with the Three Johns of Nantes, Tri Yann) is a group made up of some excellent musicians: Roland Brou with song, Alain Pennec with accordion and bombarde, Jacques Michenaud, and a percussion section. They combine traditional sources with much less traditional arrangements.

* * *

AN AMERICAN IN BRITTANY — ANOTHER NEW RECORDING

David Surette. Trip to Kemper - Celtic Music for Solo Guitar. Madrina Music. MM 203CD. 1996.

I get many letters from people who are intrigued by Breton music and want to find out where to buy recordings. And I also get requests for information from people who will be taking a trip to Brittany and want some tips on what festivals or events may be taking place during their short visit. In most cases I never hear from these people again and have to hope that the information I sent was useful to them. In 1992 I received such a letter from David Surette (in New Hampshire) who was planning a trip to Brittany. And then in November 1996 I received a short letter, his new CD Trip to Kemper, and a copy of an article he wrote about his travels in Brittany for Acoustic Guitar. And I was pleased to read in his letter that the information I sent was helpful to him!

I have heard quite a few arrangements of Breton tunes by non-Bretons, and for most of these there is little in the music to hint at any Breton origins for the tune. Indeed it is usually difficult to see any inspiration at all from Brittany. This is not the case with the music of guitarist David Surette, who has made several extended trips to Brittany, listening to lots of music, dancing at festou noz, and talking with musicians. The efforts he has taken to understand Breton music is evident in his CD Trip to Kemper. And also evident in this recording is his considerable talent on the guitar.

In the notes to the title track, "Trip to Kemper," David Surette explains that "Kemper" (the Breton version of the city called "Quimper" in French) means "confluence." And, as the notes say, the CD is a confluence of musical styles, with arrangements of dance tunes, marches, and melodies not only from Brittany, but also from Ireland and other regions of France. While the Irish or Breton roots of tunes and melodies are quite audible, Surette does not simply duplicate what he has heard from musicians or on recordings. The music is very much in the style of David Surette and one can hear the influence of his experience as a musician for New England "old time" music (contra/square dances). Like most musicians

today, Surette's sources for learning include printed music and CDs, but also lots of live music where one learns a lot more than just the notes to a tune. As a guitar player, David Surette has been inspired by Martin Carthy and John Renbourn as well as Breton masters such as Soig Siberil, Gilles Le Bigot and Dan ar Braz. But he has also learned from fiddlers, hurdy-gurdy players, pipers, singers, mandolin, and accordion players, as the notes to Trip to Kemper indicate clearly.

The confluence of styles and sources for the tunes on the CD mean that even though it is all solo acoustic guitar, it includes quite a bit of variety--dance tunes as well as slower airs. A high quality is guaranteed by David Surette's talent as a guitarist. While respectful and sensitive to the original source of tunes, he makes them his own and the result is a very fine CD.

*

David Surette has also recorded a cassette/CD called Back Roads in 1993 which includes solo and ensemble pieces. Selections from that and Trip to Kemper are included on a CD and a book of arrangements in standard notation and guitar tablature called Down the Brae--Celtic Fingerstyle Guitar. Distributed by David Surette himself, these may not be easily accessible in music stores, so here is how to order them directly:

Trip to Kemper	CD = \$15; cassette = \$10
Back Roads	CD = \$15; cassette = \$10
Down the Brae book and CD	= \$22

Shipping is \$2 for the first item; \$1 for each additional item.

Checks should be made out to David Surette and sent to the following address with your order:

Madrina Music, P.O. Box 4225, Portsmouth, NH 03802
(207) 439-5267

DAN AR BRAZ

David Surette is not only a talented musician, but also a good writer. The following article was written by him for the magazine Fingerstyle Guitar. I thank both David and the magazine for allowing us to reprint it here for readers of Bro Nevez.

In the heart of the French Celtic region of Brittany lies the city of Quimper, home of Breton guitarist extraordinaire Dan Ar Braz. A vibrant and graceful city of just of 100,000, Quimper (Kemper in the Breton language) means confluence in Breton, referring to the meeting here of the Steir and the Odet rivers before they run to the sea. It reflects as well the confluence of music and memory that makes up the music of Dan Ar Braz.

Ar Braz' music is quite diverse, ranging from lyrical solo guitar instrumentals to hard-driving electric guitar and bagpipe duets. Yet regardless of the setting or instrumentation, there's a distinctive and heartfelt quality to Ar Braz' playing and composing that pervades all his work. What's more, he's accomplished the enviable task, over 20 years and 14 albums, of producing a

body of work that draws from the traditions and landscape of his native Brittany to create a sound that is at once personal and contemporary.

His most recent album, 1994's *Heritage des Celtes*, is a prime example of both his musical range and identity. The album was the result of a collaboration between Breton, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh musicians, which originally took place for the Festival de la Cornouaille in Quimper in the summer of 1993. Expertly produced by noted Irish producer Donal Lunny (of Planxty and Bothy Band fame), *Heritage des Celtes* features numerous Ar Braz compositions along with innovative arrangements of traditional materials played by a gathering of top-notch traditional singers and instrumentalists, a folk/rock rhythm section, and Scottish and Breton pipe bands! Critical and popular response has been overwhelming, and a year after its release over 100,000 copies had been sold in France alone, with most of those concentrated in Brittany.

Located in the northwest corner of France, Brittany is a Celtic region, and shares a cultural kinship with Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Galicia in Spain. Pan-Celtism flourishes today in towns like Quimper; the local traditional music hotspot is an Irish-style pub called the Ceili, where locals quaff pints of Guinness and Coreff (a Breton brew) rather than vin rouge. For many, especially those who, like Dan, came to Celtic music in the late 60's and early 70's, one name looms large: that of Breton harper, piper, singer, and band-leader Alan Stivell.

Ar Braz was playing in rock bands in clubs and dance halls, and waiting on tables at a seaside hotel in Benodet when he first heard Stivell in 1967. Enchanted, he went to see him again when he was playing in Quimper, and when Stivell said that he was looking for a guitarist, the die was cast. Dan went on to play with the Stivell band for the next ten years, touring around the world and providing acoustic and electric guitar for Stivell albums like *Live in Dublin*, *A L'Olympia*, and *Chemins de Terre*. Coming from a rock background, Dan says Stivell provided him with both an orientation towards Breton traditional music and a reappraisal of some of his earlier influences.

"I started out with Celtic music without knowing it, because there were lots of things in the 60's that had some Celtic background to them, both in rock and in folk," he related as we sat at one of Quimper's many small cafes. "Paul Simon, Bob Dylan, Donovan, Bert Jansch, John Renbourn... I listened to all those folks, and there were very few people here listening to that kind of music in Brittany. It was through Stivell that I came to realize that there were lots of Celtic influences in the music that I liked in the 60's, even bits of things by the Beatles and the Rolling Stones."

Dan's background in folk and rock played a large part in helping to define the Stivell sound, just as the folk/rock sound of the group helped attract a whole new audience unfamiliar with traditional Celtic music. For some who were familiar, however, it was a slightly different story. "Because it was me whom Stivell had chosen to play these melodies on electric guitar," related Dan, "I became in effect the first to do this. So when Stivell was contested by traditionalists and purists, I was the symbol, the symbol of the electrification of this music. There were those who loved it, and those who didn't.

"For me, I had come to this music that was very new to me, and I had no desire to massacre it. Perhaps if I had had a background in traditional music, I would have had more preconceived ideas. As it was, Stivell said 'Play this' (he hums a melody) and I played it with pleasure. And I think that it was good. It was good for Stivell in that it permitted him to reach new audiences."

In the late 70s Ar Braz left Alan Stivell to pursue his solo career. He recorded several albums for the French label Hexagone, and throughout the 80s and 90s he has recorded with Keltia Musique, a label based in Quimper that specializes in Breton music. He also contributed four pieces to a Kicking Mule Irish guitar anthology, which has since been re-released on Shanachie. the 80s were lean times for Dan, especially after the huge success of the Stivell group. Ironically, it was in part the rapid success that also lead to its decline in popularity in the 80s.

"The popularity of the 70s was perhaps exaggerated," Ar Braz said reflectively. "It was not really natural. In fact, there were lots who were followers of fashion. When it fell out of fashion, they were no longer interested. The musicians as always continued to play. It wasn't easy, but they continued just the same. There were actually more musicians than ever before in the 80s.

"I continued to play throughout the 80s," he went on. "I made many tours to the US, playing in small clubs. I learned a lot, but financially it was difficult, and in addition, I had the impression that I could tour like that in England, in the US, in Italy, for years and years without ever taking a step forward, without ever finding a bit more comfort in which to work. So I knew that I was at a bit of an impasse. Despite everything, I produced a number of albums, telling myself that one day, something will happen."

Things did indeed start to happen in the 90s. In Brittany, a whole new generation was developing an interest in traditional music, building spectacularly on the many seeds that had been carefully and hopefully sown throughout the 80s. "When folk and traditional music went out of fashion, people went looking for other things," continued Ar Braz. "Now they're returning, they're accepting these things as part of their heritage. People in Brittany want to center themselves on something closer to them, and what is here in Brittany. So now I see lots of young people who are discovering Stivell, for example, and it's the Stivell of the 70s! There are lots of young people playing traditional music, lots of young rock groups singing in Breton. It's really quite extraordinary."

Here in the States, an increased interest in folk and Celtic music has led to increased availability of Breton music, especially through the Keltia Musique label. 1992 saw three new Ar Braz CDs released, equaling the 80s output. One of these, *Les Iles de la Mémoire*, an all-instrumental collection made up primarily of re-recordings of late 70s and early 80s material, is a beautiful guitar album and a great introduction to Ar Braz' music.

Describing music is often a dubious proposition, yet "traditionally-influenced contemporary" might work for the music of Dan Ar Braz. He has produced arrangements of traditional Breton and Irish melodies, yet the majority of his work has been original compositions: solo guitar pieces, songs, and larger group pieces incorporating traditional Celtic instruments such as bagpipes. His solo instrumental (see *Dix Annees Deja*) often utilize modal open tunings such as DADGAD and EADEAE, and are often impressionistic or contemplative. One of his signature sounds features an acoustic guitar rhythm track, often an open-tuned finger-picked arpeggio or pattern, over which a second guitar, electric or acoustic, will play a melody and then improvise. Over the years he's generated notice among guitar aficionados, yet he shies away from the guitar hero role.

"I'm not a big fan of guitar," he confessed. "I mean, I love the guitar, but I'm primarily a fan of music. The one who's led me to this way of thinking is Pat Metheny. I'm not a jazz fan, but he's one musician who has made me realize, in listening to his music, that one can convey the essential with very few notes.

"As I get a little older, it's not that I'm getting away from the guitar, but closer to music," he said. "As a musician, the most important thing is to discover your own musical universe. When you find it, you feel at home."

Ar Braz is most at home in his native Cornouaille, the region around Quimper, and thus tours less now than he did during the 70s and 80s. He plays regularly throughout Brittany as a soloist and with his own group, and in the spring of 1995 toured France with a version of *Heritage des Celtes*. He's also at work preparing material for a second *Heritage* release, slated for sometime in 1996. He is universally admired in his home, and was even named the "Quimper Citizen of the Year" in 1994.

Seeing him in these surroundings, it is easy to see the influences that Brittany has had on his music: the Celtic culture, the sea, the struggles for independence and identity. Ar Braz has utilized many of the forms and sounds of Breton music in his own music; the song *Borders of Salt*, for example, is based on a Breton melody, *Ar Baz Valan*, while *Call to the Dance* is a suite based on the Breton gavotte, one of the most popular traditional dances in Brittany. Yet for Ar Braz, the strongest influences come from his sense of place and his part in it.

"I've never tried to make music that was absolutely Celtic," he said near the end of our conversation. "I haven't done musicological studies. I search for musical colors that express a spirit, a way of life, and a way that is a part of me."

Recordings by Dan ar Braz

For those who have followed the career of Dan ar Braz, you may have noticed that his name also comes up as ar Bras – ar Braz seems to be the spelling used for more recent recordings, but it is the same person. LK

Douar Nevez/Terre Nouvelle. Hexagone 883 009 WEA (lp). 1977.

(electric & acoustic guitar with uilleann and Scottish Highland pipes of Patrick Molard)

Allez dire à la ville. Hexagone 883 021-S. (lp) 1978.

The Earth's Lament. Hexagone/WEA 883 034. (lp) 1979.

Acoustic. FLVM 3062 M103 (lp) 1984. Released by Green Linnet SIF 3035, 1985.

Musique pour les silences à venir. Rikou Soner RS 3063. (lp) 1985.

Septembre bleu. Hello 10037 JD10. 1988

Songs. Keltia Musique CD 14, M312 (CD) 1990.

Borders of Salt. Keltia Musique KM 23 (CD/cassette) 1991.

Les Iles de la Mémoire/Islands of Memories. KMCD32. (CD) 1992.

Rêve de Siam. Keltia Musique KMCD33. (CD) 1992.

Xavier Grall Chanté par Dan ar Bras. Keltia Musique KMCD34. 1992

(songs from *Allez dire à la Ville* and *Acoustic*)

Theme for the Green Lands--Suite for pipes and guitar. Keltia Musique KMCD 48. (CD) 1994.

(Uilleann and Scottish Highland pipes by Patrick Molard).

Heritage des Celtes. Columbia COL 4777632. Diffusion Sony Music. (CD/cassette). 1995.

YOUR CHANCE TO LEARN WELSH: CWRS CYMRAEG IOWA

The following press release was received by Cymdeithas Madog which has organized an annual intensive summer class in Welsh for a number of years.

Once again Cymdeithas Madog is pleased to announce its annual Welsh language course, Cwrs Cymraeg. This year's course will be held from Sunday, July 27, to Sunday, August 3, at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa, right in the heart of the country. Cymdeithas Madog (The Welsh Studies Institute in North America, Inc.) has been sponsoring courses in the United States and Canada for almost 20 years.

An excellent teaching staff will be on hand for the course, including three distinguished teachers coming from Wales—Cefin Campbell as lead/head teacher, Basil Davies, and Susan George, as well as other North American based teachers. All are experienced, professional Welsh language instructors. Cymdeithas Madog takes pride in its reputation for providing Welsh language instruction of the highest quality, geared to learners at all levels, from absolute beginners to advanced students.

During the course, about 6 hours of daily language instruction are accompanied by social and cultural activities that focus on the Welsh language, music, and culture. Activities such as folk singing, Welsh-language videos (with subtitles in English), a pub night, and Welsh folk dancing are organized for the evening hours.

The cost of the week, including room and board at the college, is \$515 for adults and \$465 for full-time students. Tag-along family members not attending classes pay \$415. Local residents not staying at the college but taking classes and joining the group for the noon and evening meals pay \$435.

A deposit of \$100, refundable prior to May 31st, will hold a place for you. (The balance of the fees will be payable by July 1st.) Checks should be made payable to Cwrs Cymraeg Iowa and sent to: Ruth Hall, 408 E. Salem, Indianola, IA 50125.

A few partial scholarships will be available, including a matching funds program through various local Welsh societies. Scholarship details can be obtained from Anne Smith, 5240 E. Frances Road, Mt. Morris, MI 48458. (810) 640-1852.

If you would like more information write to Ruth Hall at the above address, call (515) 961-5043 or email: hallross@aol.com.

We hope to see you in Iowa this summer!

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Öffentliches Recht-und Politikwissenschaft, Innrain 82, A 6020 INNSBRUCK, tél.(0512)507/2683

Fln. Gerlinde GREGORITS, Hernalser Gürtel 12/33 A-1080 WIEN, Tel: 33.1.42.18.183

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(USA), Pr.996.662.8809, Of.916.752.6701, ext.1219

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Building, INVERNESS IV36 NN (UK), tél.0463.23.41.21

Mr. Peter STEVENSON, The White House, White House Loan, EDINBURGH EH9 2EY, SCOTLAND (U.K.)

Tel. 131.447.1648 - Fax 131.447.4849

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