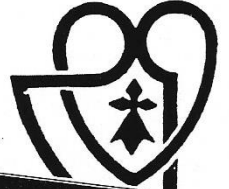
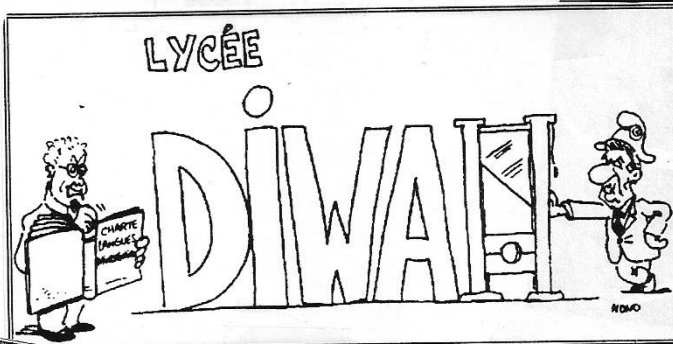


BRO NEVEZ

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



The fight for Diwan continues
See pages 1-3



Photos/cartoons from *Bretagne/Info*
(122, 123, 136 (26 mars, 2 avril, 2 juillet)

Lors de la manifestation de samedi, Jean-Pierre Chevènement a souvent été la risée des manifestants...

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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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.

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* * *

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With this issue of Bro Nevez, it is appropriate to acknowledge the very loyal support of our Members. While we continue to recruit new Members each year, the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL includes a strong core of individuals who have sustained their support for five, ten, and close to twenty years. In a country where there are so many worthy causes for support this strong commitment from so many individuals is significant. As the following lists show, support comes from all parts of the country, from men and women with many different family heritages.

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+
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FÜR DIE ERHALTUNG DER
BRETONISCHEN SPRACHE

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9/4/1999

The DIWAN high school *still* under attack

Lois Kuter

As reported in past issues Bro Nevez, plans are under way to develop a center for Breton language activities in Carhaix. Central in this “cultural/technological” campus will be the new Diwan high school, due to open Fall 1999.

The development/renovation of the old Chateau de Kerampoull and construction of new buildings where the Diwan high school, library and performance centers will be located has been supported by the town of Carhaix from the start. 10 million francs—a significant chunk of an estimated 15 million francs needed to renovate the retirement home and move the high school into the site—was approved by the Regional Council of Brittany. Given the boost to the local economy it would bring in terms of jobs and cultural activity, politicians from all parties seem to be in favor of the development of the Kerampoull site.

However, in mid-March the Prefecture contested the 10 million franc allocation by the Regional Council, citing the “Loi Failloux” (dating from 1850) which fixes a much lower limit for *public* support given to *private* schools (no more than 10% of the annual expenditures of the institutions supported). Since Diwan is officially designated a private (but NOT Catholic) school, this law threatens the opening of the high school in the fall where some 90 Diwan high school students will be enrolled. And, it has also threatened other Diwan schools which have worked hard to engage the support of local municipalities.

An immediate reaction of outrage was expressed to the Prefecture’s threat to the Diwan high school. The day after the Regional Council’s financial support was blocked in court, 300 people demonstrated outside the Mayor’s office in Carhaix. This was just a prelude to a massive demonstration to take place on Saturday, March 27, when an estimated 10,000 people demonstrated in Carhaix.

While it is not possible to ignore the laws which limit public support of “private” high schools, this has not meant that no action is being taken to insure the Diwan high school opening in Carhaix. As Diwan has been asking since its opening twenty years ago, the solution seems to be to give Diwan public school status. As a school open to anyone who desires to attend, free of charge, Diwan has always operated as a public service.

The Prefecture does not seem to grasp the fact that Diwan, (as well as the town of Carhaix and the Regional Council) are not willing to give in. On March 31st Andrew Lincoln, President of Diwan, met with the Prefect who proposed two alternatives for housing Diwan high school students in the fall. Both were rejected. The first was to squeeze the Diwan students into the public high school of Carhaix. Not only would this be inadequate space, but would undermine the idea of immersive schooling in Breton which is found not only in the classroom but in recreational activities, lunch time, etc. The second solution was to use “mobile” classrooms—quickly installed “quantum hut” style of buildings. This would only be a continuation of the inadequate housing students have put up with for the past few years, but would delay work on the permanent solution of public status for Diwan.

In a ground-breaking move at the end of April, the Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin, made an official pronouncement in favor of a public statute for Diwan. On May 20th, Andrew Lincoln met with representatives of the National Ministry of Education for three hours to begin negotiations. This first meeting gave some hope that the Ministry grasped the importance of Diwan’s unique system of language immersion where the Breton language serves as the primary medium for education. This is an area where

no compromises will be made and Diwan has carefully pointed out that it does not want to be “integrated” into the public education system, but instead “inserted” into it.

Following a second meeting with the Ministry of Education, a good explanation of Diwan’s position in the negotiations was given in the following “Official Position” printed in the June 3rd issue of Bretagne/Breizh Infos (my translation).

The State’s blockage of the financing of the high school in Carhaix showed the need to give Diwan the public status it has demanded for 22 years.

Following orders given by the Prime Minister in this area, negotiations were opened with the Minister of National Education with all the associative schools who teach through the regional languages.

Nevertheless, after two meetings in Paris, while it appears that there is a certain openness towards recognizing teaching through language immersion, no proposal has been made concerning a tripartite administration of the schools (State, Local collectivities, Diwan). Now this is the central question.

Only this manner of administration can guarantee a respect of the pedagogical project of immersion in Breton and the implementation of a true plan for development which will allow the schools to respond to an ever growing number of families who wish this type of schooling for their children.

Diwan is waiting for concrete judicial proposals on this question to show that the State is not aiming for the dissolution of Diwan, but will instead make a real recognition of its specificity.

Numerous other points also remain without a response.

Notably, Diwan is waiting for the establishment of transition measures which will insure the opening of classes this next school year in the middle schools of Quimper and Vannes, and in the schools of Faou and Commana.

The difficulties faced by the bilingual stream (Div Yezh and Dihun) show as well the need for a coherent politic for the teaching of and in Breton which will be available for all.

On June 5th, a second demonstration was held in Carhaix to support public status for Diwan as well as the other schools where “regional” languages are taught through an immersion system. These include Seaska (Basque), Calandretas (Occitan), Bressola (Catalan), and Zweisprachigkeit (Alsatian). An estimated 6,000 demonstrators hit the streets of Carhaix for this demonstration.

Although I have no news of the results of meetings with the Ministry of Education since June, it appears that meetings continue with no real advance in terms of any concrete proposals to establish a workable system of public administration for Diwan and the other regional language schools which operate through immersion.

At the beginning of July renovation began on the buildings which will house the Diwan high school students.

The Sub-Prefecture in Chateaulin wasted no time in sending a letter to the Mayor of Carhaix demanding that the town drop its support of the Diwan high school. The Municipal Council of Carhaix had defiantly authorized expenditures to allow construction to begin on the retirement home (with no specific mention that the building would be used by Diwan). In the letter addressed to the Mayor, the Sub-Prefect reminded him of the Loi Falloux and limits of support for a private high school. In its regularly scheduled meeting following the receipt of this letter, the Municipal Council of Carhaix again affirmed its intention to go ahead with the building renovations, despite the threat that the Sub-Prefecture would seize the administrative tribunal—i.e., declare the Mayor and Council to be illegal.

As of early August, the French government has made little effort to move ahead in granting Diwan public status. Diwan remains steadfast in its determination to not only survive, but to continue to grow in order to meet the demands of parents for its unique and successful style of education. It appears that the Regional Council of Brittany and the town of Carhaix are prepared to move forward as well despite ongoing threats from the Prefecture.

* * *

France has Signed The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages ... BUT ...

As reported in the May issue of Bro Nevez, France signed the European Charter during the May 6 & 7 meetings of the Ministers of the Council of Europe held in Budapest. As reported previously, France studied the Charter in light of its Constitution which states in Article 2 that “French is the language of the Republic,” and a judicial expert, Guy Carcassonne, judged that only 52 articles of the European Charter were compatible with the French Constitution. France signed just 39 of the articles of 98 making up the Charter—a little over the minimum necessary of 35.

A Constitutional Council was convened by President Jacques Chirac in May to determine if a ratification of the Charter was possible without modification of the French Constitution. In mid-June they came to the conclusion that the Charter contains “clauses contrary to the Constitution.” In recognizing the rights of specific linguistic groups in the territories where those languages are spoken, the Charter was also felt to contain some clauses that are contrary to the principle of indivisibility of the Republic, equality before the law, and unity of the French people. Without a change to the French Constitution it appears that France cannot and will not ratify the European Charter—a second step which is necessary before the Charter can be put into application.

To further delay or doom ratification, on June 24th, President Chirac refused Prime Minister Lionel Jospin’s request that he act to introduce a modification to the Constitution which would allow for ratification. After this refusal, on July 5th, Chirac suggested the establishment of a “law-program for the development of regional languages”—while reaffirming his opposition to any revision of the Constitution. Declaring himself to be “for the full expansion of regional languages,” he proposed that the “law program” could incorporate the 39 measures of the European charter signed by France—a side step it appears to appease some of the strong opposition to his refusal to move ratification of the Charter forward.

On July 12th a new association was formed during the annual conference of language scholars and teachers, “9th Meeting of Regional Languages and Cultures.” While this conference takes place on a yearly basis to examine different aspects of the development of regional languages and cultures, it was felt that a group was needed to meet year-round to push France towards meeting European norms for protecting and promoting regional languages in education, media and public life. Called “Association des rencontres des langues régionales ou minoritaires” this will serve as a pressure group to advance action by France beyond fruitless political debate. The twelve delegations represented on the administrative council are from the language communities of Alsace-Moselle, Berbers in France, Brittany, Catalonia, Corsica, Flanders, Guadeloupe, Guyane, Martinique, the Basque country, Occitania, and Réunion. Per Denez, of Brittany, is President with Yvon Bissol (Martinique) and Henry Goetchy (Alsace-Moselle) as Vice Presidents.

And Bretons are not likely to stop lobbying for the ratification of the Charter and amendment of the French Constitution. Each August, the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient attracts some 400,000 people during its nine-day span in Europe. A very popular part of the Festival is the parade of Celtic nations. Leading up the parade of 3,500 musicians and dancers this year were two dozen Breton mayors and elected officials and representatives from most of the major language and cultural organizations of Brittany. With banners demanding the ratification of the Charter and revision of the Constitution, this demonstration was cheered by some 20,000 spectators who endured downpours to view the parade. Musicians and dancers wore yellow and blue ribbons—the colors of Europe.

* * *

“No one in Brittany believes in the future of Breton” – says who?

As reported in an article in the newspaper Ouest France (June 12, 1999), so says Professor Jean Le Du from the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest, who caused a bit of a stir this June when speaking at a conference called “Regional languages and cultures of France” held at the Sorbonne in Paris. One can understand the negative reaction to Professor Le Du’s presentation on the part of Breton language supporters based on this article as well as other reports of his talk found in Kannadig (May 1999), the publication of the Union of Breton Teachers, and in Bretagne Infos (July 2, 1999 issue). Perhaps his comments are taken out of context, or he was misquoted or misinterpreted? No, I don’t think so.

Those (like me) who have had the infuriating experience (twice) of trying to listen politely to Professor Le Du present papers at academic conferences know that this is not the first time he has taken the opportunity to belittle actions Bretons have taken to advance the Breton language and to characterize militant action for Breton as the work of fanatical and fringe nationalists. While Professor Le Du has produced important linguistic studies of the Breton language, he seems to be much less scrupulous of a scholar when it comes to the sociolinguistic realm. A native speaker himself, his flat refusal to acknowledge that the Breton language could have a future, let alone his disinterest in showing even a hint of support for work towards such a future, is sad to me.

Speaking at the Paris conference with his colleague from the Université de Bretagne Occidentale, Yves le Berre, these two are reported to declare that no one in Brittany believes in the possibility of saving Breton, and that only a negligible part [of those saying they are favorable to the conservation of Breton] are ready to make the effort to learn it, and that the restoration of Breton is the concern of the “little bourgeoisie of the city.” The nonsense of such statements was not lost on those present at the Sorbonne.

Also present at this conference was Jean-Dominique Robin, President of the Union of Breton Teachers. In his presentation on the distinction between “teaching regional languages” and “teaching in regional languages” he denounced the attempt by Le Du and Le Berre to dismiss the importance of the changing positive attitude of Breton people towards their language. Robin’s paper (reprinted in *Kannadig* 61, miz even 1999) outlined the past decline of the Breton language, but also documented the growth of enrollment in and demand for Breton classes both in schools and for adults. He also cited the growing job market for Breton speakers not only in education, but also in the media and commercial ventures which serve a Breton speaking market.

Robin noted that it is not just the middle class from cities who enroll children in bilingual programs and Diwan schools, but children come from a growing representation of all socioeconomic professions in the area where a school is based.

Any number of Breton teachers can document the commitment that a growing number of Bretons—old and young—are making to learning Breton. “Only a negligible part are ready to make the effort to learn it”??? – that’s not what I have seen in my twenty-five years of observing what is going on in Brittany. Yes, the numbers of children and adults taking Breton classes and truly mastering the language is relatively small. But, is this a question of not caring, or is it a matter of not having the opportunity to learn Breton without making a heroic effort? Given the blocks that continue to be put in the way of opening new classes in the schools, and the considerable sacrifice adults must make to enroll in classes in their free time, it seems to me that an astounding number of Bretons are making an effort to learn Breton.

The 200 pages of press clippings printed in the publication called *Keleier* put out on a bi-monthly basis by Servij ar Brezhoneg reporting on the activities of hundreds of cultural organizations found throughout Brittany as well as on the growth of Breton classes, media projects, publications, advertising, and public visibility for Breton, show that there are many people throughout Brittany who believe in the future of Breton and are willing to work for it. If you were to count heads and get out the calculator, would this be considered a negligible amount out of a population of 4 million in Brittany (including Loire-Atlantique)? No, I don’t think so—especially in view of the history of oppression of the Breton language.

Professors Le Du and Le Berre need to spend a little more time out of the Ivory Tower of the university. Their belittlement of those in Brittany who are striving to reclaim their heritage and language is mean-spirited, and undermines their credibility as scholars. No doubt, these two professors consider themselves to be the only ones who are being “realistic” about the grim future for the Breton language. There is no denying the fact that Breton is threatened, but to denigrate the efforts of thousands of Bretons who are working to create a new reality is truly a sad thing to see from two distinguished Breton scholars who could use their influence in a positive instead of negative way.

BOOKS FOR THE BRETON LEARNER

The Work of Fañch Peru

Presentation by Lois Kuter

In the February 1999 issue of Bro Nevez (no 69) I included a presentation of the work of Roparz Hemon (1900-1978)—a translation of an article by Per Denez for Bretagne des Livres. Hemon published not only a number of dictionaries and grammars still in heavy use by Breton learners today, but he also wrote books and essays especially geared to Breton learners based on his establishment of a 1,000 word list of Basic Breton vocabulary (Alc'hwez ar brezhoneg eeun). Many of these books are available and being republished today (especially by Hor Yezh).

But, Breton learners have a wider choice of reading, and with this issue of Bro Nevez I want to present the work of Fañch Peru who has published a series of books with short essays, tales and stories based on contemporary life in Brittany—and especially the Tregor area where he lives. While some of these books are directed specifically to younger readers, others are good for any age—learners and accomplished readers of Breton alike.

In looking back at earlier issues of Bro Nevez where five of Fañch Peru's books were reviewed, I found it interesting that it was always in an August issue. So it is certainly appropriate that this August issue of Bro Nevez include a note on his latest book, Kernigelled ar Goañv. Because Peru's books span a ten year period of time, it seems well worth reprinting the previous reviews as well to present the work of this author who has done so much to expand Breton language literature available to younger readers and learners.

Thanks goes to the publishing house Skol Vreizh which has published these as part of its "Sterenn" series. (Skol Vreizh, 20 straed Kersko, 29600 Montroulez)

* * *

Fañch Peru. Glizarc'hant. Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1998. 135 pages, ISBN 2-903313-16-4; Tenzor Run ar Gov. Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1998. 179 pages. ISBN 2-903313-19-9; Bugel ar C'hoad. Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1989. 71 pages. ISBN 2-903313-26-1.

*Reviewed by Jay O'Callahan
(Bro Nevez 35, August 1990)*

... The three titles under review here not only address the need for books for young people in Breton, but engage as well some larger questions. Fañch Peru, mayor of Berhet (south of Lannion in Côtes d'Armor), writes of contemporary life in his part of

Brittany. His stories are, on the face of it, simple vignettes. There are no pretensions to great literature. Yet, in providing a conceptual tool (through raising everyday life in Tregor to "litterature") by means of which rural Bretons can look at their own lives and at their society, Peru has done something of great importance.

As local community institutions and traditional cultural forms have withered, rural communities have lost the tools that would allow them to think about themselves—about their past and future—as Breton communities. Since all the tools made available to them by the French cultural media are in fact based on a

French view of man and society in Brittany, Breton communities have tended to drift into generalized French models of discourse. These are oblivious to the continuing reality of "Breton-ness."

While classic Breton writers of the 30s and early 40s did generally conceive of their work as a commentary on their (Breton) society, contemporary literature has tended to address itself to more purely "literary" matters. It has thus not been taken up by ordinary Breton speakers, now in dire need of direction.

Peru's books are thus one aspect of attempts to develop the community institutions that would allow Breton communities a means of conceptualizing themselves as ongoing units; and thus developing a public debate as to the various futures that might be available to these units. (The author is, in fact, active in the Association of Breton-Speaking Mayors and Elected Officials which is strongest in Tregor and in the Guemene area, and at the forefront of community-based efforts to build a Breton future.) The books do this by taking actual life in the author's native area as a subject for literature; that is, the symbolic criticism of values. Peru is not interested in what materials he can draw from Tregor for an individual literary agenda. He doesn't attempt to use Brittany, but rather to evoke her. By making Breton communities imaginatively accessible to themselves, he, in effect, draws them into being as units of discourse, reemerging from "France."

Glizarc'hant is subtitled "Pictures of the Present Time." It is a series of 21 scenes, focusing on the lives of the Sidaner family. There are few volumes from which one could learn so much about contemporary life in rural Brittany. Tenzor Run ar Gov, subtitled "A Tale," is of the three books the

most obviously intended for young people. It is the story of the search of four teenagers for the fabled grave of Gwenc'hlan, an ancient sorcerer. While the language of these two books reflects closely that spoken in Tregor, that of Bugel ar C'hoad is more consciously literary. The story of a boy's half-fearful fascination with the life of the forest, it is an effective and bittersweet evocation of some few steps in the journey towards adulthood.

The latter two volumes are wonderfully illustrated by the ink drawings of Iffig Troadeg. All three books are attractive and well-produced. While only Glizarc'hant breaks 100 pages, the three are worth a read, and would be particularly appropriate for foreigners learning Breton.

* * *

Fañch Peru. An Traoniennoù Glas. Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1993. 135 pages. ISBN 2-903313-57-1.

*Reviewed by Jay O'Callahan
(Bro Nevez 47, August 1993)*

Fañch Peru's latest book speaks from the heart of still-living Breton society. While scholarly studies are indispensable in gaining an understanding of contemporary Brittany, books like this one provide something that such works cannot provide. It gives the feel of contemporary life in Tregor. It speaks from Breton society, where others look at it from the outside. Fañch Peru's stories engage current issues and make people's everyday affairs into literature.

The book is a continuation of Glizarc'hant's (1988) focus on the Sidaner family. Like the stories from that volume, the 26 pieces here were originally published in the magazine Pobl Vreizh between 1990 and

1992. Issues like the destruction of hedgerows, arrests of Breton families who had sheltered Basque militants, and unemployment, are woven into the lives of the Sidaners. Traditional tales are recounted and, for those who would find it useful, the Breton version of the French civil marriage ceremony is provided! The language is straightforward and alive; true-to-life, but suitable for learners as well.

Fañch Peru, in producing solid literature, is also rendering an important service to Brittany and its people.

* * *

Fañch Peru. Enezenn an Eñvor (Island of Memory). Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1994. 98 pages. ISBN 2-903313-70-9.

*Reviewed by Pierre Mens
(Bro Nevez 51, August 1994)*

Enezenn an Eñvor, Fañch Peru's latest work, takes us on a three-week journey through Ireland where we accompany him and his wife Marie-Therese. As they visit their friends, we get to appreciate Irish hospitality and we take the back roads down memory lane. The author recalls the moments he spent there in the summer of 1991 and the numerous places he visited on this occasion: Cork, Baile Bhuirne, Dingle, the Aran Islands, County Clare, and Connemara, Clonmacnoise and many more.

Get wet, it pays! Visit Ireland! That is probably what Fañch Peru was thinking while writing post cards to his friends and relatives, waiting for a storm to go on its way, sipping a mixture of warm water and "poithenn" to keep warm, stuck in his car for an hour, or a whole night.

This book, besides being a handbook on how to stay dry, leads us on the traces of a number of people—religious, historical and mythical—who are part of Ireland's heritage: Bredan, the fifth century monk who, according to old scriptures, sailed to the new world in a leather boat; Berc'heñ, possibly a pagan goddess transformed by the Christian religion into a well-mannered lady, known as Santez Brigida, among other names, in Brittany. We also make the acquaintance of a number of very lively contemporary characters who know that friendship, music and beer are a way of life!

On a number of occasions the author celebrates the strong links that tie Celtic nations together against all odds. He expresses his regret at the limited outlet their languages are permitted—especially Breton: *pegoulz e vo roet he flas d'hor yezh ha d'ar yezhoù keltiek?*

In all, what the editor describes as a "living picture of Ireland of the past and the present," is a pleasant book written in simple and accessible Breton. This is a successful attempt by Fañch Peru to share a glimpse of Enzenn an eñvor in the summer time.

* * *

Fañch Peru. Kernigelled ar Goañv. Sterenn/Embannadurioù Skol Vreizh, 1997. 151 pages. ISBN 2-91147-17-4.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This is a lovely collection of 28 short pieces originally published in the magazine Pobl Vreizh between 1994 and 1997. Topics include everything from economic crisis and layoffs, to the newly introduced celebration of St. Patrick's Day, life in a retirement home, market days, the

renaissance of the fest noz and traditional sports in Brittany, and travel to far places like Rennes, the Loire-Atlantique and Paris. Most of the pieces take the form of a conversation, and members of the extended Sidaner family are the main actors and actresses as they have been in past books by Peru.

The conversations are not in-depth studies of any particular topic, but anecdotal accounts of everyday life, including bits of history, nice descriptions of people, animals and places, and bits of folk tales. The style is lively and not without humor. The conversational style of the text and everyday topics addressed make the book especially good for Breton learners since the vocabulary and phrases are easier to translate into use (something one might actually say) than the prose style of most non-fiction writing in Breton or the more florid style of poetry and some novels.

I found the attempt to actually do an English translation of one of the short pieces very challenging for my level of Breton, but a good exercise especially in dealing with verbs. I came up with only a rough translation, and I can't claim to have understood every sentence fully, but I certainly did get a good sense of the text by making an attempt to put it into English. I missed the little glossary found at the back of Peru's other books which might have helped with some words not found in my little dictionary.

Like Fañch Peru's previous books, this will be welcome to Breton readers and learners alike for its enjoyable and realistic presentation of everyday life in Tregor.

* * *

The following books by Fañch Peru have not been reviewed in Bro Nevez, but based on his other work can be recommended without reservation for those who want the complete series:

Ur C'huziad avaloù douss-trenk, 1985
Etrezek an aber sall, 1995
60 Pennad e brezhoneg bev, 1996

* * *

HERE, MIZ AR BREZHONEG October, the Month of the Breton Language

As noted in a press release prepared by Coop Breizh, publishing in the Breton language has boomed in the past twenty years with the growth of bilingual classes and Diwan schools, as well as a growing number of adults who may be fluent speakers, but just now able to learn to read and write Breton. Some 80 to 100 books of all types are published each year in Breton.

To make these publications better known to the general public the publishing house Coop Breizh will collaborate with the Cultural Institute of Brittany during the month of October to promote Breton language books in bookstores throughout the five departments of Brittany. This was done successfully in 1998 and should get even more public visibility this year as a showcase of the high quality of work being produced in the Breton language for both children and adults.

For more information, contact: Coop Breizh, Kerangwenn, 29540 Spézet; tel. 02 98 93 83 13. E-mail: coopbreizh@aol.com

NEW BOOKS

Dr. Judy Sierra. Celtic Baby Names: Traditional First Names from Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Mann. Eugene, Oregon: Folkprint, 1997. (\$14.95)

Reviewed by Terry Wren

As an expectant father (of Brianna Elizabeth, born April 23rd), my wife, in a fit of kindness (or madness, as the case may be), bought me Celtic Baby Names. The idea was to push me towards choosing a name or two, something I carefully procrastinated (you can never rush into these things).

What I got was a wonderful book for Celtic scholars, readers, and just anyone with an interest in names. After an introduction to the Celts (who they are, where they came from), Dr. Sierra takes each of the six Celtic nations in turn. She gives a brief history about each nation and an update about their current state of affairs. She then lists names—over 1,000—by nation, listing spelling, sex, pronunciation, and a brief history of the name, including some alternative spellings. At the end of the book is a helpful listing of Celtic Saints, with their names and feast days.

The section on Brittany is interesting for the names alone. The introduction to Brittany is a little disappointing, covering very well French indifference to Breton but not mentioning groups like the Diwan movement. However, the names make up for it. Having learned my Breton through Brezhoneg Buan hag Aes, my circle of names was limited to Fanch, Lan, Yannig and Mona. But in this book, one will find Breton names to their hearts content: Argantlowen, Budoc, Donan, Gwenncalon, Heodaz, Meriadeg, Rivanon, and a host of others await the reader to read silently or delightfully roll of the tongue.

I enjoyed the book a great deal. Just reading the names out loud is worth the price of admission. I'm sure that anyone with interest in any of the Celtic nations would get equal

enjoyment out of this book. It may not get one closer to choosing names (in my case the compromises of Brianna, Brendan, and Aidan were reached), but it will at least increase the fun of the process.

Michel Le Gallo. Symboles bretons et celtiques—méthode de construction. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1999. ISBN 2-84346-045-X. 103 pp.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Here is a book for all those who want to be able to draw some of the most basic symbols and designs in Celtic artwork: the Celtic triangle, the Breton "ermine," the Celtic cross, triskell (in a variety of styles), interlacing figures, three-leaf clovers, and the "peacock's feathers" which is found in the embroidery on costumes of the Bigouden area of Brittany. For each figure there are several variations in style.

This is a book for beginners—you need not have artistic flare and imagination. Indeed, what you need is some patience and the ability to follow directions and draw lines accurately. Each design is based on setting up a grid of lines and circles. You need a good ruler, pencil eraser and especially a compass, as well as pen and ink to complete the design. It also helps to have some mathematical inclinations if you want to change the size of figures (larger or smaller) than those found on the 8 ½ x 12" size of the pages in this book. The figures you reproduce are nice and big which is helpful for a beginner.

I have not yet tested my ruler and compass skills to reproduce any of the wonderful symbols in this book, but the instructions seem quite comprehensible and the drawings showing lines and compass points are very clear. Playing around with this book should be fun.

Philippe Carrer. L'envers du décor—Ethnopsychiatrie en Bretagne et autres terres celtés. Spezet: Copp Breizh. 1999. ISBN 2-84346-027-1. 316 pages.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This is a book that is sure to provoke thought. Without any notion that Bretons are genetically or psychologically predestined for certain mental problems, the essays in this book explore the relatively high abuse of alcohol, depression and suicidal tendencies in Brittany and their link to Breton society and history. Particular emphasis is given to factors such as forced acculturation (linguistic and cultural dominance by France) and Breton family structure centered on the mother which marginalizes the role of the father.

In bringing up some serious bumps and warts in the psychological well-being of Bretons, this book is sure to bother those who want to believe Brittany is a paradise of well-balanced people with a healthy outlook and lifestyle. And some may find the explanations proposed by Carrer in these essays to seem far-fetched, but twenty years of serious research of Breton society and history and their links to psychiatry can't be too easily dismissed.

The 14 essays in this book are fascinating and thought provoking. They draw from Breton history and Celtic mythology as well as sociological studies of Breton life. You will not find simplistic cause-effect relationships set up to explain the Breton psyche, but instead lots of complex links that explain trends and tendencies in Breton behavior. And, you won't come away from reading these essays by saying "Aha, that's why my Breton uncle is like that!" but you will get a sense of how a particular history and specific social and cultural factors have an impact on the psychological state of Bretons.

Some of the essays have been printed before in now hard-to-find publications, while others are more recent. Essay titles (as I translated them from French) are: "An ethnopsychiatric reading of the novel *Mon frère Yves* by Pierre Loti,"

"Meetings of ethnopsychiatry with history in Brittany," "Breton migration and the pathology of emigration," "The Konomor complex—ethnopsychiatric study of a Breton legend," "Celtic variations on the Oedipus theme," "Alcoholism and Celtic myths," "The submersion of Is—a dangerous myth," "'They cut off their tongue'—a psychohistorical study" [of the Breton language], "Welsh and Bretons—common roots and psychopathological convergence," "Psychic defense functions of beliefs, myths and rites—grieving in Brittany," "Shame in Brittany," "The 'Barkers of Josselin'—a collective hysteria in Brittany," and "Images of the father and mother from the family drawing test done in Brittany and other regions—outline of a study done by P. Carrer and G. Le Bechenec."

Louis Pouliquen. Les voiles de deuil. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1999. ISBN 2-84346-076-X. 298 pages.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This novel evokes the life of a family in a small village of central western Brittany (the Arrez Mountains). Told from the perspective of the youngest boy, Pierre Vincent, the book describes the pleasures of country life for a young boy and his slightly older brother, Marc. But the play of children quickly becomes more limited as World War II arrives and the village lives under German occupation. Get out your hanky, because one by one, the family losses Marc, big sister Anne, big brother Paul, and eventually also the parents and faithful housekeeper, Anjela.

Besides the family, who you get to know very well, the author presents a cast of characters from the village—the school master and school buddies, postman, neighbors, and more distant relatives of the Vincent family. The relations between neighbors are strained during the war time as rumors of collaborations with the Germans run rampant and small town

jealousies are fueled into hatred and violence. Sometimes characters are a little too heroic—as in the case of Paul's agriculture school buddy, Franck, with whom sister Anne falls madly in love and with whom Paul goes off to join the French Resistance.

The emotions and moods evoked are more real than some of the characters, and the action of the book is very engaging—you want to read on to see what happens next, even though you come to expect and dread the worst in the series of tragedies striking this family. I found the odd mix of nostalgia for country life and family warmth contrasted to the darker side of small village life during wartime occupation to be very effective.

Jean-Luc Le Roux. La vie pour elle. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1998. ISBN 2-84346-042-5. 102 pages.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Here's a first novel by Jean-Luc Le Roux who shares with the reader his passion for the sea. The book begins with a very nostalgic depiction of the sunny life of a country lad growing up on his parents' small farm. The boy is smitten by the sea and his father helps him get placed as a "mousse" on a fishing boat. We move quickly on to his life as an adult. Yann becomes a successful captain of his own fishing boat, competing with Spanish ships for elusive schools of tuna, using the boats sophisticated technology as well as lots of intuition and experience.

But the catch is not lucrative enough when the international market changes (thanks to the American lust for the dollar). Our hero is forced into early retirement and returns home broken-hearted. In just 100 pages we watch a boy go through an entire lifetime and this leaves the author no time to develop much character, but one does get a feel for land, sea and the hard realities of maritime life in Brittany, nevertheless.

Cartes Anciennes de la Bretagne, 1582-1800, Assembled and presented by Claude Gaudillat with a preface by Jean-Pierre Pinot. Spezet: Coop Breizh. 1999 208 pages (40 x 30 cm).

Presented by Lois Kuter

[Information about this book has been drawn from a press release provided by Coop Breizh]

This is the first collection of all of the maps representing Brittany that have been printed between 1582 (the first) to the beginning of the 19th century. These early maps are not only important sources of information on political borders, place names, and the growth of towns and cities, but they are also beautiful to look at. 160 color maps are reproduced on 160 large pages (one side only). The long preface by Emeritus Professor of Geography, Jean-Pierre Pinot, is in French with both Breton and English translations. In this preface, the maps are present through the eyes of their users and makers—scientists, sailors and soldiers, Dutch, Italians and Bretons. The author, Claude Gaudillat, is a collector of maps and he guides the reader in the interpretation of the maps and describes how they were made.

If you enjoy maps, this is guaranteed to be an enjoyable book of great esthetic quality well worth the \$100 price tag.

OTHER NEWS

Conference on the Léonard Diaspora

Since 1988 the Amis du Musée du Léon have organized a one-day conference on different themes related to the Léon region of Brittany. Past topics of the day's scholarly presentations and discussion have included architecture, maritime history, health and medicine, and the period of 1789.

This year's "Rencontres Historiques du Léon" will take place on October 16 at the Musée du Léon in Lesneven. The focus will be on Breton emigration from the Leon area—it's history, causes, and specific communities in Canada, Périgord and Paris. The conference will also feature and exhibit on Breton explorers and a display of books about Breton emigration and history.

I would be happy to send more information to anyone interested in the details, or you could contact the following address:

Musée du Léon
29260 Lesneven

tel: 02 98 21 17 18; 02 98 83 33 57; or
02 98 83 02 63

* * *

CALL FOR PAPERS: WALES and the Welsh 2000

This conference will be held April 11-15, 2000 and will include as principal speakers Wendy Davies, Hywel Teifi Edwards, Christopher Harvie, Marged Haycock, Dafydd Glyn Jones, Proinsias Mac Cana, Colin Thomas and M. Wynn Jones.

Papers are invited that deal with any of the various aspects of the civilization, history, languages, and identity of Wales, the Welsh, and the other Celtic countries. Titles and abstracts (approximately 100 words) should be sent by October 1, 1999 to The Director, Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion sy23 3hh, Wales (or by e-mail to sle@aber.ac.uk).

For more information you can contact the Centre at that e-mail address or 22 [0]1970 626717; fax 44 [0]1970 627066.

Second Annual Celtic Women's Conference – October 7-9, 1999

Press Release from Celtic Women International, Ltd.

Celtic Women International, a two-year-old organization with members throughout North America and the Celtic world, is pleased to announce its Second Annual Celtic Women's Conference. The Conference will take place October 7-9, 1999, at the Irish Cultural and Heritage Center in downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA.

The theme for the Conference is "Being Together," and this year's conference will explore women's contributions to Celtic heritage.

A wealth of Celtic experts (representing all seven Celtic nations) will be speaking on a variety of interesting topics and leading a series of workshops. Internationally known Celtic musicians and singers will provide entertainment.

Returning for another year is best-selling Irish author Morgan Llywelyn. Diana Gabaldon, another best-selling author and Scottish historical fiction writer, is also among those invited to participate, as well as Alice Taylor, one of the most popular authors in Ireland today.

Flora MacDonald Gammon, Scottish folk singer and historian; Joan Gill, Manx storyteller; Barbara Martin, Welsh linguist and writer; Susan Pellowe, Cornish Bard and actress; and Cecile Marie Sastre, Galician and Breton historian and archeologist are also among the nineteen presenters on the program. ...

For additional information about the conference and Celtic Women International, please contact CWI President Jean Bills at 414-257-3770 or visit the CWI website at: <http://www.cwiltld.org>.

ANNIVERSARIES

Skoazell Vreizh

The association called Skoazell Vreizh (Breton help) recognized its 30th anniversary this June with a festival and conference on human rights. Skoazell Vreizh was created in 1969 to help with court costs and to assist families of dozens of Bretons put in jail for presumed activity with the FLB (Front de Liberation de la Bretagne). During its 30 years Skoazell Vreizh has also assisted Breton “insoumis” who refused to serve in the French army, militants for the Breton language who tarred French-only road signs and those who have refused to pay television taxes in view of the lack of Breton language programming, and Breton men and women who have been jailed for opening their homes to Basques fleeing police violence in their country.

Hundreds of Bretons and their families have been assisted through contributions individuals have made to Skoazell Vreizh. Per Loquet, the President of Skoazell Vreizh, is active in a number of organizations to defend Breton culture and support ecological health of Brittany. In September 1998 he was awarded the Collier de l’Hermine for his life time of work for Brittany.

For more information: Skoazell Vreizh
 Feunteenn Wenn
 3, rue Aristide Briand
 44350 Guerande
 tel.: 02 40 42 95 20

SEPNB – Société pour l’étude et la protection de la nature en Bretagne

Founded by Albert Lucas and Luc Raoul forty years ago, this environmental organization has focused on the study of the environment, public education, and the defense of natural lands in the face of development. Now called “Bretagne Vivante—SEPNB” this organization has 2,500 members and 250 active volunteers who work on nature reserves and local projects. With 47 [paid staff and a budget of 11 million francs, this organization works throughout Brittany with 63 natural reserves to study and protect Brittany’s plant and wild life. SEPNB publishes two quarterly magazines for the general public and offers numerous workshops and activities.

For more information: Bretagne Vivante – SEPNB
 186 rue Anatole France
 29276 Brest
 tel. 02 98 49 07 18

AN AMERICAN IN PAR-ER, ST-BRIEUC: A HIGH SCHOOL YEAR IN BRITTANY

By Beth Simons

It all started about ten years ago. Ever since the age of seven, I knew I wanted to spend my junior year of high school in France. Maybe it was the language, maybe the Eiffel tower...who knows the original reason. Fast forward 8 years. As a fifteen-year-old sophomore, my year was filled with finding a program, filling out my application, waiting for the decision, and then finally packing and awaiting the big day: August 27, 1998. There I stood in the airport, just barely sixteen and leaving my family, friends, and life behind in New Hampshire for ten and a half months.

Upon my arrival in Paris, I stayed in a youth hostel during the 2-day orientation, still not knowing where I would end up for the year. On the second day, I finally found out that I had a host family waiting for me in St-Brieuc. "Where?" I asked. "In Brittany," came the reply. My first thought: Great. Rain.

However, the day I got to St-Brieuc was a beautiful sunny day, and that will always stick in my mind. As much as the region's reputation says it's rainy and gray, there are days when the sky glows deep blue over the golden beach and the English channel sparkles in the radiant sun.

I found myself in a wonderful family and fabulous school. My family consisted of a mom and a dad, a 17 year-old girl, and 15- and 11-year-old boys. Everyone was extremely supportive and patient at the beginning, and it all paid off in quick linguistic progress and very little culture-shock. My host sister Delphine was just a year older than me, and we became very close. She shared her family, friends, school and life extremely generously. As the year passed and I became more fluent in French, I became more independent and was able to find my own niche and friends at school. I was a bit worried about being placed in *seconde*, a sophomore level, during my junior year, but it worked out fine. My class was better than I ever could've asked for. They were all extremely nice and helped me out on countless occasions. I understood all of my teachers right off the bat, which was a pleasant surprise. On the academic front, I took French literature, history and geography, earth and life sciences (biology), physics, chemistry and gym. I was even able to continue rock climbing thanks to my school's rock wall!

Throughout the fall, I continued another passion, singing, in the choir of the St-Brieuc cathedral. After growing up in a protestant UCC congregation, living in such a Catholic society was quite a change. Mass every Sunday morning was difficult because I missed my own church so much. However, I embraced the differences and tried to get as much out of it as possible. I'll put it this way: I now know the Hail Mary in French, and still have no idea what it is in English. I learned some wonderful music and met some great people. I even sang a beautiful piece in Russian for the Sainte Cécile concert in November, and it's all on a CD!

We spent Christmas vacation on the southern coast of Brittany, at the Trinité-sur-Mer in the Morhiban gulf. Being seaside for Christmas was a new experience, and the absence of snow seemed

downright odd, coming from the white Christmases of New England. Ah, but there was snow—a special kind of snow that Delphine introduced me to. At the nearby "Côte Sauvage" (Wild Coast), we were greeted with bits of sea foam flying through the air with the harsh winds. It wasn't exactly the kind of snow I was expecting or was used to, but I'll certainly never forget it!

On Christmas Eve, we went to a mass in a small seaside chapel. In fact, before the mass, the priest did a presentation of the story of the creation with a slide show of religious art from churches all over Brittany. The art was remarkable, with its simple yet moving figures, generally painted on wood. The influence of the marine culture was quite evident. During the mass, my fifteen-year-old host brother Vincent volunteered to do a reading. He ended up with a text about how Christmas is a family time and an invitation to pray for those who were separated from their families during the holidays. Until that moment, I'd managed to hold back the tears, but with that little twist of fate, I cracked.

After the mass, the whole family introduced me to the French tradition equivalent to our stockings over the fireplace. Each family member puts a shoe around the tree, and their presents go in and around it. I missed the digging through the pile of presents to find my own on Christmas morning, but liked their tradition nonetheless.

In January, my 21-year-old brother's girlfriend arrived in Rennes for her own 5-month exchange program. She came up to visit for a weekend, and came with us "bar-hopping" in town Saturday night. Before this year, I was extremely anti-alcohol, anti-smoking, etc. I still am, but I have now learned to look past those habits at the person. I can now appreciate a bar for the music and dancing and company of friends and pretty much ignore the beers and cigarettes in their hands. Brittany has quite a reputation for drinking, and I must say I have met very few people who don't drink. However, those who *do* are generally responsible, and I have yet to hear about any drinking and driving accidents. I do admit that I will miss the after-school DBK (diabolo banane-kiwi—basically sprite with banana and kiwi syrups), sitting at a sidewalk café talking with friends.

February brought a ski trip to the Pyrénées and a change of host family. There was nothing wrong with my first family, but Delphine had to study for her baccalaureate, the French graduation exam, so I moved in with the neighbors. Since then I've had a mom and a dad and three sisters, 16, 11, and 4 years old. They all had their birthdays this spring. In March, my brother came for a week to see me and his girlfriend. There was little catching up to do, thanks to the wonders of the Internet, but it was great to see him anyway. Spring break brought a week in Ardèche, a department in the southeast of France, but not on the coast. It was a beautiful vacation, and I even slept in a château for a few nights!

In May, my parents came over for two weeks. It was wonderful to see them, but again, there wasn't much catching up to do, because we had kept in close touch over email. For the first 3 days, we stayed here in Brittany. My first host family took us out to Mont.-St-Michel, which was magnificent, even if it was a bit hidden by the fog at first. That evening, all three families got together for *the* traditional Breton meal: galettes and crêpes! I don't think my American parents understood much of

the conversation, except for what I translated. Nevertheless I think they enjoyed simply watching me interact with my two French families and listening to me speaking French. After the meal, my current host sister and I headed off to the culminating event of the 150th anniversary celebration of our school: a fest noz!! My parents came along for the ride and just looked quickly to see what it was all about. It was my first fest noz, although I'd already learned a few dances at parties and such. The unabashed mingling of generations and everyone dancing and singing in unison was quite a new and wonderful experience. Four great Breton bands and several hours later, I'd picked up a few more dances and was paying for it in fatigue. The next day, my current family took us out the west coast, ending up on the gorgeous rocky coast of Perros-Geurec, but stopping in Tréguier for a traditional pardon on the way. The Breton costumes and chants were extraordinary, each group passing with its colorful hand-made banner. Each building along the parade route was adorned with delicate yellow wildflowers, truly heralding the festivities of the day. Tréguier's pardon is for Saint Yves, a lawyer. Attorneys from around Europe attended in full old-fashioned garb. I'll never forget my parents' witty observation: "We'd never make a lawyer a saint in the States." After our weekend in Brittany, we spent four days in Paris and six days in London.

My six final weeks in Saint-Brieuc have been punctuated by a few notable events. At the end of June, classes ended and grades came out with two nice surprises; I'd finished the year 4th in my class of 24 students, and my class had finished 2nd out of the 6 *seconde* classes. As soon as school finished, I began thinking seriously about next year's French independent study. My self-designed semester-long curriculum consists of creating an Internet site about Brittany, the Breton language, and my French experience. My host father arranged for me to meet with a colleague and a friend, both fluent in Breton and incredibly knowledgeable. They gave me a brief history of the language, showed me some Breton literature and comic books, and took me by a Diwan nursery/elementary school. I had only vaguely heard about Diwan beforehand. At the school, I was able to speak with the director and a teacher. Visiting the school and learning about their pedagogy and foreign language acquisition methods was especially interesting for me, since I am hoping to become a French teacher. My two interviewees also play in a Breton band (Strobinell) together, and they invited me to a concert a few days later. It was a 6-band festival, ending in a fest noz in the wee hours of the morning. It was a very long night, but a great concert and fest noz. I went to one last fest noz this weekend to hear Strobinell again and get in one last night of Breton dancing. I learned 4 new dances and heard more fabulous Breton music. The intergenerational ambiance again blew me away. In the States, it's not often that you find 50-somethings dancing traditional dances hand-in-hand with teenagers.

Of all the things in Brittany that I'll miss, it's certainly the music that I'll miss the most. The ever-delicious Galettes, not to mention my two wonderfully hospitable families and fantastic friends, are all up there, but the live traditional music and dancing are just unbeatable.

Here I sit in front of my computer with less than a week to go. It's so hard to believe that my life dream has come true. I've come to know a new language, a new culture, new families, new friends and most of all, a new me.

NEW RECORDINGS FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Jean-Michel Veillon. Er Pasker.
Coop Breizh CD 888. 1999. (61'14)

Although there are an increasing number of great flute players in Brittany these days, the name that pops up first has to be Jean-Michel Veillon, a veteran of the groups Kornog, Pennou Skoulm and Celtic Procession, and today primarily a solo performer. This is his third CD (see Bro Nevez 27, August 1993 and 56, November 1995 for reviews of “E Koad Nizan” and “Pont Gwenn ha Pont Stang”). Those who have followed Jean-Michel Veillon in his over twenty years of music-making will not be disappointed with this CD. Like most of the musicians who grew up musically in the 1970s and 1980s in Brittany, he has only gotten better with time—not only in a flawless mastery of the flute (and whistle), but with a more complex musical expression and ever-widening understanding of style.

While it is the genius of Jean-Michel Veillon as a great flute player and arranger that makes this CD what it is, it doesn't hurt at all that he is aided and abetted by some of Brittany's other great musicians. The accompaniment is subtle, but if you listen carefully you will hear how sophisticated it is. Those who follow Breton music at all will recognize a number of names in the list of “invited guest musicians” on this CD: Gildas Bocle (bass), Ed Boyd (guitar), Alain Genty (basses), Jean-Joe Kelly (bodhran), Gilles le Bigot (guitars), André Maillet (hurdy-gurdy), Jamie McMenemy (bouzouki), Dom Molard (percussion), Jacky Molard (guitar, fiddle, mandolin), Thierry Moreau (cello), Kristen Nogues (harp), Philippe Ollivier (bandoleon), Jacques Pellen (guitars) and Soig Siberil (guitar).

It is one thing to belt out a quick and lively Breton or Irish dance tune—and you will find the rhythms of *fisel*, *hanter dro*, *laride*, *plinn*, *gavotte* and *jigs*—but the CD also includes a number of slower airs. These show off the full capabilities of the wooden flute to sing a traditional ballad (“*Ar Wezenn avaloù*”), evoke the mysterious world of the supernatural in a newer composition (“*Les elves*”), or wail a lament to a departed musician (“*Disano*” for and by harpist Katrien Delavier). I liked the combination of elements of classical music and jazz in “*Le Carcouet-Montbran*” which flowed into a delightful “*Derobée des petites gens*.”

By now, Bro Nevez readers should know that the jacket notes are always something I also review. These are very pleasing—simple cardboard “trifold” with the CD wedged behind the middle sleeve. I found that the color scheme (purple print on a gray/gold granite background) made reading pretty tough, but it was aesthetically beautiful. The notes give a short but good description of the tunes and their source/inspiration—especially if you can read a little Breton, since this is the dominant language used. Flute players will be pleased to find details on the various instruments used for the CD.

While, for me, jacket notes can add greatly to the experience of a recording, in the end it is the music that counts. There is a great deal of variety to the moods and music on this CD which is fostered by the use of at least seven different flutes and whistles, as well as great accompaniment by a number of excellent musicians. But it is Jean-Michel Veillon who challenges the listener to really hear how much one can do with a simple wooden stick with a few holes in it.

Skeduz. Couleurs/Livioù.

Keltia Musique KMCD 98, 1999.

Skeduz is a relatively new band—around since 1993—but it includes musicians who have been on the scene a lot longer, bringing a solid grounding in traditional Breton music which has always given good bands the freedom to innovate successfully. The fact that five of the six musicians in this group have been together for over six years doesn't hurt either. At the heart is the paired biniou and bombarde of Dédé Thomas and Yvon Lefevre. Nicolas Quemener brings guitar and some great wooden flute work; Ronan Pellen plays cistre and cello; and Laurant Dacquay plays fiddle. Hilaire Rama and Stéphane Sotin—newer to the group—provide bass and percussion.

Dominating the CD are dances—ridée, plinn, an dro, rond de Loudia, riquegnée and fisel. They are all highly danceable, full of energy, and interesting in their interplay of winds and strings. I especially liked the an dro with its “eastern” touch and its ever-building energy. Although the 95 degree (Fahrenheit) temperatures and high humidity of the Philadelphia weather discouraged much dancing on the day I wrote this review in my (non-airconditioned) apartment, that dance surely tempted me to add more sweat to my brow.

I am partial to biniou and bombarde, so any group that features this wonderful duo is likely to please me, but there is much more going on with Skeduz. The string players are by no means simply an accompaniment. The interplay of the more delicate sounds of plucked instruments and biniou/bombarde works very well. There are a number of interesting transitions within each piece which serve to energize the music. And this was also the case with their previous CD, “Rag ar Plinn” (see review in Bro Nevez 63, August 1997).

I find it amazing that with so many bands in Brittany—made up of essentially a similar mix

of instruments and playing a similar repertoire—one never finds two bands that sound alike. And that is a tribute to the skill and originality of Breton musicians who manage to make even the most commonly heard tunes and melodies uniquely their own. The Skeduz arrangement of the march “Bambocher” fits into that category. The title cut to the CD, “Liv,” is a text written by and sung/recited by Manu Lann-Huel. This poem, in both Breton and French, questions racism and the persecution of people based on the color (liv/couleur) of their skin. The music backing Lann Huel's recitation of the Breton text is clearly based on the Breton ballad tradition, with an Indian/North African influence in the rhythms that work quite well to carry along the text. The French version of the text closes the CD with a slower and simpler accompaniment by guitar and other strings. Unlike the Breton version where Lann Huel half sings/half recites the text, this is a clear “reading.” And I can think of no more powerful voice in Brittany today for such a performance.

The notes on the CD indicate that the performance is in homage to Hervé Le Meur and included in the CD is an older recording of the paired bombarde and biniou of Pierre Le Beuz and Hervé le Meur. This is lovely, but might mystify many listeners who have never heard of Hervé Le Meur. Sadly, the jacket notes include no information about this great piper who died in December 1996. Hervé Le Meur was among the first members of the Bagad Kemper in 1949 and in 1978 he founded the record label Keltia Musique which has always promoted Breton piping and music of all styles. A great piper himself, Hervé Le Meur won several championships in pair with Pierre Le Beuz.

While it is too bad the jacket notes made no effort to say even half of this it is even more unfortunate that they include almost no other information either. The Breton and French text of “Liv” is included, and there is a list of the musicians and their instruments, but otherwise there is just a fold-out of some artsy photos of

the band. I would have preferred the short but interesting biographical information on each musician that came with the press packet.

But the absence of any real information in the jacket notes should not take away from the excellent music on this CD. It's rich arrangements and interesting interplay of strings and winds give it a lot of color. And the inclusion of Manu Lann Huel and his provocative text, "Liv," is an interesting and welcome direction for a Breton band to take.

* * *

Bagad Kemper. Hep diskrog.
Keltia Musique KMCD 100. 1999. (60'15)

For those who already like the music of Brittany's unique bagpipe band, the bagad, here's a new CD that will certainly not disappoint you. For those who have never heard the music of the bagad, here's a CD that will serve as an excellent introduction.

The Bagad Kemper has won 16 first place titles in Brittany's very hotly contested championship of bagadoù since 1968. This is certainly no small thing given the incredible level of technical skill and creative talents one finds in the over 60 bands of Brittany. Founded in 1949, the bagad includes today some 40 musicians—for this recording 15 pipers (biniou braz), 18 bombarde players and 10 snare drum and percussionists.

Adding to the already rich texture of the bagad are some guest musicians: Gilles le Bigot (guitar), Ludovic Mesnil (guitar) and Erwan Volant (bass). One might not expect guitars to mix well with the powerful force of bagpipes and bombardes, but there is certainly no problem here in weaving strings in with wind. Also unusual is the use of voice with the bagad which is done with the help of traditional singer Odile le Goïc in a suite of dances and a song from the Leon region of Brittany. I liked the many

transitions from solo pipers, bombarde players or guest musicians to the full sound of the entire bagad—and unlike Scottish pipe bands Breton bagadoù often make use of a conductor to make sure everyone comes in at the right moment during performances. Indeed, the complexity of the music of the Breton bagad is more akin to a symphony orchestra than bagpipe bands as most of us know them in the U.S. in any case.

Another guest musician featured in this recording is Johnny Clegg, rock singer from South Africa, who is known world-wide (although perhaps better known in Europe than in the U.S.). The selection in this CD is called "Emotional Allegiance" and it was first performed with the Bagad Kemper at Clegg's 1997 concert at the Festival de Cornouaille. True to Clegg's multicultural flavor, this song came originally from India—a traditional Hindu song that Clegg heard on a recording by Pete Seeger in 1969. It's reworking for performance with the Bagad Kemper is certainly interesting, but in my opinion not one of the stronger moments on this CD.

The Bagad Kemper has quite a multicultural flare of its own and has traveled to a number of foreign countries on tour, including Africa and China. They include a Bulgarian composition and a lovely Greek melody (interpreted by the three guest guitarists with the bagad), but the bulk of the CD is what bagadoù do best—innovative arrangements of traditional Breton dances and songs. The CD leads off with a suite of tunes performed at the 1997 championship of bagadoù (which won them their 15th title). It is described as a reflection on the work done by Hervé le Meur, who had been a former president and penn-soner (lead piper) of the Bagad Kemper. A suite of gavottes from Brittany's central western "mountains" is also a recent arrangement first done for the 1998 championship competitions. And from the 1997 championships one finds a suite from Bro Leon. While these longer suites of tunes are

wonderful, it is also nice to hear an old and very well known classic from the Breton tradition: "Eliz Iza" ("Plac'hig Eusa"). While most of the music on the CD are arrangements of traditional melodies, one also finds new compositions—primarily by the bagad's musical director, Jean-Louis Hénaff. This includes a composition inspired by a song called "Changes" preformed by the group Yes on their album 90125.

While the strong performance and musical variety on this CD is wonderful, I also liked the notes—trilingual in French, Breton and English. These briefly introduced each piece and its origins, including a map showing where the different dances of Brittany performed on the CD were from—a nice gesture for non-Bretons who might purchase this CD. The full bagad was listed and there were a few good photos to add to the attractiveness of the notes. The English notes were in a few cases slightly more condensed and in one case added a bit of humor—a quote by Dan ar Braz which stated in Breton and French that the Bagad Kemper was "the biggest rock group of Quimper" was translated in the English notes to say "the Bagad Kemper is Quimper's biggest 'rock'." I suppose that is not at all an insult in the sense that the Bagad is indeed a solid presence in the Breton music scene, and the title to the CD, "Hep diskrog" (roughly translated from Breton as "no letting go") certainly implies a certain tenacity.

This is a lovely CD and I highly recommend it to anyone who already loves the sound of the bagad and to those poor souls who have yet to discover the bagad.

* * *

Diwall. Setu ar vuhez.

EOG Productions/Coop Breizh EOG V05. 1999 (49'23)

Here's a young group (starting up just in 1996) to reassure those who might have any doubts that Breton music has a healthy future. By the looks of the photos included in the notes, the five musicians of this band are all somewhere in their early 20s. Not only is this a good "dance band" which plays with assurance and a great deal of finesse, but much of the music they perform are of their own composition. Three of the Breton language song texts are by the group's singer/guitarist, Dom an Duff. Five tunes are composed by the clarinet and sax player, Franck Fagon. Also in the group are Dominique Bott (bass), Nif Lorec (percussion), and Fanny Labiau (accordion).

While Dom an Duff cannot be classed among the great voices of Brittany, his song texts are interesting and while modern in spirit, draw from Brittany's traditions in theme. It is refreshing to have a young group include song in its repertoire and it is important that Breton language songs continue to be composed. The group also arranges a wonderful poem by Naig Rozmor, "An dañs veur" ("The universal dance"), and singer Alain Leclere is an invited performer on the CD for a suite plinn which features a traditional song called "er bloavez 32" which eloquently tells of hard financial times in the 1930s in rural Brittany. While Leclere is a great traditional singer and master of the plinn repertoire, this performance suffers a bit with just an instrumental "diskan" response to Leclere's "kan". There's just something missing to truly sustain the momentum. But, the arrangement is interesting and incorporates several other young artists of note: Ronan Le Corre (bombarde) and Yann Simon (biniou) as well as Herri Loquet on snare drum.

Cd notes include the Breton texts to all the songs with a very short summary in French. While the white print on back drives my older eyes a bit crazy, the print is clear and the juxtaposition of photos in the notes is very nicely done.

The minor criticisms aside, this is a lovely CD with a wealth of variety in the arrangement of a number of dances (ridee, rond de Loudia, riquegnée, kost ar c'hoat, roun pagan, gavotte, rond de Saint-Vincent, plinn and polka). There is a great deal of energy in the music but a feeling of confidence and "easy-going" pace to the performances that avoids the sense of frenzy one can sometimes find in younger bands.

[Note: This is the second CD by Diwall. Their first came out in 1997 and is called "Dansall ha nijal" (Sergeant Major Cy Ltd. SNC 357 06)]

* * *

Añjel. I.K.

Coop Breizh/Siam Productions. CD 883. 1999. (16'17)

While Breton bands which have proliferated with the huge popularity of the fest noz in the 1990s tend to be largely acoustic, the presence of younger generations on the dance floor and in bands has also encouraged the growth of more electric bands. I don't know much about the group called Añjel which was born in June 1998 during a festival in Germany, but I do know a few of the names of the band members. At the heart is singer Kristen Nikolas who has already shown his ability to shake things up and bring an international sound to traditional song in his work with the group Kern (see review in Bro Nevez 56, November 1995). Also in this group are two great bombarde and biniou players, Josick Allot and Job Defernez. Their paired playing and the traditional style of kan had diskant provided by Nikolas are the meat of the four selections of dance on this CD—an dro and plinn.

Backing the voice and biniou-bombarde is the percussive sound of electric bass guitar, keyboard, and sampling which bring the wilder edge of rock without in any way disrupting the unique swing of Breton dance. While the relentless beat of percussion in what is called "techno" music which has sometimes been paired with traditional Breton song and instruments tends drive me crazy, the electric side of this band is varied and interesting. Hervé Duprez and Kate Clause do a nice job of sustaining Breton dance rhythms, while adding their own innovative touches and the unique energy found in rock music today.

This is a group that I would definitely look forward to hearing and dancing to at a fest noz.

* * *

Alain Pennec. Turbulences.

Keltia Musique KMCD 101. 1999. (51'22)

This new CD by diatonic accordion player Alain Pennec is characterized by a great deal of variety of music, from a minuet by Bach to Scottish jigs and reels, a host of compositions and traditional Breton melodies and dances.

Although the press packet that came with the CD presents the Alain Pennec *Quartet*, this CD really features Alain Pennec with three accompanying musicians (who have an occasion or two to do some solos to show off their own skills). Included in the quartet which has been together for just a year is Aurore Breger on Celtic harp. Percussion is provided by Stéphane Barbier, and Youenn Landrea plays "Chapman stick" (a type of electric guitar, I presume) and digeridoo.

I would not characterize this CD as a groundbreaking display of extraordinary genius, BUT, it is lots of fun to listen to, and includes a nice variety of styles and arrangements. I liked the juxtaposition of the high "ping" of the harp with the lower reedy register of the accordion.

At times the regular beat of percussion seemed to drag a bit ("Orgies nocturnes" and "Tarañ de Trentemouk" should have had more zap to them).

Unfortunately the jacket notes give no information whatsoever about the musicians or music beyond a list of titles. Too bad—these seem like musicians one would want to keep an eye on in the future, and from the varied repertoire on the CD, they obviously bring a range of musical experience to the quartet.

Although not as highly innovative as some other Breton groups—especially in terms of rhythm—this is a solid little group of talented musicians. Those who like diatonic accordion will certainly not be disappointed by Alain Pennec's performances. He is one of Brittany's best.

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Heard Of, But Not Heard

More New Recordings

Information for the following short presentations of new CD was drawn from *Musique Bretonne* (155, mai-juin 1999), *Ar Soner* (350, fevr.-avr. 1999), *Ar Men* (103, mai 199 & 104, juillet 1999)

Championnat de Bretagne des Bagadoù, Vol. 2. BAS/Coop Breizh CD 455. 1999.

Despite the absence of the performance of the champions, Bagad Kemper, this recording captures the top five bagadoù performing at the 1998 Lorient competition for Brittany's unique bagpipe band, the bagad. Those included are Lokoal-Mendon, Kevrenn Alre, Bro Kemperle, Kerlenn Pondi, and Bagad Brieg (in the order they placed).

Le Chasse-Marée/Ar Men. Chansons de Bord. Anthologies des chansons de mer, Vol. 13 Le Chasse-Marée/Ar Men SCM 040. 1999

This is the latest in a long series of beautifully documented recordings featuring maritime music. This one features work songs on board ships, and the recordings are of song used as work is being done by the singers. Yes, these are just reenactments of activity that is no longer done, but nevertheless different from the smoother arrangements done at concert or in a studio. Included are two recordings from 1952 of sailors who used such songs in their work.

Les 4 Jeans. Les tisserands. Boucherie Productions BP 9362. 1999.

Not to be confused with Tri Yann, this group has at its center Roland Brou, a fine traditional singer. The band includes electric guitar, bombarde, and saxophone to provide a folk/rock arrangement of songs and tunes from Upper Brittany.

Carre Manchot & Akiyo 'Ka. Liyannaj. Dedic B 11452. 1999. (Distrib. Sony Music).

Carre Manchot is a hot young Breton dance band who enters into a dialogue for this recording with Akiyo 'Ka, a band from Guadeloupe. Bombardes, acordion and flute meet a variety of percussion instruments and Creole songs.

Josik Allot & Michel Dubois. Matelin en Amour. Bombarde et orgue—Festival Interceltique de Lorient. Keltia Musique. 1999.

This is a fusion of traditional Breton music with a more classical sound with the pairing of bombarde with the large church organ by two of the best in this genre.

The U.S. ICDBL Once Again at The Potomac Celtic Festival

An Eye-Witness Account by Lois Kuter

The sixth annual Potomac Celtic Festival was held June 12 and 13 at the Morven Park International Equestrian Center, one mile north of Leesburg, Virginia. As reported in the May issue of *Bro Nevez* this festival features music and dancing and this year included Tommy Makem, the Tannahil Weavers, Nolwenn Monjarret, IONA, the Poor Clares, Clandestine, Elke Baker, and the pipe and dance ensemble called Anduriña from the Galician community in Newark, New Jersey (which never fails to bring the house down). These are just a few names among dozens of others who perform at seven different stages in the rolling hills of the festival grounds. Besides great music you have storytelling, crafts, language workshops, food and drink, and sports.

The Festival celebrates the cultures of seven Celtic Nations: Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, as well as Brittany and Galicia (Spain), and their transplants in the New World. A number of bands and ensembles included arrangements of Breton tunes—stretching beyond the usual dominance of Irish and Scottish music. Indeed, there seems to be a trend in American “Celtic” bands for a more inter-Celtic repertoire. The music and dance of Brittany was most directly represented by performances and workshops by Nolwenn Monjarret from Brittany who was at the Festival for her fourth year. With her wonderful voice she presents traditional song of Brittany—in both the Breton language and French—drawing from her family heritage and solid knowledge of the Breton tradition. Not only does one get to hear a lovely voice, but the concerts/workshops offered the occasion for Nolwenn to give some background on the song and dance traditions of Brittany and a mini-lesson in Breton so that the audience can get an idea of the content of songs performed ... from cantiques and lullabies to bits of *gwerziou* and even a sample of response style singing for dancing which is so typical of Brittany.

This year, the Breton workshops were expanded with the presence also of U.S. ICDBL Member Jan Zollars from Houston, Texas, who served as the American representative for the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient for over a decade. Jan brought her love and long experience of Breton dancing to several workshops during the weekend., working with Nolwenn to teach newcomers *gavotte*, *plinn*, *an dro*, *laridé* (and a few others I can't recall for now). While recordings were used for the Festival workshops which ranged from just 15 minutes to a half-hour, live music was provided for the Breton portion of the Saturday night *Ceilidh* by members of the band Clandestine from Houston, Texas. As one would guess, they are certainly not unfamiliar to Jan who helped them get to the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient where they got a very warm welcome. This high energy band is composed of E. J. Jones on Highland and Lowland Scottish bagpipes, Jennifer Hamel on guitar and vocals, Gregory McQueen on fiddle, and Emily Dugas on percussion and vocals. They did an admirable job of providing the music for a bit of Breton dancing at the *ceilidh*.

As usual, Breton music was also a strong part of the performances by John Trexler and Virginia Turnage ("The Dronemaster and the Dancer"). John not only stirs things up with both the biniou and bombarde (which he has not yet learned to play simultaneously), but he uses clarinet and hurdy-gurdy to also present traditional music of Brittany - and Virginia demonstrates some of the dance steps (this year with the help of some of the rest of us at the festival). From Charlotte, North Carolina, John has been a member of the U.S. ICDBL since 1992, and in his enthusiasm to lend support, has paid his dues up through the year 2002!

While Festival-goers had a wonderful opportunity to hear Breton music and do some dancing thanks to the work of a number of performers, the presence of the U.S. ICDBL offered yet another opportunity to present Brittany. For the sixth year in a row, the U.S. ICDBL set up an information table at this festival to help people learn about Brittany and the Breton language and culture, with a big map of the Celtic world (including flags) as well as other posters, a few books on display, and lots of information to hand out to interested visitors. My thanks go to Susan Baker and Philippe Berthier who helped staff the table and who also carried the Gwenn ha Du (Breton flag) in the several "parades" held for the Celtic organizations and Scottish clans represented at the Festival.

Next year we expect to see Ben Pecson, another ICDBL member, to be in the parade with the flag of Asturias, his land of ancestry. Ben has provided the ICDBL booth with a flyer about Asturias and is ever ready to help out the ICDBL stand when needed. Besides a bit of information on Asturias, we continue to provide information on Galicia (without entering into the fray of whether they are "true" Celts or not). While the pipes and dancers of Anduriña are always a hit of the festival, visitors are a bit mystified by this less usually heard from "Celtic cousin." The young pipers and dancers of Anduriña (and some of the parents) stopped by our stand this year and were very pleased to see our handout sheet and to see themselves on our big map. We teased them about getting their own table, so perhaps this will happen in a future year.

And, as usual, the ICDBL booth served as a great gathering point for ICDBL members in the Maryland/Washington D.C. area who came to the Festival.

Each year the Potomac Festival features one of the Celtic nations and tries to highlight it in the programming. While this year it was Ireland who had the honored place, for the year 2000 it will be BRITTANY. What better occasion to hold a larger gathering of ICDBL members (from an even wider geographic span) and do something special to really celebrate the Breton language and culture. And while the U.S. ICDBL was not incorporated officially until 1981, work began to recruit the founding members in 1980, so we can rightfully use this occasion to celebrate our 20th Anniversary. You will be hearing more about this, but in the meantime ... save the dates for the next Potomac Festival in Leesburg, Virginia: June 10 and 11, 2000.

LOCATING BRETONS IN THE U.S.

From time to time, I receive requests from Bretons scattered across the U.S. for information about Breton organizations, Breton language classes, or just simply some kind of a Breton contact in their neighborhood. This is a big country, and, I find that I usually can offer little practical help, unless they happen to live near another member of the U.S. ICDBL.

BUT, there is help out there to find Bretons who live here in the U.S. or in Canada—whether here just on a temporary basis for a job, or living here permanently for many years. The best place to find information is the internet and there are a variety of sites specifically designed for Bretons who live outside of Brittany.

Here are just three places to start:

<http://www.bronc/>

This is the site of the Bretons of Northern California who are based in the San Francisco area. Some 5,000 Bretons are estimated to be in that area, so it is not surprising that an active organization is in place. The web site includes a directory of people as well as good links to a number of other sources of information—including the ICDBL. Of particular interest on the web site is access to Francis Favereau's French-Breton/Breton-French dictionary (published by Skol Vreizh). You can type in a word in French and get the Breton translation, or type in a Breton word and get the French translation. Eventually an English component will be added.

<http://www.generation.net/~bzh/index.htm>

This is the site of the Union des Bretons du Canada based in Montréal. Like its printed newsletter, which we exchange for Bro Nevez, this site includes nice information on Breton history and the history of Breton emigration to North America. One can subscribe to the newsletter via the site, become part of a directory of members, and get practical information about events and even get a visual view of Montreal. Like the web site for the Bretons of Northern California, this one also provides access to Favereau's dictionary for Breton-French and French-Breton translations.

<http://www.antourtan.org/>

With an estimated 3 to 6 million Bretons living outside of Brittany, it is not surprising that internet sites have been designed for them. This site has the aim to link Bretons found world wide and includes a directory as well as an active forum for the exchange of ideas. Also included in the site is a listing of events, job information, and genealogical information. This is a very innovative and interactive web site which recently featured the first cyber fest noz—and experiment likely to be continued.

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