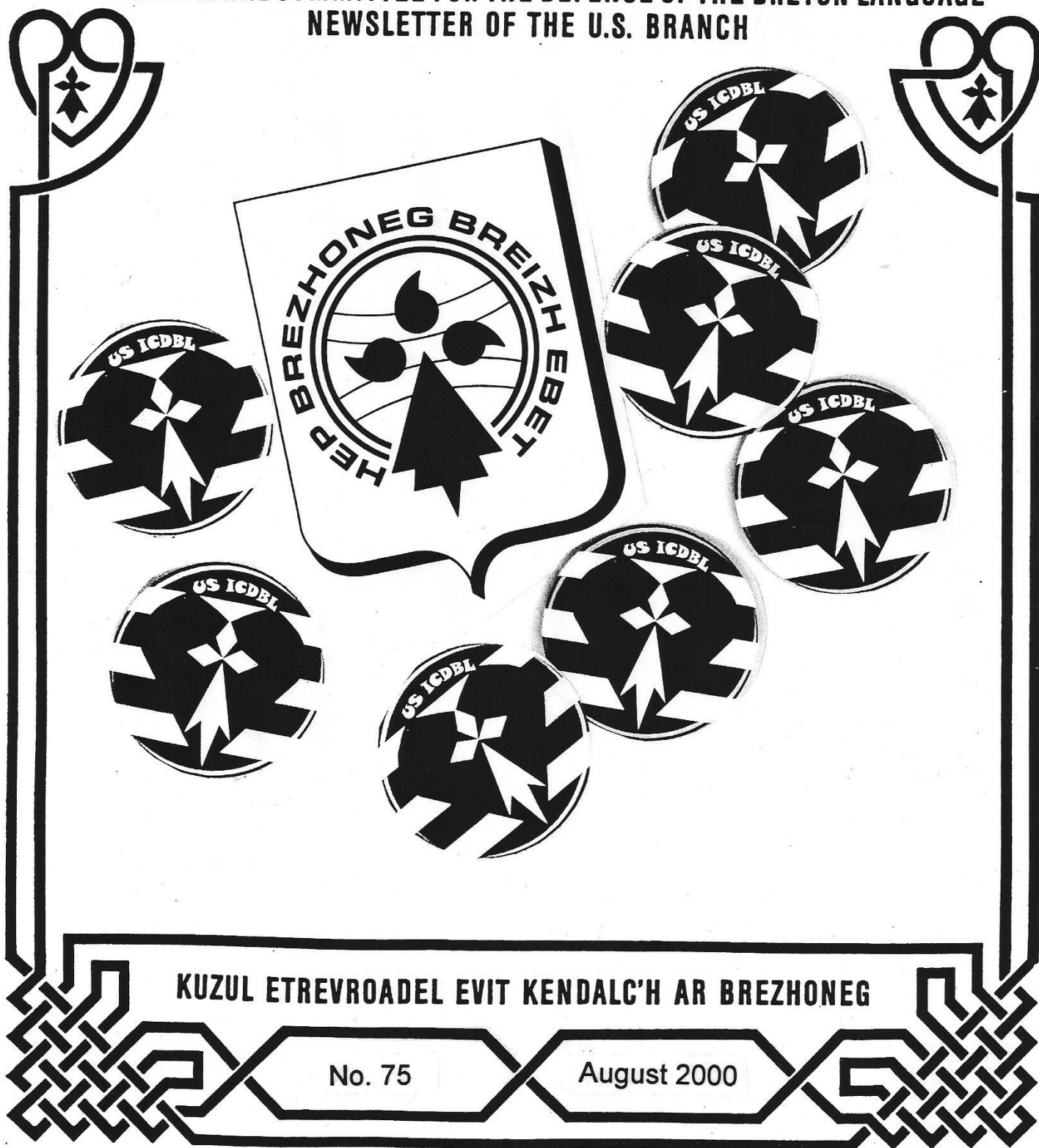


BRO NEVEZ

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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Editor:

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

(215) 886-6361

NEW E-MAIL: kuter@netreach.net

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 a newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, May, August and November. Contributions, letters to the Editor, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor. 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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Voting Membership:	\$18.00 (calendar year)
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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 to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to do this. In some instances we are also very happy to establish an exchange of publications.

* * *

The **Canadian Branch of the ICDBL** was relaunched January 1998. That branch of the ICDBL publishes a newsletter called **Brittany** (trilingual in English, Breton, French). Canadian Membership including **Brittany** is \$15 (Canadian dollars). A Canadian Membership which includes both **Brittany** and **Bro Nevez** is \$30. A subscription to **Brittany** without membership is \$10 for the U.S. and Canada and \$20 by surface mail elsewhere. Contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, 58 Century Drive, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 4J6 CANADA (e-mail: jdkoneill@sympatico.ca). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for your report and comment on the Dinan bombing. Your editorial comment at the end is especially to the point. Barry Goldwater's notorious statement at the Republican Convention in 1964 -- "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And ... moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue" -- is simply wrong, when extremism can kill innocents. Your defense of Roparz Hemon (p. 5) is first-rate. It would be good to see what Ronan Calvez wrote in his thesis (p. 5). Roparz Hemon succumbed to the blandishments of the Nazis, in part no doubt because German manipulation of Breton nationalism during World War II was directed by Professor Julius Pokorny, an outstanding linguist and pre-eminent authority on the Celtic languages. If the Parisian press chooses at this late date to continue the witch-hunt against Roparz Hemon, we may ask why it does not give an equal or larger place to condemnation of Pokorny. Is it because of the Franco-German entente and because the Germans are powerful, while the Bretons are not? And because Professor Pokorny has won a virtually unassailable place in the academic pantheon through his monumental "Indogermanisches Etymologisches Woerterbuch" ("Indoeuropean Etymological Dictionary")?

Sometimes people do bad things because they lack the ability to foresee the future. If Richard Wagner had foreseen the Holocaust, he might have modified or even abandoned his anti-Semitism. If Franklin D. Roosevelt had foreseen it, he might have mandated a less grudging immigration policy for refugees from Nazi Germany. If Roparz Hemon had foreseen the Allied victory of 1945, he would not have collaborated with the German occupiers.

Wagner's anti-Semitism must be remembered, but he wrote some masterful operas. Roosevelt's politically prudent immigration policy cannot be forgotten, but neither can his pre-eminent roles in combating the Great Depression and leading the United States and its Allies to victory in the Second Great War. I have no intention of equating Roparz Hemon with Wagner or Roosevelt, but the same principle applies to him, as you point out. The virtue of his work for the preservation of the Breton language and Breton culture cannot be negated by his collaboration with the Nazis.

Sadly, some impatient young people are inclined to act upon the Goldwater maxim. The horrors committed in Northern Ireland are, we trust and pray, now coming to an end. That will no doubt not preclude the commission of isolated acts of terrorism, just as the post-Franco settlement in Spain has not precluded such acts in the Basque country.

Concluding his splendid book, "The Basque History of the World" (New York: Walker & Company, 1999), Mark Kurlansky writes:

"The Basques are not isolationists. They never wanted to leave Europe. They only wanted to be Basque. Perhaps it is the French and the Spanish, relative newcomers, who will disappear in another 1,000 years. But the Basques will still be there, playing strange sports, speaking a language of 'k's and 'x's that no one else understands, naming their houses and facing them toward the eastern sunrise in a land of legends, on steep green mountains by a cobalt sea -- still surviving, enduring by the grace of what Juan San Martin called 'Euskaldun bizi nahia,' the will to live like a Basque." (p. 351)

We need not anticipate the disappearance of the French to believe that Bretons do not need to employ a self-defeating violence. Rather, they need the will to enable themselves to live like Bretons. We who know something of them believe they can successfully live like Bretons by exercising that will.

Cordially,

Richard Davies
U.S. ICDBL Member from Maryland

TV Breizh is Coming

A private television venture called TV Breizh is due to begin broadcasting September 1st. This will be accessible by cable and also by satellite dish with an eventual place on the public channel range of choices. Those throughout Brittany as well as France and much of Europe should be able to tune in. The press packet prepared by TV Breizh clearly outlines the aim of this new TV channel to fill in a gap of regional TV programming in Brittany (and indeed in France as a whole).

The proposed programming reflects well the desire of TV Breizh to present a Brittany with a distinct culture which is thoroughly modern and open to the rest of the world. Programs will be directed to Bretons, but of interest to anyone more generally interested in Brittany and its culture. The station will broadcast 17 hours a day, starting at 7:30 in the morning and ending at 12:30 at night. Five hours of programming—between 5 and 10:30 pm—will be new. And this will be rebroadcast several times during the day over a period of several days or weeks depending on the content.

These “prime time” programs include one hour of music (7:30-8:30) featuring Breton and Celtic artists of all styles. The block of time between 8:30 to 10:30 will include movies—with an emphasis on those from or with some reference to Brittany or the Celtic countries—as well as three “magazines”—one related to sports, one about maritime Brittany, and the other focusing on inland Brittany with topics such as agriculture, environmental issues, tourism, etc. One night will also feature a fiction TV series—and like the movies, this will usually have some kind of a Breton or Celtic connection to it. The 6:30-7:30 slot will feature talk shows where Bretons active on the political, economic, sportive or cultural front will present issues and views. And the 5:30-6:30 slot will focus on children’s programming.

This might not sound so revolutionary. But, what is most important about TV Breizh is not only that it has a specific focus on contemporary Breton life and culture, but that it will be bilingual. TV viewers will have the option to choose either a French or Breton language track. This will allow one to tap into movies, for example, where voices are doubled in Breton, or sports events where the commentary is in Breton. Those appearing on talk shows or the other documentary “magazines” will be encouraged to express themselves in Breton with subtitles provided in French. All children’s programming will be available through the Breton language track. Progressively other programs such as movies and documentaries will also be fully available in either language, as manpower is trained and available to do translation, doubling and subtitling. This is obviously a huge task and certainly a growing job market for Breton speakers.

As they themselves point out, TV Breizh offers just one more media to support all the other efforts Bretons are making to keep the Breton language a natural and growing part of everyday expression in Brittany. One fun programming feature for the Breton language will be “Les mots d’Armor”—30-second spots peppered throughout the day which will feature Breton words—in humorous cartoon animation to attract non-Breton speakers to add a bit of new vocabulary. By 2001 TV Breizh plans to add a daily Breton lesson—also cartoon animation but with a wider pedagogical reach. Also planned for 2001 is a weekly documentary on Breton history and a program featuring older Breton films and images which have been archived since the turn of the century.

TV Breizh has the promise of offering some great programming, and while limited somewhat at first by cost and manpower, the presence of the Breton language will certainly grow so that Bretons will have a TV station where their language is available not just for a few hours a week, but all day, every day.

I would be happy to copy the full dossier from TV Breizh for anyone interested in details (it is in French) or you can contact them directly at:

TV BREIZH
Quai du Péristyle, B.P. 737
56107 Lorient cedex

tel. 33 02 97 35 01 00
e-mail: tvbreizh@freesbee.fr
Watch for their web site: www.tv-breizh.com

SHORT NEWS NOTES

Other Television in the Breton Language – France 3 Ouest

France 3 Ouest announced in April a partnership with the Regional Council of Brittany which will bring a million francs in support for Breton language programming. From 1 ½ minutes of Breton daily some 35 years ago, FR3 Ouest has expanded to just 85 hours a year today—1 hour and 40 minutes each week. But something is certainly better than nothing and its two weekly programs “Du-Man Du-Se” and “Red an Amzer” have brought a wide audience to Breton language programming—especially with the addition of French sub-titling in 1996. We can hope that Breton language programs will continue to be expanded as a clear market for them seems to be growing.

(Information from Ouest France 4/11/00 reprinted in Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg 26, gouere 2000; and Armor 365, juin 2000)

Radio in the Breton Language – Some Questions at Radio Kreiz Breizh

In the world of Breton language radio a stir has been caused by the firing of the Director of Radio Kreiz Breizh, Hervé Le Bec. Active in the development of this Breton radio since 1984, the dismissal has been interpreted as a political action by the President of the Council of Administration for the radio, Jean-Yves Philippe, to distance the station from any possible “contamination” of association with those of more radical political leanings. Le Bec has been a member of the political party Emgann which has been presumed to have ties to the FLB. After the killing of an innocent victim in the bombing of the MacDonalds restaurant in Quévert in April, anyone affiliated with Emgann seems to be automatically under suspicion. While before the bombing in April Le Bec had been given a good review of his work and was even given a raise, it seems his refusal to sign a text to be broadcast over the air concerning the bombing which was drafted by J-Y Philippe to represent the voice of all RKB staff has been a factor in the shift of opinion over Le Bec’s professional abilities. Le Bec felt the request to sign the statement was an infringement of personal freedom of opinion. After a short hunger strike to bring attention to what Le Bec—and many others—feel was an unfair dismissal, the case will be taken into the legal realm. In the meantime Radio Kreiz Breizh has lost a talented member of its staff who has been a big factor in building public support for the station.

(Information from press information from the Comité de Soutien à Hervé le Bec, Breizh Info 183, 19 juillet 200; and Breizh Info 184, 26 juillet 2000)

Summer University for Breton Youth

The Cultural Council of Brittany has organized its first “Summer University” to be held September 7-10 at the Amzer Nevez center in Ploemeur (Morbihan). Directed specifically at high school and college students, this will include lectures and workshops on Breton culture and economy, Brittany and its place in Europe, and the role youth can play as active citizens at the local and global level. Guest speakers—leaders in the cultural and economic world—will direct discussion, and judging from the press articles about the conference, it should offer a good occasion for the exploration of some difficult and interesting issues. But not every hour of the day will be taken up in serious discussion. Evenings and leisure time will include cinema, concerts, a visit to the local island of Groix and a fest noz. Participation is limited to 100 people with priority given to youth, while some of the lectures and evening events will be open to the public. This is an interesting initiative that should offer young Bretons a rare opportunity for a real exchange of ideas on issues of interest and concern to their future and the development of Breton culture and economic health.

(Information from Cultural Council of Brittany “Summer University” flyer and Breizh Info 183, 19 juillet 2000)

International Celtic Congress

The International Celtic Congress was held this Spring in Bude, Cornwall. During four days, 120 delegates from Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man met around the theme “The Celtic Renaissance on the Eve of a New Millennium.” In 2001 the congress will be held in Rennes (Brittany) from July 23-28, and in 2002 the congress will move to Carmarthen (Wales), July 22-28. (information from Armor 365, juin 2000)

* * *

The Erika Oil Spill ... it still goes on

As reported in a July 22 New York Times newspaper article aptly titled “Oil Washes Away Tourism From Brittany Beaches” the Erika oil spill is still having an impact. While some beaches have been cleaned up for the tourist season, oil globs continue to wash up on others. Beaches like La Turballe—featured in the article—which face west seem to have a harder fate than those facing south like La Baule, just a few miles away. While some tourists have remained loyal to beaches where they go each year, the mere threat of unclean beaches has meant that many tourists are staying away from Brittany—a disaster for restaurants and shops who count on the tourist season for much of their yearly income.

And the future? Given the immense cost of clean-up efforts and irreparable damage to the environment and sea life, the key is obviously to prevent future spills. According to an article in Le Télégramme (“Les sept mois d’une marée noire, 4 juillet 2000) France is investing in more manpower and material to better patrol coasts and inspect ships. Time will tell if talk to toughen standards on ship safety will go into effect and be enforced.

* * *

“So that our languages may live” --

If you have been reading Bro Nevez for the past year or two you will know that efforts have long been underway to get France to first sign and then ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. France was one of the last European countries to sign the Charter (May 1999) but the Constitutional Council convened by the President of France decided in June 1999 that the European Charter was contrary to the French Constitution which states that French is the language of the Republic.

Polls have shown strong popular support in France for regional languages, the ratification of the European Charter (82% in the poll were favorable), and amendment of the Constitution to allow this (79% favorable). However, France seems unwilling to budge. So a new initiative has been undertaken to petition the government by having people send in a check with the token amount of 10 francs. This petition is being done by an organization called “Pour que Vivent nos langues” (“So that our languages may live”) which has the support of a number of politicians, cultural and economic leaders throughout France.

While most Bro Nevez readers do not have a checking account that will allow us to write a check in French francs, I am sure that “Pour que Vivent nos langues” would be happy to receive your words of encouragement. You would be welcome to use the little form at the bottom of the page which follows to send a note to this organization.

Pour que Vivent nos langues

COMITÉ DE PARRAINAGE

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Gustave Alirol, *pdt Rég. & Peuples Solidaires*

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Alan Stivell, *artiste breton...*

Le Conseil Constitutionnel, saisi par le Président de la République, a décidé le 15 juin 1999 que la Charte Européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires du Conseil de l'Europe était contraire à la Constitution française.

Ainsi :

- ✓ Malgré la demande démocratique, largement exprimée dans les territoires et les communautés concernés, soutenue par l'opinion publique dans toute la France (82% de la population favorable à la ratification de la Charte),
- ✓ Malgré le constat d'un péril évident de disparition pure et simple, à plus ou moins long terme, de la totalité des cultures minoritaires sur le territoire français,
- ✓ Malgré l'impérieux besoin de doter les nombreuses langues et cultures pratiquées en France de droits et de moyens pour assurer leur pérennité et leur épanouissement,
- ✓ Malgré la souffrance de ceux, individus, communautés et peuples, qui vivent la perte de leur identité comme une injustice insupportable,
- ✓ Malgré le dynamisme culturel, économique et social qui s'exprime à partir d'identités assumées sans complexe et sans xénophobie, dans l'échange et le partage,
- ✓ Malgré la construction européenne qui place au cœur des libertés fondamentales de l'Union le respect de la diversité culturelle, comme l'affirme désormais sa devise : "L'Unité dans la diversité".

L'État refuse de ratifier la Charte Européenne des Langues Régionales ou Minoritaires qu'il a pourtant signée le 7 mai 1999 à Budapest.

Ce refus, décidé sous la contrainte d'une constitution largement dépassée par les évolutions européennes, est inacceptable. Il met en cause le principe même de démocratie en bafouant la volonté populaire. Ses conséquences sont sensibles partout : entraves aux filières d'enseignement bilingues, carence des médias du service public, disparition des pratiques culturelles.

Pour renverser cette situation aux conséquences irréversibles, il faut nous mobiliser.

Les objectifs sont simples :

- ✓ que la France modifie sa Constitution,
- ✓ qu'elle ratifie la Charte européenne des langues régionales ou minoritaires,
- ✓ qu'elle décide de politiques adaptées et efficaces, telles qu'elles ont été mises en œuvre ailleurs en Europe, pour assurer enfin l'avenir des langues et cultures présentes sur son territoire.

Le moyen que nous proposons pour cette mobilisation est le recueil de "chèques-pétitions" d'un montant symbolique de 10 francs. Pour cela, une association a été créée : "Pour que vivent nos langues". Des dizaines de milliers d'entre nous, et même davantage, peuvent répondre à cet appel. Notre poids sera alors déterminant pour amener les élus, présents et futurs, à faire enfin les réformes nécessaires.

Merci de soutenir cette mobilisation fondée sur les principes essentiels de toute vie démocratique : citoyenneté, responsabilité et détermination.

CI-JOINT MON CHÈQUE-PÉTITION DE 10 FRANCS

EN SOUTIEN À LA CAMPAGNE "POUR QUE VIVENT NOS LANGUES"

NOM, PRÉNOM

ADRESSE

FONCTION OU RESPONSABILITÉ

À retourner à l'association «pour que vivent nos langues» • 46 rue Branda • 29200 Brest

NEW BOOKS FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

[Bernard Le Nail]. Romans et Romanciers en Bretagne. (Salon des romanciers de Bretagne à Carhaix, 29-31 octobre 1999). Institut Culturel de Bretagne/Skol Uhel ar Vro. October 1999. 64 pages. ISBN 2-86822-081-9.

The first “Salon des romanciers en Bretagne” was held in 1987 to complement exhibitions already existent for books for youth, those on maritime themes and *bande dessinées* (“comic books”). Carhaix has hosted the “Festival du Livre en Bretagne” for ten years and was the site for the latest “salon” for novelists in October 1999. The event was hosted by the Cultural Center of Carhaix, Egin, which has been active on a number of fronts to support Breton culture.

Although not listed as the author, Bernard Le Nail put together the little booklet noted above as a reference for writers, publishers, book stores and distributors, libraries and teachers. And it is not surprising that Skol Uhel ar Vro—the Cultural Institute of Brittany—was the publisher given their important role in supporting writers and providing financial support for the publication of over 1,500 books in the last seventeen years. The Cultural Institute has produced a number of practical little guides as well as a bi-monthly magazine called Bretagne des Livres which is a key resource for writers and publishers, libraries and those who simply love books.

Romans et Romanciers en Bretagne includes a wealth of short essays to introduce a variety of organizations and events supporting Breton literature. Included also is an introduction to the Cultural Institute of Brittany and its work, a summary of the role of Carhaix in supporting culture and literature, an introduction to the President of the 1999 Salon, Jean-François Josselin, a history of the Salon, and a presentation of the novels nominated for the “Prix du Roman” by the City of Carhaix. Of more general interest are a series of short essays on the history of the novel as a literary form and its evolution in Brittany. Other essays describe some well known characters created by Breton authors, the depiction of Breton history in novels written for

youth, novels with a maritime theme, and the blue collar worker in Breton language novels.

This little booklet also lists the many literary prizes in Brittany, other Salons and festivals for books, the work of the “Association des Editeurs de Bretagne” and a bibliography of two dozen books to learn more about Breton literature. And then there is a series of short essays on the role of Paris editors in publishing Breton novels, the “series” and its transition into a novel, and the many professions held down by Breton novelists to earn a living as they wrote.

All in all, this is an interesting and very practical mine of information—just as it was intended to be!

* * *

Bernard and Jacqueline Le Nail. Dictionnaire des Romanciers de Bretagne. Keltia Graphics Editions. 1999. 309 pages. ISBN 2-913953-01-8.

This wonderful reference work is inspired by the diversity, quantity and quality of novels presented each year at the “Salon des Romanciers de Bretagne.” And, it was produced with the knowledge that such a work to present Breton novelists was badly needed. The last such major work was done by Jacque Gohier in 1984 and covered only then-living Breton writers (see review in Bro Nevez 13, November 1984).

This dictionary—perhaps better described as an encyclopedia—by Bernard and Jacqueline L Nail presents 645 writers—dead and alive. Most used French as their language for novels, but also included are 36 writers who have written and currently write novels in Breton. One might wonder at this small number, but one should not be too surprised given the only very recent introduction of Breton into the schools of Brittany. It takes the growth of a public able to read to produce writers—and Breton language writers have been more prolific in other genres such as poetry and short stories.

This book covers writers from the 17th century (just two—the oldest born in 1603) through the present,

with the youngest writer born in 1972. In tallying birth dates, one finds a nice spread of periods covered. 289 authors are living today (with 59 of these over 75 years of age). One can see that a reedition will be needed soon to update activity! As Bernard Le Nail has indicated to me in correspondence, this will happen when the current printing runs out—by 2001 or 2002. 389 (60%) of the authors in the dictionary were born 1900 or after; 144 were born in the second half of the 19th century and 82 were born in the first half of the 19th century. 21 writers were born between 1750 and 1799 with just 10 born before 1750.

As the authors state in their short foreword to the book, they tried to be as complete as possible, including a maximum of information on the more obscure writers and their works, and keeping descriptions for the better known writers (like Jules Verne and Chateaubriand) relatively short since so much is available elsewhere about such writers. Each entry includes a nice biographical sketch, with pen names and birth place/date, and place of death/date right at the top of the entry. The biography gives a good description of the individual's education and occupations other than writing they may have pursued—such as journalism for many of the men and teaching for many women. It is interesting to see how many writers traveled extensively, and quite a few were born outside of Brittany or France. Many writers in the dictionary were prolific in other genres—essays, poetry, or short stories—and for quite a few entries there is just one novel to be cited. Other important works by a writer are mentioned in the biography and each novel is fully cited at the end of the entry. When possible, references for more information are also cited so those interested in a particular writer can go elsewhere for more details. An additional, more general, bibliography on Breton literature is also included in the Appendices at the back of the book.

The appendices include a number of interesting and very important tools for those using the book. An alphabetical listing of pen names is very important in tracking down authors. While it is easy to locate particular names in the text of the dictionary since they are listed alphabetically, a detailed index also includes a number of fictional charters from novels as well as people noted in biographies who do not themselves have an entry as a novelist. Another very interesting listing includes Breton towns and cities

showing those writers born there or strongly associated with the town because they lived or retired there. And finally, you find listings of Bretons who were members of the Académie française from its creation in 1635 through 1985 (with those who wrote novels highlighted). Another listing gives names of Breton novelists (or those associated with Brittany in their works) who have won major literary prizes. And another page includes a list of novels by non-Bretons which have Brittany as their setting.

I enjoyed randomly flipping through the book and picking out a biography here and there to read. Writers seemed to lead some pretty interesting lives—some would make good novels themselves. While this is a reference work of great usefulness for anyone interested in literature (libraries, teachers, book dealers and editors, as well as novelists themselves), it is fascinating for anyone who likes biography and has an interest in Brittany.

Bernard Le Nail has been the Director of the Cultural Institute of Brittany since 1983 and Jacqueline Le Nail is a librarian in Rennes. Bernard Le Nail has written a number of wonderful articles about Brittany, and is the author of two books previously reviewed in Bro Nevez. Explorateurs et grand voyageurs bretons (1998) includes detailed biographical notes on some 200 Breton explorers (see review in Bro Nevez 66, May 1998). In Bretagne pays de mer (1993) Bernard Le Nail provided the text on Breton maritime history and traditions complemented by wonderful photos by Philip Plisson (Bro Nevez 49, February 1994). With his wife Jacqueline, he will be publishing another dictionary of writers—this time those who have written books for youth. Dictionnaire des auteurs de jeunesse de Bretagne should come out at the end of October 2000.

As Bernard Le Nail steps down from his duties as Director of the Cultural Institute of Brittany we can certainly wish him well and hope that this will allow him more time to write such interesting and important guides to Brittany's cultural history.

KORNOG to be back in the States this Fall

It was way back in the mid 1980s that the Breton band called Kornog toured the U.S., introducing a number of Americans to Breton music (and to Brittany!). While Kornog broke up in the late 80s, the musicians of this band have remained active and have taken off with solo careers or play in a number of other small ensembles.

Here's the lineup:

Jamie McMenemy, singer and bouzouki player (originally from Scotland, but at home in Brittany)

Jean-Michel Veillon, flute player extraordinaire

Christian Lemaitre, fiddler who has been on tour with the Celtic Fiddle Festival (with Johnny Cunningham and Kevin Burke)

Nicolas Quemener, guitarist (in place of original guitarist in the line-up Soig Siberil)

If you thought Kornog was good in the 80s, then you won't be surprised to find that they are even better 15 years later! These are some of the best Brittany has to offer so if you can get to any of the concerts listed below I urge you to do so ... and spread the word to anyone you know who might enjoy Breton music. The only way we can get Breton bands to come more often to the States is to show them there is a good audience here for them!

The following is a preliminary itinerary (as of 8/9/00), and I can't emphasize the word *preliminary* enough. Things can change!

KORNOG FALL ITINERARY

Thursday, October 19 and Friday, October 20

John H. Williams Theatre, 110 E. Second St., TULSA, OK 74103-3212; 918-596-7126

Contact: Terry Grufik (918-596-7126 Work)

Saturday, October 21

Unity On The Plaza, 707 West 47th St., KANSAS CITY, MO; Venue Phone 816-561-4466, Ext. 117

Contact: Charles Johnson, Missouri Valley Folklife Society, 3512 Birchwood Dr., Kansas City, MO 64137; 816-763-8663 Work

Sunday, October 22

Bartlett Performing Arts & Conference Center, 3663 Appling Rd., MEMPHIS, TN 38133; Venue Phone 901-385-6440; Ticket Info 901-276-1527

Contact: Robert Campbell, Mid-South Celtic Alliance, 801 Park, Earle, AR 72331; 870-792-8679 Home

Tuesday, October 24

The Mucky Duck, 2425 Norfolk, HOUSTON, TX 77098; Venue Phone 713-528-5999; Ticket Info 713-528-5999

Contact: Rusty Andrews, 713-528-5999 Work

Wednesday, October 25

Emerald Mist, 1840 North Plano Rd., RICHARDSON, TX; Venue Phone 972-671-MIST; Ticket Info 214-821-4173

Contact: Betsy Ener, Southwest Celtic Music Association, 4340 North Central Expressway, Suite 104 Dallas, TX 75206; 214-821-4173 Work

Thursday, October 26

Cactus Café, University Of Texas At Austin, 24th & Guadalupe, AUSTIN, TX; 512-475-6515 Venue Phone

Contact: Larry Rone, Austin Celtic Music Association, P.O. Box 3164, Austin, TX 78764; 512-916-8152 Work

Friday, October 27

Warriner Hall Auditorium, Franklin St., Central Michigan University, MT. PLEASANT, MI 48859; Venue Phone 517-774-3355; Ticket Info 888-268-0111

Contact: Robert Ebner, Central Michigan Univ., Warriner Hall 351, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48859; 517-774-3355 Work

Saturday, October 28

Holy Family Parish Center Hall, TAWAS CITY, MI

Contact: Robert Ebner (see above)

Tuesday, October 31 through Thursday, November 2

John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 608 New York Ave., P.O. Box 489, SHEBOYGAN, WI 53082-0489

Contact: Kristina Bonin, 920-458-6144, Ext. 131 Work

Friday, November 3

The Abbey Pub, 3420 West Grace, CHICAGO, IL 60618; Venue Phone 773-478-4408

Contact: Pat Looney, 773-463-5808 Work

Saturday, November 4

The Music Hall, University Of Wisconsin, MADISON, WI

Contact: Robert Newton, Madison Celtic Music Association, 125 West Lakeside St., Madison, WI 53715
608-262-9470 Work

Sunday, November 5

Cedar Cultural Center, 416 Cedar Ave. South, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55454; Ticket Info. 612-338-2674

Contact: Bill Kubeczko; 612-338-2674, Ext. 23 Work

Tuesday, November 7

Workshop, Dusty Strings Company, 3406 Freemont Ave. North, SEATTLE, WA 98103; 206-634-1662

Contact: Ron Reed or John Peekstok, Dusty Strings Company (see address & number above)

Wednesday, November 8

Museum Of History & Industry, 2700 24th Ave. East, SEATTLE, WA; Venue Phone 206-324-1126; Ticket Info
206-634-1662

Contact: Ron Reed or John Peekstok, Dusty Strings Company (see above)

Thursday, November 9

Freight & Salvage, 1111 Addison St., BERKELEY, CA 94702; Venue Phone 510-548-1761; Ticket Info 510-548-1761

Contact & Tech. Dir: Steve Baker, 510-548-7603 Work

Saturday, November 11

Neighborhood Church, 301 North Orange Grove Blvd., PASADENA, CA; Venue Phone 626-791-0411

Contact: Ron Stockfleth, Acoustic Music Series, HC 79, Box 30, Crowley Lake, CA 93546; 760-935-4630 Work

Sunday, November 12

Kuumbwa Jazz Center, 320-2 Cedar St., SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060; Venue Phone 831-427-2227; Ticket Info 408-847-6982

Contact: Bob Breheny, 3415 Dryden Ave., Gilroy, CA 95020; 408-847-6982 Work & Home

Friday, November 17

Lafayette Hotel, 101 Front St., MARIETTA, OH; Venue Phone 740-373-5522; Ticket Info 740-373-6640

Contact: John Bolen, The Blues, Jazz & Folk Music Society, c/o Cobbler John's, 200 Putnam St., P.O. Box 2122
Marietta, OH 45750; 740-373-6640 Work

Saturday, November 18

The Cultural Center, Capitol Complex, CHARLESTON, WV 25305; Venue Phone 304-558-0220

Contact: Stephen Ballman, Kanawha Valley FOOTMAD, P.O. Box 1684, Charleston, WV 25326-1684

Sunday, November 19

Cincinnati Art Museum Auditorium, 953 Eden Park Dr., CINCINNATI, OH 45202; Venue Phone 513-721-5204;
Ticket Info 513-533-4822

Contact: Jo Ann Buck, Cincinnati Folk Life, P.O. Box 9008, Cincinnati, OH 45209; 513-533-4822 Work

Please note that some dates on the east coast may be added for the November 13-16 period. I will send information to readers near any added concert locations once I have more information.

NEW MUSIC FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Les Grands Airs Celtiques / The Great Celtic Airs. Keltia Musique KMCD 104. 2000.

The original idea of this compilation was to include some of the best known and loved songs and melodies from the Celtic countries—and you do find “Scotland the Brave,” “Auld Lang Syne,” the “Irish National Anthem” and even “Danny Boy.” But instead of gathering the stereotypical and often boring recordings of these, Keltia Musique was inspired—thanks it seems to Jamie McMenemy’s rendition of “Scotland the Brave”—to do something entirely new.

The fifteen selections on this CD include older and newer tunes and melodies that are well known to those who have listened to Celtic music over the years, but the performance of these melodies are by no means “old hat.” Indeed some of them are barely recognizable ... but that is for the best!

Jamie McMenemy (a Scotsman who has made Brittany his home) leads off with “Scotland the Brave,”—not the usual military style performance you hear from pipe bands, but an almost plaintive ballad of love. And, indeed, that is what the text is all about. The last verse in particular focuses on the longing of those away from Scotland for their homeland.

Bretons Patrick Molard and Alain Genty pair up on Scottish bagpipes and electric guitars for a lively rendition of “Airs de Pontevedra”—Galician tunes that have found their way into many musicians’ repertoires.

The Irish choral group Anúna performs “She Moved Through the Fair”—certainly a classic ballad from the 60s and 70s. While there is nothing unusual to the lead vocal melody, the sometimes dissonant choral arrangement adds drama and a certain energy to this lovely song.

While many might not know “Mna na heireann” from its Irish title, you will definitely recognize this melody which was performed by the Chieftans and made part of the soundtrack for Stanley Kubrick’s movie “Barry Lyndon.” You find here a very relaxed and jazzy sax and guitar duo by two of Ireland’s well known artists, Richie Buckley and Dónal Lunney.

Part of the twist one finds in the performances on this CD is the use of a very different style for a familiar genre. Pat O’May and Fred Guichen’s rendition of the maritime classic “Quinze Marins” composed by Breton Michel Tonnere starts out innocently enough until O’May breaks into that raging—almost shouting—vocal style one often finds with rock band singers.

I found the rendition of the Irish National Anthem, “Soldier’s Song” or “Amhrán na bhriann” sung in Irish by The Fallen Angels less successful. The beautiful ethereal voices and harmonies just didn’t work for this patriotic song. It reminded me of the many versions of the “Star Spangled Banner” one hears before baseball games where it seems as if the performers are working too hard to find yet one new way to harmonize and arrange the song with no particular care to the content of the text. Just my opinion.

What would a CD of Celtic classics be without an O’Carolan tune. I can think of few harpists of any Celtic country who do not have a few of his lovely 18th century compositions in their repertoire. Here Breton harp player Dominig Bouchard pairs with fiddler Jacky Molard for a nice arrangement of “Eleanor Plunkett.”

While all the selections on this CD are refreshing for the way well known melodies are performed in a style not usually associated with them, perhaps one of the most interesting rearrangements of a classic tune is found in Yann-Fañch Kemener’s remake of “Amazing Grace.” He retains the beautiful melody of this religious hymn * which Scottish pipe bands have made world-known, and sets an entirely new text in the Breton language to it. “Divrois” (“Without a Nation”) speaks of the horror of war in Kosovo where people are forced to flee their homes and live in fear and misery.

While one does not usually think of misery with the children’s song “Molly Malone” (Cockles and mussels, alive alive oh), this is a song where poor Molly dies of disease as she struggles to earn a living selling her fare in the streets of Dublin. The very eerie and slow arrangement of this song by the Irish group Bohinta is certainly unusual and, like many of the other arrangements on this CD, it forces you to hear a familiar song in a whole new way.

When it comes to Breton music, there has been no greater force than Alan Stivell in popularizing Breton tunes outside of Brittany. You won’t hear Stivell on this CD—although he has done some very interesting rearrangements of classic Celtic songs himself over the years—but you will find a wonderful rearrangement of some of his compositions (“Gwriziad difennet” and “Gouel hollvedel”) by the newly reformed band Kornog who add a composition of their own, “Feunteun Zen.” This is a nice preview of this band (now including Jamie McMenemy, Christian Lemaitre, Jean-Michel Veillon and Nicolas Quémener) who will be touring in the U.S. this fall (see information in this newsletter).

David 'Hopi' Hopkins is an Irishman who had made his home in Brittany and has played with a number of Breton bands and musicians, including Barzaz, Bleizi Ruz, Didier Squiban, Myrdhin and Elixir. His percussion instruments come from all over the world and include not only drums but xylophones, bells and gongs of all kinds. In this arrangement of the Breton ballad "Eliz Iza" he uses percussion from Africa, and all corners of Asia for a very unusual but lovely version.

I do not know Jack Luckeman, but he is described in the notes as one of Ireland's great new voices. The photo shows him scowling and angry—not an unusual image for many rock stars. He does not look like someone likely to include "Danny Boy" in his repertoire, but he does a great arrangement of the song. Lukeman's voice is not exactly that of an Irish tenor, but it has lots of passion in the soft, almost whispering of the verses followed by a powerful wailing out of the chorus. One would describe the performance as unusual but certainly melodious.

To close the CD you have the group Orion—most of whose members are from Belgium, but who have proven their talents as an "Irish" band. The two founding members are Racquel Gigot—a fine accordion player—and Rudy Velghe, a great fiddler. They are joined by Marc Keyaert on keyboards and Gérard Hirsch on guitar. The accordion takes the lead in a slow rendition of "Auld Lang Syne" and with the slower speed and lots of side diddling, one might have some difficulty identifying this familiar tune. When the band slips into two fast paced arrangements, there is definitely a challenge to pick out the basic melody line, but it is indeed there and one might never have imagined that this "New Year's" song could sound so sprightly.

The jacket notes to this CD are bilingual in both French and English and give a fairly good introduction to the musicians and singers, sometimes including song texts ("Scotland the Brave" and "Divrois"). For each selection a photo of the performers is also included, and this is a nice touch.

I found this a refreshing and highly enjoyable collection of "Great Celtic Airs." It is unique in the matching of new styles of vocal and instrumental performance with all-too-familiar tunes. While one can always enjoy the more "classic" rendering of "Scotland the Brave" by a pipe band or the pretty voice of an Irish tenor delivering "Danny Boy" on St. Patrick's Day, the unexpected rearrangements on this CD by some of the best musicians of the Celtic world definitely breathe new life in these airs.

* The words to "Amazing Grace" were composed by John Newton (1725-1807), an English sea captain, when he was able to steer his ship through a storm at sea in 1748. This was a point of religious conversion for him ... although he continued to captain ships in the slave trade afterwards. He later became a minister and prolific writer

of hymns. The origin of the melody for "Amazing Grace" is not known but thought to be an American folk melody—possibly the tune of a song sung by slaves.

Alan Stivell. Back to Breizh.

Dreyfus/Keltia III. FDM 36223-2. 2000. 44'25.

"Back to Breizh" brings Alan Stivell back to some basics that have made him an enduring force on the Breton music scene since his first little 45 rpm records in the 1960s. It has been over 35 years now that Stivell has been creating his own unique sound, and the man never seems to run out of ideas or limits to the world from which he draws inspiration. Who else can combine on one CD the ancient Celtic harp, electric guitars, scratch (that technique where DJs use a turn table as a musical instrument, skipping and percussively scratching a record), and the plaintive voice of the hu ch'in, a fiddle traditional to China.

But, compared to some of Stivell's other work, this is a relatively simple CD with nothing terribly avant garde or jarring for those who have not followed all his evolution and experimentation. The melodies—whether Stivell's own compositions or drawn from Breton or Irish tradition—are very approachable to those who like the Stivell of the 70s and 80s more than the more daring music of the 90s. But, this is by no means just a collection of pretty little ballads and snappy tunes. The instrumental accompaniment to Stivell's voice is basically acoustic, but has an underlying drive with electric guitars, keyboards and percussion. The harp is given a very strong role and Stivell is a master of this instrument which he has helped to popularize in Brittany (a lovely solo starts off "Brian Boru in French").

This is a CD which features song, and the texts are all Stivell's—most in Breton, with a few in French. They are love songs for Brittany and the Celtic countries (like "Vers les îles et villes de verre"/"To the isle of glass" and "Arvor-You (Arvoriou – I love you)"). And there are songs for peace ("Brian Boru in French"). There is a song to chastise those who hate and belittle Bretons for their persistent fight for their culture and freedom ("Armorica (suite)" in a new arrangement). There is a song to also chastise those who kill the sea with oil in order to get rich ("Ceux qui sèment la mort"/"Sowing death on sea"). Mostly the songs speak of resistance and serve as a sort of battle cry to keep moving forward ("Skoit 'n treid!"/"Hit the ground"; "Iroise (Irwazh, mor ouezeleg)"/"Brittany's Gaelic Sea"; "E kreiz hag endro"/"In the center and all around") The song which gives its title to the CD, "Back to Breizh" could perhaps also be called "Forward with Breizh" in its call for Bretons to stand tall and proud, reclaim their heritage, and sail forward to the future. It is difficult to put the songs into neat categories because most include an expression of love for Brittany as well as a call to resist oppression. But it is not just a matter of defense. Stivell expresses a great deal of

confidence in Brittany's future and the will of Bretons to build one which will be full of music and open to the world.

Stivell's voice can express tenderness in encouraging one to follow dreams, or it can be a forceful battle cry – "Chomomp Bretoned, kaoc'h da bPariz" ("Keep being Breton, to Hell with Paris"). Musical accompaniment supports the varied moods of the songs. Stivell himself provides harp, whistles, bombarde, bagpipes and keyboard, with a host of others on percussion, electric and acoustic guitars, vocal back-up and a variety of electronic and technical support. Two instrumental cuts show off an interplay of harp with both acoustic and electric guitar.

Jacket notes include all the texts to the songs plus a French and English version. These are not just literal translations, but often a slightly different text which complements the original text nicely. I enjoyed trying to work through the Breton texts, using the French and English versions to get just a bit different slant on the theme.

I like the often gentle sound to the music on this CD, but Stivell's performances here stand out for their ferocious, no-surrender, attitude about the future of Brittany, the Breton language, and culture. At a time when Breton militants have been under assault in the Parisian press, this CD is a rallying cry for Bretons to hold fast to the beauty of their heritage. Stivell has never been shy about his defense of Brittany, and he should be congratulated for this eloquent expression of his pride in being Breton.

Jean-Michel Veillon and Yvon Riou. Beo!
An Naer Produktions. Naer 402. 2000. 52'

"Beo" is Breton for "live" and this recording includes twelve selections of wooden flute in duo with guitar recorded live at concerts on April 7th and 8th in Belfast as well as one selection from a fest deiz in Koatreven. This is just the second CD this duo has recorded (see Bro Nevez 56, November 1995 for a review of "Pont Gwenn ha Pont Stang") although Riou has been playing with Veillon for a while and is one of a number of accompanying musicians on Veillon's 1993 CD "E Koad Nizan" (see Bro Nevez 47, August 1993). The two work together seamlessly and while it is easy to push the guitar work of Yvon Riou a bit to the background, the interplay with the wooden flute does a great deal to enhance and focus what you hear.

There is a certain simplicity to the combination of flute and acoustic guitar that contrasts with Veillon's 1999 CD, "Er Pasker," (see Bro Nevez 71, August 1999). In complex arrangements of Breton tunes and melodies for "Er Pasker," Veillon took full advantage of a recording studio and the more electric sound from a variety of

accompanying musicians. "Beo!" has a much more "down home" feel, as a live recording should, and while the arrangements are less complex they are still refreshingly innovative and free.

As he usually does, Jean-Michel Veillon includes not only some peppy dances—Breton fisel, gavotte, and kas a barh as well as Irish jigs and reels—but he is a master of slower airs. From the Breton song tradition you have as standouts "Ar Meliner," "Marig ar Polanton" and "Yannig Kongar," and from the Irish tradition, "Eamonn an Chnoic" and "Raghad'sa mo cheaiti" (learned from County Kerry singers while on tour in Cornwall).

While the jacket notes are extremely colorful and the first ones I have seen in four languages—Breton, French, Irish and Breton—they are a bit of a challenge to read and do not give a great deal of information about the melodies and tunes. However, you do get an interesting story for some of the tunes most in need of an introduction. One thus learns that "Ollie deus Kentucky" ("Ollie from Kentucky") is a tune for the dance an dro composed for John Skelton's little Boston terrier, Ollie. As readers might know, John Skelton is a fine flute and bombarde player for the House Band, and during a stay at John and Liz' home in Kentucky, Jean-Michel obviously took a liking to their dog.

While each selection on this CD is a little gem of its own, "Fretless Flute Song" perhaps stood out for me. This is part of a composition by Californian jazz flutist Steve Kujola which Jean-Michel Veillon brought back from a tour with the band Kornog in 1984. This lovely waltz-like melody shows off Veillon's ability to really soar with the flute, and if you weren't convinced already by the previous nine CD selections that you were hearing one of the world's best wooden flute players, this certainly clinches it.

While the repertoire on this CD features arrangements of tunes and melodies from the Breton and Irish traditions, there is one wonderful Yiddish tune called "Medyatsiner Waltz," which Veillon learned at the Boxwood Flute Summer School in Nova Scotia from Sean McCutcheon who lives in Montreal. This is followed by a lovely Macedonian air learned from a kaval player, Andras Monori from Budapest. Breton musicians always seem to make the world a much smaller place as they explore treasures from many other cultures and share their own.

It is not hard to like the mellow sound of the wooden flute (and Veillon uses flutes in D, B flat, and two shades of F). In the hands of a master like Jean-Michel Veillon with the excellently matched accompaniment of acoustic guitar by Yvon Riou, one has here a beautiful recording with lots of fiery dances, gorgeous and passionate slow airs, and the spirit of a live audience inspiring this duo to do its very best.

Arz Nevez. Pevar en avel.

Pluriel/Molène Musiques. GRI 19 123-2. 2000. 46'09.

The jacket notes to this CD sum up the Arz Nevez string quartet as follows:

Founded at the beginning of the year 1998, the Arz Nevez string quartet's purpose is to interpret any traditional Celtic music arranged for string instruments as well as original works composed for the group. Furthermore the present original experiment aims at linking up two different cultures which meet all too rarely, however much they might learn from each other.

Indeed, this is an interesting meeting of sounds with the "classical" feel of a string quartet interpreting Breton and Irish dance tunes and melodies. The members of this quartet are conservatory trained musicians with impressive credentials for their young ages: Hélène Callonec-Le Ficher and Youenn Lorec play violin; Eric Lavarec plays viola, and Kristina Omnes plays cello. But, while schooled in the classical tradition, these musicians are no strangers to Breton music and have played in a number of other groups interpreting Breton music in other ways. One can safely say, however, that the success of Arz Nevez in interpreting traditional Breton music can be credited to the fine work of Yves Ribis who composed and arranged the music for the quartet.

After musicology studies at the Faculté de Musique de Rennes, Yves Ribis took his guitar on the road, playing with Alan Stivell as well as with French singers such as Hubert-Félix Thiéfaine. In 1992 he founded the group Glaz—what I would describe as a soft rock band with a somewhat bluesy sound, combining the sultry voice of Natalie Brignonen with uilleann pipes, keyboard, percussion and electric guitars. Ribis composed and arranged for Glaz but also harmonized traditional Breton hymns and songs for the choral groups Mouezh Paotred Breizh and Kanerien An Oriant. He also worked with singer Sophie Le Hunsec on a CD of lullabies called Kalon ar Vamm (see review in Bro Nevez 70, May 1999). This varied experience underlies the varied styles one hears in Arz Nevez.

Breton dances are arranged or serve as the source of inspiration in a number of selections, and you hear the clear beat of plinn, kas a barh, gavotte de l'Aven, and gavotte Pourlet (which has a very classical twist to it as noted in its title "Gavotte Wolfgang"). While the arrangement of Irish tunes gets bogged down slightly at moments, the quartet provides a truly unique sound for some familiar tunes. Indeed, unique sums up the sound for all these arrangements and compositions—from the very well known melody "Enez Eusa" to the complex layers of Ribis' composition "Draeneg" which evokes the frenzied movement of a school of fish.

Two guests join the quartet to make it a quintet. On "May Morning Dew" you hear the lovely voice of Véronique Bourgeot (from the group Loeroù ruz). Wooden flute

player Jean-Michel Veillon joins a very interesting and lovely arrangement of a traditional hymn, "Ar seizh skleur Itron Varia Rostren." This is one of the more "daring" arrangements on the CD and has a somewhat avant garde feel. Veillon also joins the quartet for one of his own compositions, "Gwen kren en noz." And the combination of mellow wooden flute with the strings is a lovely one.

There is a certain freeness to the arrangements/compositions and their performance on this CD. While you hear the "typical" harmonies and interplay of instruments one expects from a classical string quartet, there seems to be less rigidity. Perhaps the repertoire of Breton and Irish tunes and melodies lends itself to this a more improvised sound. The musicians seem to draw a range of sounds from their instruments in both plucking and bowing styles. The interplay between the violins and the lower viola and cello shift within and between one selection and the next, and the cello seemed to be given a more dominant role than I recall hearing in most string quartets (although I haven't listened to a great deal and can claim no expertise).

The jacket notes to the CD are some of the most beautiful I have seen in a while. The cardboard cover unfolds to reveal a formal photo of the group (in contrast to the cover photo of them a bit lost in the long grass beside a Breton coast). When you keep unfolding the cover you get a panoramic view of a rocky Breton shore (3 CD width wide – 16 inches) with a wonderful variety of blues in the sky and the sea. It makes you want to take off your shoes and wade right into the little sandy alcove. The notes themselves include a number of other lovely photos, including a few more of the quartet. The text is trilingual in Breton, English and French (in that order), beginning with a short introduction to the quartet and Yves Ribis. Each of the ten pieces is introduced, noting its origins and sources of inspiration. Each musician also has the opportunity to acknowledge friends and family.

I liked this CD a great deal. It had a refreshing new sound to it with its presentation of even the most familiar tunes and melodies in a very interesting way. The musicians are all clearly masters of their instruments and the art of playing in quartet. While there was always precision to the interplay of instruments, there was also a feel of spontaneity and innovation.

Didier Squiban. Symphonie Bretagne.

L'OZ Production. L'OZ 31. 2000 57'24.

This June "Symphonie Bretagne" had its debut first at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival and then in Rennes and Brest—following the release of this CD at the end of May. This is an ambitious work—a composition in three movements, including the arrangement of some traditional tunes and Squiban's own compositions with Yann Fañch Kemener and Manu Lann Huel. Pierre-Yves

Moign—a composer whose innovative work has not been recognized as widely as I personally feel it deserves—does orchestration for the 45-member Orchestre de Bretagne, directed by Didier Benetti. Interwoven with the orchestral work are “solos” by Squiban on piano as well as some use of bombarde (Jossik Allot), saxophones (Bernard Le Dréau and René Goaer), accordion (Alain Trévarin) and percussion (Jean Chevalier). In addition, one has the 25-member vocal ensemble, Contrepoint, directed by Pierre-Yves Le Tortonnet which is used dramatically during the course of the symphony.

In the first movement I found the switch from the full orchestra to a “night club” sound with the jazzy swing of piano, sax and drums to be a bit jarring, but certainly in line with the idea that a symphony celebrating Brittany would naturally include a variety of musical styles. I liked the pairing of bombarde (and its milder version) with the orchestra for several dances and marches. Accordion was also used to evoke a more “traditional” sound which, when incorporated with the more classical sound of the orchestra’s instruments, brought a whole new feel to traditional dance tunes. The “Scottisch” at the end of the second movement almost had a Russian feel in the arrangement of accordion, choir and orchestra.

The transition from fuller orchestra and choir to smaller ensembles of instruments added a great variety to the music and a jazzier feel sometimes found with piano, sax and accordion served as a reminder that Breton music is a modern music drawing on many influences.

I have to admit that I got the sense that this symphony was a stringing together of short themes rather than a work with three “movements.” The seven segments of each movement were beautiful and interesting but I did not sense the beginning of a second or third movement—just the continuation of a flow of various themes. I found nothing in the CD notes to help guide an understanding of why there were three movements other than the fact that they were dedicated to three different people who inspired Squiban to undertake the symphony. The CD notes were beautiful with ten extraordinary photos of Breton coast and countryside by Michel Thersiquel, but they included a minimum of information about the symphony. No doubt I am trying a little too hard to find a story or hidden meaning to a work which is intended simply to pay homage in a grand way to Brittany and its rich musical heritage. It certainly does that successfully.

While many of the melodies and tunes you hear in the symphony are ones familiar to anyone (like me) who has listened to a lot of Didier Squiban’s fine work—rather than brand new music—the orchestration and combination of instruments and choir definitely give them a new spin. I like the symphony more each time I listen and congratulate Didier Squiban, Pierre-Yves Moign, and the Orchestre de Bretagne as well as the singers and musicians collaborating in this work for a fitting and beautiful tribute to Brittany.

Anne Auffret, Jean Baron, Michel Ghesquière.
Pedenn. Keltia Musique KMCD 109. 2000. 72’57.

There is probably no one in Brittany who is better known for her interpretation of the beautiful Breton religious hymns (“kantik” in Breton, “cantique” in French) than Anne Auffret. And her clear sweet voice is perfectly suited for this. A native Breton speaker from Bulat-Pestivien (near Guingamp), she has been performing these hymns in concert for many years and her first recording dates from the mid 1970s (Kanennou Santel, Velia 2230003).

On this CD called “Pedenn” (“prayer” in Breton), Anne Auffret sings fourteen hymns well known in the Treger and Upper Kernev areas of Brittany. While Anne’s voice alone is quite sufficient to convey the spirit of these hymns, one has the added power of bombarde and organ. And you have two performers also well versed in the music of the kantik—Jean Baron on bombarde and Michel Ghesquière on organ. Baron’s name is most often paired with Christian Annex—his partner in the traditional duo of biniou and bombarde. They have recorded dozens of albums and CDS (see Bro Nevez 67, August 1998, and 74, May 2000, for a few of the more recent ones). But Baron and Ghesquière are not exactly new acquaintances (see review in Bro Nevez 60, November 1996). On this CD they perform two instrumental “duets” as well as combine with the voice of Anne Auffret.

In most selections on this CD voice and bombarde alternate verses with the organ supporting them, but you often have the three in trio which works very nicely despite the fact that one might expect the bombarde to overpower the voice. There is an airy majesty to the sound of the bombarde, especially with the powerful performance by Ghesquière on a big church organ (perhaps at a peak in “Enor da gloar da virviken”). This was a nice contrast to the simpler beauty of the Celtic harp used by Anne Auffret to accompany herself in several selections.

The hymns on this CD are familiar to Bretons who attend Catholic masses and religious festivals such as the “pardon” where local saints are celebrated. And surely those for whom these melodies are part of their spiritual life will find inspiration in the performances by masters like Anne Auffret, Baron and Ghesquière. Notes to the CD include the Breton texts to each hymn as well as a short summary in French and English. A variety of topics are covered here—songs of offering, praise to God, songs of communion and purgatory, a song to implore penitence, songs of meditation, an Easter Angelus, and a song to enter the church and greet it. But, you don’t have to be a practicing Catholic to enjoy the beautiful melodies of Breton hymns.

The future of the Breton language will depend on its continued use in all aspects of Breton life—spiritual and secular alike. One can be thankful to Anne Auffret for bringing the beauty of traditional Breton hymns to the

attention of a wider public. And while the bombarde has been most often applied to making people dance in Brittany, its growing use by a number of fine musicians today in Brittany to interpret a rich heritage of religious melodies is certainly a happy development.

Bagad Men ha Tan & Doudou N'Diaye Rose.
Dakar. L'OZ Production. L'OZ 30/NV 3601-1. 2000.
51'43

Anyone who has listened to the music of Breton bagadoù knows that this is an ensemble capable of providing an incredible energy with the interplay of Scottish style bagpipes and bombardes and the rhythmic punch of percussion (snare, tenor and bass drums). The energy rises to a new level for the Bagad Men ha Tan in working with a group of some fifteen drummers from Senegal headed up by master drummer Doudou N'Diaye Rose (author of the Senegalese national anthem and internationally known artist). The earthy boom of the African drums is a wonderful contrast to the metallic hissing of the bagad's snare drums and drive of the pipes and bombardes.

I have only a limited acquaintance with African and Senegalese music, and was at first a bit disappointed that the drums did not seem to bring more complexity to the overall rhythm of the selections on the CD. But in listening a little more carefully the second and third time around, you learn to hear levels of drumming going on that you miss if you focus too much on the music of the pipes and bombardes. There is a certain melodic character to the Senegalese drums with their different pitches and tones that definitely adds a new texture to things. This is an interesting mix of instruments and melodies.

The majority of the selections on the CD are compositions by Pierrick Tanguy who is the director of the Bagad Men ha Tan. He has worked with the Bagad Kemperle for a number of years as well as with a number of Breton and other musicians of varied styles. The Bagad Men ha Tan is made up of sixteen musicians from some of the top bagads of Brittany (Lokoal-Mendon, Quimper, Quimperlé and Saint-Nazaire). Their aim is to go beyond the usual repertoire of the bagad (and that is already a pretty varied and open repertoire) in composing and performing with other musicians such as Doudou N'Diaye Rose. In 1998 they recorded a CD with bass fiddler Henri Texier for an innovative fusion of bagad and jazz (see Bro Nevez 67, August 1998).

While the melodies of the compositions on this CD are not wildly innovative their interest is in the ever-changing combination of bagpipes and bombardes—with the addition of biniou koz and accordion on several occasions. I particularly liked the low tenor bombarde, and the work of the bombardes as a whole added a great deal of zip to the music. There's lots of spice in the

interplay of bombarde and pipes, and the many layers of Senegalese drums certainly adds a dramatic element not easily achieved with the thinner sound of a bagad's percussion section.

While the Bagad Men ha Tan is clearly center stage and the drums of Doudou N'Diaye Rose's group seem to often be an "accompaniment", there is a spark to the interplay of winds and percussion. This music for the CD was recorded in Dakar between March 26th and 28th. I would guess that the musicians of these two groups have not worked together for a long time and did not have the opportunity to go through long rehearsals. While there is a tight mesh and precision in the interplay of instruments, there is also a sense of improvisation and freeness in this music.

CD notes give nothing but the names of tunes and their source as well as a listing of all the musicians in the Bagad Men ha Tan and Doudou N'Diaye Rose's group. There are wonderful photos of Dakar and the musicians as they perform together under an open outdoor "pavilion". It must have been quite an experience for the neighbors to hear their drummers combine forces with bombardes and bagpipes. And this is a CD with lots of force.

I like the powerful sound of this CD a lot, and I like it a little more each time I discover a layer of sound I missed the last time around. While this CD packs a lot of sound, I would guess that this pairing of bagad and Senegalese drums would be even better in live performance.

Cabestan. La mer est trop vieille pour qu'on se moque d'elle. Keltia Musique KMCD 110. 2000. 45'34.

Cabestan is a group with a maritime focus made up of Jean-Luc Creac'h, Thierry Decloux, Christina Desnos, Thierry Moreau and Bernard Simard. Christian Desbordes is the only one surviving from the original mid 1980s line-up, but Cabestan has always had a strong vocal and instrumental line-up of people who are knowledgeable about Brittany maritime history and traditions. This CD is a mix of newly composed songs and tunes with more traditional texts and music given a new twist with counter-rhythms and highly varied instrumental arrangements. In several selections one finds a taste of Quebec, brought to the band by Bernard Simard. This includes the wonderful percussive use of dancing feet and a certain swing that hints of Canada. Simard also brings his lovely voice to the group (see the review in Bro Nevez 74, May 2000).

Both traditional and newly composed song texts (all in French) include a nice mix of themes and rhythms—from the regular beat of work songs to the slower ramble of ballads. Song dominates with just one instrumental piece—a suite of dances, the scottische—composed by Desnos. Some topics addressed are perennial favorites

in the maritime tradition—separation from loved ones and the loss of life in storms at sea. A particularly lovely composition gives the title to the CD—"The sea is too old for one to make fun of her"—reminding us that the sea can take lives of those who don't respect her. Other texts are clearly contemporary such as "Noir total" which laments the inability to prevent oil slicks when those who get rich on the oil trade ignore poor ship conditions and do not care about the consequences of a wreck. I think we all hope that this will not become a perennial theme in the maritime song repertoire.

Another song addressing social conscience is "Esclaves", composed by Jean-Paul Ferrec to remind us that the richness of cities like Nantes, La Rochelle or Bordeaux was built on the slave trade in past centuries—a history to remember. On a lighter note is the satirical song "La javareuse" about "singers of maritime songs" who spring up everywhere, seeking the picturesque and nostalgic, dressing as sailors, learning a few classic tunes and recording a CD of authentic maritime songs. Five of the thirteen songs on the CD are traditional, but they are delivered in some new and very contemporary ways. I liked "Le navire de Bayonne"—a ballad about the challenge of surviving stormy seas. While sung in traditional style it had an interesting instrumental accompaniment using cello and accordion to give a rather mournful and menacing feel.

I liked the varied voices on this CD—from the sweet higher voice of Bernard Simard to the low and rougher sound of Christian Desnos (which I like a great deal and find well suited to both the slower ballads and rhythmic work songs in its power). Thierry Decloux also takes the lead with a voice somewhere in between the sweetness of Simard and harder sound of Desnos. The choruses could have been a bit more spirited; sometimes they sounded unenthusiastic in contrast to the forcefulness of Desnos' lead.

The creativity in instrumental accompaniment to songs has always been one of Cabestan's strengths, and this sets them apart from most other maritime groups I have heard. A variety of instruments are used, from the accordion (most often found with maritime song) to acoustic and electric guitar, fiddle, harmonica, cello and the veuze—the mellow bagpipe unique to southeastern Brittany and the north of Vendée. Accompaniment never overwhelmed the voice, although sometimes it had a way of jarring one's expectations of where the beat would be. Whether a simple backup by solo guitar or accordion or thicker grouping of several instruments, the accompaniment always enhanced the song performance.

Jacket notes provide a very short introduction to each selection plus the complete text (in French).

The three most recent recordings by Cabestan are: Fortunes de mer (Chasse-Marée SCM 028. 1993), Tempête pour sortir. (Keltia Musique KM 58, 1995),

and Femmes de marin. (Keltia Musique KMCD 81. 1998--see review in Bro Nevez 66, May 1998)

Guillemer. Escale.
L'OZ Production L'OZ 32. 2000. 37'25.

Guillemer is another maritime group, headed up by Hervé Guillemer who composed all eleven songs on this new CD. Also in the group, joining in on choruses or providing accordion or guitar accompaniment are Pierre Cosmao, Claude Briant and Rémi Martin.

Compared to Cabestan, Guillemer is a little more stereotypically "maritime" in style, but includes some interesting use of instrumental back up and some especially nice accordion work. I found a certain sameness to the songs overall, but liked "Fils des vents" with its strange shifts of key from one verse to another—a bit off-putting at first but interesting. "Tournement en deferlantes" included some nice shifts in rhythm and varied use of instruments. But this was a difficult CD for me to really warm up to.

The texts have a certain poetry, but I couldn't seem to find a compelling story line to follow in many cases. But, I'm not a person with a passion for the maritime, and that no doubt plays a factor in my coolness here. Themes included life on board sailing ships, the misery of a sailor grown too old to go to sea, a son who becomes a pirate so mothers like his own will not die of poverty when their husbands die at sea, and fishermen who discover the submerged city of Ys. The closing song "Brisants" seemed to epitomize an overall melancholy to the texts on this CD with their emphasis on the miserable and lonely life of sailors, regret for the passing of grand old sailing ships, and lack of a strong economy where Breton fishermen could earn a good living. The excruciatingly slow pace and downright drone of the voice on this closing selection emphasized the sad litany of miseries outlined in the song text.

I have to admit that I did not find the voices of Guillemer endearing. To me, they lacked forcefulness and seemed sometimes out of tune. The harmonies were nice, but didn't serve to enhance the drama or emotion of the songs. I suppose one could grow fond of the particular voice quality and "sound" of this group, but I just couldn't get engaged.

The CD comes with a very attractive cardboard cover. Jacket notes include each song text, but in a small white print on orange background that made them impossible for me to read without the help of a strong light.

While this CD did not appeal to me personally, those with a strong interest in maritime themes will find this an interesting addition to the varied repertoire of maritime music originating in Brittany.

Congratulations to Kendalc'h for 50 Years of Work for the Breton Culture

This May Kendalc'h celebrated fifty years of work for Breton music and culture. This federation includes today some 12,000 members who are largely participants in "cercles celtiques" or "Celtic Circles". These are groups which foster Breton dance, music and song—often working in pair with a bagad. While dance has been at the center of activity for the "Circles" and dancers dress in the traditional costumes for parades and festivals, what may look like nostalgic "folklore" is definitely not what Kendalc'h is all about. It is about pride, and the thousands of young people who have participated in a group under the wing of Kendalc'h have learned quite a few dance steps, but also a great about their cultural roots and history. The idea is not to look to the past but to learn how to better incorporate ones Breton heritage into contemporary life and to create new traditions.

Although it is easy to take the popularity of Breton dance and music for granted today, in the 1950s when Kendalc'h started its work, expressing pride in being Breton and promoting traditional styles of music and dance was viewed as a pretty crazy (and radical) thing to do. Young people joined "Celtic Circles" because they offered a social activity not readily available during that period, but in learning dances and songs some also learned for the first time about Breton history and the Breton language. It is difficult to underestimate the role Kendalc'h played in fostering a positive Breton identity—and in terms of music, it has always fostered a forward-looking creativity. And this has also been true for War 'l Leur, another federation of dance groups, as well as the Bodadeg ar Somerien (founded in 1943) which supports piping and the organization of bagadoù.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary Kendalc'h held a five-day festival in Quimper in May. This offered an opportunity for Celtic Circles to participate in grand new choreographic creations such as "Hentoù an dans," a work including some 1,000 dancers and over 100 musicians. "Linvdenn Ker Is" was an oratorio for choir and orchestra by René Abjean—a fitting inclusion in the festival since Kendalc'h has spearheaded the promotion of choral music in the Breton language with an annual contest/festival called Breizh a gan, held in December. And the festival also featured some of Brittany's best known musicians and singers—including Yann Fañch Kemener, Didier Squiban, Iffig Troadec, Gilles Servat, Soig Siberil, the group Anjel I.K. Certainly included at the center of the week's celebration were many of Kendalc'h "Circles" who could show off the creativity and talent these groups foster.

The work of Kendalc'h is certainly not yet over, and new "Circles" are formed in Brittany all the time to continue to encourage young people to learn about their heritage and build a strong future for its expression.

* * *

FESTIVALS IN BRITTANY

By the time I get good information about summer festivals in Brittany, the summer is half gone. But one can randomly travel in Brittany during July and August and come upon hundreds of concerts and festivals ... not to mention art exhibits and wonderful small museums on every topic. Those who really want the complete listing are directed to Armor magazine. Its July/August issue includes over 50 pages of listings and descriptions of most of the major festivals. This is a monthly magazine of some 70-80 pages with a strong focus on business and economics, but covering all aspects of Breton culture. I would be happy to provide anyone interested with more information. There is an e-mail address for Armor: armormagazine@wanadoo.fr

Festival des vieilles charrues (July 14, 21-23, 2000)

(Much of the information for this note was drawn from an article in Ar Men 113, juillet 2000)

This "Festival of old plows" originated as a "counter-festival" to the "Festival des Vieilles Gréements" (Festival of Old Boats). Inland Bretons had grown tired of all the attention the maritime festivals were getting and wanted to show that there was life in the middle of Brittany as well. The first festival took place in the village of Landeleau in 1992 and was not lacking in humor. Besides great music, the festival has included an annual "tossing the kabig" contest (a kabig is a

maritime jacket) and the “Armorica Cup” where human teams compete in plowing a nice straight furrow (judged by local experts).

But while its beginnings were pretty humble, this festival has grown to be one of the premier rock festivals in Europe and is called the “Woodstock of Brittany” (or “Koatstock” in Breton). By 1995, 10,000 people were coming to the festival which was lining up acts like the Blues Brothers and charging a low admission. It was a financial risk for the organizers, but the festival has continued to grow. By 1997 40,000 people were attending to see James Brown among a number of other artists. In 1999 American Ben Harper impressed Bretons when he arrived on stage wrapped in a gwenn ha du (Breton flag). But the festival has also featured traditional Breton music along with world pop stars.

When the festival drew over 100,000 people in 1998 it generously contributed one million francs to the Diwan high school which was to be established in Carhaix at the Kerampuill site where the festival has moved to accommodate the huge crowds. “Vieilles Charrues” has also invested in the “technopôle” at that site which is to include the festival office as well as Ofis ar Brezhoneg, Kendalc’h offices, and a major media center. Starting this fall 2000 the site will also include a campus for the Université de Bretagne Occidentale, for Breton studies with a specialty in media development.

Now in its 9th year, the Festival of Old Plows has added a pre-festival event called “Bagadañs”—a championship contest for bagadoù (Breton bagpipe bands) in the 5th category (some 57 of them!) held the weekend before. This included a big parade and performance of a creation by the federation of dance troupes “War ‘l Leur” called “Dañs ar Vuhez” with some 90 dancers and 25 musicians. This was followed by a concert by Altan and Gwenc’hlan.

During the weekend of the actual festival, July 21 to 23, headliners included Alan Stivell, The Cranberries, William Sheller, Joe Cocker, Louise Attaque, Eddy Mitchell, Beck, and Joan Baez, to name just a few. With a cost of just 300 francs (about \$45) for the whole weekend and free camping available nearby, the festival drew over 150,000 people this year. While this is a challenge for security and traffic, the festival has a positive impact on the local economy.

As the organizers had always intended, the festival definitely demonstrates the vitality of central western Brittany—by no means the wasteland it has been presumed by many to be, but an area more and more likely to draw young families as Carhaix develops as a center of culture and new technology.

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A LISTING OF (SOME) SUMMER FESTIVALS IN BRITTANY

I did not attempt to go into any detail in the following listing and certainly did not include every single festival in Brittany. Those listed below include a combination of music, dance, usually a fest noz or two, traditional sports and games, theater, arts and children’s activities. Most of them are annual and the dates would be about the same each year. One should note that many towns in Brittany also organize series of concerts during the summer months. These include classical, jazz, and more traditional Breton performers. Information was gleaned from Armor 365 (juin 2000), Armor 366 (juillet/août 2000), Breizh Info 181 (5 juillet 2000), and the internet sites for Al Levrig, Dastum, and Le Telegramme.

Rencontre Internationale de la Clarinette, June 1-4, Glomel (Côtes d’Armor)

12th year of this international gathering of traditional clarinet players organized by Paotred an Dreujenn Gaol. Besides the clarinet of Brittany, this year’s event featured gypsy singers/musicians from Romania and a New Orleans jazz group, the Mahogany Brass Band.

Fête de la Bouèze, June 11, Bazouges (Ille-et-Vilaine)

This festival to celebrate Gallo music and dance includes countryside hikes with music, dinners where musicians perform during the course of the meal, and lots of performances and dancing. This year musicians from Quebec were invited.

Festival Anne de Bretagne, June 17-25, (Loire-Atlantique)

Held in Blain this year the festival moves to a different town each year to promote Breton traditions in the Loire-Atlantique. Besides lots of music and dance there is often a focus on Breton history.

Monterfil---La Gallesie en Fête, June 24-25, Monterfil (Ille-et-Vilaine)

A weekend festival packed with music and dance of Gallo Brittany. Feasting is also given a strong place.

Musiques Traditionnelles à Châteaugiron, June 30-July 2, Châteaugiron (Ille-et-Vilaine)
Second year for this festival initiated by the organization "Rimandelle".

Folklores du Monde, July 1-9, St. Malo, (Ille-et-Vilaine)
Festival with some 1,500 dancers, singers and musicians from 15 countries, including concerts and workshops, Breton dance lessons and opportunity to dance.

Tombées de la Nuit, July 3-8, Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine)
In its 21st year, this festival has always given a strong place to contemporary theater and poetry for children as well as adults, as well as all styles of music. Dastum has organized a series of performances on the more traditional end. This year Africa was featured with small intimate day-time events as well as evening concerts. The festival is always international and includes performers from other areas of France, Ireland, Quebec, etc. Some of the Bretons featured this year were Alan Stivell, the Molard brothers, Bagad Men ha Tan and Doudou N'Diaye Rose, Skolvan, and Ours du Scorff.

Festival International de la Baie, July 3-8, Concarneau (Finistère)
Held for the 19th year this features traditional costumes and dances by 400 artists from 11 countries and 5 continents.

Tro Heol/Tournesoll, July, Ploemeur, (Morbihan)
Four Diwan schools (Lorient, Baud, Vannes, and Auray) organize this annual festival with theater, games and performances by children of the schools.

Musiques sur l'Île, July 4-8, Nantes (Loire-Atlantique)
International line-up of singers and musicians from Cape Verde, Brazil and Europe including workshops as well as concerts.

Festival Voix des Pays, July 7-9, Fougères, (Ille-et-Vilaine)
The 8th year for this festival which focuses on singers from Brittany as well as a number of other countries of traditional and less traditional styles.

Fête "1900" à Gouarec, July 8-9, Goarec (Côtes d'Armor)
While showing off life of the turn of the century, this festival includes dancing, a piping contest, a countryside walk to music, and music with dinner, as well as dancing.

Gouel an Aberiou, July 9-11, Aber-Wrac'h (Finistère)
Festival with a maritime theme including lots of chances to see old boats and how they operate, seaweed collection in Brittany, and life boat maneuvers. Films, sports and lots of music and dance are also part of the festival.

Rencontres Internationales de Harpes Celtiques, July 9-16, Dinan (Ille-et-Vilaine)
17th year for this gathering of harpists which includes contests and concerts, and workshops on history, construction and performances styles.

Kann al Loar, July 12-16, Landerneau (Finistère)
Daytime activities include music, traditional sports, dance lessons and dancing, visits to old boats on the Elorn river, art and literature stands, theater (in Breton) and feasting! A fest noz closes each evening. Great line-up of Breton musicians.

Mondial'Folk à Plozévet, July 12-16, Plozévet (Finistère)
Nice line-up of musicians from Brittany but also from Siberia, Russia, Belgium, Bolivia, China, Argentina—800 artists from 10 countries parade and perform on the 16th. Activities for children as well as dinners and hikes to music also included.

Brest 2000, July 13-17 (Finistère)
An international maritime festival with 20,000 sailors parading all types of sailing and rowed vessels (some 2,500 of them) from over 20 countries. Besides the boats, this festival includes lots of concerts

Festival de Musiques Actuelles, July 14-15, Saint Nolff (Morbihan)
Festival to feature pop, hip-hop, techno, funk, fusion ... with 14 groups from different worlds.

Musiques Mosaïque, July 14-16, Quimperlé (Finistère)

Tenth year for this festival which includes rock bands, bagadou and Breton dance troupes ... and lots of opportunities for festival goers to dance.

Fête de la Crêpe, July 15-16, Gourin (Morbihan)

Demonstration and eating of crêpes made the “old way” with music, dance and art exhibits.

Douarnenez 2000, July 17-21 (Finistère)

A bit the same idea as Brest 2000 with a few less boats but including a sea chantey contest and a variety of port activity.

Assemblées Gallèses, July 17-22, Chèze, Bréhan, Lumieux (Côtes d’Armor)

Concerts, contests, dinners with music and fest noz featuring Gallo music and dance.

Festival de Cornouaille, July 17-23, Quimper (Finistère)

One of the oldest festivals in Brittany this one began in 1923. It includes a parade of bagadoù (massed bands) of some 500 bagpipe and bombarde players and an even larger gathering of dancers in the beautiful costumes of Brittany. The festival also includes theater (in Breton), rock-Celtic concerts, jazz and traditional Breton artists. A new creation is always featured and this year a piece called “Excalibur” featured some 100 musicians. This festival has also had an international angle and this year featured Noa from Israel, Asturian piper Hévia, a Latin-Celtic band called Celtas Cortas, as well as the Senegal star Youssou N’Dour.

Fête du Port, August 4-6, Redon (Ille-et-Vilaine)

Includes a flotilla of old boats on the Vilaine River and lots of performances by maritime groups of Brittany, including a Mass held on a boat.

Festival Interceltique de Lorient, August 4-13 (Morbihan)

This is the 30th year for this huge festival which includes some 4,500 performers and 450,000 visitors. Highlights this year include a performance of Dan ar Bras’ “Heritage des Celtes.” Concerts by the Chieftans, Gaelic Storm, Capercaillie, as well as a number of Brittany’s top musicians. Americans will have a concert including Eileen Ivers, Deborah Henson-Conant, and Clandestine. This festival includes the championship contest for the top three levels of bagadoù and numerous parades and performances by dance groups from all the Celtic countries. If all that weren’t enough you also have a performance of Shaun Davey’s “The Brendan Voyage” and “The Pilgrim” featuring Gilles Servat, Carlos Nuñez and Liam O’Flynn. Throughout the festival there are exhibits of art, various workshops and exhibits and food. A fest noz closes things every night.

Les Ajoncs d’Or, August 5-6, Maroué (Côtes d’Armor)

23rd year for this festival which includes concerts and festoù-noz, including musical groups from Argentina and other regions of France as well as Brittany.

Festival Celtique à Guérande, August 9-13, Guérande (Loire-Atlantique)

More than 600 artists due for the 11th year of this festival which features Breton dance and music.

Les Escales Vagabondent, August 11-12, St. Nazaire (Loire-Atlantique)

Fusion of world musics from several continents including traditional and pop artists.

Festival de Pluvigner, August 11, 14-15, Pluvigner (Morbihan)

An international touch in the music in this festival with a choir from Toulouse, Gregorian chant, the Kerry orchestra from Ireland, and lots of Breton singers and groups.

Festival du Bout du Monde, August 12-13, Crozon (Finistère)

This is a new international festival including this year Alan Stivel and Eric Marchand and the Taraf de Carancebes from Brittany with a number of international stars (ex. Johnny Cleg and Idir) from Africa, India, South America ...

Festival des Hortensias, August 12-13, Perros-Guirrec (Côtes d’Armor)

Includes parades, concerts, maritime song, dance groups and bagadou as well as the choreographic creation “Dañs ar Vuhez” from War ’1 Leur

Festival Plinn du Danouët, August 12-15, Bourbriac (Côtes d'Armor)

Traditional games, activities for children, concerts and theater as well as the championship contests for the dance plinn for sonneurs de couple and dancers.

Festival de la Danse Bretonne et de la Saint-Loup, August 12-20, Guingamp (Côtes d'Armor)

This includes a week of concerts by names such as Carlos Nuñez, Dubliners, Jacques Pellen and his Celtic Procession, and Denez Prigent, as well as two choral works and the Kevernn Alre. This leads up to a weekend of championship contests for Breton dance groups (cercles celtiques).

Festival de la danse Léon, August 14-20, Sizun, Commana, St. Sauveur, ... (Finistère)

Moving to various towns in the Léon area of Brittany this is the first year for this festival which features traditional dance and music of the area. The festival will include workshops on local traditions as well as visits to various sites, concerts and dancing, and feasting.

Festival Ar Oastell, August 14-20, Guerlesquin (Finistère)

Nice line-up of theater, dance groups, concerts (with music of many styles), traditional games, dinners with music, and festoù-noz..

Fête des Filets Bleu, August 15-20, Concarneau (Finistère)

Dating from 1905, this was first a charity event to benefit fishermen going through hard economic times organized by artists who haunted the picturesque town. Today the festival includes bagadoù, dancers and costumes, and traditional Breton games with each evening closing with a fest noz.

Les Nuits Celtes de Muzillac, August 18-20, Muzillac (Morbihan)

A mixture of all types of music from traditional Breton song to the "Tambours du Bronx".

La Nuit de Kerlouan, August 19, Kerlouan (Finistère)

Here's a festival packed into one night (from 5 pm until dawn). Concerts feature some of Brittany's best followed by some 20 groups, singers, sonneurs de couple for dancing.

Gouel ar filmoù/Festival de Cinéma, August 19-26, Douarnenez (Finistère)

23rd year for this film festival which features a different cultural area each year (this year it is the various cultures and peoples in Italy). There are also workshops on film and Italy, a book display, activities for children and a fest noz on the Wednesday of the festival with a closing concert by the Italian Group Zoe. This offers the chance to also see what Bretons are doing with film.

Festival Dañs Fisel, August 24-27, Rostrenen (Côtes d'Armor)

This is the 28th year from this festival featuring the dance called "fisel". Included are workshops on traditional song and music, exhibits of crafts, concerts and festoù-noz. Central are the contests for biniou/bombarde, clarinet (treujenn gaol), kan ha diskanañ singing and dancers for the spectacular fisel.

* * *

A NEW FESTIVAL – Festival d'été au Parlement de Bretagne.

During July and August a number of events are being held at the newly restored Parliament of Brittany in Rennes. This historic building was largely destroyed in a fire in February 1994. While the building has been the site for French judicial proceedings since the Revolution, it carries strong symbolism as a seat of political decision making for a Brittany which remained independent in many important judicial areas even after annexation to France in the 16th century.

To mark the reopening of the Parliament Building a variety of events are taking place in July and August—from outdoor films projected on the building's walls to photography and art shows by contemporary artists and chamber music concerts. Three Breton singers and storytellers will perform: Patrick Ewen, Lucien Gourong and Alain Le Goff. And master singer and story teller Albert Poulain and friends from the Redon area will bring music and tales to a series of dinner gatherings. During four weekends visitors will have the opportunity to tour the restored rooms of the building and learn some of its history.

For more information contact: ARAP, Cour d'Appel de Rennes, CS 66423, 35064 Rennes

Telephone: 06 88 06 44 88 or visit the web site: www.parlement-bretagne.com

The U.S. ICDBL at the Potomac Celtic Festival, June 10-11, 2000

A "report" from Lois Kuter

It seems like a million years ago, but just this past June fifteen ICDBL Members gathered at the Potomac Celtic Festival in Leesburg, Virginia. "Gathered" is not quite the right word, since we never really all got together in one place since many of us participated as performers and workshop givers—and when we could we tried to attend performances of some of the many fine artists at the festival. From Brittany—which was the "featured" country this year—the festival had Alan Stivell and the Bagad de Lann-Bihoué. Unfortunately Nolwenn Monjarret who has so wonderfully presented Breton song and dance at the past four or five festivals was not able to make it this year. We missed her.

The ICDBL information tent was our central meeting point and we managed to keep it well staffed during the two days of the weekend. The 95-99 degree weather and relentless sun required heroic work from a number of us to help set up tents and displays and make ourselves available to talk to the many people who visited the ICDBL tent. No matter how hard one tried, it was impossible to avoid the heat and blazing sun!

A special thank you needs to go to Susan Baker for all her work to insure the success of our raffle drawings (we earned \$95 for Diwan!), and for the design and execution of the lovely new button for the U.S. ICDBL. And thanks also to Philippe Berthier who proudly carried the Breton flag for us in the parade of Clans and Societies on both Saturday and Sunday (and to his daughter Stephanie who helped in a number of ways). As usual John Trexler and Virginia Turnage ("The Dronemaster and The Dancer") did a great job of presenting the music and dance of Brittany in their many performances during the weekend—assisted by Breton dance teacher Matt Cosgrove. And Jan Zollars also did a large share to bring Breton dance to life with her workshops. Despite the heat and humidity, it was relaxing to dance a gavotte or two—especially when you could do it to the singing of Alan Stivell and the piping of the Bagad de Lann Bihoué!

Others who dutifully pitched in at the ICDBL tent to talk to visitors and help them with information about Brittany and the ICDBL included Ben Pecson, Richard and Jean Davies, Jim Kerr, Mary Primel (who traveled all the way from Georgia), David Scott (and family), and Matthew Webb. And there were a few other ICDBL members at the festival who had other duties at other tents or performances: Mike Rackers travelling from Ohio with a pipe band, Bill Reese helping to organize poetry workshops, Cheryl Mitchell at her Welsh tent, and Liam Ó Caiside giving Scottish Gaelic workshops. Please forgive me if I left anyone out!

The many roles ICDBL members played at the festival (and I also did two Breton language workshops) meant that we were never able to come together as one big group (no group photo!!). Since none of us are from Leesburg and we were scattered in different hotels and homes, there were challenges in coordinating any activity as a group. Unfortunately, we were

not able to organize a formal ICDBL "banquet" for Saturday evening, but I am sure that the nine of us who managed to get together that evening will not forget our meal at "Faulty Towers" where the waitress was in a constant state of panic, things crashed in the kitchen, and there wasn't quite enough silverware to go around the table. We should have suspected something when we noticed we were the only ones there that evening! But, it was certainly a pleasure to have Alan Stivell as our guest for this unusual dining experience. The food was not exceptional, but as John Trexler gratefully noted, it was nice to be indoors in a cool place.

As was the case for the six past years as well, I feel that one of our most important roles at the festival was in having an ICDBL tent where people could come with questions and get the information they needed to learn more about Brittany, its language and music. It was nice to expand our tent space this year and add a book display. For our efforts we won the "Best Clan/Society Tent" award and I carried home a lovely plaque we can display next year. Besides a nice appearance, tents are judged for their "educational" role and the presence of knowledgeable people. So, I thank all who put in some time to host/hostess the tent—even if just for a short time during the weekend. We could not have done it without you!

I think it is quite safe to say that through its presence at such a festival, the U.S. ICDBL—whether represented by just a few of us or a large number—plays an important role in helping Americans discover and better appreciate the Breton language, music and culture. This year's festival was memorable not only for the great music (and extreme heat) but for the chance to get together and share so many talents and personalities. And if there is anything that can be said for members of the U.S. ICDBL—we have personality!

* * *

The ICDBL at Other Festivals?

It is clear that there is a growing interest in the U.S.--finally—to recognize that "Celtic" refers not just to Ireland and Scotland but to Brittany, Wales, Cornwall and the Isle of Man as well (and many also extend it to Galicia and Asturias in Spain). While there is work to be done to help people understand that it is the Celtic languages that are at the heart of the adjective "Celtic" it is good to see interest growing. And with this interest, "Celtic" festivals in the States are trying to find representation from all of the Celtic countries at their festivals. This is a big challenge for festivals with small budgets who cannot bring musicians over from across the Atlantic. There are only a handful of musicians in the U.S. who perform Breton music, and I can't think of too many organizations or individuals able to put up a good information stand for Brittany!

But, a number of ICDBL members have put up displays and an information area in festivals over the years and this is an area where most members can certainly contribute. And I hope we can develop this role.

And here's a festival to consider ... This spring we were contacted by the Museum Village in Monroe, New York (50 miles north of New York City), which was organizing a Celtic festival for the first time this year. Because their date—June 10—overlapped with the Potomac Celtic Festival I could not go, but perhaps dates will not be a problem in a future year. We did send some flyers to the Museum Village Celtic Festival (for which they were grateful) and I thank them in return for their concern that Brittany be somehow represented at their festival. I ask ICDBL Members in New York or within a reasonable travel distance of Monroe to consider putting together a stand for next year. We already have some good flyers and can help out with poster displays.

* * *

ICDBL Decals and Buttons

When we have had our information tent at the Potomac Festival we found that it was pretty easy to give out flyers which people took home to digest. And while we have not recruited a huge number of new ICDBL Members or Bro Nevez subscribers on the spot, festival-goers have been willing to pitch in and purchase an ICDBL decal or button.

This year we had a wonderful new button designed by Susan Baker which was very popular. And we found this made a great item to give away to people—such as Alan Stivell and the members of the Bagad de Lann Bihoué. If any of you have the chance to set up an information table (where you are permitted to sell decals or buttons) contact me and we can get you some. Or, if anyone is planning to travel to Brittany, you might consider taking along a small stock of buttons or decals as a little gift to give to people you might meet. Given our very tight budget, it is important that we at least break even on the expense of producing the buttons, but I will try to give you a good price if you want to purchase a handful (or more).

Below is a reproduction of each of these items—life size—which you also found on the front cover of this Bro Nevez issue.



EDITORS NOTE: Every year I receive notice of the North American Northumbrian Piper's Convention the day after the May issue of Bro Nevez goes out in the mail. It never fails. I suspect that most pipers here in the U.S. are already on the mailing list for this annual event, but if not, be sure to contact Alan Jones (his address is at the end of the notice which follows).



THE 14th ANNUAL NORTH AMERICAN NORTHUMBRIAN PIPERS' CONVENTION – 18th, 19th, 20th & 21st OF AUGUST 2000

Moves to its NEW LOCATION in ESSEX, NEW YORK, U.S.A.
(Ferry directly from Charlotte, Vermont, to Essex, N.Y.)

An educational weekend set in the picturesque and historic town of Essex, on the shores of beautiful Lake Champlain.

Educational Workshops - Folk Dance/Dance demonstrations - Grand Piping Concert

A star studded line up of performers including:

From Northumberland, England: Colin Ross – Reknowned Northumbrian piper, pipe maker and fiddler (of The High Level Ranters).

From Northumberland, England: Chris Ormston - Northumbrian, Border & Scottish smallpipe player (One of the worlds finest Northumbrian pipers).

From Ireland: Paddy Keenan - Uilleann piper (One of the world's finest Irish pipers).

From Scotland: Gordon Mooney - Border, & Scottish & Northumbrian smallpipe player (Key figure in the revival of the Scottish Lowland pipes, and a true master piper).

From Bulgaria: Vasil Bebelev - (Thracian/Rhodope Kaba) Gadja player (One of the world's finest).

From Brittany, France: Alain Leroux - Breton fiddler, singer & bouzouki player (Of Ad Vielle Que Pourra).

From Scotland: Ray Fisher - traditional Scottish folk singer (Of the reknowned Fisher family).

From Ontario, Canada: Jim MacGillivray - Highland & Scottish smallpipe (One of the world's finest Highland pipers).

From the United States (California): Sean Folsom - player of all world bagpipes (A true master piper).

From Ireland: Peter Maguire – Master traditional Irish flute & whistle player.

From Islay, Scotland: Watkin Lees -Uilleann & Highland piper – Great player of both instruments. Reed maker.

From the United States: Brian MacCandless - Historian, maker & player of Pastoral & other bagpipes.

From Wales/Canada: Alan Jones – Pipe collector and player of various bagpipes.

From Quebec, Canada: Yves Moreau - Dance instructor.

From Quebec, Canada: Francois Pellerin - whistle/low whistle. A really fine player interpreting the traditional music of Quebec & Ireland.

From England/Canada: Fiddlers Ralph Thompson, Laurence Beaudry, & Liette Remon.

From France/Quebec: French bagpipe players, including Serge Sokolski – musette, Gilles Plante - Veuze, Nicola Gerardin - Grande Bourbonnais, & Christophe Garenc & Pierrick Sauvage (Brittany) – bombardes.

From Nova Scotia/Quebec, Canada: Ken MacKenzie – Highland, Shuttle, & Scottish Smallpipes – a fine player of all instruments.

Aitken's Volunteers – local fife & drum band, led by Bill James. Demonstrations and reenactments, with local historical talks/discussions.

Historian, Northumbrian piper & pipe collector **Lance Robson**, from Northumberland, England, and also **Jon Swayne**, renowned pipe maker & piper (Blowzabella) from England, are also anticipated to be in attendance.

Many other musicians from French Canada (Quebec) and elsewhere, Irish & Scottish traditional dancers, Balkan dancing & much much more.

FRIDAY 18th - INTRODUCTORY CONCERT (Commencing 7:30 pm)

SATURDAY 19th - MINI CONCERT/FOLK DANCE (Commencing 8:00 pm) featuring Northumbrian, Scottish, Irish, Breton, Quebec & Balkan dances & music.

SUNDAY 20th - GRAND PIPING CONCERT (Commencing 8:00 pm) - featuring many different pipes, pipers & other traditional musicians.

RECITALS, LECTURES, WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS, SESSIONS, SURPRISE GUESTS & much much more throughout the weekend.

For registration & further info: contact Alan Jones, P.O. Box 130, Rouses Point, N.Y. 12979; Tel.: 514-849-2944 (in Canada - 2000 only) E-MAIL: alanj@cae.ca

For local accommodation information, contact: Kim Riley at the Lake Champlain/Essex County Visitors Bureau – Tel: 518 597 4646 Fax: 518 597 4648 E-mail: lcvisit@capital.net

For Convention & other general and local information in Essex, you may contact: Donna Lou Sonnet @ 518 963 7494 or Lois at the Essex Town Hall @ 518 963 4287.

A web site and Convention specific E-mail address is anticipated to be available shortly.

TRAVELS IN BRITTANY – An Account from 1915

From time to time in the pages of Bro Nevez I have reproduced excerpts from travel writings about Brittany from the 19th and early 20th century. These sometimes provide interesting observations of a specific place and period, but some writers are better than others in accurately describing what they see. Many travel writers of the 19th and early 20th century dwell on stereotypes—sometimes positive, but usually pretty negative. Accurate ethnographic detail is not a strong point in the travel account which follows. You will find, for example, a rather unusual description of a coiffe from the Bigouden area of Brittany. But, this account does give you a good idea of some of the negative stereotypes and personal opinions travel writers felt free to include in their work.

The following excerpt is from an article by Arthur Stanley Riggs called “The Beauties of France” published in The National Geographic Magazine, Vol. 28, no. 5, November 1915.

BRITTANY: THE PURITAN PROVINCE

The real Brittany is an open, wind-threshed, compelling country of gray and green, a hardy province able to withstand the buffeting of the sea and its gales, inhabited by a race who fear only God and the sea, but man not at all. They live in and by the sea—and the sea by them. Their clouds of blue nets hang high in the sun from gleaming brown mast and yard in the harbor of Douarnenez, the symbol of their victories. And in the nave of many a little country church throughout Brittany the Sea has her symbol—a waiting catafalque.

The Breton takes his religion with the seriousness of a Puritan. All over France crosses rise by the wayside, where the peasant may pour out his simple soul in prayer and forget for one refreshing moment the burden and heat of the day; and in Dauphiné there are miniature crosses, even in the fields, for the birds; but in Brittany the cross is often a great Calvary, with the figure of the Christ crucified between the thieves. Sometimes, as at Pleyben it surmounts a structure like a Roman triumphal arch.

At Plougastel the most wonderful specimen of all has a great pedestal covered with curiously rustic figures which speak the patois of the people and portray the story of the Passion on the sloping ground of Golgotha, while below them the beautiful high-relief frieze supplements the more striking details with its quieter scenes. By

cross-road and in churchyard these weird monuments give a bizarre touch that is unforgettable. These calvaries are no mere matter of architecture, either; they stand for the people. The churches themselves throughout the province are relatively simple and austere. It is the human side of Brittany, the quaint, artless, undemonstrative people and their customs and costumes that claim attention most of all.

Quaint Penitential Services

The pardons, those penitential services to which the people come to be purged of sin, are amazing demonstrations of faith and superstition—and wonderful costumes. Every town or region has its own variation of costume and colors, and a pardon crowd is as brilliant and full of contrast as a cloud of butterflies. Some of the women's costumes—hairlooms, every one—are exceedingly rich and costly.

Those of Pont l'Abbé and Quimper are of fine black broadcloth, banded heavily with black velvet. The tight bodice is ablaze in front with thick, heavy, brilliant embroidery—all done by old men—in vivid crimsons, gold, orange, salmon, blues and greens. Over the full skirt is a fine silken apron of delicate lavender, green, pink, or cream, exquisitely embroidered. But it is the *bigouden*, or head-dress, that is most remarkable—a tight brown straw casque over the forehead and

crown, broad black velvet earmuffs and bands, and a touch of filmy white.

Even the littlest children are in costume on pardon days, and the tinier they are, the droller they look, though not so droll as papa, with his baggy gray or blue trousers, short jacket, embroidered clerical-style vest, and shovel beaver, with two long black velvet ribbons dangling down his back. There are other costumes in Brittany which are prettier, but none so characteristic.

The Marriage Mart at Pont l'Abbé

Pont l'Abbé has an amusing side-show to its pardon in the marriage mart that draws its own interested crowd. Any young woman who wishes a husband poses against the churchyard fence with her similarly wistful sisters, and love-lorn swains march up and down the line, inspecting with the sheepish gravity the occasion requires. Once suited, however, the Breton views his new property as a little less valuable than one of his great "beefs," or steers.

The weddings themselves are vastly more human and interesting than our own, and in them all the childlike gaiety of a simple and unaffected people comes out spontaneously. The dual ceremony—in church and town hall—once over, the newlyweds and their attendant friends march out into the street by couples, and often enjoy a dance in front of the cathedral or church where the religious ceremony has taken place; and the music is furnished, of all things, by the bagpipes. The Breton has a more euphonious name for that instrument of torture. He calls it the *binious*, but it sounds quite as villainous when it skirls as any Scot pipe ever can.

After the dance in the street, when there is one, the procession forms again, led by the pipers, and goes merrily off to the home of the bride for a wedding feast; but, before they enter, the guests shake up a very satisfactory appetite in a dance curiously like the Catalan Sardanas as it is still seen in Barcelona, Spain.

A Breton Wedding Dance

With the pipers, smock-frocked and beribboned, standing in the rear, the wedding guests join hands, with the bride and groom in a huge circle, and begin to sway about in an interesting sort of adults' ring-around-a-rosy. The steps are very complicated, each dancer not only moving about the periphery of the circle, but also executing a solo dance of an exceedingly lively cadence as he does so. The effect is very pleasing. Investigation developed the fact that the dance is believed to have had a Druid origin as a ceremonial thanksgiving, which, in the course of centuries, came to be used as an hymeneal dance only.

Another occasion for their gathering, the cattle market, is no butterfly affair, and though the men wear rusty old shovel hats with twin tails, the clothing of both men and women is of course, heavy cloth, and the women wear plain white caps. My observation is that the cattle fairs are more social than commercial. They are often held in a "Scotch mist," that takes the heart out of everybody but the inhabitants, who are used to it, and turns the roads and the fair grounds into gluey yellowish-gray sloughs. The buyers and sellers sit around on the fences, or on old jute bags on the wet ground in the shelter of a wall, or stand out in the mud, cheerfully gossiping, and now and then talking cow or pig. Little pigs are for sale in the markets by the firkins-full. The canny housewife makes her selection, tucks the uproarious little fellow tightly under an arm, and goes contentedly off with the squealing pig.

Where Pig, Fowl, and Family Dwell Together

The Breton is not noted for his domestic cleanliness. In plain words, many of the peasant houses are so filthy one hesitates to set foot in them. Floored with dirt and roofed with straw, often they consist of one room only, where the sturdy family cooks, eats, and sleeps, along with whatever small animals they happen to have. The fowls are very friendly neighbors, who run in and out

continually. The pigsty is frequently under the same roof as the family.

The huge fireplace, big and roomy enough to roast a whole sheep easily, is full of cranes and hooks and spits. Down one side of the room range the beds, which, more than anything else, look like closets, mounted upon deep chests which contain the precious costumes for fête and pardon. The Breton clambers into the open mouth of the closet over one mountainous feather mattress, covers himself with another, pulls the sliding wooden doors or the very substantial curtains to, after him, and proceeds to prove false every hygiene theory of the scientists. Some of these beds are most elaborately carved and decorated. When, in a curio shop in Quimper, I asked what any American would want with such a dubious *objet d'art*, and the Breton woman in charge replied that these beds made excellent bookcases for American homes when a carpenter has put a few shelves in them.

The towns have their share of curious old houses—some carved, some curiosities in an architectural way, and some with unusual personal features, like the top-heavy, tipsy-looking “House of Gilles and his Wife,” at a busy corner in Vannes. Fat and stubby effigies of the good burgher and his spouse lean our smilingly from the corner of the second story above the unquiet street and watch the throngs of passers-by with good-humored interest.

It must not be judged that Brittany has no castles, and that its rare charms are wholly simple. Such a magnificent chateau as Josselin, with its great, fortress-like turrets rising from the water, its beautiful inner court, and its vine-covered ancient walls, is a splendid example of the grand home as the antipode of the simpler one. Sucino, ruined and desolate now, is another reminder of baronial splendor and an historic spot as well.

Prehistoric Breton Monuments

In southern Brittany, especially at Locmariaquer and Carnac, in the Morbihan, we can go back into prehistoric times and find human egotism and the love of praise and memorials just as keen among primitive men as they are today among the most civilized. France possesses many menhirs (long stones) and domens (stone tables), and the very finest are in this locality. The standing columns, or menhirs, are in the nature of simple monuments. One, the Men-er-Hroeck, or Stone of the Fairies, the largest in the world, at Locmariaquer, was nearly 70 feet in height and weighed about 342 tons. It was overthrown by the elements, and there is something very sad about this huge stone monolith, now shattered and prostrate upon the ground of what was once a hallowed spot.

Carnac is perhaps the most remarkable place in the world for these prehistoric monuments. In even rows, the stones—from 4 to 16 feet in height—stretch across the desolate gray moor literally by the thousand. What story do they tell? Was this the burial ground of a nation? Do these unresponsive monuments hide the untold tale of a terrible field of blood and the wiping out of an army of thousands?

The dolmens are simply long, rough slabs of stone, supported by a row of vertically placed slabs at each side and the rear. Under this hug table a passageway and a vault have been excavated, and the researches of the archaeologists have proved conclusively that these curious structures are neither Druid altars nor religious in their significance at all, as at first thought, but merely family or tribal burial vaults. Here and there, on the inner side of the end stone, one finds a wonderful inscription in wavy characters like snake trails—a language of the past, clear and distinct, yet unreadable—a puzzle as deep as the mystic inscriptions of Mexico and Central America.

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