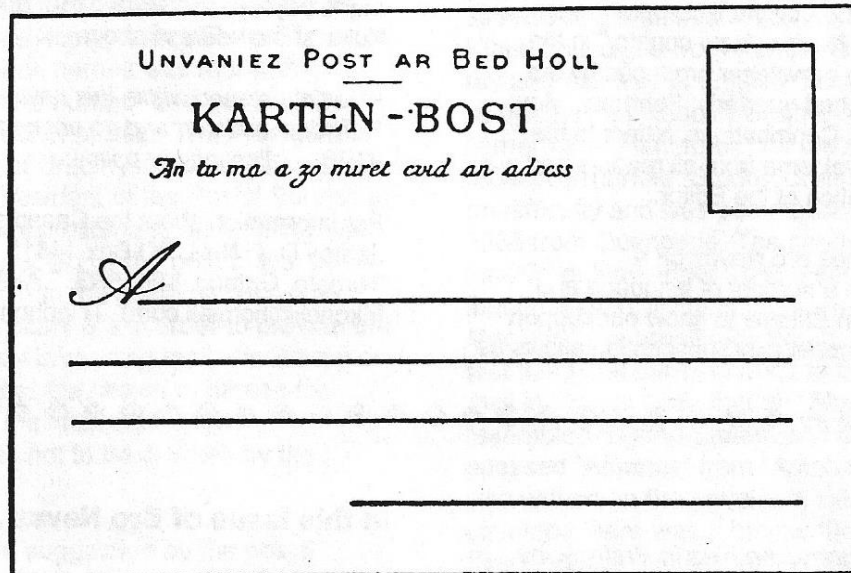


BRO NEVEZ

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



Breton Post-card

... From 1905

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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On The Cover . . .

... is an illustration from *Rambles in Brittany*, by Francis Miltoun, with illustrations by Blanche McManus (L.C. Page & Co., Boston) published in 1905. This is found on page 22 of the book in Chapter II – The Province and the People. The text which explains this Breton Post-Card in the Breton language is as follows:

Brittany has been, and perhaps ever will be, considered by Frenchmen an alien land, where, in its great plains and mountainous regions, in the valleys of its bubbling rivers, and on its rock-bound shores, the people, one and all, "speak a tongue so ancient and so strange that he who hears it dreams of a vanished race." Yes Brittany is a land of menhirs, of legends and superstitions, but all this but makes a roundabout journey the more enjoyable, and one must really cross and recross it to its uttermost confines in order to realize its great variation of manners and customs, to say nothing of speech, for, even though the Breton tongue is dying out as a universal language, one still buys his post-card with a

queer legend on its face, which looks like Dutch at first glance, but really is Breton. ..."

In this Issue of Bro Nevez

... You will read about the French postal service and their inability (unwillingness?) to respect Breton language place names on envelopes that pass through the postal system. Was the post card described by Francis Miltoun in 1905 something one bought at a post office in Brittany? Something officially sanctioned by the postal service? Surely it would not have been created merely for the amusement of tourists.

In this issue you will also read about some of the work being done by Bretons to teach, write, create, and make the Breton language more publicly visible so that a Breton language postcard addressed in Breton will arrive safely at its destination.



The French Postal Service and the Breton Language

Lois Kuter

As more and more towns and cities of Brittany are putting up bilingual French/Breton signs for town entrances, streets and buildings, a curious statement was made this January by Yves Amiard, the director for postal services for western Brittany. He recommended to communities that they use French names rather than Breton ones to insure better mail delivery. It's not that he's against Breton, he said, but postal reading machines have some difficulty with things like C'H found in Breton language names.

As one would expect, this "suggestion" to make life easier for the postal service by using "French" spellings of Breton place names was met with outrage in Brittany and a number of organizations made public statements of protest. The President of the Regional Council of Brittany, Jean-Yves Le Drian, wrote a letter to the President of the Postal Service in Paris asking for an explanation and demanding that Breton names be respected by the post office. Jean-Paul Bailly responded that the postal service was working on its optical scanners in order to provide the best possible efficiency in reading mail – in Breton or French. He clarified that the choice of names for streets or towns was the choice of those municipalities and was not to be dictated by the postal service.

One can hope that the suggestion by the postal director for western Brittany to avoid complications by using "French" names was simply a thoughtless remark. One might think that the barrage of letters and protests in front of post offices was out of proportion to the problem, given the reassuring response from the President of the Postal Service to M. Le Drian's demand for an explanation.

But, as in many other areas of public life, the Breton language has been forbidden as a legitimate language for mailing addresses until more recent times. And no doubt there are still letters that never reach their destination or meet with unnecessary delay when addressed in Breton. Bretons are reminded by this incident that they must remain vigilant and continue to fight for the presence of Breton on mail. For postal workers in far-away distribution centers, Breton may be a nuisance, but for people of Brittany it reflects the true identity of small villages, towns and cities. Why should they be required to use a distorted "French" rendering of those names?

☰ A Little History from the Recent Past

With this incident and the passion it aroused I was reminded of a campaign waged in the 1980s and early 1990s by Klaud An Duigou to insure that letters he addressed in the Breton language reached their destination. In April 1992 a decision was given in his case by the Conseil d'Etat that the postal service was not obligated to deliver such letters since names in Breton "were not found in the French postal code, nor in international nomenclatures of foreign countries and distributions offices."

While official recognition of the legitimacy of Breton names for the postal service was thus denied, letters have made it through the French postal system when postal workers have chosen to send them along. I saved two envelopes which were sent to me by Klaud an Duigou from Kemperle (Quimperlé) where my address was in English, but the country was designated as "Stadoù Unanet" to which was added "Amerika an Hanternoz" for the second letter. The envelope marked "Stadoù Unanet" reached me with no difficulty and was postmarked the 9th of January 1986 from Quimperlé. The second letter postmarked the 27th of November 1986 went first to England. At that time I was living in the town of "Plymouth Meeting." Apparently Plymouth, England, was the first thing that came to mind to the person sorting the mail in France even though "Stadoù Unanet" resembles "United States" and one might have guessed "America" from "Amerika an Hanternoz" also written on the envelope. When I received the envelope there was a handwritten note on it stating "Not England. Try U.S.A." so the British postal system seemed to be able to figure out the destination.

I have not collected other examples of letters that have arrived safely with "Stadoù Unanet" instead of "USA" which most of my Breton correspondents use. It would be interesting to see if this truly poses a problem. Once a letter arrives in a country, there is a postal code that should guarantee that it gets to the local post office of the recipient, no matter what language is used for the town name. Surely such numbers have been introduced so that postal workers and those sending mail internationally do not need to learn a thousand languages. We here in the USA take it for granted that we can spell out a country's or a town's name in English rather than Japanese, German, Urdu or some other language of the world – big or small. This is because English is a widely recognized international language, but also because electronic scanning systems can be programmed to use number codes and translate languages.

☰ The Pervasive C'H

In looking at a list of some 1,500 communes of Brittany with five-digit postal codes (all five departments) where the “French” version is placed side by side with a Breton language version, one finds that names with C'H are not so common that postal workers need to panic. I did a quick scan of this list published in Skol an Emsav's 2007 datebook and found nine names where the “French” version of the name includes a C'H:

Crac'h (Morbihan) / Krac'h cited for the Breton language version
Gommenec'h (Côtes d'Armor) / Goanac'h
Kermoroc'h (Côtes d'Armor) / Kenvoroc'h
Penmarc'h (Finistère) / Penmarc'h
Plouezoc'h (Finistère) / Plouezoc'h
Ploulec'h (Côtes d'Armor) / Ploulec'h
Plourac'h (Côtes d'Armor) / Plourac'h
Port-de-Buis-lès-Quimerç'h (Finistère) / Pont-ar-Veuzenn-Kimerç'h
Tourc'h (Finistère) / Tourc'h

There are of course many other smaller towns and villages that do not have their own postal code where C'H is a part of the name commonly used by people sending mail to an address there.

There are some 90 other communities with their own postal code where the “Breton” version of the name would have a C'H. Nearly half of these are in Ile-et-Vilaine and Loire-Atlantique where it is unlikely that mail will be addressed in the Breton language for towns where this language has not had a presence for centuries or was never used.

If a letter has a postal code there is no reason why it should not reach a local post office where those unfamiliar with Breton could certainly use a list like that provided by Skol an Emsav and easily accessible by internet could solve any delivery mysteries. So is the presence of C'H really a challenge for postal delivery?

Sending a letter to Brittany with an Address in Breton

I have to admit that to be on the safe side, when I send a letter where I put a street or town name in the Breton language, I often put the French version next to the Breton name, just to be on the safe side ... especially if they are quite different in appearance. There are certainly many people in the postal service in Brittany who are quite capable of and willing to work with Breton-only addresses. And as Breton becomes more visible in signage for street names and

towns, one can expect that more and more people will become comfortable with Breton names.

Obviously making Breton as visible as possible publicly, in every way possible, is an action that can have an impact on the future of the Breton language. This certainly has been the case with people's personal names as Breton first names have taken on a popularity and people no longer see them as a stigma of an unwanted identity. Learning about the history associated with a Breton language name for a place, and using that name, can also be a way to affirm identity and enjoy it.

If you want to be more comfortable in addressing correspondence in the Breton language to friends in Brittany, there is a website designed especially to guide you in this, <http://arpost.free.fr>, where you can find examples of how to write an address and find Breton versions for names. A great website to explore to see examples of bilingual signs for roads, and buildings is www.geobreizh.com. This site also has lots of maps, demographic information, and a wealth of other information to discover.

If Bro Nevez readers here in the U.S. or Canada have had adventures with the French postal system in sending mail addressed in Breton to Brittany it would be interesting to collect examples of this. And if you address your mail in Breton now and have difficulties with its delivery it would be very helpful to document this given the promises from the president of the French postal service that the mail will go through.

Adult Learners of the Breton Language

In January Ofis are Brezhoneg published a report called “Enseignement du Breton aux Adultes – Bilan de la rentrée 200.8” This includes a detailed look at a study done between October 23 and November 28, 2008, to survey adult Breton learners in weekly classes and more extended workshops during the previous year. 180 organizations/teaching sites were contacted with a written questionnaire and telephone follow-up to get an 88% response.

This study showed that in 2008, some 4,880 adults took Breton classes – an increase by 6% over the previous year. The growth was found particularly in weekly classes with 3,173 adults taking evening classes and 227 taking classes at their work site.

◆ Evening Classes – 3,173 adult students

These classes were found at 178 sites in 156 communes, representing 10.5% of all communes in Brittany. While the number of sites where weekly evening classes can be found is not significantly different from the past year, there has been a big increase during the past ten years with 50 more sites in 2008 than in 1998.

The number of adults taking evening classes grew 9.8% for beginners and 6% for all levels combined from the previous year. The city of Rennes has the highest number of students (193) with Nantes second. But the region around Brest has the biggest concentration with 623 students. Half of all the evening class students are in the Finistère with the largest increase (+164 students) in Cornouaille, thanks in large part to the work of the organization Mervent to expand classes.

While there was an increase of adults at the beginners level taking Breton for the first time, there was also an increase of numbers at the highest level of learners, representing Breton speakers with a strong command of the language.

◆ Weekly worksite classes – 227 adult students

The availability of weekly Breton classes at worksites for adults to attend during their workday is a new phenomenon. Most of these sites are public institutions like mayor's offices such as Brest where 73 employees take Breton classes. Other mayor's offices include those in Carhaix, Pontivy, Quimperlé and Quimper. The General Councils of Côtes d'Armor and Finistère as well as the Regional Council of Brittany also offer classes for employees. IFREMER, a maritime science center, and the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient also offer weekly classes for employees. While reaching a small number of adults, such initiatives can only help in putting Breton into the public arena.

◆ "Stages" / Intensive workshops – 1,138 adult students

Workshops where adults participate in more immersive study have actually decreased by 102 adults in 2007/08 from 2006/07. Of the total 1,138 taking such workshops 123 were enrolled in long-term study (months in duration), 603 in week-long courses, and 412 in weekend classes.

◆ Correspondence courses – 350 students

Adults learning Breton through a correspondence course totaled 350. 90% of these were through the Skol Ober program. It is felt that this is an area where growth could occur with electronic media opening doors for more innovative and interactive teaching.

◆ Teachers for Adult Learning

Nearly 250 teachers are engaged in Breton classes for adult learners. 34 are employed full-time, 89 receive payment for teaching but are employed this way on a part-time basis, and 121 volunteer their time for teaching. Two-thirds of all teachers are part of the DAO (Deskiñ d'An Oadourien) network which offers workshops and works to insure a higher professional level of teaching.

Overall the report shows that the growth of adult learners is dependent on the availability of courses – and for weekly classes the need for something nearby one's home. The work of organizations such as Mervent and Sked to enhance offerings and provide teachers for different levels of learners is shown to have an impact. While the 4,880 adults learning Breton may be a drop in the bucket for a population of 4.2 million, the growth of this group is important and can have an impact on expanding the use of Breton in public services, the media and schools.

Finding Breton language resources – A Few Suggestions

Klask

There is very little chance that you will ever find a Breton language book, CD, DVD, etc., in an American store, so one has little choice but to order these directly from Brittany. This has been made easy using the internet, and for those seeking one-stop shopping for Breton language materials, the website www.klask.com is a great place to start. This catalogs over 700 items from 35 different publishers: Al Liamm, An Here, Keit Vimp Beo, TES, Yoran Embanner, Bannoù Heol, Hor Yezh, Mouladurioù Hor Yezh, An Alarc'h, Al Lanv, Skol Vreizh, Cooper Breizh, Skol, and Delioù having the largest offerings. Included are not only books – for children and adults - but also music CDs, DVDs, stickers, and other products promoting Breton. You can search by publisher or by topics: learning materials for Breton, "autocollants" (stickers), comic books, coffee table books, video cassettes, audio CDs, dictionaries, DVDs, materials

for teens, bilingual books, novels, poetry, short stories, and theater. One way or another, you are bound to find what you need, and a short description and visual depiction will help you get a little more details before you place an order on-line.

Some more specialized sources:

Skol

Skol is a publisher that specializes in reediting rare or unpublished earlier works in or about the Breton language. Since 1996 it has produced 17 titles (23 volumes) which are printed in small numbers (300 copies only) and are sold by correspondence. Most recently published was a previously unpublished supplement to Émile Ernault's *Dictionnaire vannetais* – 2 volumes totaling 766 pages, including a 36-page study of the Vannetais Breton dialect. While this and many other publications made available by Skol are definitely not for the beginner student of Breton, they are invaluable to scholars of the language and important reference works for academic libraries. Other publications have included *Le premier dictionnaire vannetais*, but Pierre de Châlons from 1723; *Les dictionnaires français-breton et breton-français* by Julien Maunoir from 1659, and *Le vocabulaire breton du Catholicon* (1499) by Jéhan Lagadeuc – the first Breton dictionary printed in Breton-French-Latin. For a complete catalog and to get on an e-mail list for information as new publications come up for sale contact: skol@bzh5.com or write to: SKOL, 6 straed Lapticque, 22000 Saint-Brieg

Librairie Tymen

This book seller carries a large selection of older publications – books, journals from the 19th and 20th century, and pamphlets - about Brittany and the Celtic countries as well as maritime culture. These are in both French and Breton. With a store in Quimper (3 place d'Ecosse, 2900 Quimper) this shop has had a website since 2007 where you can see what is available and get a short description. It is not set up to order and pay online but it is easy to contact the store to determine prices and shipping costs in order to place an order: <http://www.librairietymen.com> / e-mail: contact@librairietymen.com



Prizioù 2009

Prizes for Creativity and Innovation in the Breton Language

For the 12th year the television station France 3 Ouest has organized a selection of prizes for the best use of Breton in a variety of cultural expressions. A jury of Breton speakers from the worlds of teaching, journalism, and media, gather in December to select three nominees for each of six categories, with winners announced at a ceremony which was held January 24th and televised the 25th on France 3 Bretagne.

The following are the winners and nominees in each of the categories:

☐ Priz ar gwellañ levr a faltazi / Prize for the best book in fiction

Winner: *Mervel ul lunvez*, by Henri Dorsel, (édition Emgleo Breiz),

Other nominees: *Aada ha narki*, by Goulc'han Kervella, (édition Al Liamm), and *Huñvre, d'an hollsent*, by Pierrette Kermoal (édition Aber).

☐ Priz ar gwellañ pladenn / Prize for the best CD Recording

Winner: *Konsert 2*, by Ozan Trio.

Other nominees: *Tuchant e erruo an hañv*, by Yann-Fanch Kemener et Aldo Ripoché, and *Deiz al lid*, by the Ensemble choral du bout du monde.

☐ Priz ar gwellañ film-tele / Prize for the best Documentary Film

Winner: *Hent dall*, by Sébastien Le Guillou (a portrait of a blind couple in Trégor).

Other nominees: *30 vloaz, 30 dremm* (a history of the Diwan schools), and *Ur bloavezh war an douar*, by Anna Quéré (a portrait of an organic farmer).

☐ Priz ar gellañ intrudu evit are vugale / Prize for the best initiative for youth

Winner : Divskouarn, an association to encourage the use of Breton with infants

Other nominees: Hipolenn, an association to promote reading in Breton for children, and the publishing house Bannoù-heol, for its translation of the Titeuf comic books into Breton.

☐ Priz are gwellañ brezhoneg / Prize of the best expression in Breton

Winner : Martial Ménard, who directed the publication of the An Here Breton language dictionary, who has published a series of books of popular expressions in Breton, and who has written a weekly column in Breton for the *Ouest France* newspaper.

Other nominees: Gwenole Bihannig, who has translated the Titeuf comic books, and Fañch Peru, who has written a number of books for young people.

☐ Priz brezhoneger ar bloaz / Breton speaker of the Year

Winner : The association organizing Ar Redadeg, the relay race throughout Brittany to raise money for Breton language initiatives and to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Diwan schools.

Other nominees: TES (Ti Embann ar Skolioù) and Dastum, for the CD Rom *Diskanoù* to teach children and adults to sing in Breton, and Stumdi, for its six-month Breton language training sessions to prepare people to use Breton in professional work.

UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger

www.unesco.org/culture/

UNESCO has published its latest edition of this Atlas which lists some 2,500 languages which are endangered, and in the case of 230, have been extinct since 1950. For each language the name, degree of endangerment, and the country or countries where it is spoken is noted. The online edition of the Atlas provides information on the numbers of speakers for each language, relevant policies and projects, and geographic locations. You can search by language or by location. The UNESCO website provides not only a wealth of information on languages of the world and excellent links to organizations and websites devoted to languages, but also a presentation of initiatives by UNESCO to protect the world's "intangible cultural heritage."

When you enter the section for the Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger you will find maps help to locate where languages are generally located, and flags note if a language is "unsafe," "definitely endangered," "severely endangered," "critically endangered" or "extinct."

"Unsafe" are language where most children speak the language but it may be restricted to certain domains, such as the home. "Definitely endangered" languages are those where children no longer learn the language as their mother tongue in the home. "Severely endangered" are those languages spoken primarily by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves. "Critically endangered" languages are those where the youngest speakers are grandparents and older and they only use the language partially and infrequently. There are no speakers left for "extinct" languages.

If you search for "France" you find a list of 26 languages in danger:

Those which are unsafe are: Alemannic, Basque, Luxembourgish, Rhenish Franconian, and West Flemish.

Those which are definitely endangered are: Alpine Provençal, Corsican, Francoprovençal, Gascon, Romani, Walloon, and Yiddish

Those which are severely endangered are: Auvergnat, **Breton**, Burgundian, Champenois, Franc-Comtois, **Gallo**, Languedocian, Limousin, Lorrain, Norman, Picard, Poitevin-Saintongeais, and Provençal

Message from Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of International Mother Language Day 21 February 2009 (from the UNESCO website)

As the twelve months devoted to celebrating International Year of Languages have come to an end, this year's International Mother Language Day, marked on 21 February 2009, signals the beginning of a new phase for reflection and assessment.

Ten years after the Day was proclaimed by the General Conference of UNESCO on the proposal of Bangladesh, what conclusions can now be drawn?

One point must be made. After laying emphasis on each community's recognition of its own mother tongue, the Day has increasingly drawn the international community's attention to the foundations of linguistic diversity and multilingualism. It has also become clear that languages, which form part of the identity of individuals and peoples, are key to the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals.

A growing number of increasingly diverse stakeholders in governmental organizations and civil society acknowledge that languages are central to all forms of social, economic and cultural life. Links between multilingual education (involving the mother tongue, national languages and international languages), education for all and the Millennium Development Goals now constitute the pillars of any sustainable-development strategy.

We do indeed hope that tangible results conducive to the use of mother languages and to multilingualism will emerge under the impetus of the communication campaign conducted by UNESCO during International Year of Languages 2008, and that these challenges will continue to be the cornerstone of action taken by governments and development agencies.

In addition to the interest aroused by the Year and the hundreds of language promotion projects launched in 2008, the impact of the International Year of Languages will be assessed in the coming months to gauge the importance of languages to development, peace and social cohesion.

Accordingly, on this the tenth International Mother Language Day, I appeal for action to ensure that the many declarations and initiatives announced in 2008 will be followed up by specific sustainable measures.

I hope, in particular, that governments will introduce, in their formal and non-formal education systems and their own administrations, measures designed to secure the harmonious and fruitful coexistence of the languages of each country. We shall thus succeed in preserving and promoting multilingual environments that show due respect for all expressions of cultural diversity.

English Language Radio in Brittany

For a number of years there has been a growing population of new residents in central western Brittany moving from the British Isles. This has sometimes caused friction as Bretons feel an invasion, but the influx has also brought a bit of an economic renewal as newcomers set up businesses and shop locally, restore old houses, send their children to local schools and participate in local life. Association Intégration Kreiz Breizh (AIKB) has worked on a number of projects to ease the transition and this January partnered with Radio Kreiz Breizh and Radio Bro Gwened to create a 15-minute daily radio broadcast in English (updated weekly). The following is how this project – Spotlight on Brittany - is

presented on the website where it can be accessed: www.spotlightonbrittany.fr

Spotlight on Brittany is a dynamic Community Radio programme which will be brought to you by AIKB in partnership with [Radio Kreiz Breizh](#) and [Radio Bro Gwened](#).

Living in a new country often presents lots of challenges. We aim to help you meet these with a new fifteen minute weekly radio programme comprising:

Information spot

Here we answer your questions and help you to understand legislation. For example taxation, building regulations, education, owning a boat, fishing permits etc.

Out & About

We give an insight into daily life and living here in Brittany, a look behind the scenes at our local fetes and festivals and other aspects of Breton / French culture and history.

Language Spot

A great chance to brush up your French with words and phrases that you can use in your daily life and an insight into the history behind some of the words we hear. Conversely, if you are already a Francophone then this also an excellent way of improving your English.

Brittany, A Music Capital of the World - Festival des Vieilles Charrues - July 16-19, 2009

Brittany plays host to many large festivals during the summer which feature Breton and Celtic music of all styles. Perhaps the biggest and best know are the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient and the Fêtes de Cornouaille in Quimper.

But Brittany also hosts some major festivals where uniquely Breton music is certainly present, but not dominant at the festival. Such is the case for the Festival des Vieilles Charrues (Gouel an Erer Kozh in Breton, and Old Ploughs Festival in English). During four days in July (this year July 16 to 19) over 80 bands perform a mix of pop/folk/rock on acres of land just outside of the town of Carhaix called Kermampuilh (the site at which one finds Diwan's high school during the school year!). Each year some 150,000 to 180,000 people attend this festival where families and children are very welcome. Many people

camp out and thousands of volunteers insure a peaceful and well organized operation for the festival.

Vielles Charrues started as a much smaller operation in 1992 and was set in the village of Landeleau. This site was quickly outgrown and Carhaix has hosted the festival since 1995.

Headliners for the 2009 festival include Bruce Springsteen and the E street Band, The Killers (also from the US), Fiction Plane with Sting's son Joe Summer, and Priscilla Ahn.

This festival serves as a platform for the discovery of lesser known pop/folk/rock/reggae/rap/blues ... performers from around the world, but has always included internationally known performers – among others Ben Harper, Iggy Pop, Patti Smith, Joan Baez, James Brown, The Cranberries, Johnny Clegg, ZZ Top, Charles Aznavour, Peter Gabriel, Tracy Chapman, Massive Attack, REM, The Cure, and Johnny Hallyday.

The festival offers an exceptional line-up of performers and the price is also exceptional. For the Friday concert featuring Bruce Springsteen adults pay 49 euros, children 9 to 14 pay half-price and kids under 9 come for free. For more information about this festival (and to order tickets if you plan to go) the website is: www.vieillescharrues.assoc.fr

Carhaix / Karaez and Ya d'ar Brezhoneg

Carhaix is the first city of Brittany to achieve a level 3 in the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign organized by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg. This represents 24 different actions implemented by the city in favor of the Breton language. This includes bilingual road signs in the city and surrounding commune, bilingual signs in the Mayor's office and administrative buildings, a study of place names and bilingual signage for panels presenting local culture and history. 15% of children in Carhaix are in bilingual programs and the city continues to promote Breton in the schools with financial and technical support. The city also promotes Breton language classes for adults. City workers are encouraged to take Breton classes (and this is financed by the city), marriage ceremonies can be conducted in Breton, and the Mayor's office answering machine is bilingual.

Carhaix will aim for Level 4 by 2011 which will continue to build on work to promote Breton and make it visible through the city. New actions can include the purchase of Breton language books for

the library, the organization of performances in Breton, increased use of Breton in official ceremonies, and increased presence of Breton in the schools.

For more information on the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign visit the website: www.ofis-bzh.org

New York City to host one of Brittany's Premier Bagadoù – the Bagad Saint Nazaire

The Bagad Saint Nazaire has been invited to march in the 2009 Saint Patrick's Day Parade this March 17th. This parade which dates to 1766 is the largest St. Patrick's Day parade, and receiving an invitation to participate in it is no small matter.

Taking advantage of the Bagad Saint Nazaire's trip to New York City, BZH-NY – the association of Bretons in New York - has organized a number of other performances – just as they did for the Kevern Alre who came in 2007 for the parade. On Monday, March 16th, the Bagad Saint-Nazaire will perform at Symphony Space (Leonard Nimoy Thalia Theater), on Tuesday, March 17, they will march in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and an "After Parade" performance and jam session will take place at Club Shrine in Harlem, and on Wednesday, March 18th, the bagad will perform for a fest noz at Connolly's in Times Square. If you are in the New York City area, don't miss the chance to see this excellent ensemble. For the details on performance times and locations keep an eye on the BZH-NY website: www.bzh-ny.org. And check out this website for lots of other activities by this very dynamic organization of Bretons and Friends of Brittany.

The Bagad Saint Nazaire is among 14 or 15 bands in the top category of Breton bagadoù (plural for bagad). This ensemble of Scottish style bagpipes (cornemuse), bombardes and percussion was first created in the early 1950s in Brittany. While modeled after the Scottish pipe bands, Bretons have taken these bands in very different directions. Their repertoire is rooted in Breton traditional song and dances, but for concert and contest performances a bagad will create highly innovative suites of music which can incorporate rhythms from around the world (jazz, blues, and Eastern European, Middle Eastern, African and Latin rhythms). Singers and other instruments – Breton or not - are often incorporated into a performance in a highly sophisticated way. For its celebration of its 50th anniversary in 2003 the Bagad Saint Nazaire released an innovative CD called "QM2" evoking the rich industrial heritage of their city, Saint Nazaire, which is located on the Loire

River where it meets the sea. The shipyards of this city produced ocean liners like the Queen Mary 2 (QM2), the Normandie, France, Monarch of the Seas, and others.

This is a bagad which will not disappoint those who had the chance to enjoy the performances of the Kevrenn Alre bagad and dance troupe when they came to New York City for the Saint Patrick's Day parade and a week of added performances in 2007 (including a quick stop in Philadelphia)

This is not the first trip down Fifth Avenue for the Bagad Saint-Nazaire. In 1990 the bagad (at least part of it) marched in the 229th Saint Patrick Day's Parade. Their trip to New York City was brief and they did not have the chance to do many other performances. As will be the case in 2009, the trip in 1990 was greatly aided by the help of the Breton community in New York, in particular Jean-Pierre Touchard and the Stade Breton. The Bagad crossed the Atlantic once again in 1996 for a two week tour in July in Canada participating in the World Festival of Folklore in Drummondville as well as the Festival Francophone d'Amérique du Nord in Quebec, as well as numerous other concerts and street performances where they were very warmly applauded.

Discography:

Pib-Rock. OMAC-Self production. 1992
Fonds de terroir. OMAC 9820. 1998
QM2. SNA 0324. 2003

American musicians in Brittany - Bagad Kemperle

On Sunday, February 8, 2009, three American pipers took part with the Bagad Kemperle in one of two major annual competitions for the first level bagadoù of Brittany. This is a first ever and certainly the opportunity of a life-time for American musicians who have discovered the intoxicating effect of Breton music. This opportunity was made possible by Yoann Le Goff, a Breton now living and working in Connecticut who is a member BZH New York. Being a piper he sought the opportunity to play with a pipe band while here and joined the Manchester Pipe Band. This led to an acquaintance with pipers Sean Buchta and Mike McNinch and drummer Jake Otto. All four traveled to Brest to play with the Bagad Kemperle for the "Championnat de Bretagne de Première Catégorie des Bagadou." No matter how good the musician, one cannot simply arrive and jump

into a performance which can determine a championship of the highest level of bagadoù of Brittany, so these four worked with scores and recordings transmitted via the magic of internet and plunged into intensive practice sessions during the week before the actual performance. There is no doubt that the hard work and talent of these musicians was much appreciated by the Bagad Kemperle.

Losses for Breton Music and Culture

Robert Le Grand (1919-2008)

Robert Le Grand was born October 8 in Plouay (Morbinhan) and moved to the Guerande peninsula in 1937 where he would make his home. He founded the Celtic Circle "Ar Vro Wenn" in Guerande in 1946 and the following year founded the Pardon of La Baule. From 1955 to 1973 he served as the administrative secretary for Kendalc'h, a federation of over 160 Cleric Circles and cultural groups with 13,000 members throughout Brittan and in Breton emigrant communities. In this role he created the magazine Breiz in 1956, a comprehensive journal on Breton history, art, music, dance, and sports, which almost always had articles on the other Celtic countries and their cultures. Until more recent years this was one of the few magazines for Breton culture and history.

In 1957 Robert Le Grand helped found the Cooperative Breiz and served as its director from 1962 to 1982. This distribution and publishing house for Breton books and music recordings provided access to thousands of publications and recordings as well as flags and stickers. While materials were sold by correspondence and in several Coop Breiz stores – including one in his home in La Baule – in the early days Le Grand and others insured access to materials by setting up stands at festivals and markets. While today Breton materials are found in nearly every book shop in Brittany, in the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s it was quite difficult to find such things. Coop Breiz continues to be instrumental in helping the words and voices of authors and performers teach an audience.

Robert Le Grand retired in 1981 but in fact continued to be quite active in supporting Breton culture. He was a cofounder in 1997 of the Anne de Bretagne Festival – a major festival for Breton culture which moves to different cities of the Loire-Atlantique each year. In 1989 he was awarded the Prize Herve ar Menn, and in 1991 he was inducted into the Order of the Ermine for his lifetime of work for Brittany. It would be difficult

to overestimate the impact of this militant's work for the Breton culture.

(Information drawn from Bernard Le Nail's homage in Lizher'minig 19, December 08-March 09 and other sources).

Robert Marie (1915-2008)

Robert Marie was one of six young Bretons in the 1940s who had the dream of reviving and building a unique musical heritage for Brittany. In 1942 with Polig Monjarret, Dorig Le Voyer, Efflam Cuven, René Tanguy, and Iffig Hamon, he founded the Bodadeg ar Sonerion, and organization for bombarde and bagpipe players. At age 93 he was the last of the six to pass away.

At a period when pipers were disappearing in Brittany none of these six young men would have dreamed that the bagad (a brand new ensemble of Scottish style bagpipes, bombardes and a drum section) would have the incredible success it has had. Tens of thousands of young people have passed through the ranks of the BAS, learning music, but also about their unique historical and cultural heritage. Like the Celtic Circles, the bagad has served as a "school for pride" and a training ground for some of Brittany's finest musicians. While younger generations have taken on the leadership of the BAS, Robert Le Grand remained active in that organization all his life and will surely be missed.

(Information drawn from Ar Soner 388, November-December 2008)

Heard of, but not heard ... new Recordings from Brittany

The following information has been gleaned from reviews and notes in: Al Liamm 368 (Mezheven 2008) / Ar Men 168 (jan.-fev. 2009) / Armor 466 (nov. 2008), 467 (déc. 2008) & 468 (jan. 2009) / Musique Bretonne 211 (nov-déc. 2008), 212 (jan-fev 2009)

Abalip. *C'hwezh an houarn – Dansoù ha kanaouennoù bro Breizh Izel / Fest Noz.*

www.abalip.com

Philippe Abalain (Abalip) was a percussionist with the group Storlok and here creates his own sound and songs in Breton. Other musicians for this recording include: Loig Troel (accordion), Heri Loquet (darbouka, cajon and other percussion), Yann-Gireg ar Barzh (guitar and mandolin), Soig Siberil (guitar), Alan Bodenan (electric guitar), and the Kevernn Kastell bagad.

Big Stal. *Le Big Stal, Live.* Self-produced. Big Stal. This is a collection of musicians recreating the feel of jazz "big bands" under the direction of Julien Le Mentec, bass player and musical director of the Saint-Malo bagad. The group includes bombardes, a brass ensemble, accordion and percussion, with a mix of Breton, blues and jazz rhythms with an emphasis on dance. The collaboration of talented musicians makes this well worth a listen.

Gérard Delahaye. *1+1 = 3.* Dylie Productions. DY 280. This is a solo performance by singer/guitarist Gérard Delahaye with a CD for children. As always, Delahaye mixes carefully arranged and interesting music with texts that evoke the joys and cares of children. A highlight of the CD is a song "Pennsoner du bagad de Keriou" in which Delahaye masterfully recreates the music of bagads in parades. While Delahaye's texts are almost always in French, two compositions in Breton are included here.

Dom Duff. *[E-unan].* BNC Productions. www.domduff.com

This CD includes 11 selections in Breton by singer and guitarist Dom Duff. Inspired by Breton singers Glenmor and Denez Abernot, with a resemblance in style to Bob Dylan, these compositions are modern and driven by a rock beat with a blues swing. They are live performances recorded during year's span.

Fiskal Bazar. *Ha Goude-se ...* Self-produced This is a five-title CD by a group founded by Hervé Bossard (bass), Laors Laloy (guitar and song), Hanne Müller (percussion) and Maj-Britt Vogl (accordion). It features Breton language songs on a range of social issues, from the defense of the Breton language to racism.

Mike James. *Maes Lago.* CO – Le Label. Singer and button accordion player Mike James is from Wales and makes his home in Brittany. On this CD he works with Rachel Goodwin (piano), Jean-Luc Le Mouël (uilleann pipes), and Jacques-Yves Rehault (fiddle) for an anthology featuring music from Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany.

Paul Ladmirault. *Paul Ladmirault: Chansons écossaises, choeurs profanes.* Skarbo DSK 2084. Works by Breton composer Paul Ladmirault (1877-1944) performed by the Ensemble Mélisme(s) founded in 2003 and directed by Gildas Pungier, formerly head of the Rennes opera choir and now head of the choral group for the opera in Rouen. The ensemble includes 20 Breton singers. Compositions performed include a series of arrangements of well known Scottish songs (translated into French) as well as arrangements of Renaissance works and a ballad from the Barzaz Breiz.

Roger Le Contou & Fred Le Disou. *De l'énergie à revendre.* Astrouve 001.

These storytellers from Gallo Brittany spoof the modern world of renewable energy and computers – among other topics – with funny stories and songs.

Jo Le Sergent, Samuel Le Hénaff, Marcel Jaffré. *Voix de Bretagne – Tri Pichon Noz.* BNC Productions. TPN 001.

This is a double CD presenting two traditional singers – Jo Le Sergent and Marcel Jaffré – with accordion player Samuel Le Hénaff. They present a repertoire of traditional Breton language songs from the Baud/Pluméliau area (Vannes). Included are songs for dancing as well as slow airs, performed solo or by both singers together. Several more recent compositions are also found, including “En Aljér” by Jo Le Sergent, inspired by his military service in Algeria. A 64-page booklet (Breton/French) presents these three performers and their songs – in Breton with a French translation – with lots of photos.

Jean Louis Le Vallégant. *Confidences Sonores.*

Unicité. 1si2la #1.

This is an intimate performance of improvisations with composer, bombarde and sax player Jean Louis Le Vallégant and musicians of Vallégant Noz Unit. The performance includes elements of Breton and other world traditions with a mix of voice and instruments evoking a range of atmospheres.

Mouez Port Rhu. *Des homes et la mer.* MPR 08-1 (www.groupe mouez.free.fr)

This features choral arrangements of compositions by Roger Briand and Jean-François Emelin on a maritime theme. Accordion and guitar accompany the choir in a strong but not highly innovative performance.

Allain Pennec & Sébastien Bertrand. *Réunions de chantier.* Cinq Planètes CP 12565

This features two masters of button accordion with a variety of dances – polkas, gavottes, schottisches, ronde de Loudéac and more.

Ronan Pinc Quartet. *Rue de Dunkerque.* Le Micro Bleu MB007. (<http://ronanpinc.free.fr>)

This quartet features fiddler Ronan Pinc, Pierre-Henry Aubry (guitar), Jeff Alluin (piano) and Jean-Baptiste Breton (bass) with jazz guitarist Philip Catherine for some selections. They perform compositions by Stéphane Grappelli as well as three compositions by Ronan Pinc for an urban and elegant sound.

Le Routiniers. *En avant-deux.* Self-produced VOC 928.

This is a group composed of Michel Colleu, Patrick Cordonnier, Gaël Rolland and Bertand Cormier on vielle à roue (hurdy-gurdy), fiddle, accordion and clarinet. A

few invited guests add new textures and rhythms. This repertoire includes airs and dance tunes from the northern part of Upper Brittany where you find the dances avant-deux, schottisches, mazurka, guédennes and aéroplanes. These are all solid musicians who present a repertoire from a region less often heard from than others.

Sonerion Du. *Liv an amser.* Self-produced.

This is the 18th CD by this fest-noz band – one of the longest-lived and best loved of Brittany. They have a high nervous energy and unique sound for the variety of dances performed including here avant-deux, an dro, pile-menu, kaz ha barh, laridée and others.

Michel Tonnerre. *C'est la mer.* Arthur Music AM 01.

Tonnerre is one of the best known and most innovative of Brittany's singers who focus on maritime themes. With his distinctive raspy voice he presents compositions with a variety of memorable characters – rebels and outlaws, and sailors down on their luck.

New Books from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Louis-Christian Gautier. *Histoire des Templiers en Bretagne – l'Ordre du Temple et son implantation en Bretagne.* Yoran Embanner. 2008. 195 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-14-6.

The author warns us straight away that there is still much to be learned about the Templars and that this book is definitely not the last word. But it is clear that this historian specializing in the medieval period has left few stones unturned or archives unvisited in his efforts to present facts about the much romanticized Templar Knights.

It is clear that without a wealth of written documents, some details are difficult to pin down – including the date of origin for the Templars – 1118, 1119 or 1120. In Jerusalem space was given to the Templars at the Temple Mount, believed to be the site of the Temple of Solomon, and this monastic order took on the name Poor Knights of Christ and the Temple of Solomon. Their reason for being was to protect Christian pilgrims from being robbed and killed by bandits as they traveled to Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the coastal city of Jaffa. The order was officially endorsed by the Catholic church at the Council of Troyes in 1129, and in 1139 Pope Innocent II exempted the Order from all authority but that of the Pope, allowing them to travel freely across borders and exempting them from taxes. With the loss of the Holy Lands in 1291 the Templars were forced to

retreat from Jerusalem. In 1312 Pope Clement V suppressed the Order and its lands and holdings were transferred primarily to the Knights Hospitaller, another military order of the period founded to care for sick or wounded pilgrims as they traveled to the Holy Land.

The first part of Gautier's book provides a brief introduction to the Templars, their origins, structure, operation, battles, growth and decline. It is a complex story and Gautier guides one through it as smoothly as possible, but a good knowledge of European history is helpful in sorting out the political players.

Part two of the book presents Brittany in the 12th and 13th centuries and describes the presence of the Templars in Western Europe – a presence which allowed them to accumulate goods and land to sustain military combat in the Holy Land. Gautier examines the possible presence of Templar sites in Brittany, citing the limited studies done on this topic and examining the problem of the "Temple" place names which may or may not point to the presence of Templars, but perhaps to holdings only.

Part Three examines actual sites in Brittany thought to be associated with Templars – especially in Nantes and the Loire-Atlantique but also in Morbihan, Ille-et-Vilaine, Côtes d'Armor and Finistère.

Part Five ties things all together, describing the end of the Templars in Brittany and discussing further research to be explored. It is clear that there are lots of intriguing place-names, legends, oral tradition, ruins and crosses that invite more explanation.

Very useful appendices present maps of the Holy Land and Brittany so that one can put names into a geographic context. A summary timeline is provided and a chronology is given to match Masters of the Temple, Popes, French Kings and Breton Dukes. Appendices outline the hierarchy of positions within the Order, how the Templar "house" functioned, and elements of dress and symbols. Various charters, letters, and legends cited in the main text are also provided. For those who want to read more, a bibliography will serve well for general or more specific topics.

The book is packed with photos of places, buildings, and stone crosses, as well as maps, artwork, and drawings of historical figures and symbols to make the book very attractive and provide a wealth of visual images to match the text. Orange colored content pages for each part of the book and for borders to each page add a great deal of color. There is a

medieval feel to the font style used for the lettering to introduce each section and chapter. I have to say that upon first glance the book gave me the weird sense of looking once again at history books of my high school years – evoked by its colorful cover, the particular size and weight of the book, and page layout. But this is a far more handsome and interesting book than any school text I ever owned.

Joseph Bédier. *Tristan et Iseult. With illustrations by Xavier de Langlais.* Yoran Embanner. 2008. 187 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-13-9.

It would be hard to find anyone who is not familiar with this story. Tristan who hails from Loonnois which is thought to have been Wales or possibly Scotland, wins the hand of Iseult (Isolde), princess of Ireland, for his foster father Mark, king of Cornwall. On the trip from Ireland Tristan and Iseult mistakenly sip a magic potion that was prepared for Mark and Iseult to bind them forever in unbreakable love. You can imagine the rest if you do not know the story already. In an effort to escape this impossible situation and the wrath of King Mark, Tristan does quite a bit of traveling and this story is also about his adventures as he tries in vain to forget his love for Iseult. It is the type of tragic twisted tale that makes a great opera – as Richard Wagner found for his "Tristan und Isolde" written in 1857 and 1859.

Author of this French language version of the tale, Joseph Bédier (1864-1938) was a professor of medieval French literature at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland as well as universities in Paris and Caen. He was a member of the Académie française from 1920 to his death. He not only studied medieval texts but in the case of *Tristan et Iseult* used his knowledge of scattered texts to create a more complete rendering for all of us to enjoy. First published in 1900 this was translated into English by Hilaire Belloc and Paul Rosenfeld and into Cornish by A.S.D. Smith.

This re-edition of his work is certainly welcome since Bédier's telling of this classic tale of tragic lovers is a great one. It is certainly enhanced by the wood cuts by Xavier de Langlais. This edition include 45 full and half-page illustrations (some 20 not before published) as well as 19 letter block illustrations to start off various chapters of the book. A map by Langlais of the Celtic countries that figure in this tale is also included (Cornwall, Ireland, Brittany, Wales and Scotland).

Xavier de Langlais (1906-1975) wrote a Breton version of this tale – *Tristan hag Izold* – which was

published by Al Liamm in 1958 with a reedition in 1972. And Langlais' introduction from this Breton version is brought to this new book (translated into French). This gives French language readers access to Langlais' insightful introduction to the tales as well as his remarkable illustrations. It appears from Langlais' introduction that his 1958 Breton version was a translation of Bédier's work, but I could not confirm this from any biographical information I could find about either author.

It is certainly fitting that a Breton version of the tale would be written and that Langlais would cite Bédier in his introduction since Bédier was in fact a Breton. He was born in Paris and spent much of his childhood in Réunion (where he learned creole). He spoke several languages and spent time in a number of countries including the U.S. While quite conscious of his Breton heritage, he did not speak Breton. Surely he would have been pleased to see his book in that language and to see it illustrated by Langlais.

Xavier de Langlais worked in paints, woodcutting and ceramics, and was also a writer and poet in the Breton language. His frescos can be found in a number of churches and chapels of Brittany. He was a professor at the school of fine arts in Rennes and joined the artists "cooperative" Seiz Breur in 1927. He was a co-founder with Ronan Huon and Vefa de Bellaing of the Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerien (Inter-Celtic Camp for Breton-Speakers) in 1948. This summer Breton immersion camp exists to this day to help Bretons master their language in a fun and effective way.

This book is beautifully produced with ivory hued thick paper pages, each of which has a design by Langlais at the top and bottom of the page. Little wood block designs – triskells, hearts, swords, etc. – close each chapter and also lend to the visual richness of this edition.

You can find the English language translation of Bédier's *Tristan et Iseult* on the internet, but if you read French this is surely the most enjoyable way to rediscover this classic tale. And if you read Breton, explore this tale through the telling of it by Xavier de Langlais.

Albert Poulain & Bernard Rio. *Fontaines de Bretagne*. Yoran Embanner. 2008. 217 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-15-3.

What could be more important than water, and it is no surprise that throughout the world springs and fountains are sites with spiritual significance. There

are thousands of fountains throughout Brittany – mini buildings constructed to capture the water of a spring – which have a spiritual significance. Most often this is linked to the hundreds of saints of Brittany, but some fountains have not been consecrated by a church. Some fountains have healing properties (and punitive properties) and some can be used to foretell a future, and all of this is dependent on specific actions and rites. Distinctive architectural features are linked to particular regions and the function of a fountain. The authors do not claim to have found every fountain in Brittany, but you are introduced to countless numbers of them in this book.

Albert Poulain is perhaps best known as a master of traditional song and storytelling in Gallo Brittany (see Bro Nevez 73, February 2000), but he is also an architect who has scoured the countryside studying farms, chapels, roadside crosses, fountains or any other structure that is part of Brittany's cultural heritage. Bernard Rio is a journalist and author of books on a variety of topics including Celtic mythology, nature and gastronomy. He has written a number of guides for those who want to hike in Brittany, including one that takes you on the paths of pardons for Brittany's many saints (*Randonnées sur les chemins des Pardons en Bretagne*, 2007). Clearly both he and Albert Poulain have covered a great deal of territory on foot and in research to locate the fountains they describe and sketch.

This book is a sort of inventory of fountains with lists as to their "type" (healing and magical powers) and by architectural features. Each section has an introduction and lists of locations and fountains, often with a short description of a feature related to that fountain. Some fountains appear in a number of listings. Names are given in both French and Breton for each saint's name and fountain or town/city.

The first section of the book, "History: legends – magic," describes the ancient veneration of springs and fountains. These "holes" – sometimes considered bottomless – were the door to other worlds. The proper rites and use of the water from a particular fountain could have marvelous effects. The first list in this section includes some 40 of the oldest fountains such as the Prad-Paol fountain in Plouguerneau/Plougerne (Finistère). According to legend Saint Pol-Aurélien cut off the head of a dragon here which bounced three times on the ground creating the fountains. Some of the fountains listed are found near menhirs or stones erected by the Gauls, or near a Roman road or site. Legend has it that Julius Cesar drank from the fountain in Guéwrande/Gwenrann (Loire-Atlantique).

82 fountains are listed for their link to history and legends. For example the fountain of Sainte-Anne/Santez-Anna in Dinan (Côtes d'Armor) is said to spring from the tears of a young woman abandoned by her lover. This water cures the broken hearted and those with tooth aches. In Dirinon (Finistère), Saint-Divy/Sant-Divi made a spring flow with his prayers and Sainte-Nonn/Santez-Nonn left the imprint of her knees on a stone where she gave birth to her child.

22 bottomless fountains are listed, including the fountain of the Trinité/an Drinder in Pleyben/Pleiben (Finistère) in which a treasure was thrown during the French Revolution. This list also includes fountains with enormous flooding potential, such as the Margatte fountain in Combourg/Komborn (Ile-et-Vilaine) where a white stone "corks" the waters which would otherwise flood an entire valley. There are also fountains with unusually warm or hot waters, and fountains created when a horse or bull stomped on the earth – as at the fountain of Saint-Samson/Sant-Samzun in Dol-de-Bretagne (Ile-et-Vilaine) where this saint's horse caused a spring to flow.

Numerous saints themselves had the power to make water spout from the earth and 76 such fountains are listed – linked to nearly as many different saints. The book lists 58 fountains found in or attached to Breton chapels and churches – giving them an extra sacredness. Also listed are "white fountains" – "feuntenniou gwen" which like fountains that turn into wine (usually just once a year at a certain moment) have the power to give drinkers a new otherworldly perspective. Particularly interesting are fountains which have associations with both life and death – often to show those performing a specific rite the outcome of a sickness.

This leads to a section on "oracles and divination" where you find a list of 84 fountains which can give you signs of the future – often by interpreting the outcome of objects put into the water which sink, swim or float. A number of fountains help determine if/when sailors will return from sea, if a child will be healthy and strong, if a lover will be faithful, or if someone who is ailing will recover quickly or die. And one can sometimes view a future bride or groom in the waters of a fountain. One can use the fountain of Kerlivio on the island of Groix to identify thieves. If you cross paths with them while carrying water from the fountain they will suffer a stomach ache until stolen goods are returned.

There are a number of fountains that can be used to predict marriage – showing their success and how

soon they will occur. At the fountain of Ker-Iliz in Bodilis/Bodiliz (Finisère) a pin taken secretly from one's sweetheart's dress will float on the water if she shares his love. At the fountain Saint Goustan/Sant-Goustan in Le Croisic/Ar Groazic (Loire-Atlantique) a young lady will throw a pin into a crack in the rock at the fountain. If it sticks the first time she will marry within a year. Otherwise, she will wait the number of years equivalent to the number of tosses it takes to stick the pin.

Fountains can have magical properties important to a rural society. 90 fountains are listed which can be addressed when rain is needed. Dipping crosses or relics into the water is often the way to get a saint's attention. One can also petition for good weather, protection from thunder and lightning, for a good harvest, and for good winds at sea.

A section of the book addresses the particular practices used in working the magic of fountains. These include immersion in a fountain, draining and cleaning a fountain, putting a piece of clothing into a fountain (often to foretell a future), circling around a fountain, approaching the fountain at a certain time (sunrise, sunset, midnight, etc.), offering something to the fountain (pin, coins, bread, twigs of specific trees, etc.). All must be done in a specific way, and woe to those who abuse the waters or show disrespect. 38 fountains are listed where consequences for the wrong action can be severe. You may be blinded, made ill, go deaf, go lame, or die. Men who scoff at women addressing a fountain for its powers may find themselves with breasts bulging with milk. Or a fountain may simply dry up or lose its powers.

The second main section of the book focuses on the healing properties of fountains in Brittany – sometimes "preventative" medicine to insure a healthy child or smooth childbirth, and most often healing an ailment. Thousands of fountains throughout Brittany have these effects. 80 are listed for their abilities to cure various maladies. Others are more specialized for ailments such as wounds, colic, stomach aches, tooth aches, fever, mental problems, sore throats, skin problems, rheumatism, sterility and fecundity, head aches, deafness, eye problems, ulcers, etc. A large number of fountains are related to the health of babies and young children.

In this section of the book are also found fountains that can be sought to insure the health of one's farm animals – horses especially which have a particular association with Saint-Eloi/Sant-Alar. Cattle are also protected – often by Saint Cornély/Sant-Korneli. Pigs, sheep and dogs also have their fountains.

The third major section of the book lists fountains according to architectural structure and features – styles of construction linked often the particular areas of Brittany. Lists of fountains here include a quick note of structural features. Illustrations are very helpful to show what seems like subtle differences between architectural styles. A listing of vocabulary and drawings where architectural terms are attached by arrows are very helpful for those not familiar with this terminology.

26 color photographs by Bernard Rio and over 100 detailed sketches of fountains by Albert Poulain show the variety of styles found in the fountains. A dozen sketches by Michel Politzer add a bit of human action – showing a saint poking the ground with a staff to activate a spring, a mother dipping her child into a fountain, a procession on a saints' day, etc. A bibliography is included as is a list of publications by each author.

This book will be especially appreciated by those who already have a bit of knowledge about Brittany, its history, saints and legends. And it will also be welcome to those who want to explore the Breton countryside and get a better appreciation of its architectural heritage. Interdictions from the 6th century on by the Catholic Church and its representatives have not eliminated Bretons' devotion to fountains and their spiritual and medicinal importance. Today you would be hard pressed to find anyone who would admit to circling a fountain three times at midnight to insure fertility, but fountains retain a power and are an important part of the spiritual landscape and history of Brittany. After exploring this book I would approach them with respect as one should any sacred site of any cultural heritage.



DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL 21 – THE BRETON RAIN

Jean Pierre Le Mat

I must confess it: The best rain I ever tasted was not a Breton one. It was in Connemara, during holidays in Ireland. It was a fine rain, so subtle that it was not possible to know if its movement was downwards or upwards. It was not mist nor fog, since you could clearly see the landscape. Only the colors were changed. It rained like that for hours and hours. Really, I have never seen such a magic rain.

Nevertheless, if that Connemara rain was really a perfect model, Breton ones can reach that level in quality. It gently moistens your face and your clothes. At the beginning, the water sticks without flowing. If you stay long enough outside, the microscopic droplets assemble joyfully. First, they give your face and your hair a supernatural brilliance. The Breton rain draws Celtic designs here and there. After that, liquid snakes awake and meanders down towards our mother earth. If you are clever enough, you will understand the signification of the hieroglyphs drawn on your coat, or on the face of your girlfriend. If you are perceptive enough, you will feel the grass frolic under the cuddle of the Breton rain.

There are countries which do not know the right way for raining. A few years ago, I lived in Aquitaine, in the south-west of France, not far from the Pyrenees mountains. There, I suffered choking rains, brutish rains. The water assaults you and weights on your body like lead. Communication is impossible. You are mugged during less than five minutes. This kind of rain savagely pours on you as much water as a Breton rain drops in ten days. You feel such a brutality and lack of grace in such precipitations that you feel sorry for the natives. I spoke to them about the bad behaviour of their rains, and I could see that they themselves were not pleased about them. They even told me that they are only happy with sunny weather.

I have been told by knowledgeable fellows that rain is the result of the condensation of atmospheric water spray into drops heavy enough to fall. The water vapour comes from the oceans and from the plant respiration. Some also say that our human industry produces clouds and increases the chance of rain.

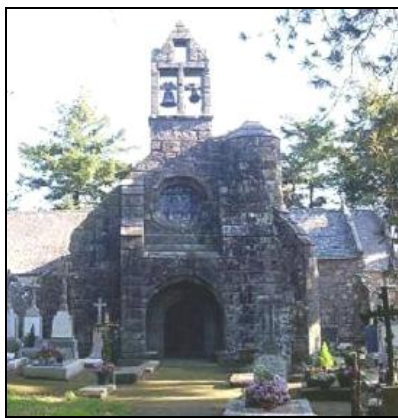
This must be true, and I have great respect towards the scientists. But I never find explanations for the seasonal differences of the Breton rain.

In winter, rain is a border between two universes. On one side, a universe of frost, slippery ways, sometimes snow. It is a universe with adults moaning and children shouting merrily. On the other side, a universe of grey clouds, torn from time to time by a white and low sun.

Between the two universes, the winter rain is a no man's land. In the little harbour of Roscoff, on the north coast, the winter rain keeps me away from the motion of the waves and from the life of the ocean. Every drop of winter rain pushes me into myself and builds the wall of my loneliness. One day, against the black magic of the winter rain, I managed to find a

shelter in the old church. But the walls and the pillars were unfamiliar, part of a mineral world. They seemed distant, turned towards the gold chalice, into the tabernacle of the old altar. Even the little light above the choir seemed cold, silent, distant.

There is a story about the church of Burthulet, not far from Callac, in the Arree Mountains. It is a small building, surrounded by a cemetery where some of the old graves are no longer looked after. The chapel, settled on the top of a woody hill, is lost in the countryside, surrounded by two or three small stone houses. It was owned by the Order of Jerusalem during the XVIth century, and before that by the Knights Templars. From ancient times, a belief remained until now that, here in the chapel, the Devil died from the cold. That seems strange, but I can imagine it is true. And I can say that it must have been during a winter rain, after days of snow. It was during that gap between the universe of frost and the universe of greyness. The unique refuge against the hollow abyss would be the dancing flames of a fire, where living creatures assemble. Burthulet is a poor spot in the centre of Brittany, and the Devil must have lost his way to hell there. His most powerful weapon is loneliness. The Devil, confused by the cold Breton winter rain, was killed by his own weapon.



The Breton spring rain is completely different, and can be considered as curing the wounds due to the winter rain. The stones of our old churches, like grains, seem to beam and to bloom. The old stone statues, in the church of Roscoff, are gently mocking the wet banknotes in my wallet. The sea sends messages through the droplets. It grasps my shoulders and turns my eyes and my steps towards the beach. Are the shrimp here? Are the spider crabs back?

In Pont Aven, the country of the painters, the spring rain draws new landscapes. It changes the colours, bows the poplars, pigments the sky with white, blue, grey and dark shades.

These spring rains are linked with Breton legends. I remember the story of the wife of a Caldron Lord, which was collected during the XIXth century near Plouaret. The man was the Lord of the lands all around, and he was very rich. But he has to stay in a caldron during all the day, or with the caldron stuck on his back. His wife is not allowed to tell her friends or family that the man can, during the night, leave his heavy shell. To ward off the fate of her husband, she went naked under the rain to an old stone cross, not far from the menez Bre, one of our holy hills. There, she had to touch and to talk without fear to a ghostly horse, then to a fearful white bull, and at the end to a spectral black cow. She succeeded in this ordeal and so she freed her husband, her brother-in-law, and her mother-in-law from an evil spell. This feat cannot be achieved on a dry sunny day, but only under a spring rain.

The Breton autumn rain looks like the spring rain. Perhaps a little bit depressing, when a drop bursts on a dead leaf. But it seems that the water tries desperately to put a new life into it. It is not the life we know, but another one. It is the life that moves our goblins, our fairies, the life that is in the ancient statues of our churches. It is common to say that the Breton people are fascinated by the mysteries of death, and that Breton literature is full of our questions without answer. But it is not the fascination of nothingness. It is not the attraction of void. It is the feeling of another life, of next worlds. The Welsh call Brittany Llydaw, the Irish call it Letha. That means the flat land which is the door of the next world. The Breton autumn rain carries the feeling of that world to us, and ancient Celts got the same impression when they came here. It is very difficult to explain these things to people who don't tarry under our autumn rain, to people in a hurry, or to people who rush about in air-conditioned cars and air-conditioned houses.

It is in autumn, when rain is falling, that we can meet those who are gone to Anaon, the Breton next world. About one hundred years ago, between Dinard and Saint Malo, there was no bridge. There was not, of course, the tidal power station that now bars the river Rance. There was a small ferry boat crossing the river when it was needed. At the beginning of the XXth century, it was the job of Hervé Rault to pull at the oars all day long, from one side to another. On the Dinard side, you have to knock at the door of Hervé and his family. If you were on the Saint Malo side, you had to ring a bell to ask him to come. On the 3rd of November 1912, at about eleven o'clock PM, the bell rang on the Saint Malo side. The rain was falling endlessly, after a strong storm that lasted three days. Hervé crossed the river, and found on the landing

stage an old friend, captain Yannig Corbin, and about twenty sailors of the crew of the “Fou de Bassan” (“Gannet” in English), a merchant ship trading with America. Yannig Corbin was a native of saint Lunaire, not far from Dinard. Hervé Rault told him that he could only get ten of them in his boat. Yannig Corbin answered that they must, all of them, cross the river to come back home, and the silent sailors began to huddle together on the boat. They did not weigh down the small craft. The captain was the last one to climb on the boat, and sit in front of Hervé Rault. During the crossing under the heavy rain, Hervé was upset and could not fix his mind. When he landed on the other side, all the men disappeared into the rainy night. Yannig Corbin stayed a few seconds after them, and thanked his friend before going his way.

Hervé Rault was told on the morrow morning that the ship “Fou de Bassan” wrecked two days before in front of Saint Malo. Nobody, out of the captain Corbin’s crew, could be saved from death. Hervé Rault kept this story for himself during thirty years. When the rain was falling heavily, in November, he sometimes went to cross the river, even when the bell had not been heard.

The Breton summer rain is the most achieved of all the species of rains. It is not linked with anything else. It exists for itself, as a masterpiece. It is what the French call “l’art pour l’art”, art for art’s sake. It is part of the natural balance. It brings with it energy after drowsy dog days, freshness after sunny afternoons, poetry after prosaic winds. In other countries, a summer rain can be seen as the Savior of the crops or the great Refresher of men. Here, rivers are running everywhere, and the celestial water does not have a celestial role. Summer rain is not a holy gift here.

Rain is part of Brittany’s nature and culture. We are proud of it.



Notes on Fountains of Brittany in 1869

From *Brittany & Its Byways – Some Account of Its Inhabitants and Its Antiquities; during a residence in that country, By Mrs. Bury Palliser* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1869)

I chose the following excerpts to present just a few springs and fountains of Brittany described in 1869 by Mrs. Bury Palliser to tie into the book review in this issue of Bro Nevez for *Fontaines de Bretagne*. And in one case, I found a description that also discusses the Templars – another book review theme in this newsletter issue. Mrs. Bury Palliser (1805-1875) describes a number of churches and presents dozens of saints and the miraculous properties associated with them in her book about her travels through Brittany. Her references to fountains are scarcer, and scattered among other odd bits of information on a wide range of topics – everything from agriculture, historical tidbits, cuisine, and folk tales, to the state of roads, details of architecture, and costumes. – Lois Kuter

Mont Dol (pp. 34-36)

The marshy country round Dol has been formerly inundated by the sea; it is now reclaimed and protected by a dyke twenty-two miles long, extending from Pontorson to Chateauneuf. The whole tract is full of buried wood, a submerged forest, which the people dig up, and use for furniture. It is black, like the Irish bog-oak. They call it “couëron.” In the midst of this plain rises a mamelon or insulated granite rock, resembling in form Mont St. Michel, called the Mont Dol. On top is the little chapel of Notre Dame de l’Espérance, upon which was formerly a telegraph, and near it is a column surrounded by a colossal statue of Our Lady. Mont Dol was a consecrated place of the Druids. The guides showed us a spring which never dries, and also a rock upon which they point out the print of the foot of the demon, left by him when wrestling with St. Michael. We meet the curé, who gave us a medal of the church, and told us the principal points in the view before us, extending over the whole Bay of Cancale.

On our way back to Dol, we walked to a cornfield, in the midst of it stands a menhir (they are so termed from the Breton *men*, stone and *hir*, long), called the “Pierre du champ dolant,” a shaft of gray granite, about thirty feet high, and said to measure fifteen feet more underground. On the top is a cross. The first preachers of Christianity, unable to uproot the veneration for the menhirs surmounted them with the

cross preserving the worship but changing the symbol. In the same manner, they did not attempt to destroy the veneration of sacred groves and fountains, but transformed to new saints the miracles of times past.

Lanleff (pp. 68-71)

Next day we made an excursion to the famed Temple of Lanleff, in Breton, the "land of tears," situated in a retired valley about six miles from the sea. According to the tradition of the country, it was built by "Les moines rouges," as they style the Templar Knights. The road was incessantly up and down hill, as we afterwards found they are throughout Brittany; a "pays accidenté" it may be truly called. The chapel of Lanleff is composed of two concentric circular enclosures separated by twelve round arches, with cushion-shaped capitals, having heads, human and animal, rudely sculptured upon them at the four angles. Its whole diameter is about twenty-two feet. It was probably built by some Templar Knight in the beginning of the twelfth century on his return from the Holy Land. The number of arches may allude to that of the twelve apostles.

The parish church was built on the east side of the temple, the only part which has preserved its roof, and which served as a vestibule to the more modern building. A gigantic yew formerly grew in the central enclosure, and overshadowed it with its spreading branches; the parish church has been taken down and rebuilt in another part of the village, and the yew-tree has disappeared.

Close to the temple is a spring enclosed by flagstones. When moistened, they appear covered with blood-stained spots. According to the tradition, in olden times an unnatural father sold his child to the Evil One. The gold received for the bargain was counted out upon the side of the spring, and the accursed money left its print upon the stones. A bare-legged peasant who stood by with her pitcher, threw some water over the stones, and immediately there appeared round red spots of different sizes – indelible marks of the diabolical bargain. We went into a cottage close by, and had some boiled eggs and cider. The inmates were at their meal – a bowl of milk, into which they broke their buckwheat "galette." We were much struck with the jealous pertinacity of the Breton, to show he considers himself as of a different people and country to the rest of France, a feeling which more than three hundred years has not dissipated. Our driver would talk of Bretons and French as of distinct nations, and the Normans in this part of Brittany are the special objects of hatred,

originating, perhaps, in the former subjection of Brittany to Normandy. When Charles the Simple ceded to the fierce Northmen the province now known by their name, their sovereignty extended over Brittany, and the dukes of Normandy did homage for both provinces to the King of France. The Bretons struggled hard against the supremacy of the Barbarians, but eventually had to acknowledge the Duke of Normandy as their sovereign lord.

Notre-Dame-du-Flogoët (pp. 122-127)

This church is one of the finest in Brittany. Its color is somber; it is the oldest monument in Brittany in which the Kersanton stone is employed. This stone is a volcanic rock called hornblende, of very fine grain, with minute specks of mica. There is a large quarry near St. Pol de Léon; but it is found principally on the west of the harbor of Brest, near a village from which it takes its name. Kersanton stone is of a dark-green color, approaching to bronze, gives out a metallic sound when struck, and is easily worked in the quarry, in blocks of from twenty to forty feet cube, but hardens on exposure to the air. Time has no destructive effect on it; the most delicate, lightest, and most ornamental sculptures executed in it remain uninjured, while the hardest granites, erected at the same time, are friable and decomposed. The Kersanton stone cuts glass like a diamond.

The architecture of Folgoët is distinguished for the elegance and richness of its ornamentation: the softness of the Kersanton stone, when French taken from the quarry fits it specially for the deeply cut, lace-like works of the artists of the flamboyant school, and the church is remarkable for the sill with which the productions of the vegetable kingdom are represented both within and without. It has no transepts, but to the south is a projection formed by the treasure chamber. The modern pulpit has a series of medallion bas-reliefs representing the legend of Solomon.

The jubé, or roodloft, is a perfect lacework of stone. Above three arches, decorated with vine-leaves, is an open-worked gallery of pierced quatrefoils surpassing in exuberance of ornament any other known.

To the east are five altars, all of Kersanton stone, most delicately sculptured – the under-cutting of the foliage most wonderful. They are in the shape of tombs or sarcophagi, the form generally adopted for the altars in the sixteenth century. Round the "antel des anges," richest of them all, is a row of eighteen niches, filled in with the figures of angels holding alternately phylacteries and escutcheons; round the

top is a cornice of thistle leaves – on the cut stalk of one hangs a dew-drop perfect to nature.

The high altar is decorated with vine-leaves, birds pecking the grapes, and the ermine, with its motto “à ma vie,” introduced. The altar of the rosary has also a cornice of vine-leaves modeled evidently after the high altar.

The fine flamboyant rose window at the east of the church resembles that of St. Pol de Léon, and below it is the fountain of Salaun. The spring is concealed under the high altar, and flows into a basin without, preserved by a kind of Gothic porch sculptured with thistle-leaves and crockets, and within it, on a bracket, is a delicately chiseled image of the Virgin. Some children round the fountain offered us pins, the use of which we did not understand. We afterwards learned that it is the custom in Brittany for girls to take a pin from their bodice, and throw it into a sacred well, to ascertain, by its manner of sinking, when they would be married. If the pin falls head foremost, then there is no present hope of matrimony, but if the point goes first, it is a sure sign of being married this year.

On the new year, in some parts of Brittany, pieces of bread and butter are thrown into fountains, and from the way in which they swim the future is foretold. If the buttered side turns under, it forebodes death; if two pieces adhere together, it is a sign of sickness; and if the piece floats, it is an assurance of long life and happiness.

The veneration of springs and healing wells is of very ancient date, and was prohibited by early councils of the Church; but the worship of that element from which suffering humanity seeks for relief in all its ailments has passed through succeeding creeds, and that which was held sacred a thousand years back is still the object of reverence and affection.

Nor is the sculpture outside the church less remarkable than the interior. The west door, now fallen to decay, has an arch with double entrance separated by a column containing a bénitier. A wreath of curled leaves runs round the arch, and on a bracket of thistle-leaves formerly stood a statue of John V.

The north side has little ornament. The great richness is in the south, where is the fine porch of Bishop Alain de la Rue, who consecrated the building, and more splendid still, is, at the angle formed by the projecting sacristy facing the west, the Porch of the Apostles. The twelve Apostles are ranged on each side, under rich canopies; the whole porch one mass of floral decoration, vine-leaves and mallows, interspersed

with dragons, birds, and insects. On the right of the porch is a crouching figure with a label inscribed: “Bn soiez venz,” - “Bien soiez venuz” or “Soyez les bien venues” – an invitation to the faithful to enter into the church. On the lintel of the two doors are ermines passant, and the motto of the Dukes of Brittany, “À ma vie,” and towards the south are the remains of a whole cornice of ermines, running through the rings of a long scroll inscribed with “À ma vie.” This motto was first taken by Duke John IV (who instituted the order of the Ermine) to imply that he had conquered Brittany, and would maintain it, even at the cost of his life, “à ma vie.”

The collar consisted of a double chain, in each of which were four ermines, and two more hung suspended from two chains, surmounted by coronet. The motto “À ma vie” was placed round each of these ten ermines.

Ste. Anne d’Auray (pp. 158-160)

From Hennebont we went by rail to Auray, and established ourselves for some time in the Pavillon d’en Haut, a most comfortable hotel. Auray is situated on the slop of a hill, the streets narrow and steep.

Our first drive was to Ste. Anne d’Auray, one of the most famous places of pilgrimage in Brittany, on account of its miraculous well and church. It has been called the Mecca of Brittany. Here according to the legend in the seventeenth century, Ste. Anne appeared to a countryman, and directed him to dig in a certain field, where he would find her image, and to build a chapel there. Guided by a miraculous light, Nicolazic discovered the statue, and erected a chapel on the site.

The spring where Ste. Anne first appeared is now enclosed in a large basin of cut stone. Near it is the church, in course of reconstruction. It stands in a court surrounded by covered galleries for the shelter of the pilgrims. Two flights of steps, called the Scala Sancta (after that of St. John Lateran), lead to a platform over the three entrance gates, upon which is an altar surmounted by a cupola, where mass can be heard by 20,000 persons. The steps are ascended by the pilgrims barefooted, as they do at Rome. The fête of Ste. Anne is celebrated on the 26th of July, when pilgrims arrive from all parts of Brittany to visit the miraculous statue, to ascend the holy staircase, and to drink or wash in the sacred fountain. It was a fête day when we visited Ste. Anne. There was a large assemblage of people, and booths were erected round the court, where were sold rosaries and the wire brooches, with scarlet and blue tufts of worsted,

called épinglettes, worn by the Bretons in their hats as a token of their having made pilgrimage. We saw exhibited the photograph of a young lady, said to have lately recovered from paralysis after bathing in the holy well. So world-wide is the fame of Ste. Anne d'Auray that a traveler mentions having seen at her shrine an embroidered altar-cloth of Irish damask, with "Irlande: Reconnaissance À Sainte Anne, 1850," woven into the pattern. The convent, with its enclosure, the Scala Sancta, fountain, and miraculous bush, all date from the seventeenth century. There is a railway station for Ste. Anne, within two miles of the church.

Sainte Anne-La-Palue (pp. 280-285)

The Pardon of Sainte Anne-la-Palue takes place the last Sunday in August, continuing three days, and is one of the most frequented in Finistère.

At Plounevez-Porzun we turned off the Crozon road, and about two miles further arrived at the chapel. The road all the way was lined with peasants walking to the Pardon. The young men of Douarnenez wear blue jackets, embroidered in colors, with rows of plated buttons, the sleeves and waistcoat of a darker blue than the jacket, scarlet sashes, some with plaited bragou bras and shining leather gaiters; but most of them wore trousers, their hair long, and their hats with two or three rows of colored variegated chenille. The women had square caps, and aprons with bibs. Those who were in mourning wore light yellow caps, called "Bourladins," stained that color with beeswax or saffron.

St. Anne is a newly-built church, standing on the slope of a down which separates it from the sea, in a perfectly insulated situation. It is only open once a year for the Pardon. Round it were erected numerous stalls, with toys, Epinglettes, and rosaries (chapelets) in heaps for sale; for rosaries must always be purchased at the Pardon, to preserve the wearer from thunder and hydrophobia. The great fabric for them is at Angers, where they are made in immense quantities. In the principal manufactory a steam-engine is used for turning the beads; in the others the common lathe. One make told us she sent annually into Brittany alone rosaries to the value of 800/. There were tents and booths erected for the accommodation of the pilgrims who had arrived the preceding day. They eat, drink, and dance in the tents by day, and sleep on the tables at night.

At ten o'clock, at the ringing of a bell, a procession was formed, consisting of a long line of peasants, preceded by priests and banners, which made the round of the church; the penitents, en chemise to the waist, barefooted, carrying wax tapers in their hands. The penance is sometimes executed by proxy; a rich sinner may, for a small sum, get his penance performed by another. One woman made the round of the church on her knees, telling her beads as she hobbled along. This was in performance of a vow made for some special deliverance.

We proceeded to the top of the hill, from which the beautiful Bay of Douarnenez presented a most lively appearance; fleets of small boats arriving from every direction, and a huge steamer from Brest, which was obliged to land its passengers in small boats, on account of the shallowness of the water.

The appearance of the downs now became very animated, covered with gaily-dressed peasants arranged in groups, sitting or lying on the grass, in every kind of attitude.

At four o'clock the grand procession took place. First came the priests of all the surrounding districts, with the banners and crosses of their parishes; then followed five girls (three and two) in white, carrying a banner, and eight more in similar attire, bearing a statue of the Virgin. Next appeared the banner of Sainte Anne, carried by women in the gorgeous costume of the commune – gowns of cherry-colored silk, trimmed half the way up with gold lace, a silver lace scarf, the aprons of gold tissue or rich silk brocade. Under their lace caps was a cap of gold or silver tissue. Four more of these superbly-dressed bearers ("porteuses") carried the statue of Ste. Anne. Girls carrying blue flags walked by their side. Troops of barefooted penitents and shaggy-headed beggars closed the procession, which was followed by a countless train of peasants. It slowly wound its way over the hill, and again descended to the church, where it mingled among the crowds of assembled spectators, which filled in the churchyard and were seated on the steps of the calvary.

Not far from the church is the holy well of Ste. Anne, where devotees were engaged pouring the holy water over their hands and backs, dipping their children, and testing the miraculous efficacy by various other ablutions.

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