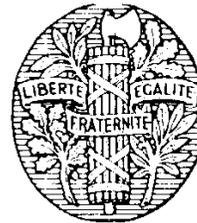
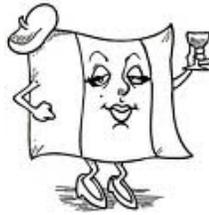


BRO NEVEZ

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



In a website Google search to find images of "symbols of France" an odd assortment of things come up.

See pages 3-4

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the 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.

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. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above.

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

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Is it March already???

I did not want to give you any excuses for the lateness of this "February" issue of Bro Nevez. But let me tell you about this winter in Philadelphia !

In December we received some 20 inches of snow – already more than the past two winters combined. While January was an easy month, February was one for the record books. Within one week we received a snowfall of 24 inches and then another of some 20 inches on top of that. And added to that, another 6 to 8 inches fell at the end of February. While temperatures above freezing have helped to melt some of this, there are huge piles of the stuff that will be here for a long time to come!!! This is not a normal winter for us here in the Philadelphia area and we are very eager for spring to arrive.

I have a new respect for regions of the world where blizzards are the norm.

The weather here in Pennsylvania was challenging but not life-threatening – and our hearts have gone out here to those in Haiti and now in Chili who have lost many loved ones in earthquakes. And as I put this issue of Bro Nevez in its final form, I read of storms in Europe of a devastating nature. – winds, water, and waves - taking lives as well. I hope that all our friends in Brittany are safe and secure, and wish a speedy and tranquil spring for us all. The days are growing longer, here and the sweet singing of birds in the early morning hours inspires hope.

Lois Kuter 

The Great Debate on French Identity

Lois Kuter

You may have read about the “grand débat sur l’identité nationale” (the great debate on national identity) launched in France in November to span three months with a closing colloquium on February 4, 2010. At this colloquium France’s Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Cooperative Development would present its proposal to support national identity and to reaffirm the values of the Republic (France) and pride in being French.

The Ministry of Immigration Integration, etc. (for short) was created in May 2007 following a campaign promise by President Nicolas Sarkozy (www.immigration.gouv.fr) and the first Minister was Brice Hortefeux. Since January 2009 Éric Besson has held this post. The creation of this Ministry has not been viewed kindly by all in France. Some have seen the association of Immigration and Integration/National Identity as a means to exclude or further divide immigrants arriving from Africa and the Middle East from the true “French.”

The “Great Debate on National Identity” has stirred concerns of the Muslim community of France as well as other peoples of France like the Bretons. An article published November 24, 2009, in the New York Times by Steven Erlanger had the title “France Debates Its Identity, But Some Question Why.” The article begins:

PARIS – France, a nation endlessly fascinated with itself since at least as far back as the Gauls, is again engaged in a bizarre and deeply political debate over its identity. Not for the first time, everything has been ordered from the top down, a project and campaign promise of Nicolas Sarkozy. ... By raising issues of immigration, national identity and the Islamic veil, Mr. Sarkozy is trying to assuage his party’s concerns about a “Globalized,” more racially and religiously diverse France, which can sometimes seem pretty far removed from Racine, if not from the farces of Molière.”



Éric Besson

It is hoped by those organizing it that this debate will engage all citizens of France in a better appreciation of a “singular and plural identity,” of a “millenary culture, which in mysterious ways impregnates all.”

The following is my summary of proposals published in a February 8, 2010, press release from France’s Prime Minister summarizing the next steps for the “debate” (www.debatidentitenationale.fr)

1 – Continue the great debate on national identity.

Proposal 1 – Put together a commission of historians, sociologists, intellectuals and elected members of the French Parliament to prepare measures to value national identity.

2 – Know the Values of the Republic

Proposition 2 – Create a notebook for young citizens. This would explain the symbols of the Republic and major dates and people in French history. This would also provide directions for civic action to help children grow into good citizens.

Proposition 3 – Introduce a teaching module on the Republic in to Civic Service. Young people engaged in civic service with various organizations (with salaries paid by the State) would receive training in the values of the Republic.

Proposition 4 – Transform the “Day of Calling and Preparation for Defense” into a citizens gathering where people would get an in-depth introduction to rights, duties, and principles of the Republic and of living cooperatively together.

Proposition 5 – Reinforce the role of the schools in the construction of civic consciousness and the preparation of new pedagogical tools. “The tie between the School, the Nation, the Republic and the Country [Patrie] is one of the central historical dimensions of our educational system.”

3 – Cultivate pride in being French

Proposition 6 – Give each child of France the occasion to sing the Marseillaise at least once a year. Learning the national anthem is already part of school programs, but children need to learn to respect its meaning and gain the desire to sing it.

Proposition 7 – Expand the list of people honored during the Fête Nationale (July 14). Honor more people working for their country and community during July 14 ceremonies and festivities.

Proposition 8 – Make it obligatory for each school to fly the French flag and to have the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen” posted in each classroom. “It is in the visibility of symbols of the Republic that young French people will acquire respect for them and the formation of a sense of national involvement.”

Proposition 9 – Open the schools to parents to encourage their learning of rights and duties. Schools can serve to help parents become more conscious of Republican values and the rights and duties of citizenship.

4 – Bring the principles of the Republic to life.

Proposition 10 – Empower teachers to be masters of their classroom to enforce rules.

5 – Welcome New French Citizens.

Proposition 11 – Make the act of becoming a citizen a more important ceremony. Systematize the various ways people become citizens and require new citizens to attend a ceremony.

Proposition 12 – Make it easier for foreigners to become French citizens when they show exceptional effort to integrate. Instead of five years, allow some to apply for naturalization in two years – especially in view of their efforts to perfect linguistic and cultural assimilation beyond the required conditions for citizenship.

6 – Review the requirements for foreigners to live in the Republic.

Proposition 13 – Strengthen the contract incorporating and integrating new migrants. Review requirements that need to be met by foreigners who wish to establish residence and become citizens of France. This proposes a more advance mastery of French (through obligatory, albeit free, classes if necessary)

Proposition 14 – Make it easier for parents of foreign students to establish a relationship with schools. Assist parents to learn French in free classes, to learn the values of the Republic, and to better understand the school system.

In its reliance on assimilation to form good citizens, France seems to be continuing an old model where one’s acceptance (and glorification) of symbols of the French Republic are the only way to be a good citizen – flying the flag, singing the Marseillaise, learning a certain view of history, and especially mastering the French language. In this debate on national identity it appears that “liberty, equality, and fraternity” – now joined by “secularism” – really mean conformity to a very limited definition of what it is to “be French.”

Hope for French Government Support of Breton and Regional Languages? – Non, non et NON!

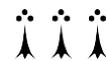
As you have read in many pages of Bro Nevez covering this issue, France signed but is one of the few countries of Europe to refuse ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Ironically in order to join the European Union today, a country is required to have ratified this Charter. And there are a number of Articles of other European and international charters and conventions for the protection of minority peoples and languages which France has refused to sign.

Besides a campaign promise to implement a Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Cooperative Development, Nicolas Sarkozy also promised to support a law to protect and promote the regional languages and cultures of France (as did ex-Minister of Culture, Christine Albanel). This is a promise that is not to be kept.

In the name of the French government, Éric Besson (the Minister of Immigration, Integration, etc.) told Martine Faure, President of the Intergroup for Regional Languages of the French National Assembly, that such a law will not be enacted since it is “contrary to the principle of indivisibility of the Republic and equality before the law” in its protection of individual speaker’s rights.

If one ever needed confirmation that France was uninterested in the future of anything but the French language in France, this flat refusal by the French government to consider such a law would be it. Anyone needing further convincing can just look at the promotion of Republican values and symbols and the French language in the “Great debate on French identity.” This is the same old talk by France about its role as a country which is exemplary in the promotion of human rights (liberty, equality, and fraternity), and the same old road blocks to insure that Breton and other regional languages – or languages of immigrant peoples – remain legally unrecognized and marginalized.

Since the 1970s Breton Parliament and Assembly members have been working to introduce legislation for regional languages and to get more decision-making power at the regional level to support language and culture. While no one expects miracles from the French government, Bretons do not easily give up. The fight will go on.



Breton wrestlers to be criminalized for animal cruelty?

When it comes to respect for identity and its symbols there seems to be just one side of the story in France. One is reminded of this in a recent court case brought against the Federation of Gouren for animal cruelty by an animal rights group based in Paris. It has long been a tradition to award a ram to the winner of Breton wrestling tournaments – gouren is a Celtic style of wrestling popular in Brittany. And the winner will carry this animal on his/her shoulders for a short time in a sort of “victory lap.” Gouren is a sporting tradition which is truly conducted in the spirit of fair play and it is free of violence. While highly competitive, the idea is not to annihilate your opponent, but to fight with respect according to well-defined rules. To the winner goes a ram – a symbol of strength and endurance. And one can be assured that this animal is treated well by the winners for the honor it represents. In the past a ram would become part of a farm’s troop, and today this can still be the case. If the winner does not have the facilities to house and feed the ram, they will find it a home where it will peacefully graze and grow old like any other sheep.

As someone who has followed the renaissance of gouren since the 1970s and who has appreciated it for its unique Breton elements – including a vow to fight fairly recited in Breton by all tournament participants - I was astonished to learn of this lawsuit brought upon the Federation of Gourin which organizes tournaments for wrestlers of all ages (men and women, boys and girls). Surely there are cases of true animal cruelty and neglect that could use this animal rights group’s attention. The fact that this case was considered seriously in the courts this December is even more dismaying and indicative of the disconnection between French institutions and the reality of Breton life and culture. While the case was dismissed in February, this was due more to a technicality of timing in the particular case of “animal cruelty” rather than the court’s opinion that this tradition was in no way harmful to animals. Those eager to protect Breton rams from their place of honor at gouren tournaments will be bringing this back to court.

The following is a letter from the President of the Federation of Gouren presenting their position on this matter (my translation from its publication in *Dazont Breizh/L’Avenir de la Bretagne* 486, January-February 2010).

The Federation of Gouren, 1,500 licensed members strong with some 5,000 school participants in partnership with the National Education system, was brought to court by the Association Stéphane Lamart for “using a living animal as a lottery drawing or prize.” The case was judged before the courts in Brest on December 14. The animal in question is the maout (ram) which we offer to

the winner of our large summer tournaments (five to six per year). This is an ancient and uninterrupted tradition well documented historically.

The maout is also the symbol of Breton wrestlers, stitched onto their “roched” (wrestling shirt). In our language [Breton] it signifies as well a fairly fought victory. In fact, before each tournament, all our competitors state a vow of loyalty excluding treachery and brutality. This vow must include the treatment of sheep as well, which are the object of all respect.

Carried on the shoulders of the winner for a lap around the wrestling field, his feet are not tied and he is fully free to move. We feel we have not transgressed either the letter or the spirit of the law – we do not organize a lottery or the distribution of prizes and there is no mistreatment.

In addition. We claim this to be a vital tradition – ancient and integral to our cultural patrimony. This is why we ask for solidarity and support of all citizens devoted to Breton culture and the protection of animals.

We thank all those who demonstrated their calm support in accordance with our vow “in all loyalty, without treachery or brutality.”

Erwan Evenou
President, Federation of Gouren



Photo from the Gallésie en fête website where viewers are called to sign and on-line petition in support of Federation de Gourn. (www.gallesie-monterfil.org)

A post note: A number of Breton organizations and institutions expressed support for the Federation de Gouren. On March 5, Skol Uhel ar Vro (Cultural Institute of Brittany) sponsored a lecture/workshop free to the public on the topic of Gouren and its continuing role in Breton tradition through time. Led by Aurélie Epron, this presentation has the title “From Gouren of ancestral times to a modern Gouren: how does a traditional practice survive the times?” The presentation aims to give an idea (and pose some questions) about what gouren is and how it has changed over time to adapt as an expression of modern Breton life.

Losses in the Breton Family

Bernard Le Nail (1946-2010)

Brittany mourned the sudden loss of Bernard Le Nail who died from a massive stroke on January 5 at the age of 63. Few have contributed so much to Brittany and few have displayed the humbleness and generosity of spirit one found in Bernard Le Nail.

A scholar of Breton history – in everything Breton – Bernard Le Nail was active in the economic and cultural life of Brittany. Born in Paris, he worked for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Nantes in the 1970s and was active with the Centre Nantais de Culture Celtique. He would learn Breton through the Skol Ober correspondence school as have many other Bretons during times when there was no alternative (and this is still the case for many today).

From 1979 to 1983 he was the Secretary for CELIB (Comité d'Étude et liaison des Intérêts Bretons), a very influential organization in the economic growth of Brittany during this period. In 1983 he would take on the direction of the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) and serve this institution until 2000.

In 2001 he launched a publishing company, Les Portes du Large, which has had a strong focus on Bretons and world travel through history – a topic which Bernard Le Nail particularly loved and had considerable expertise. He himself was a world traveler and spent time in Mexico and South America, the United States, and a number of other countries. He was an active participant in the International Celtic Congress and the Brittany-Galicia Association, and traveled frequently to the Celtic countries. Gwyn Griffiths (ICDBL representative in Wales) wrote in homage to his good friend Bernard Le Nail that “his knowledge of Wales would shame most Welshmen and he was equally well informed about the other Celtic countries. As for Brittany, he was an encyclopedia on legs.”

I started corresponding with Bernard Le Nail in 1984 (and his English in the first letter I received was impeccable). Although not frequent and in French, his letters were always full of good information. As others have emphasized in eulogizing Bernard Le Nail, he always had a concern for accuracy and excellence, and he was always extremely modest about his own work while at the same time encouraging and supportive of others. He frequently sent a positive word of support for the work of the U.S. ICDBL and was a contributor to Bro Nevez. In this issue you will find an article he contributed to us (translated from French by long-time U.S. ICDBL member Geneviève Ray) called “Names of Places with Breton origins throughout the world.” This was published in Bro Nevez numbers 19 & 20 (May and August 1986). The

traces left by Breton explorers and travelers throughout the world was an ongoing passion of Bernard and he never stopped looking for place names with a Breton foot print (see “A Project to Document Breton Emigration in Bro Nevez 44, November 1992).

Generous not only in his encouragement to those working for Brittany and the Breton language, Bernard Le Nail gave freely of his knowledge ... and his books – both those he wrote himself and with his wife Jacqueline, and those he published for Les Portes du Large. On my last visit to Brittany in 2007 I had the good fortune to be able to visit with Bernard and Jacqueline, just before departing for the U.S. Added to the pile of books and pamphlets gifted to me by friends throughout Brittany were another half dozen gems from Les Portes du Large. In an anecdote that demonstrates well Bernard's insistence on the highest quality possible, I recall him bemoaning the wrong use of color by a printer for a particular book cover – a small detail that I would never have noticed. My suitcase was indeed a heavy one heading back to the U.S. from that trip and I am still trying to read everything I brought home!

Tied closely to Bernard Le Nail's interest in Breton men and women who explored the world was his interest in Breton biography of all kinds. With Jacqueline he produced two excellent dictionaries of literary figures of Brittany – a dictionary of writers for children and youth and a dictionary of novelists. Both are full of wonderful detail – invaluable reference works.

I do not have a complete biography of this prolific scholar – and he wrote hundreds of articles for Breton publications and the online Agence Bretagne Presse. The following are books by Bernard Le Nail (and Jacqueline Le Nail) as well as some published by Les Portes du Large for which you will find a review in Bro Nevez.

Bernard Le Nail (text), Philip Plisson (photography). *Bretagne, pays de mer – le patrimoine maritime breton*. Hachette, 1993 (Bro Nevez 49, February 1994).

Bernard Le Nail. *Explorateurs et grands voyageurs bretons*. Editions Jean-Paul Gisserot, 1998. (Bro Nevez 66, May 1998)

Bernard & Jacqueline Le Nail. *Dictionnaire des Romanciers de Bretagne*. Keltia Graphic. 1999 (Bro Nevez 75, August 2000)

Bernard & Jacqueline Le Nail. *Dictionnaire des auteurs de jeunesse de Bretagne*. Keltia Graphic, 2000 (Bro Nevez 81, February 2002).

Bernard Le Nail. *Noms de lieux Bretons à travers le monde*. Portes du Large, 2001 (reviewed in Bro Nevez 81, February 2002)

Bernard Le Nail. *L'Almanach de la Bretagne*. Editions Jacques Mareseille – Larousse. 2003 (Bro Nevez 90, May 2004)

Bernard & Jacqueline Le Nail. *Pays de Vitré – hommes et femmes remarquables*. Les Portes du Large, 2004 (on my pile to be read !)

Bernard Le Nail, *Des Bretons au Mexique*. Le Portes du Large, 2009 [Bernard Le Nail's latest publication]

Publications of Les Portes du Large by other authors:

Jean-Loup Avril. *Mille Bretons, Dictionnaire biographique*. 2nd edition, 2003 (Bro Nevez 90, May 2004)

Hervé Gourmelon. *Le Chevalier de Kerlérec – l'affaire de la Louisiane*, 2003. (Bro Nevez 91, August 2004)

Olivier Le Dour & Grégoire Le Clech. *Les Bretons dans la ruée vers l'or de Californie*, 2006 (Bro Nevez 105, February 2008).

Marcel Fournier. *Les Bretons en Amérique française 1505-2004*, 2005 (Bro Nevez 99, August 2006)

Yves Rocher (1930-2009)

On December 26, 2009, Brittany lost another loyal defender at the age of 79. One can serve Brittany in a number of ways, and Yves Rocher served it in building a cosmetics company which was based in his native village of La Gacilly (near Redon). Founded in 1958 the Yves Rocher company was a pioneer in using natural botanical products. Today the company employs some 15,000 people – 7,000 in France and over 3,000 in Brittany.

While Yves Rocher could have set up business anywhere he chose to base his operations in the small town of La Gacilly – greatly adding to the local economy and employment. He also served as mayor for this town from 1962 to 2008 and served on the General Council of the Department of Morbihan as well as the Regional Council of Brittany.

Meriadeg Herrieu (1924-2009)

One of six children of Loeiz Herrieu and Loeiza ar Meliner, Meriadeg Herrieu passed away this December. A Catholic priest serving parishes in his native Vannetais (Bro Gwened), he would follow in the foot-steps of his father, a famous writer and supporter of the Breton language – particularly that of Bro Gwened. He wrote a number of articles for the magazines *An Dihunamb* and *An Doéré*, and grammars and dictionnaires to assist

those wanting to perfect the Vannetais dialect of Breton. Among his works were *Skrideu Gwenedeg, textes Bretons annotés pour étudiants, Le Breton du Morbihan Vannetais* (1974), *Le Breton Parlé* (1979), *Dictionnaire Français-Breton, Vannetais* (1981), *Dictionnaire Breton-Français, Vannetais* (2001),

Bastien Guern (1923-2009)

This December Brittany also lost one of the great singers of kan ha diskant for gavotte, Bastien Guern, of Poullaouën, at the age of 86. This singer had influenced a number of traditional singers of younger generations as well as sonneurs (binioù, bombarde and accordion). Like many others of his generation, Bastien Guern cannot be found on many recordings, but you can find his voice alongside another giant of his generation, Manuel Kerjean, and they pair with Jean-Claude Le Talec and Alain Le Clere - “youngsters” who carry on the tradition of kan ha diskant for dances of central western Brittany – on the CD *Chants à répondre en Centre-Bretagne / Fest-Noz e Bro Rostren*. (See the review in Bro Nevez 53, February 1995).

Short Notes – Some Good Things Happening for the Breton Language in Brittany

Rouzig, a magazine in Breton for 3 to 7 year olds with some 720 subscribers celebrated its 100th issue this past December. Created in 2001 by Serge Monfort, Rouzig is a little red dog who speaks Breton and he is the subject of stories found throughout the magazine. Other stories are included as well, along with games and activities, all in Breton. Congratulations to publisher Keit Vimp Beo who has been a pioneer in the production of Breton-language publications and games in the Breton language for children and youth.

Redadeg 2010 – As noted in the November 2009 issue of Bro Nevez, Ar Redadeg is a 1,200 kilometer relay-race where each kilometer purchased supports various Breton language projects and the Diwan Breton language immersion schools. The U.S. ICDBL has purchased two kilometers, thanks to the contribution of Richard and Valerie Herr (1 km) and to all of the U.S. ICDBL Members who have contributed money beyond their dues to support the Breton language (the 2nd km). This is just the second time for the Ar Redadeg (which was launched in 2008) and this year it will start in Rennes on May 10 and end on May 15 in Pontivy, passing through all five departments of Brittany. (www.ar-redadeg.org)

Produit en Bretagne (Made in Brittany) has signed the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg accord. Produit en Bretagne is an association to promote Breton products which includes some 225 companies in 60 different areas of economic activity in all five departments of Brittany. This December they signed onto the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign launched by Ofis ar Brezhoneg (Office for the Breton Language www.ofis-bzh.org). Present for the signing in Rennes were the President of the Regional Council of Brittany, Jean-Yves Le Drian, Jakez Bernard and Malo Bouëssel du Bourg, President and Director of Produit en Bretagne, and Lena Louarn, President of Ofis ar Brezhoneg. Already engaged in the use of publicity in the Breton language – such as the “Plijadur penn-da-benn” campaign in the Paris metro stations – Produit en Bretagne will expand its use of Breton in publicity, on internet sites, and internally in its business work. Breton will be present on business cards, letterhead and envelopes as well. In promoting high quality products of Brittany, the Breton language will also gain some increased visibility.

Ofis ar Brezhoneg has introduced an new automatic Breton-French translator on its website (www.ofis-bzh.org). While this will not actually “translate” a text into perfect French, this service will help French speakers to get the sense of a Breton word, phrase or longer text. Ofis ar Brezhoneg can provide professional translation work (for a fee) - which it does for many businesses and organizations - but this website function is free for use by anyone. Try it out!

Prizioù 2010. Each year a panel put together by the TV station France 3 Ouest awards prizes for innovative work in the Breton language. For this 13th year the winners were as follows:

Best Literary Translation

Mark Kerrain for *Teod ar balafenned* (An Alarc'h publications), for translation of a book in Galicien by Manuel Rivas.

Other nominees were Yann Talbot for a translation of Franz Kafka, *An treuzstummadur* (Al Lanv) and Erwan Hupel for the translation of Palestinian author Ghassan Kanafani, *Ur gwel eus Gaza* (Al Liamm).

Best CD

Dom Duff for *E-unan* (BNC Productions). Other nominees were Gwennyn for *Mammenn* (Keltia Musique) and Louis-Jacques Suignard & Yann-Guirec Le Barz for *Tcha tcha Douarnenez* (BNC Productions).

Best Audiovisual Production (for TV or Web)

Goulwena An Henaff and Étienne Strubel for the series *Ken Tuch'* (produced by Lionel Buannic). Other nominees were Ronan Hirrien for *Lannoù Telo* (France Télévisions) and Jean-Pierre Lyvynec for a short telefilm *Micherioù* (France Télévisions).

Best Project for Youth

The Ubapar vacation camps for Breton language. Other nominees were the film *Brendan ha sekred Kells* by Tomm Moore and Nora Twoney (produced by Dizale) and the Breton language theater troupe from the Diwan high school “Los furlukinos”

Breton Language Speaker of the Year

Lena Louarn, President of the Ofis ar Brezhoneg, for her ten years of service there.

Also nominated were the Morvan Brothers who have been singing Breton kan ha diskant (often in support for the Diwan schools) for some 50 years, and the Breton language Wikipedia which includes some 30,000 entries

Disprizioù 2009. Countering the Prizioù for creativity in the Breton language, journalists of Breizhoweb TV created a prize three years ago to note those who were exceptional in their negative expression for the Breton language. Five winners were identified for this past year.

For Teaching

Alain Colas of the Lycée Dupuy-de-Lôme in Lorient who stated that it was necessary to prepare children for the future and not for the world of their grandparents. This meant teaching Chinese and eliminating Breton that had been offered to secondary level students.

For Politics

This Minister for Culture, Christine Albanel (and her successor Frédéric Mitterrand) and Éric Besson, Minister of Immigration and National Identity, for their refusal to consider a law for regional languages of France – you read about this earlier in these pages!

For Public Life

Yann Arthus-Bertrand, a well known figure in the ecology movement, who noted how wonderful Brittany was for its photographic beauty, but who noted that he was annoyed by all the bilingual signs and felt efforts should be put to finding a common language rather than supporting ones like Breton.

For Economic Life

The postal service and the director for Ouest Bretagne, Yves Amiard, for its inability to deal with apostrophes in Breton place names.

For Media

France 3 (who initiates the Prizioù) for their drop in Breton language programming – said to drop by nearly 100 hours between 2006 and 2008 (25% of this programming).

New Books from Brittany

Simon Alain. *Descartes, Breton? – The Breton Point of View*. Yoran Embanner. 2009. 342 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-21-4.

This book – in the English language – begins with a “Note to the reader”:

This book is not a book of philosophy. Therefore, it does not require any knowledge in philosophy. However, it is about a philosopher ... It demands curiosity at least!

Having never read anything by Descartes, I found this a pretty interesting read. But it was a reading that took more than just curiosity, since it is dense in history and thought. It would be very helpful to have a good sense of European history and the history of philosophy to fully appreciate the book. And I believe that it would be much more interesting if one had actually read some of Descartes work. But maybe not, since the author encourages one to reread Descartes with a new awareness of a Breton point of view.

Everyone knows Descartes as the philosopher who said “I think, therefore I am” but that’s as far as many of us get and do we understand what that means? René Descartes (1596-1650) was a man of a particular period of time, and as the author points out he has been used during different periods of history to incarnate the idea of France and “Cartesians.” I certainly never realized Descartes was Breton, nor did Descartes himself call himself a “Breton” or a “Frenchman” since the idea of identity was quite different during his lifetime. He was not born in Brittany (but on the border of Poitou and Touraine), but he was part of an extended family that lived in Brittany and participated in its political life. He spent time in Brittany but lived primarily in Holland. He spent time in Germany and other counties of central Europe, Italy, England, and died in Sweden. He spent just a bit of time in Paris, but when he returned to France it was mostly to visit family in Brittany. The book gives a good feel for the political and religious conflicts of Descartes day and of the centuries that would follow which would influence the way Descartes was interpreted and misinterpreted to serve certain agendas.

At times it is hard to follow the author’s train of thought on identity, philosophy and the interpretations of Descartes through history, but there is a lot of repetition in the writing and a number of topics are revisited several times through the 342 pages of text. Sometimes this is helpful in putting an idea in a different context, but sometimes it just seems like unnecessary redundancy. The frequently italicized phrases get a bit annoying since they do not always seem to be ideas that need any emphasis. Those

minor things aside, this is a thought provoking books with lots of fascinating little details.

Much has been written about Descartes (Simon Alain cites a great number of books and articles in all languages) – form a French, German, Dutch, English and many other points of view. But, this is the first book to look at this philosopher’s life and thought from a Breton point of view.

Added Note: Newspaper articles in the New York Times and Philadelphia Inquirer (February 25, 2010) report on the discovery of a letter written by René Descartes dated May 27, 1641, concerning the publication of “Meditations on First Philosophy.” This was one of 72 letters by Descartes stolen from the Institut de France by an Italian mathematician in the mid-1800s. This letter has been in the manuscript collection of Haverford College here in the Philadelphia area of Pennsylvania. Ironically it was a philosophy scholar, Erik Jan Bos, at Utrecht University in the Netherlands (where Descartes spent many years) who noticed a reference to this letter on the internet. Haverford College, unaware that the letter was stolen goods, has graciously offered to return the letter to Institut de France (their generosity will be recognized with a prize of 15,000 euros).

Jacqueline Le Calvé and Loïc Tréhin. *Promenades en Vallée du Scorff*. Yoran Embanner, 2009. 112 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-24-7.

The Scorff River is just some 75 kilometers long but it is fed by a network of smaller streams that add up to some 770 kilometers. Starting at Mellionnec in the Côtes d’Armor, the Scorff flows south through the Department of Morbihan and a bit of Finistère before joining the Blavet River at the city of Lorient and then reaching the Atlantic Ocean on the coast of south central Brittany.

This book is primarily a guide for “tourists” and anyone – local or from afar – interested in the history, architectural and artistic patrimony, and natural beauty of this region of Brittany. This book is designed especially for those who might want to do some walking in the countryside – which is a great way to see Brittany and enjoy it The book divides the Scorff watershed into five sections and a map is included to note the walking trails and sites to visit for each (and one is directed to the Maison de Scorff for more detailed maps of the walks). For each walking trail the departure point and the distance is noted (form 3.2 kilometers to as long as 32 kilometers, with most in the 5 to 10 kilometer range).

Each of 40 sites to be found in the Scorff watershed is described and these include lots of small churches and chapels as well as manor houses, a 19th century forge, Gaulic structures from the 5th and 6th century B.C., and

structures built over the centuries on the river to catch eels and fish. Each site gives history and highlights of what to see – in the case of churches and chapels the dates of original construction and those of changes and restorations. One is introduced to the saints to which a chapel is dedicated and the date is given for the annual “pardon” – the festival to honor the saint. For those who wish to reach the sites by car, detailed driving instructions are included.

Each of the five sections of the book is introduced by a segment of a song text in French and Breton – “Chanson de Scorff”/“Sonenn ar Skorff” – which describes the landscapes and towns to be found. This was written sometime after 1923 by Julien Dupuis (1878-1955). The song is from the perspective of the river which recounts what it sees as it flows through various sites and towns – sometimes a happy encounter as in the countryside around Plouay where people sing old songs in Breton and play the biniou, and sometimes not so happy as in Pont-Scorff where city people have abandoned their language, or in Lorient where the river Scorff leaves its woods and valley to go out to sea.

While the bulk of the book is made up of descriptions of various historic and cultural sites of the Scorff valley, the book also includes a good introduction to the history of the area, from the very first human settlements evidenced in archeological sites of the Neolithic period through the 19th century. Current environmental concerns for the care of water resources are also noted since the health of streams and rivers are integral to the health of a cultural patrimony.

The author, Jacqueline Le Calvé is a sociologist and historian who has studied religious practices and the evolution of rural life in Brittany. She directs the Maison du Scorff which promotes the historical patrimony of the region and which cares for the walking trails presented in the book. Loïc Tréhin, a painter and illustrator who lives in the Scorff valley, has provided some 50 illustrations for the book to give a taste of some of the countryside, buildings and objects one will see.

This is a lovely book to take along on any one of dozens of walks to explore this beautiful region of Brittany.

Isabelle Nguyen & Loïc Tréhin. *Poul-Fetan, un voyage dans le temps – La renaissance d’un village breton*. Yoran Embanner, 2009. 175 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-25-2.

This is the story of a little village called Poul-Fetan located several kilometers from the town of Quistinic on a hill overlooking the Blavet River in the Morbihan. From an active village of agricultural families established in the 16th century, descendants of just one family continued to

live there in the 1970s and most of the buildings had fallen into ruin. In 1977 the town of Quistinic purchased this village recognizing a gem among the ruins. The rebuilding would take a long time and require many hours of work by volunteers and professionals who would reconstruct the magnificent stone houses, barns, mills, walls, and other structures that made up the agricultural village.

By the 1990s the buildings had been restored, using techniques and materials to recreate the way they would have looked in the 19th century. The next step was to recreate the natural landscape and farmland with native species of plants and animals. And in doing this people took on the roles and tasks of the old days recreating life in the village – baking, washing, growing vegetables, and raising animals in the way it would have been done. While making this village a site of “living history” with people in costumes recreating the life of other times makes this a draw for tourists, the process of bringing this village back to life has been the opportunity to study and recognize how Bretons fit into their landscape (land and water) in other times.

This book presents the results of that research with information about the construction of rural houses, the furniture that would go into them, the costumes people would have worn, and what their everyday life would have been like. The crops they would have grown and animals that would have been raised are also presented and you learn about butter-making and bread baking.

The book also presents how the village functions today as a site where people can learn about nature and farming and the cultural life (of the past and present).

The author, Isabelle Nguyen, grew up just a few miles from the village (of a Breton mother and Vietnamese father) and spent many years working in Paris before returning to her home area. As a child she saw the village in ruins. Although not cited on the cover page as an author, the assistance of Pierre Poilus (from the Guyane) who worked on the reconstruction of Poul-Fetan and the preparation of the book is noted. The text covers a great deal of territory in the subjects presented and is geared to both the tourist who is clueless about Brittany as well as those who have a strong interest in rural Brittany and its history. What really brings the book to life are the hundreds of color photos of the village (before and after) and of all the topics presented – architectural details and everything else from plants to farm carts, bread, cows and costumes. In seeing the beauty of this village and the vibrant life that has come back to it, one can understand the pride that the people of this region take in this renaissance that seems a miracle.

Stéphane Calé and Laure Calé. *Grimoire des Fêtes Fantastiques – Recettes & Astuces à l'usage des Apprentis Sorciers*. Yoran Embanner, 2009. 96 pages. ISBN 978-2-914855-47-1.

If you love Halloween and want to throw the best party ever seen, this is the book for you. You will find a number of recipes (graded from simple to more complex) with ingredients, how-to, and a photo of the gruesome looking result. For your Entrée you might consider the Sorcerer's fingers, "Fant-Oeufs" or a death sandwich (among other frightening but delicious options). For the main course you can prepare Vampire Vomit, Surprise Serpent or pumpkin soup. Desserts include cadaver's eyes, bones and cemetery stones. And for your beverage you might consider a pint of blood or a cocktail with toad's eyes.

If the artful and often humorous nature of your food is not enough, the book includes lots of great suggestions for décor – signs, designs, props and music – to make your home into a haunted house. There is a section with stencils that you can also use in decorating. How-to's on creating a great costume (dead people, nuclear accident victims, ghosts or sorcerers) are also included. And the book also includes suggestions to design your invitation to the party. Everything is covered and the reader is encouraged to use their imagination as well.

This book is beautifully produced graphically with colorful and interesting page borders and use of dramatic colors throughout. Even if you never throw that spectacular Halloween party, if you love that holiday for all its excessive craziness and fun, this is the book for you.



Deep Inside A Breton Skull 25 – Breton Cooking

Jean-Pierre Le Mat

"We are what we eat. We don't know any longer what we eat. So we don't know any longer who we are."

This icy syllogism raises a distressing question: to know who the Bretons are, we have to know what Breton cooking is.

According to a specialist "The Breton table reveals simplicity and sincerity first. Nothing is better to settle the genius." Fine. We must be simple and sincere people. But what else?

The most ancient piece of Breton cooking, apart from raw food, is soup. It must have been the same in many places of the world. Making soup was a means to digest elementary food: water, salt, and whatever you can find, roots, bread, meat. Until the middle of the 19th century,

vegetables were not eaten in poor families. The basic food was chestnuts, beans and lentils. Then came the potatoes and this was a revolution, because productivity was higher than any other food crop. Potatoes came into northern Brittany through England, and so they were named in the Breton language "patates" or "pato," borrowed from the English name. In southern Brittany, they came through France, where the tubercle was named "pomme de terre," "earth apple." In this area, potatoes were named in Breton "aval douar," a translation of the French name.

Soup was a meal which marinated any eatable stuff that was found. I still hold the pot that my grand father brought with him to school. His mother put in it his soup for the whole day.

Formerly, the first time a young boy could drive the family cart up to the local market by himself, he could sit down at the family table. Before that ordeal, he had to get his meal on the bench near the bed, in the single room of the house. Then his father gave him a bowl with hot salted water, together with bread or rough pancake, and said to him the sacramental phrase: "my son, let you make your soup by yourself."

The first meal known as a typical Breton recipe is krampouezh, crêpe in French. It is a large and thin pancake, on the top of which you can spread different ingredients. On top of a krampouezh made with wheat flour, you can put honey, butter, or any sugared product: jam, maple syrup, chocolate, cooked fruits. On a krampouezh made with buckwheat flour you can put eggs, ham, cheese or any salted product: sausage, scallop, artichoke...

This recipe resembles pizzas in Italy, paellas in Spain, couscous in Algeria, tacos in Mexico. That is, poor people's cooking: you mix what you can gather around in a saucepan, and you eat it together with a cheap and stodgy basis made with local grain.

Poor people's cooking doesn't mean bad food. It means two things: first, local food and second, a clever cook to mix it properly.

Of course, now, local foods are often despised and the cook is not always clever enough. So, you can find strange ingredients upon your krampouezh: curry, German sausages, Asiatic vegetables, ketchup. You can find even gambas reared in an unspecified ocean. These exotic krampouezh are destined to be eaten by the Bretons who don't know who they are and by the tourists who don't want to become Bretons.

The kig-ha-fars is another version of a mix of local products. There are vegetables, meat and wheat flour. The flour is cooked in a bag together with the rest, in the same stock. It is a local recipe from Leon, the north-

western part of Brittany. Now you can find it everywhere in Brittany.

And what about seafood? A plate with spider crab, oysters, clams, scampis, winkles and other primitive animals living in the ocean is a king's treat. Formerly, it was also poor people cooking. It was the result of local gathering. Seafood was the sea animals that the fishermen found in their nets and that they could not sell. It was also what the poor people can get wandering on the rocks and the beaches to find something to eat.

So, if you ask for seafood in Brittany, you must dictate two conditions: first, it must be a local gathering: no gambas nor Nordic crabs nor Canadian lobsters. Second, it must be fresh food, just coming out of the sea.

The art of *krampouezh* is an art of cooking and mixing. A seafood plate is an art of juxtaposition. The success of these recipes is not linked with rare products or complex processes. It is the art of the Haiku in Japan, this minimalist verses which can be stronger and more tasty than long romantic poems saturated with glaring colors and exclamation marks.

The poor people and the gatherers know who they are: they know that they are moneyless and that they are from here.

Aside from this cooking of gatherers and poor people, Breton cooking smells of butter. Potatoes and porridge, meat and fish are cooked with butter. Here, butter is gently salted to give it a good taste and to preserve it a longer time.

The pleasure seekers, who want to taste the best of the butter cooking, savour the *kouign amann*. It is a lukewarm cake dripping with liquid butter. The *kouign amann* is a bread dough in which the cook incorporates the maximum of butter and sugar that can be soaked in it. Usually, for a pound of flour, you must use a half pound of butter and a half-pound of sugar. Some adventurers try to do better.

Kouign-amann is a scandal for the dieticians, who consider it as a cholesterol bomb. Nevertheless, a prohibition would be useless. The recipe is easy to get on the internet, and the ingredients are easy to get in any grocer's shop. A harsh repression of Breton consumers of *kouign amann* by the police or the army could instigate social unrest in the country.

The perfectionists, who want to reach the absolute in Breton food, go and buy a block of butter in a small farm of central Brittany. Then they eat it upon slices of hand-made organic bread.

The only "bourgeois" cooking which is genuinely Breton is the white butter cooking, localized in the Nantes area.

The white butter was dreamed up in the big Breton city a century ago. It is a sauce made up with butter, shallots, and Muscadet, the renowned white wine of the Nantes area. The white butter is served with fish of the river Loire, pike, pike-perch or shad. These fish are cooked before in a court-bouillon, with herbs and spices. The white butter can be served also with some sea fish, like sea-perch, red mullet or skate.



In hidden parts of Brittany, there exists a cooking which is not the cooking of poor people, nor the cooking of gatherers, nor a butter cooking, nor a bourgeois cooking. It is the cooking "under the clods" which is found on the island of Ouessant. The turf clods full of heather roots are cut with spades not far from the sea shore on this island where wood is a scarce resource. Stews and other plates simmer for hours in the middle of a turf fire. The caldron is covered with clods which burn slowly. The plates become impregnated with a peaty flavor.

We are what we eat. Breton cooking is "simple and sincere". Will our children be like the industrial products they eat, standard, functional, legal and without any original default?

Bretons in New York City Know how to Party! BZH New York

Want to learn how to dance Breton dances?
Want to play *belote* (a popular card game)?
Want to join a *bagad*?
Want to claim your Breton identity through its cuisine?
(see Jean-Pierre Le Mat's article above!!!)

You have only to travel to New York and take part in some of the many activities organized by the very active BZH New York.

This organization of Breton emigrants to the U.S. and friends of Brittany of all origins have been very active especially in organizing occasions to enjoy Breton music. In 2007 they brought the *Kevrenn Alre* to our shores to participate in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in NYC, and in 2009 the *Bagad St. Nazaire* had this honor. Breton groups *Skolvan*, *Red Cardell* and *Ag Ar Cheoj* have all given concerts in New York City sponsored by BZH New York.

This January 30, 2010, BZH New York organized its first Interceltic *Fest Noz* at Connolly's Time Square, attended by some 400 people with 40 musicians from five Celtic nations (and the U.S.) providing dance and song.

For Breton music you had the Duo Morgane Labbe and François Tiger, veterans of the fest noz scene in Brittany with the group Tadaam. They are travelling to a number of cities in North America including Montreal, Miami, New Orleans, Santa Fe, San Francisco, Seattle, Vancouver and New York (www.myspace.com/tadaam). Breton music was also provided by Marie Martin a singer/songwriter who sings of her travels to New York, London and her native Brittany. And then there is the Bagad de New York, initiated by Breton piper Youenn Le Goff which has mobilized American based pipers and bombarde players. To my knowledge it is the first and only bagad of America. Several of its members will be competing as members of the Bagad Bro Kemperle and Kerlenn Pondi in competitions in Brittany.

Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Galicia also had a presence at the fest noz with singers, musicians and dancers. Proceeds from a silent auction of photographs by Capucine Bourcart and Christophe Legris went to Action Against Hunger/ACF International for earthquake relief in Haiti.

For the Week of May 16 to 23, 2010, (Saint Yves Week), BZH New York is planning programs to honor the contributions to Breton culture by poet and singer Youenn Gwernig. Youenn spent a number of years in the U.S. where he befriended Celts in New York and got to be pals with Jack Kerouac. He returned to Brittany in 1969, but his experiences in the U.S. remained strong in his poetry, songs and stories. (see Bro Nevez 63, August 1997, for an introduction to this important figure in Breton culture).

For their celebration of Youenn Gwernig BZH New York is planning poetry readings, a world premiere of a documentary film on his life, and a fest noz featuring Breton singers and musicians Louise Ebrel, Ifig FLatres, Diese3, and the Bagad New York as well as other Celtic artists.

To keep an eye on all the activities (including a concert by Nolwenn Monjarret noted in the next column) and to get a good introduction to this very dynamic organization see their website: www.bzh-ny.org

Nolwenn Monjarret on Tour in the U.S.

Nolwenn Monjarret is not the best known of Breton singers, but growing up as the daughter of Polig Monjarret who has been at the root of dozens of important musical institutions (from Bodadeg ar Sonerion to the Kan ar Bobl and Lorient Interceltic Festivals), she could not help but absorb Breton music. And because Polig Monjarret was also very active in linking the Celtic countries (especially Ireland) Nolwenn has rubbed

elbows at the dinner table with many greats of Irish music. She has recorded with the Chieftans – great friends of her father- and sang with them at the 2008 Interceltic Festival of Lorient. She will sing with them again this March 11 in Lowell, Massachusetts when they perform there as part of St. Patrick's Irish Heritage Week (www.lowellauditorium.com).

On this very day when I work on finishing up this issue of Bro Nevez – February 28 – Nolwenn Monjarret is giving a concert for BZH New York at the Tout Va Bien restaurant. As is the case in Brittany, feasting and music go well together for the Bretons of New York, and Nolwenn will sing as part of a three-course meal at this restaurant which has long been a center for Breton cultural life in New York. On February 21 Nolwenn Monjarret performed in Great Falls, Virginia, in a concert with Beth Patterson, Iona and Bruce Molsky as part of the Old Brogue Winter Concert Series. She will be performing on March 4 in Nashua, New Hampshire as part of the New Hampshire Celtic Heritage Month (www.nashualibrary.org)

Nolwenn has not centered her career on music but has remained active as a semi-professional. In the 1990s she performed several times at the annual Potomac Celtic Festival in Leesburg, Virginia, and she has sung and done workshops at gatherings of Celtic Women International. Today she is performing more and more (in Breton, French and Gallo). In Brittany she has performed solo with piano accompaniment and sung in choirs. Since 2006 she has sung with Les Lièvres au Chant, a group from the Loire-Atlantique who sing in both Gallo and French. She is preparing two CDs where she will sing, one accompanied by pianist Philippe Le Gallou and the other accompanied by pianist Dahud.



New Music from Brittany

Heard of ... but not heard

The following short notes are based on reviews and notes from the following Breton magazines: *Ar Men* 174 (Jan,-Feb. 2010) / *Armor* 480 (Jan. 2010) & 481 (Feb. 2010) / *Musique Bretonne* 218 (Jan.-Feb. 2010).

Dan ar Braz. *Comptimes Celtiques et d'ailleurs* (www.eveiletdecouvertes.fr)

On this CD you will hear familiar songs and children's counting rhymes (Frère Jacques, À la claire fontaine, and others) as you've never heard them before. These are interpreted by guitar master Dan ar Braz, Clarisse Lavanant, and Ronan Le Bars (uilleann pipes).

Bagad Roñsed Mor. *Kejaj*.

Based in the small town of Locoal-Mendon, this top level bagad celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2009. This is a

four-time champion of the bagad of Brittany, those unique ensembles of Scottish style bagpipes, bombardes and drums which have exploded in Brittany since their creation in the early 1950s. This CD captures the celebration of this bagad in which Breton singers and musicians joined them in performance – Louis Ebrel, Gilles Servat, Dom Duff, Pat O'May, Samuel Le Henanff, and Pascal Lamour.

Bernard Benoit. *La Guitare et les oiseaux*. Self-produced.

This is a new album from a pioneer of Celtic guitar, joined by classical guitarist Anne Chauraud, cellist Maud Caron, and the songs of birds integrated into the music both in rhythm and pitch.

Centre Marc-Le-Bris. *Chants populaires de 1854*. Centre Marc-Le-Bris.

This CD includes a performance of 20 of 49 songs collected by school teacher Joseph Rousselot in 1854 in the Loudeac region. These are songs that have continued to be passed down in the oral tradition of Brittany. A 128-page booklet accompanies the CD.

***Celtic Fiddle Festival*.** Equinoxe / Loftus LM 003. Because of their extensive touring in the U.S., American readers might already be familiar with this trio of fiddlers from different Celtic traditions. Started in 1992, Ireland was represented by Kevin Burke. Johnny Cunningham presented Scottish music but he sadly died at a young age in 2003. André Brunet from Quebec then joined the group to present North American Celtic roots. Well representing Brittany has been Christian Lemaître, and for a period guitarist Soïg Sibénil toured with the group. You'll hear another great guitarist, Jed Foley, on this CD. These are all the cream of the crop who have all explored fiddling traditions of each other's Celtic world (and beyond). If they do tour in the U.S. near you, don't miss the concert.

***Choeurs, Chorales et Maîtrises de Bretagne. Chants profanes et sacrés*.** 2 CDs. Coop Breizh CD 1023. This is a two-CD set of choral music from professional and amateur choirs of Brittany with a variety of song sources – Renaissance music, Handel, traditional Breton cantiques, and compositions of many kinds.

Dastum Bro Dreger. *Un Nozvezh e Plougraz*. Dastum Bro Dreger PL01
This is an anthology of performers from *veillées* held in the Tregor area. *Veillées* are informal evening gatherings where songs and stories are shared. While today they are a bit less spontaneous in scheduling, they still gather a variety of talents in a relaxed atmosphere. This is a selection from hundreds of performances (in Breton) in the Tregor with a Pdf file including texts.

Deomp. *Hop!* Co-Le Label CO A/38.

This is a fest noz band with sonneurs Tangi Pénard and Jacques Louvic and others with a variety of Breton dances, marches, and some compositions. While not ground-breaking, this CD is well done.

Ensemble Vocal Mélismes. *Kanamb Noël*. Skarbo DSK 2093.

Gildas Pungier directs the Ensemble Vocal Mélismes with singers from the Psalette de la Cathédral de Tréguier in his arrangements of a number of Christmas hymns from Brittany on this CD.

***39e Festival Interceltique de Lorient*.** Keltia Musique KMCD/DVD 21.

This CD includes some highlights of the 2009 edition of the huge Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient captured on both CD and DVD. That year highlighted Galicia so you'll see performances by Carlos Nuñez as well as Susana Seivane ... and many others from this 10-day festival.

Les Goristes. *À Fond la caisse ...* Keltia Musique KMCD 516.

The Goristes are an "ensemble" of singers with a keen sense of humor and satire. They poke fun at nearly everyone, but especially the high and mighty and those who think they are high and mighty.

Erwan Hamon and Janick Martin. *Sous le tilleul*. An Naer Produktion 912.

Erwan Hamon on flute and bombarde joins with accordion player Janick Martin for their own compositions and arrangements of traditional Breton music and dance. They have played together for a long time, perfecting dances of Gallo Brittany, but show they are also masters of dances like the gavotte. They are joined by Mathurin Hamon for song for a great CD.

***La Musique bretonne pour les nuls*.** Keltia Musique KMCD 513.

"Pour les nuls" in France is the equivalent of the American "...for dummies" which has covered pretty much every topic available. This CD synthesizes the huge diversity and wealth of Breton music – and does so with some success. A trilingual booklet presenting Brittany and its music is included.

Arnaud Le Gouefflec. *Le Disque Vert*. Eglise de la Petite Folie/Last Exit Records LER 006.

Le Gouefflic was at the center of the Orchestre Préhistorique and has been part of the rock band scene in Brest. His strong texts here are enhanced by the variety of music provided by his band-mates.

Samuel Le Henanff. *Gouriad ha Diuachell*. BNC Productions. SLH 01.

This traditionnel Breton accordion player shows his stuff on his first solo CD with dance tunes and melodies and

some of his own compositions as well as some Irish themes.

Bruno Le Rouzic and Jean-Pierre Alarcen. *Voyages*. Coop Breizh BLR 01.

This CD features Bruno Le Rouzic on Scottish style bagpipes with Jean-Pierre Alarcen on keyboard and electric guitar in arrangements of traditional tunes and some new compositions.

***Musique de Celtie et d'ailleurs*.** CD – Le Label AJ40 to AJ45.

This is a collection of 6 CDs, each focused on different instruments and artists who present music from the Celtic countries and elsewhere – traditional in style as well as newly composed. These are: Mike James on fiddle, Hervé Grall on guitar, Armelle Gourlaouën on harp, Rachel Goodwin on piano, Kenan Gwernalec on wooden flute, and Pierrick Lemou with Dominique Trichet on fiddle.

Daniel Paboeuf Unity. *Les Ateliers du vent*.

Saxophonist Daniel Paboeuf is joined by Hélène Le Corre on “programming” and song, David Euverte on piano and synthesizer, and Régis Voulard on drums in a jazz ensemble.

Republik. *I thought the war was over*. Monte Carlo Records / Amis de Tuchenn Kador. LADTK-MCR 57/0911.

Frank Darcel, former guitarist with the rock band Marquis de Sade, reunites this rock band from Rennes. The group includes singer Sébastien Thoreux, guitarist Xavier Géronimi, bass guitarist Kevin Toublant, and drummer Florent Pradigon. Pure rock.

Soïg Sibéiril. *Botcanou*. Coop Breizh CD 1026. (www.soigsiberil.com)

Sibéiril is a master of acoustic guitar and the open tuning that lends this instrument to the interpretation of Celtic music. He has played with a number of bands (Kornog, Gwerz, Pennou Skoulm, Ours du Scorff) and in duo with Nowenn Korbell, and has seven solo CDs under his belt. Anyone familiar with Breton music should need no introduction. Here he interprets and composes melodies and rhythms ranging in styles. This artist is always worth a listen.

A New Book about Breton Composer Jean Cras

Jean Cras (1879-1932) is described in the press release for the new book about him as “a remarkable man by anyone’s measure. Twice a decorated hero of the Great War, this Rear-Admiral of the French Navy, scientist, inventor and moral philosopher was also a highly esteemed composer during his lifetime, enjoying the

same stature and level of recognition as Fauré, Debussy and Ravel.”

This is indeed a Breton composer worth getting to know and hopefully this new book by Paul-André Bempéchat, called Jean Cras, Polymath of Music and Letters, will bring new attention to this remarkable composer. With over 600 pages and 200 music examples, this is a book for those truly interested in this composer’s music. But, Bempéchat does not ignore the Breton roots of Jean Cras, nor his other roles as inventor, military man, and scientist.

For a very good introduction to this book and Jean Cras go to the publisher’s website www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754606833,

And for an introduction to this musician and scholar I reprint below a quick biography from Harvard University where he is an Affiliate with the Center for European Studies.

Biographical Statement - Bempéchat's research focuses on the interplay of music, literature and politics to examine the survival of minority cultures within France and the Hapsburg Empire. He is editor of, and contributor to, Liber amicorum Isabelle Cazeaux, 2005, and author of numerous scholarly and encyclopedic articles, as well as the biography, Jean Cras, Polymath of Music and Letters. A graduate of the Juilliard School, the Sorbonne and Boston University, Bempéchat is artist-scholar with the Institut Culturel de Bretagne. He also serves as president of the Lyrice Society for Word-Music Relations and is concurrently preparing several compact discs, including the complete piano works of Jean Cras and major works of Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. Bempéchat's multi-volume study of nationalism via impressionism, entitled Impressionism Beyond Paris, is expected in 2012.

Names of Places with Breton Origins throughout the World

Bernard Le Nail
Translated by Geneviève Ray

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Editors note: We take all responsibility for any misspellings or misinterpretations of the original text given to us by Bernard Le Nail. Please keep in mind that this was first written in the mid-1980s and it is very possible that Bernard Le Nail’s own research after that might have brought new information to light. Nevertheless, we publish it here to give a flavor of his passion as a Breton for world exploration.

Ever since man can remember, the people of Brittany have always been great travelers. Since Brittany became French, it has constantly provided more than half the crew of the French navy. It has given the world intrepid pirates, audacious navigators and great sea captains by the hundreds of thousands. It has also given us thousands of priests and nuns who left to preach the Gospels in other countries and continents. By hundreds of thousands, Bretons have been forced to leave to look for work elsewhere, especially in other regions of France, but also in other lands. Nearly 200,000 Bretons have, thus, emigrated to the U.S. and Canada since the last century. Today we meet Bretons or their descendants all over the world and particularly along the coasts and on islands where the memory and the spirit of the adventurous Bretons have been preserved for centuries.

Far off in the Atlantic, the Azores archipelago had remained free of inhabitants up to 1432, before being occupied by Portuguese. But, part of its population, in the 15th and 16th centuries came from Brittany, and one can still find the name of a small town and of a county, *Bretanha* (Bretagne) in the northwest of Sao Miguel Island.

In the southwest of the Atlantic Ocean, another archipelago which made the front pages a few years ago, the Falklands, disputed between Argentina and the United Kingdom, is called in Spanish, *Islas Malvinas* or in French *Iles Malouines*, in memory of the colonists whose origins were in Saint-Malo, and who were the first inhabitants from 1764 to 1769, before being evicted by the Spaniards who were themselves later evicted by the British.

Off the south coast of Cuba one can find the *Cayo Breton* (Breton Canal). A bit to the north, off the coast of New Orleans, in the Mississippi Delta, lay the *Breton Sound* (Breton Strait). On the Atlantic coast of the U.S., south of Washington D.C. in the estuary of the Potomac, is *Breton Bay*. All these names bear witness to the important presence of Breton ships and Breton sailors in these regions in the 17th and 18th centuries.

It is also a fact that the coasts of Newfoundland had been visited by Breton fishermen as early as the year 1500 and perhaps even earlier. Their home ports were Bréhat, Dahouët, Saint Malo and others, on the north coast of Brittany. These sailors were not the only Europeans to visit these rich fishing grounds, but they were the majority. Therefore, in 1578, accounts showed 100 Spanish vessels who had come to fish for cod, 60 Portuguese vessels, 30 British vessels, and 150 Breton vessels (source: *An Historical Statistical Account of Nova-Scotia*, Halifax 1829). It is, therefore, not surprising that traces remain in the names of places, even if many of these names have changed over four centuries, have been altered, or even replaced by English names. The

voyages of Jacques Cartier and other Breton navigators and explorers have also left their trace on the toponomy.

This is why, on the coasts of Newfoundland one can find the names of *Belle-Isle*, *Cape Race* (Pointe du Raz?), *Trespassey* and *Trepassey Bay* (Baie des Trepasés), *Groais Island* (Ile de Groix), *Saint-Méen*, *Saint Lunaire*, *Quirpon* (Carpont?), *Harbour Breton*, *Boutitou* (name of a Malouin fief) as well as two *Cape Freel's* (Cape Fréhel)?

Ile de Cap Breton (Cape Breton Island) evokes the preeminence in the number of Breton sailors in that region during the 16th century. In fact, on the first maps drawn by Europeans such as the anonymous French map of 1543 preserved in the National Library of Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale), inspired from the map of Diego Ribeiro, the totality of the actual Nova Scotia is called *La Terre des Bretons* (Land of the Bretons), the actual island of Cape Breton is named *Cap aux Bretons*, and we also find in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence River *l'Yle du Breton* (the Island for the Breton). On Pierre Descelier's map (1550) preserved in Manchester, Nova Scotia, is also called *Terre des Bretons* and on the map of Gerardus Mercator (1569) *Terra dus Bretones*.

In 1548, the Sienese doctor Pietro Andrea Mattioli, writing about Canadian coasts in the new edition of the Geography of Ptoleme, said: "The coasts of that country were discovered by Breton people, that is to say the French men of Brittany who come and fish there and catch some particular fish called 'baccalai' and which they salt." And in 1551, the Italian historian Francisco Lopez de Gomara, wrote in the General History of the West Indies and Newfoundland: "In that country and these near islands are and inhabit Breton people. Bretons and Danes made the voyage of Baccaleos."

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Gulf of the Saint Lawrence River was called, by every European geographer "*Entrée des Bretons*" (Entrance of the Bretons). The map of the French King Henri II, so called the map of the Dolphin and preserved in the British Museum, mentioned by the name of "*Terra de los Bretones*" the whole territory that today makes up the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. That same denomination can be found on the maps of Gastaldi (1548), of Agnese (1554) and of Ruscelli (1561). But, on the other hand, in 1612 on the map of Champlain, the *Terre des Bretons* had already become *l'Acadye* (Acadia). Later on, the *Ile du Cap Breton* will be rebaptised *l'Isle Royale* (Royal Island) as if one had wanted to erase all reference to the Bretons.

Farther north, the region that today encompasses Labrador and the Quebec north is called, on many of the 16th century maps, *La Nouvelle Bretagne*, while the name of *Nouvelle France* is given to the southern region of the actual province of Quebec, as well as to regions that

were still unknown to the west. On the map of Nicolas Sanson d'Abbeville, in 1656, one still can read "*Estotiland ou Terre de Labrador ou Nouvelle Bretagne*," but the British maps of that time, such as Henry People's, translate Bretagne by Britain (which in fact means "Great Britain") and that name of New Britain to most of Canada. After the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) no more mention will be made of "Petite Bretagne" on the maps of Canada.

Many names and places in the Province of Quebec and in other Canadian provinces have a tie with Brittany. In Quebec one can find *Port Saint-Servan*, *Port-Cartier*, *Nantes*, the *Detroit de Jacques Cartier*, the *Mount Jacques Cartier* (1,268 meters), the industrial center of *Saint-Malo* in the city of Quebec, the *Lac Vitré*, the *Lac Careil* and the *Troilus* and *Mesgouez Lakes* (in memory of the Breton Troilus de Mesgouez, Marques of La Roche, who left in 1578, nominated "Lieutenant General Governor and Viceroy of the Said Newfoundland" by the king of France and whose attempt for colonization was an appalling failure).

In Saskatchewan one can find *Loc Maria*, *Le Folgoët*, *Nedelec* and *Saint-Brieux* near Lac Lenore at approximated 20 kilometers southwest of Melfort. In Alberta, *Gourin City*, founded by Bretons in 1913, is near Plamondon, not far from Edmonton.

It is believed also that many names of lakes, rivers, and forests in the vast Canadian north would be of Breton origins. In the Northwest Territory is found Lake Manoir, in memory of Julien Manoir (1606-1683), author of important works in the Breton language. Indeed, these vast desolate spaces were explored and recognized by the missionaries Oblats of Mary among whom many were Bretons who reached Canada in 1841 and who had been reinforced in number from 1901 to 1905 at the time of the separation of church and state in France and the banishment of the congregations. These missionaries were particularly dedicated to the evangelization of the Indians and the Inuits of the great Canadian north (cf.: "List of toponyms Oblats in Canada" established by the Father Gaston Carrière).

Within the United States, there are some names of places showing ties to Brittany. For example, Jean-Jacques Audubon (1785-1851) who spent his adolescence in Nantes before he left for the U.S.A. at the age of 18 where he was to become famous as a naturalist painter, has left his name in many places. In Louisville there is a large public park that bears his name (Audubon Park). Audubon is the name of a small town in Iowa, east of Omaha. It is also the name of a suburb of Philadelphia in New Jersey, and a small town in Pennsylvania, near Norristown, northwest of Philadelphia, where Audubon lived.

Many names of Breton origin are also found in the Indian Ocean.

The largest island of the Seychelles archipelago which is 148 square kilometers and holds 88% of the Seychelles population, is called *Mahé Island* – or *Ile Mahé*, the name of a navigator from St. Malo, Mahé de la Bourdonnais (1699-1753) who also gave his name to the town of Mahébourg (pop. 15,000) on the southeast coast of Maurice Island. (On the other hand, the City of Mahé in India, formerly called Maïhī, has nothing to do with the Malouin captain.)

Coëtivy is the name of another island of the Seychelles archipelago. It is the name of a very old Breton family from the region of Léon, among whom are particularly known Cardinal Alain de Coëtivy (1407-1474) who restored the church of St. Yves of the Bretons of Rome, and his brother, Prégent de Coëtivy (1399-1450) who became a French admiral. It is probably in honor of the latter that the island got its name, that is to say, unless there had been a Coëtivy among the lieutenants of Mahé de la Bourdonnais or other Breton navigators from the 18th century.

To the east of Madagascar is the small island of *Tromelin*, still a French territory although claimed by the island of Madagascar. It probably owes its name to the Breton geographer, Jacques Boudin de Tromelin (1771-1842).

On the west coast of Reunion Island is *Pointe de Bretagne*.

Much to the south, *Marion Island*, which belongs to South Africa, draws its name from the Malouin navigator, Nicolas-Thomas Marion-Dufresne (1729-1772). The *Crozet Islands* which belong to France owe their name to another Breton sailor, Julien-Marie Crozet, born in Port-Louis in 1727 (whose father was from Voiron in the French province of Dauphiné). Working aboard ship in the Indian Ocean from age 12, he made many commercial voyages and explorations to Asia and Oceania waters before he was lost at sea in 1780.

The *Kerguelen* archipelago, which encompasses 300 islands (total area 7,000 square kilometers) and which belongs to France, derives its name from the Breton navigator Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen-Termarec (1734-1797) who discovered these islands in 1772. There, one recognizes many other names tied to Brittany: *Baie Bretonne*, *Baie d'Audierne*, *Golfe du Morbihan*, etc.

In the Gulf of Tonkin, the closest Vietnamese island to the Chinese border is called (at least on western maps) *L'île de Kersaint*, and draws its name from Guy-Pierre de Coetnempren, Count of Kersaint, born in Brest in 1747, and who died in Suresnes, near Paris, in 1822. He had

been sent by Louis XVI in 1787 to what was formerly called Cochinchine (Vietnam).

In New Guinea are found the *Golfe de Huon*, the *Huon Peninsula*, and the mountain range *Finisterre* (4115 m.). These names bring to mind the voyages of Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec, a descendant of a very old Breton family which fostered many well known sailors. Born in Brest in 1747 and a page to the king in 1762, Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec made several voyages to Ceylon (today Sri Lanka) and China. In 1791 he was sent to look for the expedition of La Pérouse who had been ship wrecked. He did not find La Pérouse, but discovered and mapped coasts unknown to Europeans in Australia and in New Caledonia, where he died in 1793. His name was given to the *Huon Islands*, small islands north of New Caledonia. One of these islands is called *Le Leizour*.

The name *Nouvelle Bretagne*, oddly enough, does not originate from Brittany. It is the translation of New Britain, the name given to that island by British navigator William Dampier (1651-1715) who discovered the strait that bears his name in 1699. A century ago, a Breton adventurer, the Marquis Charles de Breil de Rays, had dreamed of cutting for himself a colonial empire comprising the Solomon Islands. He gave the name "Port Breton" to what was called "Port Praslin" in the bay south of New Ireland, where Bougainville anchored in 1775. From 1878 to 1882 four expeditions including a total of one thousand men, were sent to the "Colonie Libre de Port Breton" (Free Colony of Port Brittany), but the saga ended in tragedy, and less than 70 people returned to Europe. The name "Port Breton" has long since disappeared from the maps of the region. *

On the other hand, one can find, not far from New Brittany, a group of islands whose names are genuinely Breton: the *Trobriand Islands*. These tiny islands are known all over the world for the long stays of an anthropologist of Anglo-Polish origin, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), who studied customs and manners – particularly sexual behavior – within families of natives. From Malinowski's books and their translation into many languages, psychologists and anthropologists the world over know of the Trobriands, unaware that the name given to these Melanesian peoples is from Brittany. Indeed, the name of that small archipelago comes from Jean-François Trobriand de Keredern, born in Plouigneau in 1730, who died in Brest in 1780 and had led an expedition to Malaysia in 1775.

The coasts (and even the interior) of Australia have preserved also, in no small number, names of Breton origin. Off the southwest coast of Australia, *Marion Reef* is the name of a large group of coral reefs which owe their name to the Malouin Nicolas-Thomas Marion-Dufresne (1729-1772). One-fourth of the city of Adelaide

(population 950,000) is also called *Marion*, and one can find *Marion Bay* in Tasmania. 150 kilometers south of Adelaide is *Guichen Bay*. Guichen is the name of a township in the Ille-et-Vilaine department of Brittany and was named after another famous sailor, Luc Urbain du Bouëxic, Count of Guichen, born in Fougères, June 21st, 1712. He died in Morlaix in 1790 after participating in and then leading numerous campaigns in the Mediterranean, on the coasts of Africa, and in Canada and the Caribbean islands.

Off the coast of Adelaide, in the Kangaroo Islands, is Cape Couëdic. Charles Louis de Couëdic de Kergoualen, born in July 1740 in Pouldregat, joined the navy when he was 16 years old, and played a part in numerous campaigns in the island of Guadeloupe (West Indies), in India and other regions of the world. He is particularly known for his heroic fight, on October 16th, 1779, on board the frigate *La Surveillante* (The Watcher) against a British ship in the bay of Iroise. Mortally wounded, he died on January 7th, 1790. In western Australia, 60 kilometers from Port Hedland is Cape Keraudren, undoubtedly named in honor of Pierre-François Keraudren, born in Brest, May 15, 1769, who died in Passy (today a section of Paris) in 1858 after a career as a navy doctor that took him all over the world.

In Tasmania, the large island south of Australia, Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec (1748-1793) gave his name to the *Huon River* and to a small town, *Huonville* near Hobart (unless, perhaps, that name came from another Breton sailor who also visited these regions, Huon de Kerilliau).

Northeast of New Zealand is a group of volcanic islands frequently shaken by earthquakes. Raoul, Macauley and Curtis, with a total area of 34 square kilometers, were annexed by New Zealand in 1887 and have the very Breton name of *Kermadec Islands* in memory of Jean-Michel Huon de Kermadec. An underwater mountain range bears the name of *Kermadec Ridge*, and the deepest underwater trench of our whole planet (1,200 kilometers long, reaching depths of 10,047 meters) is called *Kermadec Trench*.

This enumeration (which leaves out Europe) is by no means exhaustive, and probably many other place names with Breton origins exist all over the world. It would be interesting if all readers, who know of other examples would point them out to us, mentioning as much as possible their exact geographical position and the documents (maps, atlases or others) in which they are mentioned.

* Readers are referred to an article by Yann Morvan, "L'incroyable histoire de la 'colonie libre de Port Breton'" (*Dalc'homp Sonj* 13, Fall 1985) for more about this colony.

An Introduction to the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)

The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 240,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

Some U.S. ICDBL members are of Breton heritage, but the U.S. ICDBL is intended to be a group of “anyone and everyone” showing support for the Breton language rather than an organization for Breton-Americans like so many other “ethnic” organizations in the U.S. We do have quite a few members with Irish, Scottish or Welsh heritage, so there is a strong inter-Celtic element to our work. Most of our members speak neither Breton nor French and most have never been to Brittany. But we all have some reason to help fight for the survival of the Breton language.

What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed in 356 of the 51 States of the U.S. -- from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between—we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 25 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. In November 2006 we published our 100th issue.

In the 3,000+ pages of **Bro Nevez** produced so far, over 800 books from Brittany have been reviewed or noted, and over 300 Breton music recordings have been reviewed and an additional 800 new releases briefly described.

The U.S. ICDBL Web Site: www.icdbl.org

On our website we have published a guide to Breton music (updated in 2006), a guide to learning materials for

the Breton language, an introduction to and map of the Celtic languages, a presentation of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools, and two documents presenting the Breton language and why it is endangered and what is being done about it. Bretons themselves have created many great websites to present their country and its culture, and we provide links to a large number of excellent and reliable sites created by Bretons themselves.

Other Action

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. We have had an annual information booth at the Potomac Celtic Festival (Washington D.C. area) since 1994. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

More direct support for the Breton language ...

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan – Breton language immersions schools – for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Member. We have maintained a personal link with the children on one particular Diwan school – Skol Diwan Landerne – since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school’s “godmother.”

As is the case for all branches of the ICDBL, our support of the Breton language is mostly symbolic—the fact that outsiders care at all offers encouragement to people in Brittany who are working to sustain the Breton language and find new and creative ways to use it. And we know that this has been noticed and much appreciated in Brittany.

PLEASE JOIN US. YOUR SUPPORT SHOWS THE PEOPLE OF BRITTANY THAT THEIR LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORLD

A yearly membership (including subscription to our newsletter) is just \$20. If you would simply like to subscribe to our newsletter, without becoming a Member, that is also \$20. Make out a check to “**U.S. ICDBL**” and mail it to the address below.

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