

BRO NEVEZ

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



A statue for the Goadec sisters in Carhaix

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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New Website for the U.S. ICDBL

Check out the new look for the U.S. ICDBL website – and coming soon, new content and some updates too:
www.icdbl.org

On the Cover

Featured on the front page is a prototype for a statue by Annick Leroy to be erected in the center of the city of Carhaix to honor the Goadec sisters, reknowned singers of the kan ha diskant style of singing for Breton dances. See the brief note later in this issue of Bro Nevez about a new CD collecting their work.



Notre-Dame des Landes: a new Plogoff?

By Natalie Novik

This is a title you often see in the Breton media these days. It concerns a project by the municipality of Nantes to build a new international airport northwest of the city, in a very agricultural area, by the village of Notre-Dame des Landes (Our Lady of the Moors, often abbreviated now as NDDL). The reference to Plogoff is that, back in 1980, a plan by the French government to build a nuclear plant on the Pointe du Raz, at the edge of Brittany, on a very sacred spot, was thwarted by the locals who protested en masse, attracted the attention of the rest of Brittany to their fight, staged numerous peaceful protests, occupied the land secured for the project with a shepherd and his flock, and in the end, won the day.

What is the matter then with an international airport near Nantes? The municipality will tell you that the existing airport is too small, the runway is too short for large international carriers, and the building of a new airport would create jobs and give a boost to the local economy. This is part of a larger plan to develop Western France, which suffers today from a lack of infrastructure and its remoteness from the center of Europe.

The adversaries of the project are quick to point out that there is no study showing that a larger airport would necessarily attract international flights, that there are already two nearby airports (Nantes and Rennes), that the expansion of the high-speed train will compete with the airport and that the project is the brainchild of local legislators eager to fill their pockets.

Things have turned relatively violent. A “village” of quickly built cabins was erected this fall on the edge of the lot planned for the airport, and the police were sent to dislodge the squatters. The intervention of the police was particularly brutal, many protesters ended up in the hospital with severe fractures. This coming under a Socialist government means that there is even more protest, because it was not expected to happen.

The squatters are back, and now a young farmer has moved into one of the farms slated for destruction, and on February 3rd, cattle were brought to his farm. This replicates exactly the Plogoff scheme, where the shepherd’s presence made it difficult for the French to maintain their initial plan to blow up the nearby cliff to build the plant.

Large demonstrations against NDDL have taken place since last summer, each time bringing thousands of protesters to the streets of Nantes and Rennes. Even some of Hollande’s ministers have declared themselves against the project. But his Prime Minister, Jean-Marc Ayrault, was mayor of Nantes between 1989 and 2012, and is behind the concept of the airport.

But it is interesting to note some of the arguments of the protesters:

- Because the area designated for the airport has not seen any development for several years now, it has become a sanctuary for wildlife;
- Others note that the project, which is meant to be a major cog in the development of Western France, is not ambitious enough if it is to reach its goals. It calls for only two runways and does not have the necessary infrastructure plans to provide services and maintenance on the scale of an international airport.

Another interesting aspect of this story is the fact that, for the French, it is not taking place in the region of Brittany from which the Nantes region was excluded during WWII. It is a matter for the Pays de Loire, an artificial region which was created then, encompassing the Nantes region and some of the Loire valley adjacent to Nantes. However, the distinction obviously escapes the Bretons, who consider this fight as theirs...

Notre-Dame des Landes is also very close to the Briere Natural Park, a large wetland stretching north of the Loire river, which is seen as a fragile environment, with thousands of migrating birds stopping there every year, and an ecosystem balanced between land and sea, particularly vulnerable to industrial development.

What will happen in the end is hard to tell at this stage. But the protesters are negotiating with the regional government and the national government, and both sides hope that they will reach a compromise. It comes in the midst of other European protests against nuclear plants, new railroad connections, urban development,

and feeds on the rancor of unemployed youth whose numbers have grown dramatically over the last year in this particular region. There is a strong sense all over Europe today that unbridled development can do more harm than good, even if there is a potential for additional jobs. The argument on the part of the protesters is that they will probably not be the beneficiaries of these jobs, and that it is their duty to ensure that the environmental balance is kept for future generations.

In the meantime, a human chain 15 miles long around the site is foreseen by the protesters for May 11, 2013, and a music festival will occupy the premises on August 3 and 4.

The Breton Language Ready for Burial?

An interview with President of the Finistère General Council, Pierre Maille, published in the *Ouest France* Newspaper on January 5 & 6, 2013, set off a very strong reaction among Bretons this January, and rightfully so as this political leader dismissed the desirability of investing support for Breton which he classified as a language which has just about disappeared as a living language.

In response to a journalist’s question: “What is the objective (for Finistère) for the Breton language?,” Mr. Maille responded:

“If the objective is to say we have a language of which the speakers are in the process of disappearing and we want to maintain it because it is a part of a collective patrimony, at least to introduce it and teach it, to maintain a presence in the public space. Or else the objective is to make it a language of common use like Catalan or Welsh. For me clearly, I say that we are not in the objective of a commonly used language. I think that would require enormous resources in communications, media, etc. ... This is a language that has already disappeared as a commonly used language, except for a reduced number of speakers.”

Quel est l’objectif (du Finistère) pour la langue bretonne ? »,

« Si l’objectif est de dire : on a une langue dont les locuteurs sont en voie de disparition et que nous voulons la maintenir car c’est un patrimoine collectif, au moins faire de l’initiation et de l’enseignement, maintenir une présence dans l’espace public. Ou bien l’objectif est d’en faire une langue d’usage comme le catalan ou le gallois. Moi, clairement, je dis que nous ne sommes pas dans l’objectif de la langue d’usage. Je pense que cela demanderait des moyens énormes en communication, média, etc... C’est une langue qui a déjà disparu en tant que langue d’usage, à part pour un nombre réduit de locuteurs »,

Among the responses to his declaration was a letter from Patrick Malrieu, President of the Cultural Institute of Brittany and Chancellor of the Order of the Ermine. I have taken the liberty of translating this from the French and apologize in advance for any misinterpretations.

M. Pierre Maille
Président du Conseil Général du Finistère
31 bd Dupleix, CS 29029
29196 Quimper Cedex

Mr. President,

One would hope that an evolution of knowledge and ideas shared by more and more of the world related to the respect of diversity (both biological and cultural) would spare us the hasty and undeserving affirmations on the part of an accountable political leader such as those you put forth about the Breton language (*Ouest France* of 5-6 January, 2013).

Far from any pretense for exhaustiveness, please find some evidences which seem useful to include in your reflections.

Humanist aspects, Human Rights, International Conventions, Democracy ...

The respect of cultural diversity is not a gesture conceded out of nobility of spirit, patrimonial curiosity or compassion, but a duty.

Must one be reminded that France signed the International Convention on Cultural Diversity, that the Charter on Fundamental Rights of the European Union clearly stipulates the duty given to states to respect their cultural minorities ... and also that France is regularly reproached (ONU, UNESCO, European tribunals) for its lapses and discriminations related to regional languages and cultures?

Must one be reminded that the decline of Breton is first and above all the result of 200 years of an organized politics of eradication? Have you forgotten that just 100 years ago French was not the language of "common usage" in Lower Brittany and was introduced only by force, by the informers and actors of the "Black Hussars" of the Republic?

A combat that is hardly glorious ... In view of this certification, François Mitterrand could assure us of the necessity in 1981 for a statute for regional languages and a national rectification that we still await thirty years later. Thanks to the old principle repeatedly confirmed which for France is to not apply to itself what it extols for the entire world!

Cultural diversity, Human Rights, Democracy are not on supermarket shelves from which one can take what one

likes according to one's feelings or political or dogmatic presuppositions, and declare that which is not agreeable "unfit for use"! And isn't it the duty of political leaders to work for the respect of these fundamental principles and the application of actions that stem from them instead of calculating the eventual extinction date for Breton?

If to the contrary one must favor the principle to stop spending money and efforts for languages which are no longer "commonly used," then French has some big worries to demonstrate its practice. This latter language is no longer "commonly used" in numerous domains (research, international relations, commerce ...). Consider equally, the percentage of emissions purchased from the Anglo-Saxon world in the televisual area. Thus, voices have arisen, including those of political leaders, to suggest that Francophonie is a lost cause. Any utilitarian approach to linguistic diversity can only open the way for them.

There are just two alternative outcomes: on the one hand we consider linguistic diversity as an obstacle to be eliminated to benefit a universal code adapted to world merchandising (of which we already feel the painful effects), or on the other hand, we have understood that such a universal code brings a single concise and alienating way of thought that serves only the interest of the money-makers.

If the word "democracy" still has a sense, the principle above would be reinforced by the views of the population. And, multiple surveys on this subject show clearly and with percentages that exclude any ambiguity (82%) that the Breton population wants a future assured for Breton. Thus, even those who do not speak Breton consider this language to be part of their patrimony that should be transmitted.

Cultural Aspects and Identity

Even though this evidently seems basic, let's quickly review this facet of the question: what does it matter that the most ancient example of a text in Breton precedes the most ancient French text by several decades? So what if the first French dictionary was in fact a Breton-French-Latin dictionary? So what if there's contemporary literary production, publishing houses, numerous and productive theater troupes, literary gatherings and reading clubs, book fairs, and literary contests for Breton? So what if Breton is present nearly everywhere in place names or family names?

According to your conception, is all of that part of patrimonial embalming rites, or practices that belong to a language in "common usage"?

This is a paradox in a period when everyone (in the political, economic, and tourism world) is ready to sing the praises of the interest for a region to have a strong

identity. But identity isn't a quality unchangeable for an eternity, but a gift that one transmits from one generation to the other; also something that one renews, takes care of, enriches, and which pulls from all the diversity of activities that are part of a population.

Identity has in common with ecology its systemic character – a coherent (but always fragile) ensemble in which the smallest aggression made on one part of its components is felt by the whole system.

To admit that one could dispense with “common usage” for Breton is to prepare for other disavowals for tomorrow. And once identity and its components are destroyed, it is futile to believe that millions will be capable of recreating one, a forced one.

In a general way, it is surprising to ascertain the systematically fearful attitudes on the part of the political world of the populace's demands which prove to pose no problem once implemented, but which have required true battles to obtain the right to go forward. Remember the interdiction of Breton names during the 1960s (and the family allocations refused to these dangerous offenders), the fines for having a “Bzh” sticker on one's car license plate, or the fight for bilingual road signs? Who would find fault with this today? Did the Republic quake on its foundation and brush with the risk of disintegration?

And this reflection is even truer if one looks at immersive bilingual education and the quality of its results (Diwan classed number two in France for the excellence of its results at the end of secondary school! Even so, how many dogmatic stupidities have we heard about the supposed risks taken by our dear blond heads ... and this, despite the recognition on the part of all linguists of the advantages of early bilingualism).

Societal Aspects, Citizenship

The ostensible good excuse to refuse an action often involves the invocation of “economic reality,” but who has put forth the question of the positive economic effects generated from an open and creative identity?

- Expansion of Breton associations (remarkable in relation to the rest of France) for which volunteers multiply the impact of grants/subventions many times and generate a real economic gain.
- Impact of this associative network on society itself (intergenerational links, integrative capacity, training young generations to take responsibility, mobilization of local volunteers to take charge of their patrimony, activity for the local population).
- Openness to others: to be able to live one's culture, and to see it recognized is a *sine qua non* condition

for accepting that of others without fear. An antidote to xenophobia! (How else to explain that Brittany is the region of France with the strongest ONG presence? With one of the weakest levels of the extreme right?)

What is it that costs more? Allowing a population to fully realize itself or pay the consequences of ill adjusted youth (violence, delinquency, damages, a concurrence of burned cars...) and lamentation over the catastrophic effects of a lack of integration, an absence of social ties. On which side is “economic reality”?

A country that does not respect itself has no future. Why would a country which does not respond to the expectations of its inhabitants hope that its inhabitants would feel solidarity? Why do they want to “live and work” in the country the day when this latter shows itself incapable of employing them?

Surveys show the optimism of Bretons facing their future: a people who feel good in their skin have the desire to master their destiny. Isn't this a real economic value surpassing – by far – all the subventions (which are nothing other than a partial redistribution of what Bretons have given in the form of taxes)?

Economic Aspects

It was not so long ago (the post-war years) that Brittany was considered an underdeveloped country, stricken by an emigration out of 20,000 young people each year, a country of contemptible “ploucs” [“hicks”]. How can one ignore that the reverse of this tendency was due to the concerted action of people and organizations driven in common by a strong sense of Breton identity (Celib, the world of cultural Breton organizations, the agricultural cooperatives, banks) who refused a fatality of “economic realism” which urged finding work where it could be found – in the east of France!

To stay closer to the area of concern here (Breton language, culture and identity) what does one see? Enterprises whose economic reality is surely worth that of the political world, who are happy to float notions of identity and language to promote their products, to make use of identity as a generic label above and beyond the product's logo, large shopping chains using bilingualism to create a sense of proximity and belonging.

And what about tourism, our second sector or activity, with Brittany in the lead pack for tourist destinations in France (France itself being number one worldwide)? Do we owe this infatuation [for Brittany] to ideal sunshine or to the combined effect of the quality of destination sites and the offer of culture and patrimony? Fêtes, festivals, music, dance, local fairs ... what would they be without the thousands of volunteer dancers and musicians whose sole motivation is the pleasure of expressing

their identity? Certainly the language does not have a dominant part (but this is nothing to be satisfied about or from which to draw idle conclusions) but it is an integral part of a sense of identity which animates these actors.

Responsibility and Political Courage

This is not the time to count speakers nor to project charts which predict the date when the last Breton speaker will die, but through determined, coherent and broad decisions to avoid this (a culture forms a whole and its progress or its decline depends on taking into account all of its components and putting all the vectors for its transmission and learning to work: school, immersion, introductory classes, audiovisual, support for publishing and distribution).

And your proposals seem singularly out of synch at a time when:

- Parliament members of your own party take note of the alarms sent by the associative movement (I recommend to you “Langues et cultures régionales” by Armand Jung and Jean-Jacques Urvoas)
- 24 Breton parliament members of the Majority have called on the Minister to obtain bilingual regional TV stations (*Ouest France*, 25 January 2013) such as those in existence in Corsica with Via Stella.
- Ratification of the European Charter for the Defense of Regional or Minority Languages is part of the campaign promises made by the current President of the Republic.

It is in fact very much the role of elected officials to move laws forward that meet the needs of society and fundamental cultural, society or patrimonial stakes.

From this perspective the support brought by the Departments and the Region are just as essential as a stepping stone in this evolution as the engagement of elected officials so that our regional languages and cultures find their “normal” place in teaching as well as in the media and that a response is given willingly to social demand. In a well understood economic reality shouldn't the costs which are the duty of National Education and our Communication be taken on by these Ministries so that Bretons are not obligated to pay their taxes two times?

Isn't it incomprehensible that the elected officials of the Basque country have been capable of singing a convention with the State assuring their responsibility for teachers salaries from the year a school is created while Breton officials have not been capable of this? Or that in Corsica every student receives an introduction to the Corsican Language? Isn't it the role of elected

officials to obtain the minimum for their Region that has been acquired elsewhere? Isn't true political courage the solution of these discriminations on the institutional level?

With regret and a sense of paradox to have to address these lines to the President of a Department which has effectively devoted a real portion of its budget to the Breton language, please accept, Mr. President, the expression of our distinguished wishes.

Patrick Malrieu
President, Cultural Institute of Brittany
Chancellor of the Order of the Ermine

Another letter to Pierre Maille is also worth including here since it is equally eloquent in presenting arguments for investment in the Breton language. This is from Andre Lavanant who has been at the heart of the development of the Diwan schools as well as Sumdi and Dizale, organizations to teach Breton and promote its audiovisual use.

Mr. President,

You said in *Ouest France* of 5 January 2013 concerning the Breton language: “For me clearly, I say that we are not in the objective of a commonly used language.”

You have broken my heart.

How after this declaration at the beginning of this new year can you send wishes for happiness to the thousands of families who school their children in one of the three bilingual tracks in this Department, not to mention Brittany more widely?

Numerous reasons led parents to opt for this teaching and one among them – the strongest – rests on their personal conviction and hope that our old language will have a future and that youth will have a role in that future. Do you want to ruin that hope?

You add: “I think that would require enormous resources in communications, media, etc.”

Let's open the debate.

This doesn't concern an airport, LGV or a traffic circle! Resources certainly, but in the cases cited you repeat well that the resources will have an impact on the real economy. Do you know that languages have an economy of their own, generating intellectual activities, services ... not to mention the social ties. I'll come back to the media.

Here's why your opinion so disturbed me.

When I was 25, after an exilement of several years, I made a professional choice that I have renewed

throughout my career to anchor myself in my Region, because I always had the conviction that LANGUAGE was the Breton characteristic with the most internal growth and that it was necessary to open a worksite for its reconstruction over several generations. I know families well established in homes outside of Brittany who have “un-emigrated” because they know they will find an educative response for their children in Brittany in the learning of our language. Since being 25 years old (I’m now 62) in parallel to my salaried job and then head of an enterprise, I have had a career as a volunteer – one just as intense as the other so that I could participate in this building project.

From 1979 to 1997 I was consistently present in the organization of the development of Diwan schools having taken on the role of President during three-fourths of this time. I saw the building of every stage of this creation from scratch, the battles to win confidence, the budget process and plan for reparation, ministers and first ministers .. presidential promises and especially their being forgotten. I pursued my investment in spare-time activities for Breton speaking youth [An Oaled], in adult education which would allow adults to look to trades where language was important [Stumdi], in the audiovisual [Dizale] which along with new technologies would allow Breton to be offered on the web and local TV channels.

In these different areas individual initiative gave birth to associative businesses for some. They are to this day present and active in Breton life, are productive of services and values, generate employment, were born and exist to give sense and use to the Breton language.

We have been and we are numerous in taking part in the recognized dynamism of the Breton social tissue, precisely because of our attachment to the future of the language.

And you tell us that you are not “in the objective of a commonly used language.”

Do you need to be reminded that in France school is tuition-free (paid for by taxes nevertheless!), that public media, radio and television are free (also paid for with taxes). How many radio stations and TV channels are there? Can’t the Republic simply become a bit more sharing?

It’s curious that for the administrator of public goods that you are, you think that to do more you need to spend more: Isn’t it possible to redefine, reorganize to do better? Have you forgotten to call into line France Télévision for its inertia and especially France 3 for its wastefulness and failure to keep to its mission?

Another example – the reorganization of school time which has been debated. What will be the cost of its application? What will it bring - well being for the

children, the teachers, the parents? Do you have a way to evaluate any gain? Do you know how long it will take for a return on the investment?

To return to your sentence, since you use the collective “us” – is this in the name of the General Council? I was not aware that there had been any public discussion. Is it in the name of the Socialist majority? Is it a Presidential opinion?

I have many other things to say, but my outcry is not a discourse. Thank you for bringing up this subject of our society here in Brittany; it’s valuable news for all those who are interested in this.

Please accept, Mr. President, my greetings as a citizen and Breton.

André Lavanant
Former President and developer of Diwan, An Oaled
Founding-President of Stumdi and Dizale
Breton of the Year 1995 (thank you to Armor Magazine)
Order of the Ermine 1996 (thank you to my peers)
Chevalier in the Ordre des Palmes Académiques (for services given to National Education/SIC)
Ouh la la, I am impressed.

Regional Public Television – A petition for Brittany

The following is my translation of a letter sent January 24, 2013 to France’s Minister of Culture and Communication by 24 Deputies and Senators from all five Departments of Brittany. It speaks for itself.

Madame Aurélie Filippetti
Minister of Culture and Communication
2, rue de Valois
75033 Paris

Madame Minister,

Last December 18 the employees of France 3 observed a day of strike for which the word of plan was the inversion of the channel’s model to make “a regional channel disconnected from the national instead of a national channel disconnected from the region.” The mobilization was large in the regions, especially in Brittany where directors noted that 71.31% of staff were striking.

Obtaining fully operating public regional channels, on the TNT, constitutes in fact a response to a real need and allows regions to offer audiovisuals comparable to those of other European regions. A regional piloting will equally guarantee a better efficacy in audiovisual service and will permit a development of creativity and the broadcasting of programs in regional languages.

The development of regional public channels will thus meet the need to insure a public audiovisual service which approaches quality while regional programs are often the victim now of variable adjustments in budget and technology. This will equally allow a reinforced visibility for French regions in Europe and the world, especially the touristic regions and those with a strong identity like Brittany, Alsace or even the Provence.

This model of a regional public channel already exists in Corsica with Via Stella, and shows encouraging signs for an extension to other regions. The reinforcement of programs in regions would be facilitated to the extent that existent technical and human resources are under-utilized in a good number of them.

Nevertheless, last September you made your reticence known towards the regionalization of France 3 on the grounds that this would be too expensive. We understand and support the governmental direction aimed to reduce public deficits of the State in a period of great economic constraints.

We nevertheless want to call to mind as an example that the taxpayers of administrative Brittany annually contribute up to 125 millions of euros in audiovisual taxes. The quarter of this sum would be amply sufficient to finance a fully operating regional public channel. For example, the BBC Alba, fully operating public channel in Scotland, budgets annually for 25 million euros per year, all resources combined since it is a global media with television, radio and internet. This budget is lower than the actual budget for France 3 Ouest which is 32 million euros. The budget of Via Stella is 24 million euros.

Brittany benefits besides from the existence of dynamic producers and distributors in French and Breton. The public channel will thus drive activity in this network, allowing fruitful cooperation and openings to the design of technical evolution. The Regional Council, a decentralized public channel, and contracted private operators could rapidly put in place a particularly productive model serving the Breton population through creation, diffusion and information.

At this moment when you are discussing with M. Rémy Pflimlin the broad orientations for France Télévisions through an addition to a contract of means and objectives of which one question concerns the regionalization of France 3, we urge you to consider these elements and our support for the emergence of fully operating bilingual regional public channels.

We are at your disposal to discuss this subject in more detail.

Please receive, Madam Minister, the expression of our highest consideration.

Patricia Adam, Deputy from Finistère
Nathalie Appéré, Deputy from Ille-et-Vilaine
Jean-Luc Bleunven, Deputy from Finistère
Maryvonne Blondin, Senator from Finistère
Yannick Botrel, Senator from Côtes-d'Armor
Marie-Anne Chapdelaine, Deputy from Ille-et-Vilaine
Ronan Dantec, Senator from Loire-Atlantique
Richard Ferrand, Deputy from Finistère
Jean-Luc Fichet, Senator from Finistère
Chantal Guittet, Deputy from Finistère
Edmond Hervé, Senator from Ille-et-Vilaine
Ronan Kerdraon, Senator from Côtes-d'Armor
Virginie Klès, Senator from Ille-et-Vilaine
Viviane Le Dissez, Deputy from Côtes-d'Armor
Annie Le Houerou, Deputy from Côtes-d'Armor
Jacky Le Menn, Senator from Ille-et-Vilaine
Jean-Pierre Le Roch, Deputy from Morbihan
François Marc, Senator from Finistère
Jean-René Marsac, Deputy from Ille-et-Vilaine
Paul Molac, Deputy from Morbihan
Monique Rabin, Deputy from Loire-Atlantique
Dominique Raimbourg, Deputy from Loire-Atlantique
Gwendal Rouillard, Deputy from Morbihan
François de Rugy, Deputy from Loire-Atlantique



French Presidential Promises ... and Not

After affirming clearly his intentions a number of times during his presidential campaign in 2011 and 2012 to seek the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, French President François Hollande announced on March 13 that he would no longer pursue this. It appears that the Conseil d'Etat, a judicial advisory group of the government, has expressed reservations about the ratification. Despite the fact that the expression of reservations in the past has not blocked other laws of France, President Hollande has used this to reverse his position on the European Charter.

This is particularly disappointing since a great deal of work was invested in modifying the French Constitution to try to insure that the Conseil d'Etat and the Conseil Constitutionnel would not have cause to block the advance of rights for regional languages. The phrase "French is the language of the Republic" in Article 2 has in the past been interpreted to mean that this is the only language permitted protection. In 2008 a new Article 75-1 was added stating "The regional languages form part of the French heritage." Apparently this heritage is of little importance to some in France.

Prizes for the Future of the Breton Language – 2013 Winners

(Information from the Website of Ofis ar Brezhong)

With support of the Regional Council of Brittany, the Public Office of the Breton Language and France 3 Bretagne television organized this annual awards event on January 26, 2013, to recognize seven categories of creative activity which fosters the Breton language. Present were Lena Louarn, Vice President of the Regional Council for language of Brittany and President of the Public Office of the Breton Language, Agnès Le Brun, Mayor of Morlaix where the awards ceremony was held, and Bernez Rouz, director of Breton language emissions for France 3 Bretagne. The emcees for the event were Breton language TV personalities Goulwena Le Hénaff and Yann-Herle Gourves.

The winners of the seven categories where individuals or institutions were recognized for the work in the development of Breton language use are as follows:

Breton speaker of the Year

1st Prize: Thierry Jamet for the edition of Harry Potter in Breton and the creation of a Diwan school in Pornic.
2nd Prize: Martial Ménard for his dictionary, *Dictionnaire Français-Breton*, by Éditions Palantines
3rd Prize: Gwenvred Latimier for the creation of the internet sites *Soubenn ar Geek* (soubennargeek.wordpress.com) and *Klet er gêr* (kletergerkleteker.wordpress.com) as well as his work to digitize the manuscripts of Anjela Duval.

Businesses

1st Prize: *Difetis*, for an internet site to sell electronic books in Breton (difetis.com).
2nd Prize: ArMen, for its edition of a special issue *Langue bretonne et entreprise*.
3rd Prize: Koroll Sonorisation for its use of bilingual signage.(korollson.com)

Public organizations

1st Prize: the Library of Brest for its policies to promote the use of Breton in its internal work and with the public using the library.
2nd Prize: Lannion-Trégor Agglomération for its active promotion of Breton.
3rd Prize: The federations Ville d'Art et d'Histoire and Petites Cités de Caractères for their use of Breton in signage for the towns they promote.

Associations

1st Prize: Bod Kelenn, for its promotion of the Breton language in the Pays du Roi Morvan
2nd Prize: Dizale for *BreizhVod.com*, a website for video on demand.
3rd Prize: Botanix for its site about horticulture and botany (botanix.kpr.eu/br/).

Theatrical Creations

1st Prize : Ar Vro Bagan for *Armorica Breizh*.
2nd Prize: Teatr Penn-ar-Bed for *Yerma*, by de Federico Garcia Lorca.
3rd Prize: The troupes of Callac and Guerlesquin for *Sal ar Gouelioù*.

Recordings of Song in Breton

1st Prize: Brieg Guerveno for *Bleunioù an distruj*.
2nd Prize: Youenn Guillanton for *Etre Ploermael ha Châtelet-les-Halles*.
3rd Prize: Lunch Noazh for *Dimezellig dantelezet*.

Books

1st Prize: Pierre-Emmanuel Marais for *Alje 57*, a novel on the Algerian War (Editions al Liamm).
2nd Prize: Aziliz Bourges for *An diaoul ouzh taol* (Editions Emgleo Breiz).
3rd Prize : Monika Piarden for *An avel en ho plev*, a police crime novel (Editions al Liamm).

The winners of each category received a prize of 1,500 Euros as well as a trophy. The second and third place winners each received 500 Euros.



Kelenn Opens its doors to future Breton Teachers

From March 16 to 23 an open house was held at the Kelenn center which trains teachers for the Diwan schools. Diwan has 3,678 students in 44 pre and primary schools, 6 middle schools and a high school and despite the financial challenge of raising funds to support a new school, these immersion schools for the Breton language continue to grow each year.

The Kelenn training center is located in Quimper and each year welcomes some 15 students hoping to get a Master 2 (Métier de l'Enseignement et de la Formation) for immersive bilingual teaching. Most of the students have learned Breton as teens or young adults and often have a solid training from 6-month course work with Mervent, Roudour, Skol an Emsav or Stumdi. Kelenn focuses on training students to become teachers and helps them find a position in a Diwan school once they complete two years of training.



400 issues of Ya!

The 400th issue of Ya!, a weekly magazine/newspaper in the Breton language has come out to mark eight years for this successful publication by the organization Keit Vimp Bev based in Laz in the Finistère. Aimed at a general audience of teens as well as adults the content is varied, covering current events in Brittany and the world, stories, games and crossword puzzles, research reports and interviews, and news of events from concerts to movies and radio. In just 12 pages there's a lot to read about and you will even find some texts in the Gallo language as well as Breton. Its lively presentation full of photos and illustrations helps attract a wide audience and young talent to contribute their creative energies to its production. Check out the website – in Breton - to practice your Breton, learn about what's going on in Brittany (and the wider world too) and learn how to subscribe. www.yabzh.com

KENTEL 19 /LESSON 19

By Natalie Novik

GERIADURIG VOCABULARY

The months in Breton:

Genver	January
C'hwevrer	February
Meurzh	March
Ebrel	April
Mae	May
Mez(h)even	June (old Celtic for mid-summer)
Gouere	July (meaning unknown, could be related to "here", to sow)
Eost	August (could be a borrowing from Latin, but also means harvest)
Gwengolo	September (white straw, after the harvest)
Here	October (to sow)
Du	November (the black month)
Kerzu	December (the very black month)

The first four months are borrowed from Latin.

To use them in a sentence, the names of the months are preceded by the word miz (month). For instance:

Tri (3) a viz ebrel, Deg (10) a viz gwengolo, Ugent (20) a viz kerzu

YEZADUR GRAMMAR

Interrogative adverbs

If you want to ask a question, in many cases you will start the sentence with a word like what, which, where, when etc.

Pe, which means what is not usually used alone, except in a few expressions:

- **Pe oad eo?** (what age is he/she)
- **Pe anv out?** (what name is yours)

Piv (also spelled piu) means who

- **Piv eo?** Who is it?

Petra means what

- **Petra eo se?** What is this?

Peseurt means what or which when it is linked to another adverb

- **Eus peseurt bro e oa-hi?** From what country was she?

Penaoz means how

- **Penaoz a vo greet an dra se?** How is this going to be done?



New Webiste for the Gallo language

www.beraeyn-galeizz.com

Bertaeyn Galeizz has a newly revised website to present information and events related to the Gallo language of eastern Brittany. Check it out to learn about this unique language of Brittany and the rich cultural activities surrounding it.

A Few Losses for Brittany

Two major actors in defense of Breton culture passed away during the past months, each contributing in a unique way to Brittany.

Jean-Christophe Cassard was a historian who specialized on the Middle Ages and the War of Succession of Brittany (1341-1364). He wrote a number of scholarly articles and books but also worked with Ar Falz and Skol Vreizh to make history accessible to all.

Pierre-Yves Moign was a musician and composer who was a pioneer in Breton traditional music in classical and choral works. He was also a teacher who created the Centre Breton d'Art Populaire in Brest in 1978. Besides a number of important compositions he touched a large number of music students, inspiring them to create in new ways.

Leon Kuter passed away this March at the age of 90. He was not a Breton militant, but as my father he was always very supportive of my work for the ICDBL. And through the years he grew to love Breton music – especially traditional singers. I shared new CDs with my parents at dinner during visits, and during the past 25 years my father gained a deep appreciation and very good ear for the unique sounds and voices of Brittany.



Bretons invade New York City ... Once Again

BZH New York is an organization of Bretons and friends of Brittany dedicated to promoting the culture, economy, tourism, and language of

Brittany. We have reported a number of times in this newsletter on the excellent work this organization has done to promote Brittany and March is one of the months when they are most active, partnering with the Irish and other communities of New York.

In past years BZH New York has brought over the Kevrenn Alre and the Bagad Sant Nazer to perform and march in New York City's Saint Patrick's Day Parade which is viewed live and on television by millions of people. This year again, the 252nd parade had a strong Breton presence with 80 musicians and dancers from the Bagad du Moulin Vert and the Ensemble Eostiged ar Stangala of Quimper.

Organized around the Parade, the bagad and dancers were featured at a number of large and small concert venues during their stay in New York.

On Wednesday, March 13th there was a St. Patrick's Fest Noz at Connolly's in Times Square. In addition to bombard, bagpipes and percussion, the fest noz featured kan ha diskan singers Armel an Hejer and Alain LeClere. You can't get much better than this for Breton dancing. Proceeds from the fest noz will go towards the travel of the bagad and circle – not insignificant costs for a large group.



On Thursday the 14th, the Ensemble Eostiged ar Stangala gave a concert and dance performance in Central Park from 1-2pm at the Naumberg Bandshell.

On Friday the 15th you could find them at the Armor Lux store (232 Mulberry St. in NYC) for what was billed as an "intimate concert" (although it is hard to imagine intimacy with bombards and bagpipes!). That evening they appeared in concert at the Shrine in Harlem (2271 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd.) at 7 followed by a jam session up to midnight.

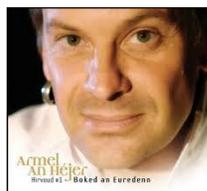
The Bagad du Moulin Vert and Eostiged ar Stangala also joined some 80 musicians, dancers and storytellers on Saturday night, March 16th, after the Saint Patrick Day parade for a Celtic Appalachian Celebration at Symphony Space. This featured music and dance from Ireland, Scotland, Brittany and the Southern Appalachian Mountains in association with Glucksman Ireland House of New York University.

And before heading back to Brittany the bagad and dancers participated in a Breton-Garifuna Cultural Exchange on Monday, March 18th (7pm-12am at Duane Park on 308 Bowery) This evening included poetry, dance and musical exchange between the Breton bagad and dance group with the Garifuna community living in New York City. In case you are as ignorant as I about this community here's a bit of background provided by BZH-NY: *March 11 to April 12th is celebrated as Garifuna American Heritage Month in the State of New York. On March 11th 1797, the Garifuna were exiled from their homeland Yurumein (St. Vincent and the Grenadines), and landed on Roatan an island off the coast of Honduras on April 12th 1797. Garifuna language, music, and dance were proclaimed a masterpiece of oral and intangible heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2001.*

For details about all these events check out the BZH NY website: www.bzh-ny.org

Heard of, but not Heard 27 New Recordings from Brittany

Notes for the following quick presentations were gleaned from reviews and information in *Ar Men* magazine 192 (Jan-Feb. 2013) & 193 (March-April 2013), *Musique Bretonne* 233 (Oct./Nov./Dec. 2012) and the Coop Breizh and other websites.



Armel an Hejer. *Boked an euredenn*. Kerne Productions. Armel An Héjer (vocals) is not new to the Breton scene and has a mastery of the traditional song repertoire as well as newly composed texts in the Breton

language. He is joined by Jérôme Kerihuel (tablas), Julien Stevenin (bass fiddle), Nicolas Stevenin (oud), Pierre Stephan (fiddle).

Jean Baron & Yvon Bréhu. *Bombarde, ocarina et orgue.*

This CD was recorded with the organ of Chantepie and includes 13 pieces where church organ played by Yvon Bréhu is paired with bombard and ocarina played by Jean Baron. Selections include traditional Breton marches, dances and hymns.

Bagad Melinerion de Vannes & Ochestre Symphonique du Conservatoire de Vannes. *Melin'art Orchestre.* BV04.

This DVD features a concert performance where the Bagad Melinerion partners with a symphonic orchestra to perform for traditional Breton dances and contemporary dance. Certainly not the first time a bagad has been part of an orchestral performance, but a partnership worth encouraging.



Duo Blain-Leyzour.

First CD for this duo of Guillaume Blain and Claire Leyzour. Guitarist Blain sings in both Breton and French and Leyzour provides fiddle for a repertoire focused on the dance of the Nantes area of southeastern Brittany.



Bobby and Sue. *I'm Dead, Thanks for Asking.*

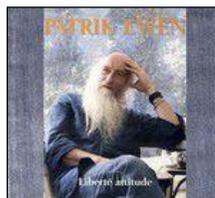
Blues, soul, country and jazz set to guitar and piano for an American sound on this CD of 10 songs in English with titles such as "The Wrong Subway," "In the Mood for Destiny," and "Dressed to Kill"...



Brest Bagadoù 2012. Bodadeg ar Sonerien.

Championship performances in Brest February 2012 including Bagad Roñsed Mor (Locoal Mendon), Bagad Melinerion (Vannes), Bagad Penhars

(Quimper), Bagad Bro Kemperle (Quimperlé), Bagad Brieg (Briec), Bagad Ar Meilhoù Glaz (Quimper), Bagad Cap Caval (Plomeur), Bagad Sonerien Bro Dreger from Perros Guirrec, Kerlenn Pondi (Pontivy), Kevrenn Alre (Auray), Bagad Quic en Groigne (Saint-Malo), Bagad Beuzec ar C'hap (Beuzec), Bagad Kemper (Quimper), Bagad Sonerien an Oriant (Lorient).



Patrick Ewen. *Liberté Attitude.*

Dylie Production DY3123.

Singer-songwriter Patrick Ewen composes songs drawing on his home experience of the Arrée Mountains of central western Brittany and travels to Scotland

(especially) and the world for arrangements of known and lesser known songs in Breton, French and English. Among the selections on this CD are Youenn Gwernig's song on Breton emigration to America "Gwerz an harluad" and a new twist on the well known "The band played Waltzing Matilda."



Melaine Favennec. *Émoi des mots.* Dylie Productions DY3121.

Singer Melaine Favennec presents the poetry of Max Jacob simply with voice or with guitar accompaniment. Born July 1876 in Quimper, Jacob would die in 1944 in the Drancy Deportation

Camp after deportation from France as a Jew. While living in Paris after a childhood in Brittany he would come to know Pablo Picasso, Guillaume Apollinaire, Georges Braque, Jean Cocteau, Jean Hugo, Christopher Wood and Amedeo Modigliani.



Soeurs Goadec – *Chanteuses du centre Bretagne.* Grand Interprètes de Bretagne 5.

Dastum & Coop Breizh. CD 1032. With the renaissance of the fest noz in the 1950s the Goadec Sisters were some of a number of

traditional singers of Breton language ballads and kan ha diskan songs for dancing who dusted off a repertoire and won the hearts of young Bretons discovering their roots in the 1960s and 70s. This double-CD set (each 70 minutes) brings together a representative sample of their performances – from recordings collected by Albert Trévidic, Claudine Mazéas and Donatien Laurent and three early Mouez Breiz albums produced in 1967 and 1972. A 150 page booklet provides the Breton song texts and translations and analysis as well as biographical information and reminiscences by those who knew them, enlivened by lots of photos.



Brieg Guerveno. *Bleuniou an distruj.*

A CD with 3 songs in Breton (Skornet, An Emzistrujer, Emgann Kergidu) performed by rocker Brieg Guerveno with Xavier Soulabail on bass and Joaching Blanchet on drums. This CD was

awarded the first prize in the Breton song CD category for Prizioù 2013.



Youenn Guillanton. Etre Ploermael ha Châtelet les Halles.

A CD with 11 songs in Breton in a pop-rock style on a variety of themes addressing societal issues such as the banking industry, ecological catastrophes like black oil tides, and invasion of Tibet by China. Texts by Guillanton are from a collection of poetry called *Gwerz war dosennoù* edited by Skol Vreizh. This CD was awarded a second prize in the Breton song CD category for Prizioù 2013.



Gérard Jaffrès. Ses grands succès.

Best loved songs (most in French with a maritime theme) by singer-songwriter Gérard Jaffrès.



Yann-Fañch Kemener, Aldo Ripoché, Hervé Merlin, Damien Cotty. Gouañv bepred. Buda Musique 3720520.

Breton master of traditional song Yann-Fañch Kemener has recorded before with the classical and baroque sound of cellist Aldo

Ripoché who plays viola de gambe on this recording with Damien Cory. Hervé Merlin brings another period stringed instrument to this mix where Breton song is alternated with pieces by Couperin, Robert de Visée or Bodin de Boismortier.



Lors Landat & Thomas Moisson. An Tan Skornet.

This duo pairs song and accordion for a variety of Breton dances on their first CD. They are joined by Roland Conq on guitar, Julien Le Mentec on basse fiddle,

and Sylvain Barou with flutes.



Le Gall-Carré/Moal & Friends. Coop Breizh.

Tangi Le Gall-Carré and Erwan Moal combine on accordion and guitar for compositions and arrangements of traditional Breton and Irish tunes with a hint of Africa

and India in the mix. They are joined by Etienne Calla on bass, Jérôme Kerhuel on percussions, Thomas Felder on fiddle, Konogan An Habask on uilleann pipes and Timothée Le Bour on sax.



Jamie McMenemy. 4. Keltia Musique.

Guitarist and bouzouki player (and fine singer) Jamie McMenemy is joined on this CD by Bernard Bizien on guitar, Ronan Bléjean on accordion and Malo Carvou on flute for arrangements of Breton and

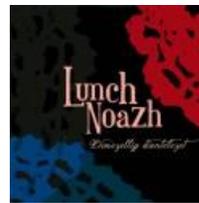
Scottish songs and tunes.



Yves Menez & Idéal Jazz.

Accordéon Gavotte. Dastum Bro Dreger/An Naër Productions. Accordion players Patrick Lefebvre, Jean Floc'h, Régis Huiban, Yves Le Gac, and Yann Le Corre give new life to the

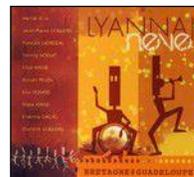
orchestra created in the 1950s by master accordion player of the Monts d'Arrée in central western Brittany Yves Menez (1905-1983). Yves Menez composed a number of dances for the dañs tro and other popular dances of the period and this jazz ensemble was at the origin of a style called "accordion gavotte" where the old and new are combined and accordion players show their stuff. The recreated band also includes Roland Conq on banjo, Gaby Kerdoncuff and Youenn Le Cam on bugle and trumpet, Timothée Le Bour on saxophone, Pierre Stéphan on fiddle, and Loïc Larnicol on drums.



Lunch Noazh. Dimezellig Dantelezet.

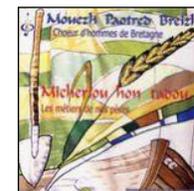
A CD with four original songs in Breton with a style that combines world music, funk and jazz. The group is made up of singer and harp player Maela Ar Badezet, Julien

Vrigneau on saxophones, Mathilde Chevrel on cello, Victor Simon on bass guitar, and Xavier Garaabedian on drums. This CD was awarded a third prize in the Breton song CD category for Prizioù 2013.



Lyannaj. Lyannaj Neve.

Musicians from Kejaj of Brittany team up with Akiyo and Gwo ka Masters of Guadeloupe for a CD which includes a variety of dances from Brittany and the creole tradition of Guadeloupe.



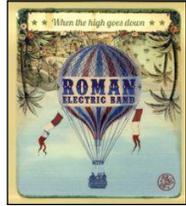
Moezh Paotred Breizh. Micherioù hon tadoù.

This CD by a men's choir of Brittany focuses on songs related to traditional work occupations of Brittany – sabot-makers, tailors, seaweed collectors, millers, farmers

and fishermen. The majority are in the Breton language, with roughly half traditional songs newly arranged and the other half newer compositions.



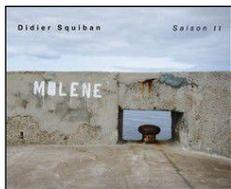
Pat O'May. Celtic Wings. Keltia Musique KMCD 556. Of Irish origin but long established in Brittany, Pat O'May is a rock guitarist. On this CD he plays duos with Alan Stivell, Martin Barre (of Jethro Tull), Moya Brennan (Clannad), Jonathan Noyce (Archive, Gary Moore), James Wood (Excalibur).



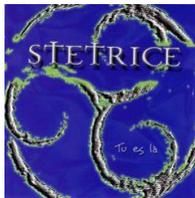
Roman Electric Band. When the high goes down. Rock and Roll songs in English composed by Roman (lead guitar and vocals, acoustic guitar and percussion) with titles such as "Cool drink," "Silent Walker," "Back to my hometown," or "When I'm Gone," along with the title track "When the High Goes Down." Group members are James Wood (backing vocals and guitars), Vicent Duval (bass), and Jiri Schefferlie (drums, percussion and backing vocals).



Soldat Louis. Kingdom Tavern. A rock band well loved in Brittany with 10 selections of song in French on a variety of themes rooted in Breton experience.



Didier Squiban. Molène Saison II. L'Oz Production. 15 years ago pianist Didier Squiban produced a CD of compositions inspired by the island Molène. Here Squiban takes a new look at his life and the island he loves for 24 short pieces for piano.



Stetrice. Tu es là. Marzelle/Celtyfest Records. Songs in French and Breton with a rock beat, country music swing, or Celtic rhythm performed by Stéphanie Deshayes (bass guitar and whistle) and Patrick Deshayes (guitars and harmonica). The group also includes Frédéric Perrouc with accordion and percussions, Phil er Dann with electric guitar, and Christophe Morvan with bagpipes and bombard.



Olivier Trévidy. Au cul du camion. Singer Olivier Trévidy with with Didier Dréo on guitars, Jean-Mich Moal on accordion and synthesizer, Jean-Christophe Boccou on drums, and Fred Guével on percussion. Among others joining on this CD are Didier Squiban,

Manu Lann Huel, Lors Jouin, and Ronan Pensec. Most of the songs are in French – new compositions on a variety of contemporary themes.



Tri Yann. Chansons de Marins. Tri Yann is one of the longest running and most popular of Breton bands who continue to blend acoustic and rock styles with themes from Breton tradition and contemporary life. Maritime songs

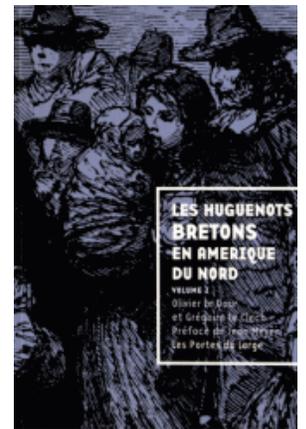
have always been part of the repertoire for this group from the port city of Nantes and this CD features 14 songs of a maritime theme.



Books from Brittany

Olivier Le Dour and Grégoire Le Clech. Les Huguenots Bretons en Amérique du Nord. Vol. 1. Les Portes du Large. 2012. 695 pages. ISBN 978-2-914612-30-2.

You probably didn't know that there are today a number of Breton Huguenots who settled in the United States in the 17th century. If you have an interest in Breton-American genealogy or simply early American colonial history, this is a book you will find of great value.



The first four chapters of the book lay down the background of who the Huguenots were and their presence in France and Brittany. The story begins in the early 16th century with the Protestant "protest" against the Catholic church by Martin Luther and Jean Calvin (and others). In France protestants would confront a Catholic royalty and political unrest would grow as the nobility and associated bourgeoisie adopted protestantism, By the 1560s there would be just 1.5 million protestants in France (5-7% of the population of 17 to 20 million) but this would include 40% of the nobility. The Edict of Nantes in 1598 would put an end to civil wars but during the 17th century Kings Louis the XII and XIV would wage war on the protestants and the edict of Nantes (which restricted if not outlawed Protestantism) would be revoked and the protestant population would drop.

The Calvinist movement would reach Brittany later than in other parts of France and would not reach much beyond eastern Brittany. But while the numbers were small, Protestantism was adopted by a large number of Breton noble families and middles classes – merchants,

doctors, lawyers, and workers associated with those families. This would be primarily in urban centers like Vitré, Rennes and Nantes and would include emigrants to Brittany from other parts of Europe and France who settled in these cities. In Brittany between 1565 and 1568 the population of protestants is estimated to have been just several thousand.

The persecution of protestants would lead to emigration of Bretons to other French regions, Switzerland, the Channel Islands, England, Germany and the Netherlands during the 16th century and then from the 1660s through the early 18th century. Between 1670 and 1700 some 130-200,000 Huguenots would leave France. Most would move initially within Europe with the hope of returning eventually to their home region. Those Bretons who crossed the Atlantic to America did so via Jersey or Guernsey, England or the Netherlands, where they had put down some roots. Their travel to North America was largely for economic advantages and not to flee from persecution.

The book succeeds in providing a context to understand the general reception and political climate Huguenots would find in 1685 to 1690 when most would arrive on American shores. This was a period when settlers were moving west, confronting Native tribes, and the colonies were populated by settlers of many religions. All of this would impact the success of Huguenots and the route their descendants would follow.

The second two-thirds of this 695-page book looks at the history of Huguenots in particular regions – New England, New Jersey/Delaware/Pennsylvania, Chesapeake Maryland and Virginia, and North and South Carolina (which would have over 200 pages of attention). In identifying Breton emigrants, the authors recognize the difficulty of tracing Breton roots for some families where Bretons first settled in various places in Europe or where French and Europeans settled in Brittany and intermarried with Bretons. Some 80 family names and their variations and changes through time and travel are presented. You get a fascinating glimpse into the lives of people who were part of the early settlement of the U.S. And, it is guaranteed that American readers of this book will learn a lot about the history of their country that they never learned in school.

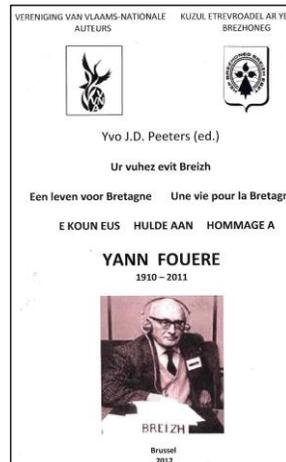
While presenting a general context to understand the history of Huguenot exile and emigration, there is a great deal of detail in this book to trace particular families which makes it particularly interesting for anyone tracing Breton family history. Do you think you might have early Breton protestant ancestors who settled in South Carolina? You might find them in this book where the text in the footnotes offers another layer of interesting information and detail. The book excels in telling the story of what happens to many of the Breton

protestants who would be viewed in the colonies as French Calvinists in the early colonial period.

The book is enlivened with 160 maps and illustrations, and for those who want more information there's a good bibliography as well as a list of genealogical and library websites, and a list of academic journals and archives consulted.

There are two authors for this book. Grégoire Le Clech (1909-1990) is known for numerous studies of Breton emigration. While he gave numerous presentations and wrote articles for scholarly journals, he never published manuscripts prepared for books. He left a wealth of notes and documentation from his research from which this book draws. Olivier Le Dour, born in Rennes in 1966, has family roots in the area of Rennes and Dol as well as the Montagnes Noir. He previously published *Les Bretons dans la ruée vers l'or de Californie* (Bretons in the California Gold Rush) – see review in *Bro Nevez* 105, February 2008. Widely traveled, like many Bretons, Olivier Le Dour works for the European Commission in Brussels.

This is just Volume 1 of this detailed study of Breton Huguenot emigration to North America and volume 2 will focus on emigration to the state of New York. For more information about the Editions Portes du Large which includes a number of excellent works about Breton explorers and travelers around the world (from Australia to Mexico, North America, Brazil or China), check out www.portesdularge.com



Yvo J.S. Peeters, Editor.
Ur vuhez evit Breizh / Een leven voor Bretagne / Une vie pour la Bretagne. Hommage à Yann Fouéré (1910-2011). Brussels, 2012

The International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, based in Brussels, has published a new work in homage to Yann Fouéré (1910-2011) who was a major figure in the Breton movement of the 20th century who spoke up for Breton and European

minority rights on a world stage (see *Bro Nevez* 120, November 2011). This 68-page work edited by Yvo J.S. Peeters is in Breton, Dutch and French, and includes essays by and about Yann Fouéré as well as a bibliography of his extensive works.

This publication is available from the Fondation Yann Fouéré which has a rich website with texts in English and French by Fouéré: www.fondationyannfouere.org



Deep Inside a Breton Skull 37 The Valley of the Saints

Jean Pierre Le Mat

This is a story of a bunch of mad Breton people. They must be jealous of the celebrity of Easter Island. Yes, they really want to outclass the Pascuans for the third millennium.

They intend to carve one thousand big statues for Eternity. Statues of old Breton saints. And they have begun the job, the fools!

For the moment, 27 statues about three-meters high and ten-tons in weight have been erected in the Valley of the Saints. Three new ones are being carved now.

This Valley of the Saints is situated in Carnoët, between Carhaix and Guingamp, deep in the hilly center of Brittany. The place is dominated by a medieval motte, which is all that remains of the Castle of Carnoët. Farther down is a chapel dedicated to Saint Gildas, built at the beginning of the 16th century.



This Saint Gildas lived during the 6th century. He was a kind of Celtic-trotter, travelling in Brittany, Wales and Ireland. He is known through a sermon which has a great historical value. He is said to have reconciled King Arthur with Meleagant. He was the abbot of Rhuys in Brittany, and also of Llanancarfan in Wales. The people of Carnoët say that

Saint Gildas is buried there, but they are not alone in the Celtic world to claim this honor. Maybe they are right. Nobody knows.

Of course, the first statues erected here are those of the seven saints who founded our country: Pol, Tugdual,

Brieg, Samson, Malo, Patern, Kaourintin. Together with these seven fine characters are the two patron saints of Brittany: Holy Anne, the grandmother of Jesus, who could be Breton through her link with old Dana, mother of the Celtic Gods; and Holy Erwan, Saint Yves in French, the barrister of the poor people.



Our Valley of the Saints is a mix of spirituality and legend, of memory and history. Here is Brittany, don't forget that. Here, the sunny sky of spirituality is enriched and colored by clouds of taunting legends. The dryness of historical documents is fertilized by a shower of possible events. We have historical evidence for some of our saints. For the others, we don't know if

they are real characters or not. Is it a problem? They are representative of a people, fulfilling itself through actions and dreams. Religion teaches that God created the world and humanity. We believe that our old saints contributed to create our country and to outline our humanity.

Each carving is sponsored by local communities, companies or private people, linked in one way or another to one of our old saints. It can be through your name or your forename. It can be because the saint stayed, fifteen centuries ago, somewhere in the place where you are living now.

This saint can be close to you because you have been moved by the history of his life. Maybe he is the messenger who carries your secret prayers to God? You are right; you can trust these holy guys and women of our kind; they are still protecting us.



I smile passing near the statue of Saint Didy. I remember going each year, when I was a young boy, to the pardon of the chapel of saint Didy, near Morlaix. I keep in my mind the memory of the wood statue of the saint, his foot on a green devil grasping a clog; and the religious procession around the chapel, after the office; and the headdresses of the grandmothers; and the men

running to be the first to catch a goose, a game forbidden now because cruelty to animals; and the races organized for the young people.

I bow down before the statue of Saint Herve, the blind and irascible exorcist. I shiver in front of the statue of Saint Tremeur, walking with his head in his hands after being beheaded.



Deep inside my skull is rising an army of heroes and saints, a multicolored troop. And I remember these words of the grandmother of St Yves: "little boy, act always as if, one day, you would have to be a saint". Such words cannot be judged. They are much more than wisdom or madness. And I secretly hope that, now, Breton grandmothers whisper

to young people falling asleep: "little child, act tomorrow as if, one day, you would have to be like one of these women and men, whose statues has been erected in Carnoët for eternity".



Want to read more from Jean-Pierre Le Mat? Check out a wealth of provocative notes and articles on Brittany and all things Breton on his website: www.contreculture.org. You will need French to explore his "enquêtes bretonne sur les mythes français."



A Travel Account from 1905

Rambles in Brittany by Francis Miltoun (Boston: L. C. Page & Company)

Editor's note: As is always the case with travel literature, the author's opinions are most often casual observations – rarely based on any solid scholarship or research. While a traveler's observations can sometimes be quite interesting, they are often highly influenced by the prejudices of their day.

Chapter V: The Breton Tongue and Legend

The speech of Brittany, like its legend and folk-lore, has ever been a prolific subject with many writers of many opinions.

The comparison of the speech of the Welshman with that of the Breton has often been made, but by no one so successfully as by Henri Martin, the historian, who, in writing of his travels in Wales, told how he had chatted with the Celtic population there and made himself thoroughly understood through his knowledge of Breton speech.

In its earliest phases, the Breton tongue had a literature of its own, at least a spoken literature, coming from the mouths of its bards and popular poets. In our own day, too, Brittany has its own songs and verses, which, though many of them have not known the medium of printer's ink, have come down from past generations.

The three ancient Armorican kingdoms or states, Domnonée, Cornouaille, and the Bro-Waroch, had their own distinct dialects.

There is and was a considerable variation in the speech throughout Brittany, though it is and was all Breton. The dialects of Vannes, Quimper, and Tréguier are the least known outside their own immediate neighbourhood; the Léonais of St. Pol de Léon is the regular and common tongue of all Bas Bretons.

The old-time limits of the Breton tongue are wavering to-day, and from time to time have drawn appreciably toward the west, so that the boundary-line, which once ran from the mouth of the Loire to Mont St. Michel, now starts at the mouth of the Vilaine, and finishes at a point on the northern coast, a little to the westward of St. Briec.

It was during the decadence of the Breton tongue – known to philologists as the third period – that the monk Abelard cried out: "The Breton tongue makes me blush with shame."

The nearer one comes to Finistère, the less liable he is to meet the French tongue unadulterated. The numbers

knowing the Breton tongue alone more than equal those who know French and Breton, leaving those who know French alone vastly in the minority. The figures seem astonishing to one who does not know the country, but they are unassailable, nevertheless.

Here in this department at least, and to a lesser degree in the Côtes du Nord [Côtes d'Armor] and the Morbihan provinces, one is likely enough to hear lisped out, as if it were the effort of an Englishman: "*Je na sais pas ce que vous dites,*" or "*Je n'entend rien.*" No great hardship or inconvenience is inflicted upon one by all this, but now and again one wishes he were a Welshman, for the only foreigners who can understand the lingo are Taffy's fellow countrymen.

Breton legend is as weird and varied as that of any land. It is astonishing convincing, too, from the story of King Grollo and his wicked daughter, who came from the Britain across the seas, the Bluebeard legend, the Arthurian legend, which Bretons claim as their own, as do Britons, to those less incredible tales of the Corsairs of St. Malo and the exploits of Duguesclin and Surcouf.

There is a quaint Breton saying referring to little worries, which runs thus: "When the wind blows up from the sea, I turn my barrel to the north; when it blows down from the hills, I turn my barrel to the south." "And when it blows all four ways at once?" "Why, then I crawl under the barrel."

This is exactly the Breton's attitude toward life to-day, but he finds a deal of consolation in his legends and songs of the past, and in his ruffled moments they serve to put him in a good humour again. This is something more than mere superstition, it is a philosophical turn of mind, and that is good for a man. The heroes of legend are frequently those of history. One may cite Joan of Arc with relation to old France, and Duguesclin in Brittany. There is a difference, of course, and it is wide, but the comparison will serve, as there is no other character in all the history of Brittany – unless it be that of Duguay-Trouin, the Corsair of St. Malo – who stands out so distinctly in the popular mind as does Duguesclin, "the real Breton."

There is none in his own country, however illiterate he may be, and the Breton peasant, in some parts, is notoriously illiterate, who knows not this hero's name and glory. Still more deeply rooted are the old folk-lore superstitions which have come down through the ages by word of mouth, no doubt with the accruing additions of time.

Morlaix is the very centre of a land of mystery, tradition, and superstition. Among these superstitious legends, "Jan Gant y tan," as it is known by its Breton title, stands out grimly.

Jan, it seems, is a species of demon who carries by night five candles on the five fingers of each hand, and waves them wildly about, calling down wrath upon those who may have offended him.

Another is to the effect that hobgoblins eat the cream which rises on milk at night.

Yet another superstition is that the call of the cuckoo announces the year of one's marriage or death.

Another, and perhaps the most curious of all, is that, if an infant by any chance gets his clothes wet at certain pools or fountains, he will die within a year, but he will live long years if he fall in, yet is able to preserve his garments from all dampness.

When one drinks of the Fountain of De Krignac three times within the hour, says the peasant of Plougasnou, and is not cured of the fever, let him abandon all thoughts of a remedy and prepare for death.

There are two legends associated with Brittany which are little known. Both relate to Bluebeard. This legend is of Eastern origin, as far as concerns the story of the man who slew his wives by dragging them about by the hair, ultimately decapitating them; but the French Academy of Inscriptions and Polite Learning evolves a sort of modern parallel as another setting for the same apocryphal story. It concerns a certain Trophime, the daughter of a Duke of Vannes, in the sixth century. She was married to the Lord of Gonord, whose castle was situated on Mount Castanes, and was the eighth wife of her husband. He killed her because she discovered the bodies of her seven predecessors; but her sister Anne prayed to St. Gildas, who came with her two brothers to the rescue. St. Gildas restored Trophime to life, and the Bluebeard of Gonord and his castle were swallowed up by the earth.

The origin of the story has always been in doubt, but the generally accepted theory is that Perrault founded the tale on the history of Gilles de Laval, Seigneur de Rais.

The Academy, however, destroys all this early conjecture in favour of the Gilles de Laval affair. Since Gilles de Laval was a kinsman of the Dukes of Brittany, the following is given as his claim to having played the part, though, as the report of the Academy goes on to say, De Laval proved himself to be but a fanatical sorcerer.

Gilles de Laval was born in 1404, and was a member of the family of Laval-Montmorency. He was handsome, well born, rich, and a most valiant soldier, and one of the warmest supporters of Joan of Arc, whom he defended against all who spoke ill of her, constituting himself her personal champion. He fought valiantly with

the “Maid,” and was made a marshal of France when twenty-six years of age.

He was very wealthy, and he doubled his possessions when he married at the early age of sixteen. His extravagances, however, were greater than his riches. He had a refined taste, and loved illuminated manuscripts, stamped Spanish leather, Flemish tapestries, Oriental carpets, gold and silver plate, music, and mystery plays. After peace was made, he and his wife retired to their castles and lands in the Vendée, where Gilles soon found himself hopelessly in debt. He had to find money somehow, for he was of a fine, open-handed disposition, and had never denied himself anything. It was only natural in that century that he should turn his thoughts toward alchemy and the philosopher’s stone.

Francesco Prelati, an Italian with a reputation as a magician and a maker of gold, was installed, with all his alchemist’s apparatus, in Gilles castle; but when he was asked to make gold, he confided to his patron that it would be necessary to summon the aid of the devil, and that for this purpose the blood of young children was absolutely required. The two then scoured the country round for children, whom they murdered with horrible rites, until at last their crimes became so notorious that they were arrested and tried at Nantes.

Gilles de Laval and his accomplice were accused of murdering no fewer than twelve hundred children, and were tried for sorcery and found guilty. The Lord of Laval was strangled, and his body was burned; but Francesco Prelati, as a mere vulgar sorcerer, was burned alive.

At Saint Cast in the Côtes du Nord, one hears vague and fabulous reports from the natives, even to-day, of a pirate ship – a veritable sister ship to those of Duguay-Trouin of St. Malo – named the *Perillon* and commanded by one Besnard, known as the terror of the seas. Like other songs of seafarers of the days gone by, that concerning the terror of the seas is good enough to incorporate into the text of some rattling story of pirates and corsairs, such as boys – and some grown-ups – the world over like. Another popular Breton air was known as “Biron ha D’Estin” (“Byron and D’Estaing”), and had to do with the war in America. Another was the “Chant du Pilote,” and had for its subject the combat of the *Surveillante* and the forts at Quebec in 1780.

Of the same period was the “Corsairs’ Song,” which is very well known throughout Upper Brittany even to-day, beginning thus:

“Le trente-un du mois d’août.”

Throughout Upper Brittany also one hears the old housewives still mumbling the old words and air of the song current in the times of Francis the First.

It was when the prince was treating for his release from captivity that the words first took shape and form:

“Quand le roi départit de France,
Vive le roi !

À la male heure il départit,
Vive Louis !
À la male heure il départit (bis)

Il départit jour de dimanche.

Je ne suis pas le roi de France.

Je suis un pauvre gentilhomme
Qui va de pays en pays.

Retourne-t-en vite à Paris“.

* * *

Editor’s Note: It is worth adding the following appendix from the book citing numbers of those speaking the Breton language.

APPENDIX XI The Breton Tongue in Brittany To-day¹

Département	Individuals Understanding Only Breton	Individuals Understanding Breton and French
Côtes du Nord	145,000	150,000
Finistère	352,000	302,000
Morbihan	182,700	190,000

It is a regrettable fact that the Morbihan has the greatest number of illiterates of any of the departments of France. Among a hundred conscripts for the army, often thirty or forty are classed as illiterate, while in Finistère and the Côtes dur Nord, the number falls to thirty or less, and in Ille et Vilaine to less than twenty.

¹ This table takes no cognizance of those speaking French only and not Breton, whilst the three departments given are those only in which the knowledge of the Breton tongue is in excess of that in other parts.

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