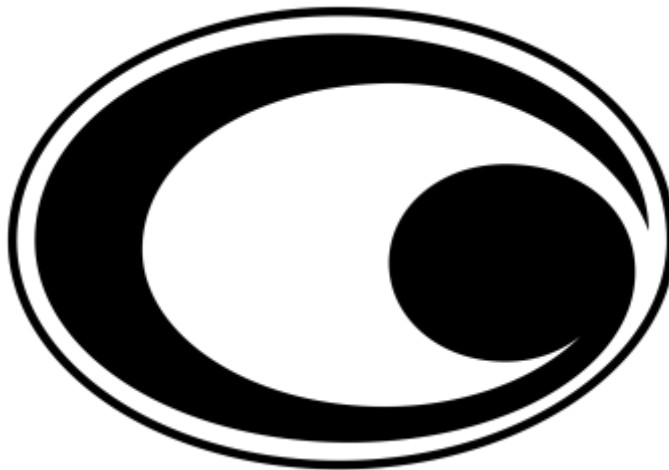


# BRO NEVEZ

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



The "*Spilhennig*"

Equivalent to the *An Fáinne* for Irish speakers, this symbol created by Ofis ar Brezhoneg and worn as a pin identifies Breton speakers. Will there be more in future years?

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 137

March 2016

# BRO NEVEZ 137

March 2016

ISSN 0895 3074

## EDITOR'S ADDRESS & E-MAIL

Lois Kuter, Editor  
605 Montgomery Road  
Ambler, PA 19002 U.S.A.

(215) 886-6361  
loiskuter@verizon.net

U.S. ICDBL website: [www.icdbl.org](http://www.icdbl.org)

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.

**This newsletter can be sent as a PDF file attached to an e-mail instead of, or in addition to, the print version. Just let the Editor know how you would like to receive it.**

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

For information about the Canadian ICDBL contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, PO Box 14611, 50 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M8L-5R3, CANADA (e-mail: [jdkoneil@hotmail.com](mailto:jdkoneil@hotmail.com)). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.



## Editorial

In this issue of Bro Nevez we welcome the contribution of the Canadian representative for the ICDBL Diarmuid Ó Néill. He presents a compelling argument for the need to promote the use of the Breton language in all aspects of daily life.



### Cautious Optimism for the Future Condensed Reversing Language Shift Update for the Breton Language

Diarmuid Ó Néill  
December 2015

*Editor's Note: The following is contributed by the Canadian Representative for the ICBL, Diarmuid Ó Néill. He is the editor of Rebuilding the Celtic Languages – Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries (Y Lolfa, 2005, ISBN 0 86243 723 7) in which various authors examine the state of the six Celtic languages using the Reversing Language Shift model developed by Joshua Fishman. Below is a draft taking into account changes in the past ten years.*

Although today in 2015 approximately 61% of all Breton speakers are over the age of sixty and Breton is now classified as a severely endangered language by UNESCO having fallen from roughly one million speakers in 1950 to roughly 200,000 today we can dare to be optimistic that strategies being put into place by Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg will cause the number of Breton speakers to begin to increase over the next several decades. We can also see from the success of the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg/Yes to Breton campaign being waged to expand the use of Breton in businesses and public life that the role of Breton in civil society will be strengthened.

Although there is a feeling of frustration among many Breton language advocates about the situation Breton is making progress. The number of primary school children in Breton medium schools in western Brittany will pass the 10% mark within the next several years and clearly will eventually rise much higher in both western and eastern Brittany. The annual Breton growth rate of about 4.5% is equal to the rate of growth in Ireland for Irish medium education.

The percentage of Breton speaking families is presently about 3-4% and while this figure is tending to rise slightly as Breton medium education expands it is a weakness which must be overcome in the future in order to consolidate the Breton language in community

life. This is a point which Joshua Fishman correctly made about how schools alone simply cannot do it. This point was recently born out in Wales as the results of the 2011 census showed a decrease of 20,000 in the number of Welsh speakers since 2001 despite an increase in the number of Welsh medium students. This was unable to prevent a decrease in the number of Welsh speaking families. The Welsh were shocked. They had been expecting a 5% increase in the number of Welsh speakers not a 3% decrease.

What Celtic language advocates need to take from this is that for long term strategies of revival greater focus on family life and community life must be factored into the picture. Happily the Breton language movement is already tackling this issue with the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg/Yes to Breton campaign which might be complimented by a slightly more aggressive drive to create new Breton speaking families.

### Breton medium students by department 2015/2016 – Total - 16,345

	Penn-ar-Bed/ Finistère	Aodoù-an-Arvor/ Côtes d'Armor	Mor-Bihan/ Morbihan	Il-ha-Gwilhen/ Ille et Vilaine	Liger Atlantel/ Loire Atlantique	Total Brittany
2015/2016						
Pre-school	8,81%	4,17%	6,43%	1,21%	0,54%	3,56%
Prim. Level	7,11%	3,46%	5,10%	0,94%	0,38%	2,83%
Sec. Level	2,03%	0,91%	0,80%	0,19%	0,07%	0,68%
Total	4,71%	2,26%	3,10%	0,60%	0,24%	1,84%

Today in 2015 approximately 4% of Breton families employ Breton as the chief language of the home as opposed to probably less than 2% in the 1990s. As the use of Breton in the schools and in public life has increased this has caused an increase in family usage. In addition family use of Breton or inter-generational transmission of the language is probably at a higher rate of above 5-10% in western Brittany. In the Republic of Ireland it is estimated that about 4% of families employ Irish as the language of the home while in Wales about 8% of Welsh children are raised in Welsh speaking homes despite a much higher figure of roughly 25% of Welsh children being enrolled in Welsh medium schools. Here we can see clearly one of the greatest challenges facing not only Breton but all six of the Celtic languages and indeed the other minority languages of western Europe such as Basque, Catalan, Galician and Frisian.

There is a clear understanding of the need to promote Breton in public life thus we see the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign which has been such a great success in mobilizing the Breton population to action which is of crucial importance and which is an indispensable part of the Breton RLS movement. However at the time of the publication of "Rebuilding the Celtic Languages" in 2005 several figures in the Breton language movement stated openly their opinion that "the school was the cornerstone not the family of reversing language shift" in sharp rebuttal of my own counsel as well as that of Joshua Fishman. I am sticking to my original position. Fishman was right. The family is indispensable. One of

the reasons that the Irish and Welsh language movements are only treading water is that they too continue to overlook the critical role of family usage of their languages. The census of 2011 showed a significant drop in the number of Welsh speakers from 582,000 in 2001 to 562,000 in 2011 particularly in the Welsh speaking heartland of the northwest as native Welsh speakers die off and are replaced not with new Welsh speaking families but with more and more Welsh speaking students many of whom are going to lose their Welsh speaking ability as time goes by and as often as not marry an English speaking partner and rear their children in English. This is the reality of school based revival movements which fail to focus on the family/community arena. Ireland is full of people who were educated in Irish medium schools but have now lost their Irish speaking ability through lack of use.

We need look no further then Basque and Catalan where a majority of students are now Basque speaking and Catalan speaking respectively. Spanish remains dominant not only in business life but also in most respects of social life including family life. The Basque Government in particular gambled that by throwing most of its limited financial resources at the schools back in the 1980s that this would achieve the greatest results. The result however was only a partial success in that there are greater numbers of Basque speaking students and young people and indeed more Basque speaking families but not enough to recreate a solidly Basque speaking society which remains elusive.

The Irish government in the 1920s and 1930s also threw all of its resources into a school based revival of Irish which essentially failed to re-establish an Irish speaking society although it did increase the number of Irish speakers and achieve official status and other goals for Irish. To a certain extent Welsh, Breton, Basque and all the rest are marching along in the footsteps of the Irish in the respect that all of them are mounting essentially school based revivals and may be repeating the classic Irish mistake of not putting enough emphasis on family and community use.

The results of the Welsh census of 2011 which showed a decline of 582,000 Welsh speakers in 2001 to 562,000 Welsh speakers in 2011 and which shocked the Welsh should be a wakeup call to all the minority language movements in western Europe. We have to remember that in western Brittany in the early 1900s Breton was the dominant language in over 80% of homes. A Breton speaking Brittany will remain elusive too also unless a far higher percentage of Breton speaking families is recreated. Likely at least 30% but preferably above 50%.

The most recent figures published for Breton medium education in September 2015 indicate 16,345 students or a 45% increase over the previous eight years. Although this figure is still less than 2% of all students in Brittany some striking and encouraging patterns have emerged. Firstly there is the strong and consistent growth occurring in Breizh Izel or western Brittany. Here, as of September 2015, some 8.81% of preschool children and 7.11% of primary children are now in Breton medium schools. This is no small achievement. It heralds the fact that Breton medium education is becoming a growing reality that is here to stay just like Basque medium schools or Welsh medium schools. Sometime in the next several years over 10% of primary children in Breizh Izel will be in Breton medium schools and down the road the figure will clearly pass the 25% mark and eventually 50% and beyond. The overall Breton growth rate was 4.5% for the school year 2013/2014 which compared favourably for example with the Irish medium education growth rate of 4.8% during the school year of 2013/2014.

Although many in the Breton cultural movement continue to feel great frustration with what they perceive as a far too slow growth rate it would appear that Breton medium education is beginning to win the long term battle against political and financial roadblocks placed in its path. Perhaps most encouraging is the continuing establishment of new Breton medium schools in every canton of all five Breton departments not merely western Brittany. It is obvious that all citizens of Brittany now accept Breton as a national language. The increasing number of adult Breton speakers and new schools in Rennes is particularly striking.

In summary it can at least be said that Bretons are aware of the need for Breton to make a breakthrough in all areas of public life hence the ambitious and well thought out plans to establish more Breton speaking businesses, to establish a Breton medium university, and to push for official status for the Breton language. Broadly speaking at the time of writing Breton is beginning to make greater inroads into the economic life of Brittany thanks to the Yes to Breton campaign although a greater presence in the universities and official status for Breton remain far off goals which are perhaps inseparable from the larger question of what Brittany's eventual status will be – a unified region of five departments, an autonomous community like the Basques, or a new Celtic nation, only time will tell.



## **The fight for recognition of the Breton Language goes on ...**

The following article is from the website [www.Nationalia.info](http://www.Nationalia.info) (January 26, 2016) and describes well the frustrating efforts to get the French government to act on the recognition and protection of languages within its borders. See below for information about Nationalia.

### **60 Breton groups urge MPs to step up efforts to pass language law before 2018**

French National Assembly rejected increased protection of minoritised languages earlier this month

Nationalia.info

Some 60 Breton civil society groups sent a letter to each of Brittany's members of the French Parliament asking them to ensure the approval of a framework law for the promotion of endangered languages and cultures before the end of the current term. The move comes 10 days after a National Assembly vote [January 14], in which almost all MPs were absent, rejected increased protection for France's languages other than French.

The letter, written in Breton and French, is undersigned by all major pro-Breton language and culture groups. These include the Diwan federation of Breton-medium schools and Kevre Breizh, an umbrella organization for 37 federations and groups to which some 50,000 people are affiliated.

The text argues MPs still have 17 months ahead within the current legislative term to achieve the approval of a new law that allows to implement policies that help the transmission of minoritised languages and cultures to the younger generation.

The groups recall that pro-languages activists have been waiting since 2008 -when the French Constitution was amended to include a reference to the "regional languages" as the "heritage of France"- to see a framework law on language passed.

Lawmakers opposed to further rights for speakers of minoritised languages say the Constitution clearly states that French is the only language of the French Republic. Thus, they continue, any move aimed at strengthening the place of non-official languages would be unconstitutional, such as for example the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

The French Senate rejected in October 2015 a Socialist-led proposal to amend the Constitution in order to open the door for the ratification of the European Charter. Most senators belonging to conservative parties opposed the move.

### What is Nationalia.info

From the website: [www.nationalia.info](http://www.nationalia.info)

The online journal **Nationalia** has been launched by CIEMEN [Centre Internacional Escarré per a les Minories Ètniques i les Nacions, in Catalonia] the fruit of over thirty years of experience in the field of stateless nations.

One of the original aims of the organization was to open up possibilities of information-sharing to peoples and nations that were marginalized or saw their identity and existence threatened. Then as now, the proponents of CIEMEN were aware that ignorance generates fear, rejection and violence and that providing reliable information about these peoples and nations would be a sure-fire way of overcoming public ignorance about the social reality of stateless nations.

The need to provide reliable information is as relevant today as it was then. If we are to recognize and respect individual and collective rights and work towards lasting peace and democracy, it is essential that peoples and nations are acknowledged as they really are and as they would like to be.

To achieve this aim, CIEMEN already provides information via its journal *Europa de les Nacions* (Europe of Nations). But thanks to **Nationalia**, CIEMEN has now firmly arrived in the age of new technologies, which are today essential for communication and exchange, as well as boosting knowledge and awareness about peoples and nations.

It is worth noting that **Nationalia** focuses on the new Europe that is emerging today, in which so many

peoples and nations find themselves marginalized despite playing a major role in building the future. But the scope of Nationalia will not be restricted to the borders of Europe: it also takes into account the concerns of peoples and nations across the world.

In short, **Nationalia** is determined to fill some of the gaps that, in our opinion, still exist today in the provision of information. With this in mind, the journal is open to collaborative projects with other similarly specialized media.

*Aureli Argemí*  
*President of CIEMEN*



### Prizioù Dazont ar Brezhoneg / Prizes for the Future of the Breton Language

(Information for this report was drawn from the Ofis ar Brezhoneg website, January 30, 2016)

In partnership with the Ofis ar Brezhoneg the television station France 3 Bretagne has organized annual prizes for creative work promoting the Breton language. The ceremony for this 19<sup>th</sup> year to award prizes took place on January 29 in Plougastel-Daoulas.

The following were the winners this year:

#### **Brezhoneger / Breton Speaker of the Year**

1st prize: **Romain Sponnagel** for the development of Breton teaching and Breton culture in the area of Saint-Brieuc. Creation of the Smart Phone application called Stag which allows people to goelocate each other. [http://www.bretagne.bzh/jcms/prod\\_188466/fr/romain-sponnagel](http://www.bretagne.bzh/jcms/prod_188466/fr/romain-sponnagel)

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: the band **Krismenn**, for workshops of Breton language song and concerts on the world stage of the Festival des Vieilles Charrues. <http://krismenn.com/>

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: **Darlene Arokoh**, a young Kenyan who learned the Breton language (with Stumdi) and who aims to defend indigenous languages.

## Kevredigezhioù / Associations

1st prize: **Agriculteurs de Bretagne / Labourenn-douar Breizh**, for their regular use of Breton in all their communication. <http://www.agriculteurs-de-bretagne.fr/>

2nd prize: **ADEC 29**, Association pour le Dépistage des Cancers in Finistère, for their brochure in the Breton language about cancer prevention and treatment.

3rd prize: **AREP**, a job training organization for its creation of a diploma program for pre-school teachers in the Breton language.

## Embregerezhioù / Businesses

1st prize: **NumériBulle**, for their Breton language books for children that can be downloaded by internet. <http://www.numeribulle.com/>

2nd prize: **D'istribilh**, a beer-maker in Plouider which created a buzz with a video in Breton seen over 100,000 on internet. <https://fr.ulule.com/brasserie-distribilh/>

3rd prize: **Camping du Conguel** in Quiberon, for its bilingual signage. <http://www.campingduconquel.com/>

## Aozadurioù public / Public Organisations

1st prize: **CNFPT**, National and regional job training organization which put together Breton language training for public service employees. <http://www.cnfpt.fr/>

2nd prize: **Community of the communes du Pays de Quimperlé**, for their active promotion of Breton and translation of their magazine « Mag 16 » in Breton. <http://www.quimperle-communaute.bzh/>

3rd prize: **Mayor's office of Pont-Croix**, for its support of the opening of a Diawn school in an area which otherwise had no bilingual teaching available. <http://www.pont-croix.fr/>

## Levrioù faltazi / Non-Fiction works



1st prize: **“Udora pe afer an ed-du”**, science fiction novel by **Paskal an Intañv** (Ed. Al Liamm). <http://www.brezhoneg.org/fr/livres/udora-pe-afer-ed-du>



2nd prize: **“N'eus ket a garantez eürus”**, novel by **Goulc'han Kervella** (Ed. Skol Vreizh). <http://www.skolvreizh.com/>



3rd prize: **“Divemor”**, novel by **Pierre-Emmanuel Marais** (Ed. Al Liamm). <http://www.brezhoneg.org/fr/livres/divemor>

## Kleweled / Audiovisual creation

1st prize: **“Kurdistan, Huñvreal an Nevez-amzer”**, documentary (52 minutes) by **Mikael Baudu** on the situation of the Kurds in Syria facing the Islamic State. (Production : Gwengolo filmoù) <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3aqpzy>

2nd prize: **“Enseller Panda”**, series of animated films for children by **Gilduin Couronné** and **Sébastien Hivert** (Production : JPL Films). <http://jplfilms.com/>

3rd prize: **“Paotred al Loc'h”**, documentary (28 minutes) by **Ronan Hirrien** about the life of a homosexual couple in Central Brittany. (Production: France 3 Bretagne). <http://www.bretagne-et-diversite.net/fr/films/paotred-al-loch>

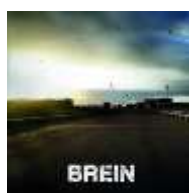
## CD kanet e Brezhoneg / Breton language song on CD



1st prize: **“Skeud o roudoù”** by **Nolwenn Korbell** (Ed. Coop Breizh). [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nolwenn\\_Korbell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nolwenn_Korbell)



2nd prize: **“Heol Gor”** by **Dañs er Jeko** (self-produced). <http://www.danserjeko.com/>



3rd prize: **“Brein”** by **Brein** (self-produced). <http://www.brein.fr/>



## Telenn Sant-Brieg

[www.tiavro-saintbrieg.org](http://www.tiavro-saintbrieg.org)

Many of the larger cities of Brittany (and even smaller ones) have a cultural center where a wide range of activities are organized – Breton language classes, films, workshops, concerts, lectures, etc. The Telenn center of Saint-Brieuc, created in 1987, is a very active one, and it happens to be directed by the Prizioù award winner for Breton Speaker of the Year, Romain Sponnagel.

Like other cultural centers this one fosters collaborative work of a number of smaller cultural groups in the area of Saint-Brieuc – over 20 with about 2,000 members overall. They support Breton dance, music, Gallo and Breton language, sports, and art and culture more generally.

The work of this center, like all others, counts heavily on the support of volunteers. Check out the website to get a good idea of the many activities they foster.



### Ar Redadeg – Running for the Breton Language

The Ar Redadeg is a relay run launched in 2008 to raise money to benefit the Diwan schools. Individuals or groups sponsor different kilometers of the run which passes through all five departments of Brittany. It is run every two years and the proceeds are now split between the Diwan schools and a variety of other organizations who apply to be included. These are new initiatives in teaching, media, music, sports, or any other area that promotes the Breton language.

Today the run is over 1,700 kilometers and passes through over 30 communities who are encouraged to organized special activities for the occasion to highlight the festive nature of this event. Young and old participate and the run goes on night and day. This year is the fifth edition and it will start in Saint-Herblain near Nantes on April 29, ending in Locoal-Mendon on May 7 in time for the Trophée Roñsed-Mor festival for bagads.



Ar Redadeg was modeled on the Korrika organized some 30 years ago to support the Basque language. [www.korrika.eus](http://www.korrika.eus). The model has been adopted by other European peoples to support ehir language initiatives. In Catalonia it is called the Correllengua ([www.cal.cat](http://www.cal.cat)). In Galicia (Spain) it is called the Correlingua ([www.correlingua.gal](http://www.correlingua.gal)). In Wals it is the Ras yr Iaith ([www.rasyriaiith.cymru](http://www.rasyriaiith.cymru)) and in Ireland it is the Rith ([www.rith.ie](http://www.rith.ie)). As in Brittany these runs engage a wdie community, building solidarity and resources for language initiatives.





## Brittany Commemorates the Centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland

<http://irlande2016.bzh>

2016 marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising in Ireland which led to independence. This event did not go unnoticed in Brittany and continues to serve as an inspiration to Bretons dreaming of independence for Brittany. Brittany has many links to Ireland, not the least of which is the presence of a Celtic language and culture.

Hundreds of Breton musicians have mastered Irish traditional music and certainly the introduction of the wooden transverse flute to Breton music can be traced to a love affair in Brittany with Irish music. The musical exchanges are frequent, fostered by the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival among other opportunities for Irish musicians to tour in Brittany. There are also economic ties and travel is fostered by direct links to Ireland established by Brittany Ferries. 120 Breton towns are twinned with towns in Ireland.

While there will be hundreds of events in Ireland and in Irish emigrant communities throughout the world to mark the centenary, with an active role being taken by Breizh-Eire, Bretons living in Ireland. See their website [www.breizheire.com](http://www.breizheire.com). But there will be numerous projects in Brittany and organized by Bretons. Here are some examples:

The Bagad de Vannes Melinerion will be participating in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade in Dublin and no doubt these musicians will be sharing music elsewhere during the March 16-19 trip to Ireland. [www.bagad-de-vannes.com](http://www.bagad-de-vannes.com)

Numerous talks and workshops will be offered about the history of Breton-Irish links including a 2-day colloquium in Vannes on April 22 and 23rd called "Bretagne, Irlande, Chemins croisés, 1916-2016" which will discuss historical, cultural, political, artistic, and economic ties. Jean Guiffan, a professor of history-geography in Nantes and author of a number of works on Ireland will give several lectures on Breton-Irish history. Erwan Fouere, son of Yann Fouere, will give a talk at the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient. These are just a few of the opportunities in Brittany to learn about the shared history of these two nations.

Besides fostering some lectures the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) will put together a traveling exhibit on the history of the 1916 Easter Rising and its ties to Brittany.

Numerous books will be published (or re-published). Terre de Brume will publish a translation of Patrick Pearse's work in French "Gens du Connemara." The Cultural Institute of Brittany will publish two re-editions: Louis-Napoléon Le Roux's biography of Patrick Pearse written in the late 1920s, and a special Easter 1916 edition of the magazine Dalc'homp Soñj published in 1986. The Cultural Institute will also publish a work by Alan Le Noac'h on Irish immigrants in Brittany in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The annual book fair of Carhaix in October will have the 1916 Easter Rising as its theme fostering the display of books on the topic of Ireland as well as special talks during this big event to celebrate the wealth of publications in Brittany.

Bretons will organize a trip or two to Ireland to visit sites related to the 1916 events as well as Breton-Irish relations.

And in the world of sports the Gaelic Athletic Association will organize an August world championship of Gaelic football in Dublin. A team from Brittany has been invited to participate.

Keep an eye on the Eire-Breizh 1916-2016 website for updates on events : <https://irlande2016.bzh>

On this website you will find a very informative article by Justin Dolan Stover, of the History Department of Idaho State University, "Brittany and the 1916 Easter Rising." This was drawn from the website for *En Envor*, a site devoted to contemporary Breton history where authors can post articles (which are reviewed by an editorial committee). Check this out for a variety of topics. <http://enenvor.fr/>



## New Publications on the Early Celts

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

### Two Republished and revised works by Françoise Le Roux and Christian -J. Guyonvarc'h

Françoise Le Roux (1927-2004) was born and died in Rennes and was a co-founder of the journal *Ogam* and its supplement *Celticum*. She was a specialist in the



history of religion and Celtic studies. Christian –J. Guyonvarc'h (1926-2012) was born in Auray and grew up in a Breton-speaking milieu. His academic career encompassed German studies and led ultimately to a post and the Université de Rennes II teaching Celtic languages and literature. These two scholars examine early Celtic language and culture through the research of medieval Irish texts and linguistic studies, not ignoring archeological evidence, the history of religion and traces of ancient Celts in more modern folklore and customs.

Besides hundreds of articles in *Ogam* and *Celticum*, they have published a number of books in collaboration: *Druides* (1986), *La civilisation celtique* (1990), *La société celtique* (1991) and *Fêtes celtiques* (1995) among others. While intended for a general public with some knowledge and interest in the history of the Celts, these are certainly in-depth studies of interest to scholars of Celtic society.

In plunging into the two texts noted below this reader, whose study of early Celtic society is rudimentary at best, I was struck by the authors' demonstration of the complexity of researching an ancient past where so little tangible evidence is available for scholars. While the relative isolation of Ireland left a rich legacy of texts, the Celts of the mainland of Europe left very little to examine. Contemporary accounts of Celtic life by conquerors or by scholars centuries later require filtering and interpretation.

And, of course, a solid knowledge of Celtic languages and others (Latin, Greek, German, French) is critical to any scholar in looking at ancient texts or in reviewing what other cotemporary scholars think. Le Roux and Guyonvarc'h seem to leave no stone unturned (or text unread) in trying to more accurately depict ancient Celtic life and to undo misconceptions and some misdirection in their study by others. They are definitely not shy about noting their disagreements with other scholars and in pointing out the difficulties of coming to definitive conclusions given scanty documentation of ancient Celtic customs and life.

**François Le Roux and Christian –J. Guyonvarc'h. *La civilisation celtique* – nouvelle édition revue et corrigée.** Yoran Embanner, 2015. 252 pages. ISBN 978-2-36747-017-7.

*La civilisation celtique* offers a nice albeit not neat and tidy introduction to ancient Celtic civilization, starting with the definition of who the Celts were, where they were found, how they fit into a larger Indo-European category of peoples, and how their movements and interactions were important factors in their history.

Very useful is an introduction to how scholars know what they know – the hazards of “racial” identification, traces left in archeology, philology, and linguistic research, history of religion, and traces found in folklore and ethnographic studies. The authors also identify how texts, inscriptions, and place names might be used by scholars. The sources are not always contemporary and certainly not necessarily accurate. Caesar interprets Celtic gods through the lens of a Roman pantheon. 12<sup>th</sup> century and later manuscripts from medieval Ireland were written long after historical events of pre-Christian times.

The authors caution that little is actually known of ancient Celts but nevertheless present an interesting overview of what history is known and sources from which this glimpse is drawn. In presenting social organization and the spiritual world of ancient Celts, they carefully provide a guide to how the Celtic world-view differed from the Roman and Christian ones that would come to dominate. And they show the impact of the invasion of Germanic peoples.

Appended information which sorts out language families and their chronologies and basic names in Celtic theology and social structure are very helpful.

While this book will be interesting for a general public, it will be most appreciated by those who have done some exploration of the vast literature on ancient Celtic society and culture. Clearly there are some differences of interpretation among scholars, so the re-edition of works by those like Le Roux and Guyonvarc'h is important.

**François Le Roux and Christian –J. Guyonvarc'h. *Les Fêtes celtiques* – nouvelle édition revue et corrigée.** Yoran Embanner. 2015. 258 pages. ISBN 978-2-36747-016-0.

*Les Fêtes celtiques*, originally published in 1995, focuses on four principal festivals of early Celtic society which – while greatly affected by Christianity and modern life – are still recognized today.

Samain (November 1) is the best documented and most studied by scholars. This is the time when humans have access to the Other World. It is the end of one year and the beginning of a new one, and it is marked by sacrifices and religious ceremonies.

Imbolc (February 1) was a time for purification and marked the end of winter.

Beltaine (May 1) celebrates the coming of summer and light. Like Samain, it included sacrifices and religious ceremony. It is the beginning of a new season.

Lugnasad (August 1) was a royal celebration – the assembly of King Lug. It was characterized as a time when political questions were resolved, a truce was called, fairs and economic exchange took place, and sports and races occurred. Poets and musicians had an audience.

As was the case for *La civilisation celtique*, the authors spend a great deal of time explaining how they came to conclusions about the nature of these festivals – the various ancient and more modern sources from which their basic elements were teased. And the authors are also generous in their critique of other scholarly work. One comes away with a respect for the challenges faced by scholars of ancient cultures where written and archeological documentation is scant and subject to varied interpretation.

**Venceslas Kruta. *Le monde des anciens Celtes*.** Yoran Embanner, 2015. 40 pages. ISBN 978-2-36747-012-2.

In this presentation of ancient Celts the author draws on early Irish and other texts – as incomplete a record they may be – but the focus is on archeological evidence and what art and artifacts reveal. Venceslas Kruta is the director of emeritus studies of Proto-History of Europe at the École pratique des Hautes-Études in Paris. He is former director of the Centre d'études celtiques of Paris and directed the scholarly journals *Gallia* and *Études Celtiques*. He has served as a consultant on a number of exhibits of ancient Celtic art and he is the author of dozens of books and articles on early Celtic life. This book is a revision and reworking of some 40 years of previous studies, taking into account more recent archeological findings and interpretations that more modern research techniques have enabled.

The book is directed to a general public but the 375 pages of text are dense with details, augmented by over 150 detailed drawings and very helpful maps which show the vast expanse of territory Celtic peoples once covered and the locations cited in the text. The maps also help locate ancient neighbors of the Celts – Illyrians, Greeks, Etruscans, etc. The focus is on the 1,000 years from the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC up to the Roman and German expansions and introduction of Christianity in Ireland.

In presenting artifacts and art which provide evidence of Celtic lifestyles as well as their movement and trade with other early populations, the author analyses social and religious organization and roles of peasants, warriors, priests and princes, as well as women. Funerary tombs and fortresses reveal numerous objects and visual depictions that help give an idea of trade (wine and metals), dress, and art and crafts.

**Philippe Jouët. *Dictionnaire de la Mythologie et de la Religion Celtiques*.** Yoran Embanner. 2012. 1,039 pages. ISBN 978-2-914855-92-1.

This book is not brand new (published in 2012) but it is definitely worth noting it even several years after its publication in the context of the others presented above. This dictionary is a gold mine of information and a very useful book to have by one's side when you are working your way through scholarly works on early Celtic society and culture. It is better described as an encyclopedia. Those who already have an in-depth knowledge will be able to quickly dig out a few more notes and cross-references, and beginners who need a quick introduction to a name – obscure or famous – in Celtic lore and history will be able to easily find it. The alphabetical listing that makes up the bulk of the book gives a basic introduction to thousands of names of people and gods (Lug, Finn Mac Cumhail, Brian Boru, Lywarch Hen, Arthur ...), the symbolism of animals (toads, bees, horses, birds, falcons...) or places (Kernow, Avalon, Ireland ...) and things (stones, logs, lakes, fire, milk ...) or concepts (law, obligation, numbers, divination, magic, shame ..). Hundreds of legends and early texts are summarized and basic ideas summarized.

The author's 46-page introduction to the dictionary is an excellent overview of features of early Celtic religion and mythology and presents the challenges of studying the ancient Celts. There are references in nearly all entries to over 800 books and articles listed in the back of the book. While it is interesting to randomly turn a page to learn about people and symbolic meanings of acts and objects, this is truly a useful guide to sort out the concepts and people you will meet in other works on early Celtic society.

## **A new book on the Mammals of Brittany**

**Stéphane Brousse and Sandra Lefrançois. *Mammifères en Bretagne*.** Yoran Embanner. 2015. 143 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-85-6.

It is always nice when a book is both informative and interesting, but also lovely to look at and pleasurable to hold in one's hands. Yoran Embanner has produced a series of books on Brittany's natural world – presenting reptiles and amphibians, coastal birds, and inland birds authored and illustrated by Stéphane Brousse and Sandra Lefrançois. And other authors have produced works on plants and the coasts and dunes of Brittany. In each of these books a representative sample of species is presented with sketches and watercolor drawings which capture the characteristics of that species. These books are written for a general public

and are a pleasure just for the artistic quality alone. You would not want to get them muddy or wet on an expedition to explore Brittany's wildlife, but there is plenty of information in these "guides" to allow an amateur naturalist to better identify and appreciate the creatures and plants they may encounter.

This book on mammals of Brittany starts off with a useful lexicon of terminology and an alphabetical list of the 49 species included in the book – of 73 identified in Brittany (with over 5,000 identified world-wide). Here you find the French and Breton popular terms for the animal as well as the scientific name which will help an English speaker match a *renard roux* or *louarn rous* with the red fox we know (*Vulpus vulpus*). The introductory section also defines what makes a mammal a mammal and provides the story of how the ermine became the symbol of Brittany. And the first mammal you will meet in the book is the ermine. Evel just! (Rightly so!)

Each portrait of the 49 animals includes its names, identifying features and behavior, its predators, distribution and habitat, eating habits, reproduction, and status as a protected or endangered species in Brittany, France or Europe. Its weight and size, years for sexual maturity and longevity are also included.

Animals included include bats, dolphins, whales, seals, muskrat, nutria, mink, raccoon (an invasive species introduced in France in the 1930s), otter, mole, vole, ferret, beaver, badger, civic cat, deer, wild boar, martin, rabbit, hare, hedgehog, weasel, mice, rats, squirrel, fox and grey wolf. While the wolf was exterminated in Brittany and France in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been moving back and may yet reach Brittany again.

The book also introduces the reader to a number of nature preserves and parks in all five departments of Brittany, as well as to conservation work being done to protect mammals. Also address are invasive species which now make their home in Brittany (raccoons, nutria, muskrats and others often introduced for their fur). And you learn about "nuisibles" – "harmful" species considered pests. The invasion of animals in attics and basements, in gardens and in urban spaces is also addressed.

Stéphane Brousse is an "amateur" naturalist who has the skill to provide a mass of information in a highly readable style. Sandra Lefrançois is a professional photographer and nature illustrator who studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Havre and in Rennes. Together they give us a beautiful book which mammal lovers will truly appreciate for a wealth of information.



## Deep inside a Breton skull 47 – Merlin Hypothesis

Jean Pierre Le Mat

---

Deep inside my Breton skull, there is knowledge and consciousness... It is not the same! My knowledge can be conscious or unconscious. What does that mean?

### The theorists and we, poor unconscious Bretons

The animals have an unconscious knowledge. The eels, swallows and all migratory animals know their migration routes. They know how to defend themselves and find food. They can recognize other animals of their kind. The human cannot be fundamentally different.

His unconscious knowledge was studied by the psychiatrist Karl-Gustav Jung. Jung believed in the existence of a broad unconscious, not purely personal.

Sigmund Freud, another psychoanalyst, did not imagine this collective unconscious. But he admitted telepathy. According to him, the soothsayer captures the desire of the one who consults him. His words are reinterpreted by the patient, looking not for a truth but for a meaning.

Biologist Rupert Sheldrake assumes that what he calls "morphogenetic fields" would explain the differentiation of embryonic stem cells. According to Sheldrake, "motor fields" also exist which would explain the spider web, the nest of birds, and the trip of eels.

During the seventies, the biologist Richard Dawkins invented a new science he called memetics. The meme is an idea, a belief, or a behavior which exists in the mind of people. The meme is a cultural unit, like the gene is a genetic unit. It can reproduce itself. It can jump from one to another, like the gene jumps from parents to children.



In another field, but not too far, the English ecologist James Lovelock built the "Gaia hypothesis". He considered that the Earth, named Gaia

by the ancient Greeks, is a living system. This system includes all the living creatures, but also air, water and oceans, and all materials that constitute our planet. Lovelock tries to answer a question: Why Earth remains a hospitable planet, although evolution is theoretically driven by odds? Lovelock considers that Gaia/Earth is a self-regulating system, with internal mechanisms that look like biological mechanisms.

Of course, the biological characteristics of Gaia are different from the characteristics of an animal or a plant. There are differences between a DNA protein and a neuron, the neuron and the nervous system, the nervous system and the individual. The neuron does not think. However, assembly of neurons offers this possibility to human beings. Above the individual being, for example the ant, it is possible to contemplate a larger community. The anthill is a living entity, with its own duration, behavior and spirit. Gaia is this kind of superior being.

The Gaia hypothesis was sometimes picked up by mystics. Lovelock never agreed with that. Mystic developments should not overshadow the initial scientific approach of global ecology.

### Back to Brittany

What is the link between these psychoanalysts, biologists and ecologists? What is the link between these guys and Brittany?

Brittany is an ecosystem smaller than Gaia. Living here in my wild peninsula, far away from big cities where people have universal and abstract ideas, I conceived the Merlin Hypothesis.

Merlin ! Our soothsayer, our prophet... He can see deeply into the past and future. Through Uther, Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, he gave to our country a long period of steadiness. Merlin mastered war and peace, myths, desires, projects. He was not a god altogether. He is the soul of our land. We are like ants and Merlin communicates with the anthill.



To speak like the scientists named above, the Merlin Hypothesis considers that a stable social and historic ecosystem would tend to set up mechanisms that allow it to survive and to reproduce.

Brittany is such a social and historic ecosystem. It exists in time and space. Brittany survives through an everlasting collective desire. The stubborn maintenance of our vernacular, our freaky identity, the transmission of our strange myths, various phenomena exist that are unexplained. Our will to define ourselves as a specific human community is not understandable. There is a reality, but without any way of exploration. Words fail.

Community? Nation? Ecosystem? Well, a hypothesis can be put forward. The Merlin Hypothesis.

Why is Brittany viewed as a “region with a strong character”, while it is not the case for other French regions like Burgundy or Franche-Comte?

According to Freud, there must be on one side a strong desire, and on the other side a mediumship ability to capture that desire. The Breton desire must be constant, powerful and timeless. The phenomenon is self-sustained when the people concerned have mediumship ability. Collective aspiration, whether religious or festive, is a trait often credited to Bretons. Many observers consider us as both mystical and partygoers. When we capture the collective desire of Brittany, it goes to a conscious level. It becomes an individual desire which, in turn, feeds the collective desire. Probably, the “strong character” of Bretons will perpetuate.

Deep inside my Breton skull, there must also exist what Jung named “archetypes” and a collective unconscious. This collective unconscious has been built in the skulls of my parents and ancestors, with Breton colors due to our climate, our landscapes, our history.

Memetics is an exciting theory. With the people I live with, I share genes and also memes hidden in my skull. Most of them come perhaps from an ancient past. True, I feel a bit archaic, old-fashioned sometimes... No shame.

The Gaia Hypothesis is inspiring but it is too large for me. Here in Brittany, we are not accustomed with big estates, big cities, big and universal thoughts. Our little fields are bordered with earthed banks. Our landscapes are green with grass. Vista is shortened by curtains of trees or gentle slopes. Instead of looking at the sky, we look and we speak with fellow visitors and inhabitants. Horizon is far away only when we go on board a boat or a plane to leave our land.

The Merlin Hypothesis suits me. It puts me in tune with people, animals, water, stones, air of my country. I am not troubled by my unconscious. It is a gift out of control. It comes from my ancestors, from my lands and rivers, from our frolicsome winds and rains.

My unconscious is humming the inaccessible sacred song of Brittany.





## Heard of, but not heard – 12 New CDs from Brittany

Notes for these presentations were gleaned from the internet, the Co-op Breizh website and *Ar Men* magazine No. 210 (Jan-Feb. 2016).



### **Dan ar Braz. *Douar Nevez*.**

[www.danarbraz.com](http://www.danarbraz.com)

This is a re-mastered edition of this classic first 1976 album by Dan ar Braz where he composes a series of musician compositions around the legend of the sunken city of Ys.

Ar Braz is a master of electric and acoustic guitar and he is joined on this CD by 6 great musicians who add flutes, bagpipes, piano, keyboards, electric bass and percussion for a CD which remains innovative nearly 40 years after its first release.



### **Laure Guillou. *Sevel*.**

This is the first CD by this singer from Concarneau which includes seven of her own compositions as well as traditional Breton songs and texts by Youenn Gwernig, Anjela Duval, and Jean-Luc Roudaut with

whom she worked as an accompanist. The twelve songs on this CD are in French, Breton and English. She is joined by Jean-Luc Roudaut as well as musicians Kevin Camus on flutes and uilleann pipes, Philippe Gouret on keyboard, electric guitar and vocals, Louise Bonodot on cello, and Alan Kelaï on acoustic guitar.



### **Youn Kamm et le Bagad du Bout du Monde. *Youn Kamm et le Bagad du Bout du Monde*.**

Youn Kamm is a trumpet and biniou player, flutist and singer who has launched his own group after eight years on the fest noz scene and

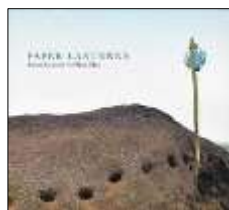
collaborative work with Ibrahim Maalouf and the Kreiz Breizh Akademi. The Bagad du Bout du Monde incorporates musicians from a number of the top bagads of Brittany. And also part of the group are Morwenn Le Normand on vocals, Yvon Molard on percussion, Yann Le Gall on electric guitar, Etienne Callac on bass, and Olivier Guenego on keyboard.



### **Marie-Aline Lagadic & Klervie Rivière. *Tout le monde sur le pont – Chansons de fête du pays bigouden*.**

Traditional singers Marie-Aline Lagadic and daughter Klervi Rivière team up for a CD which evokes the

changing word of rural Bigouden Brittany at the beginning of the 20th century. They draw from their family repertoire as well as song texts by François Nicolas and other known and unknown composers. Texts for melodies and dances are in Breton and French. They are joined by Alain Trévanin on accordion, Yvonnick Penven on guitar, Kevin Ruellan on sax and clarinet, Tangi Sicard on bombard, Yannick Martin on biniou koz and bombard, Sylvain Hamon on Scottish bagpipes, and the Bagad Cap Caval for a closing gavotte bigoudène.



### **Pascal Lamour & Ffran May. *Paper Lanterns*.**

This is the 13th CD by Pascal Lamour and for this recording he pairs with singer Ffran May for songs about the fragility of the natural world and the worlds

cultures and languages, and the power of dreams. Songs are in French, English, Breton, Welsh and Castilian.

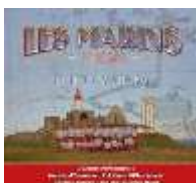


### **Gurvan Liard. *Dounia*.**

[www.gurvanliard.com](http://www.gurvanliard.com)

The hurdy-gurdy (vielle à roue) is a unique and very old instrument capable of a range of melody and rhythm. On this CD Gurvan Liard uses the instrument to its fullest with compositions and

arrangements inspired by traditions of Africa, Turkey, Bulgaria, India ... He is joined by guest artists Nanih Vitard on vocals, Anne Laure Bourget on percussions, Pierre Protais on drums, Fabien Gille on saz, and Sylvain Corbard on bass fiddle.



### **Les Marins d'Iroise. *La Mer est immense*.**

Coop Breizh. CD 1106

[www.lesmarinsdiroise.com](http://www.lesmarinsdiroise.com)

This is one of Brittany's "men's choirs" which features a maritime repertoire. Hailing from Brest, they

include on this CD an impressive number of invited guest solos by Murray Head, Hughes Aufray, Tri Yann, EDF, and Gilles Servat. Their arrangements of traditional and composed maritime songs are accompanied by guitars, mandolin, banjo, fiddle and harmonica.





**Fabien Robbe. *Da bep lec'h*.** Improvising Being IB41. From his tie with the fest noz band Menestra and in arranging music for the choreography of the dance group Eostiged ar Stangala, Fabien Robbe brings a strong knowledge of

Breton dance to this solo piano CD. But he is inspired also by the free-jazz piano style of François Tusques who has collaborated often with Breton musicians. On this CD Robbe combines these influence in innovative performance of Breton dance and melodies.



**Republik. *Elements*.** CD LADTY 005.

Republik is a rock band hailing from Rennes centered around singer Frank Darcel whose texts are in French, English and German.

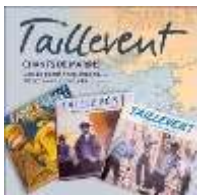
Resolutely rock, the band also has a strong melodic line to its music. The band includes Éva Montfort on bass, Stéphane Kerihuel on guitar, and Federico Climovich on drums. Also performing on the CD are James Chance on sax, Wendy James, Tina Weymouth, Chris Frantz, and Yann Tiersen.



**Scoops. *Rockarolan*.**

Scoops is a trio who combine traditional Breton and Irish song and tunes with a jazz and pop sound. The trio is composed of David Doucerain on guitars, bass fiddle and banjo, Nicholas Dupin on

bodhran and bones, and Baptiste Rivaud on flutes and tin whistles. Guests for the CD are Céline Rivaud, Cécile Girard, and Kevin Camus on fiddle, cello and uilleann pipes respectively.



**Taillervant. *Les 15 premières années*.**

[www.taillevant56.wordpress.com](http://www.taillevant56.wordpress.com)

This 25-man maritime group from the Morbihan celebrates 15 years of performance with a selection of 25 of their best songs from their three CDs.

A 12-page booklet includes photos of the group and words to all the songs.



**Titom. *Ken ha ken*.** [www.titom.fr](http://www.titom.fr)

This is the fourth CD by this group led by composer and bombard player Thomas Lotout. Traditional Breton song and dance is rearranged in new ways with a definite rock beat. The

group also includes Jean-Christophe Boccou on drums and sampler, Raphaël Chevalier on fiddle, sax, cello and banjo, Gaëtan Grandjean on bouzouki, electric and acoustic guitars, Stéphane DeVito on bass, and Yannig Alory on wooden flute. They are joined by a number of

guest singers and musicians adding vocals, biniou, hurdy-gurdy, keyboards and ukulele.

## A Travel Account from 1869

**Mrs. Bury Palliser. *Brittany & Its Byways: Some Account of Its Inhabitants and its Antiquities During a Residence in That Country*.** (London: John Murray). 1869

Editor's Note: I have often drawn from Mrs. Palliser's travel book on Brittany because it includes interesting details and lacks some of the highly negative stereotyping of other travel writers. Mrs. Palliser (1805-1878) is best known for her writing on lace.

Pages 285-299

We took a carriage at Rosporden for Le Faouët, passing by Scaër on the Isole, a stream which rises at the foot of the Montagnes Noires, takes a curve round the town of Scaër, and joins the Laita. It is full of trout and salmon.

Scaër is a town remarkable for having preserved many old customs and superstitions; among others, the bees are considered to be entitled to share in the joys and sorrows of the family. Their hives are surrounded with a red stuff on the occasion of a marriage; with a black on that of a death. This custom is still preserved in Wales. In all parts of Brittany bees are treated with special affection. As the redbreast is sacred, because she broke a thorn from the crown of our Lord that pierced His brow, so are the bees revered because, as we learn from the code of Hoel the Good, though they were sent from heaven to earth after the fall of man, the blessing of Heaven has ever followed them in their exile. This, too, is the reason the wax they produce has the privilege of lighting the altars for the divine office.

It was the day of a Pardon, and the peasants were all in gala dresses. A wrestling match unfortunately had just been finished; for throughout Cornouaille wrestling has been, from time immemorial, as favourite a game as in our county of the same name. Our driver tried without success to procure for us some of the little double crystals, intersecting each other at right angles, called "pierre de croix"—by mineralogists grenatite—found in the Coatdry, a small affluent of the Aven, washed out of the mica slaty rocks in which they abound. The peasants assign to them a miraculous origin, and wear them in little bags round the neck as charms against headache, blindness, shipwreck, and hydrophobia, being, as they signed with the cross. According to tradition, a pagan chief, having, in his impious rage, thrown down the cross in the chapel of Coatdry,

Heaven, in memorial of the outrage, placed the sacred symbol upon the stones of the river.

At Le Faouët we again entered the department of the Morbihan. This pretty little town is situated between the Sterlaer and the Ellé. We first walked to see the chapel of Ste. Barbe, perched, in the most singular manner, in the cleft of a high rock, about a mile from the town.

After a steep climb we reached the plateau of the hill, where is the monument of a M. Berenger, who desired to be buried in this elevated spot, which commands a charming view of the surrounding country, the silvery waters of the Ellé winding at the base of the mountain. We then descended, by a flight of handsome, broad, granite steps, with balustrades, to the chapel, placed on so narrow a space that it was impossible to give it the usual inclination to the east. The entrance-porch is to the southwest, and the high altar opposite, against the walls of the chapel, to the north-east. On the top of the steps is the belfry, consisting of a roof, supported by four columns. The day of the Pardon each pilgrim rings the bell. The chapel was built in this singular spot, according to tradition, by a knight, who was overtaken by a storm in the valley of the Ellé beneath. He saw an enormous mass of detached rock on the point of falling down and crushing him, when he invoked the intercession of Sainte Barbe, the guardian saint against thunder, promising to build her a chapel, if delivered from the danger. His prayer was heard; the rock was stayed in its descent and rested on the cleft, where, next day, the grateful knight began building the chapel, as a thank-offering for his escape. Above Ste. Barbe, stationed on an insulated rock, one of the highest peaks in Brittany, is a small chapel, dedicated to St. Michael, also approached by a flight of stone steps, like Ste. Barbe, with bridge built over an archway. The rock on which it stands is so abrupt, that rings are placed along the sides of the chapel for the pilgrims, when creeping round, to hold on by. Many have perished in the attempt; none, they say, have ever succeeded in making the circuit.

There was a wedding at Le Faouët during our stay there. Guests, invited from all quarters, to the number of 250, arrived in their gala costumes, some of them magnificent: one woman wore a gown entirely of gold tissue; it was her wedding-dress. The musicians, with biniou and hautboy, went round to summon the guests. We saw the procession going to church. The bride was prettily dressed, with a high cap, beautifully "got up," pointed in form, and trimmed with lace, and embroidered; a muslin apron, also lace-trimmed, and a double muslin shawl, similarly trimmed, the lace beautifully plaited; a violet silk dress, white moire sash, and a small bunch of white flowers. The bridegroom was "en bourgeois." Outside the church door were tables, laid out with cakes; after the service the bride and all the party took each a cake and put money in the

plates, as an offering for the poor. They next adjourned to the Place, where they danced three "gavottes" under the trees. The ceremony of stealing away the bride then took place; that is, she was chased by some dozen of the youths of the company, and he who had the good fortune to capture her she treated to a cup of coffee at a café. Dinner followed, and then they returned to the interminable gavotte. They hold each other's hands "en grand rond," then wind themselves round the centre couple, executing most elaborate steps, and uncoil again to return to the grand rond. We counted as many as thirty couples in one gavotte. These festivities last two, or sometimes three, days, during which time all the wedding party are entertained free of expense.

Le Faouët is a great fishing quarter. The Ellé, which flows round the town, is a stream of considerable size; and, four miles below Le Faouët, it is joined by the Laita, and before Quimperlé unites its waters with the Isole, whence its mingled streams flow into the Atlantic, under the name of the Laita. We were told that large fish were taken in a pond in the grounds of the Abbey of Langonnet, not far from Le Faouët, but it is strictly preserved.

The people of this district retain all the old Breton superstitions; they believe in the Car of Death, drawn by six black horses, driven by the "Ankou," or Phantom of Death, with an iron whip. They also have full faith in the Washerwomen of the Night (Lavandières de la Nuit), who wash the shrouds for the dead, and fill the air with their melodious songs:—

"Si chrétien ne vient nous sauver,  
Jusqu'au jugement faut laver:  
Au clair de la lune, au bruit du vent,  
Sous la neige, le linceul blanc."

"If no good soul our hands will stay,  
We must toil on till judgment-day:  
In strong wind or clear moonlight,  
We must wash the death-shroud white."

They engage the passer-by to help them in wringing the linen; if he refuses, they drown him in their washing trough, or suffocate him in a wet sheet. Should he show himself ill-disposed, after having agreed to help them, they dislocate his arm. If he wrings the wrong way, his fate is inevitable; but if docile and obliging, they give him some clothes and dismiss him.

A mile and a half from Le Faouët, on a height a little off the Quimperlé road, is the beautiful church of Saint Fiacre, dating from the middle of the fifteenth century, celebrated for its carved wooden jubé, or rood-screen, and its painted glass. The church is falling to decay. It would be tedious to enumerate all the figures, and describe the details of this beautiful jubé. The carving is a perfect tracery of lace-work. Three large figures

represent our Saviour and the two thieves. Then there are the Virgin and St. Joseph; the latter, with carpenter's plane and hammer. Below, Adam and Eve, and the Angel with the flaming sword. Two angels hold cartouches, on one of which is inscribed, "L'an mil C/III XX/III (1480) fut fait cette sculpture par Olivier de Loergan;" and, on the other, "Cette passion fut peinte l'an 1627. Yves Perez fabricant. Tous repaint en 1866." Below are panels carved in the flamboyant style, of exquisite workmanship. The two middle panels have the sacred monogram, those on the east side ermines surrounded by cordelières.

The side of the rood-loft facing the choir has pendants with grotesque carvings of allegorical signification.

A man in an apple-tree, gathering the fruit, symbolizes theft. Next comes a disgusting representation of gluttony: a man relieving himself of a pig he has swallowed, the tail alone remaining in his mouth. Then follow a young man and woman, gaily attired, emblematic of luxury. So far, three of the "sept péchés capitaux" are represented; but after these comes a national subject: a man playing on the bagpipe. The figures throughout the rood-screen are all boldly executed, and the tracery most elegant and delicate.

The painted glass in the church is considerable, and represents the Life of Our Saviour, that of St. Fiacre, the Feast of Herod, and the Martyrdom of the Baptist, figures of the Prophets of the Old Testament, with many others. In most of the subjects, the figures are much mutilated. On one window is inscribed, "Pierre Androuet ouvrier demeurant à Kemperlé 1552." Over one altar is a sculpture, representing the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, between two archers, in the quaint costume of the sixteenth century.

About six miles from Le Faouët, is the ruined castle of Poncallec, with its forest, étang, and forge; once the demesne of the young marquis of that name, who was implicated in that conspiracy to transfer the Regency from the Duke of Orleans to Philip V. of Spain, called the plot of Cellamare. Of the hundred and forty-eight gentlemen included in the accusation, all escaped to Spain, except Poncallec and three others. Poncallec refused to accompany them from a superstitious fear, a fortune-teller having foretold he should perish by the sea, "par la mer." They took refuge in a church, but were surprised by a party of cavaliers who had muffled the feet of their horses to reach them unheard. They escaped through a subterranean passage, and, for fifteen days, lay concealed in the hollow of a yew-tree, fed in secret by faithful peasants. Poncallec traversed France in the disguise of a priest, but was arrested at the Pyrenees. He with the three others were all convicted of high treason, and, a few hours after their condemnation, were beheaded at Nantes. Poncallec was the last to suffer. When ascending the scaffold, he

asked the executioner his name; on his answering "La Mer," Poncallec felt the witch's prophecy was fulfilled.

The estates of the four victims were confiscated, their arms effaced from the fronts of their houses, the moats of their castles filled in, and their trees (hautes futaies) cut down, "à hauteur d'infamie," that is, within nine feet of the ground, in like manner as were those of Moor Park, after the execution of the Duke of Monmouth. A list was presented to the Regent Philip of other offenders, but he tore the paper, and published an amnesty. The story of Poncallec is dramatically told by Alexandre Dumas, in his novel, called 'Une fille du Regent.' The Bretons honoured the victims as martyrs, and M. de la Villemarqué, in his 'Chansons Bretons,' gives a touching elegy which shows the sympathy excited by the tragic fate of Poncallec...

We left Le Faouët and its comfortable primitive inn, the "Lion d'Or," with much regret; the country around is beautiful, and we had arranged to set out early that we might cross the Montagnes Noires by daylight; but we were disappointed in procuring a carriage, and it was not till late in the afternoon that we were able to leave in a diligence, of which the coupé alone was reserved to us, the interior being occupied by Breton farmers, returning from a horse-fair. From the elevated wooded ground of Le Faouët, the road makes a precipitous descent, and crosses the little stream of Moulin-au-duc, after which it again rises, in a winding direction, along the side of a mountain with a valley and little stream beneath. Then a rapid descent brought us to Gourin, where we would gladly have risked staying the night, and waited till morning to pursue our road over the mountains, but we had paid our fare to Carhaix. Up hill and down again, like all the roads in mountainous Finistère, from Gourin we ascended again and passed a crest of the Montagnes Noires, which separates the three departments of Finistère, Morbihan, and Côtes-du-Nord; and proceeded through a valley to Carhaix, where we arrived at midnight, and therefore had no opportunity of seeing the beauties of the mountain scenery.

Carhaix is a dirty, unpaved, dull town of the middle ages, much decayed from its ancient importance when capital of the country dismembered from Cornouaille, in the sixth century, by Comorre the Breton Bluebeard. It is situated on an eminence, commanding an extensive view of the barren monotonous surrounding country, bounded by the Arré mountains, the Alps of Finistère. It is the centre of Lower Brittany, and the Duke d'Aiguillon, Minister of Louis XV., caused six roads to be made from it to Brest, Quimper, Morlaix, St. Brieux, Vannes, and Châteaulin, with the hope of introducing commerce and civilisation into this barren district, "le dernier trou du monde," as it is styled by the Parisian.

La Tour d'Auvergne, Premier Grenadier de France, was born here, and a bronze statue of him, by Marochetti, has been erected to his memory. He is in the uniform of a private soldier, and presses to his heart the sword of honour just presented to him by the First Consul. Round the pedestal are four bas-reliefs, representing scenes in his life. In the first, he saves a wounded soldier; in the second, he forces the gates of Chambery; in the third, he takes leave of the parents of a youth, for whom he goes as a substitute into the army. The last represents his death; he was killed by a lance at Ober-hausen (Bavaria), fighting against the Austrians. The monument bears this inscription on its four sides:—

“La Tour d'Auvergne, 1<sup>er</sup> Grenadier de France,  
né à Carhaix le 23 Decembre, 1715; mort au  
champ d'honneur le 27 Juin, 1800.  
“Ecrivain, Citoyen, Soldat, sa vie toujours  
glorieusement remplie ne laisse que de sublimes  
exemples à la posterité.  
“Tant de talens, et de vertus, appartenaient à  
l'histoire et au premier Consul, de les devancer.  
“Celui qui meurt dans une lutte sacrée trouve pour  
le repos une patrie même sur la terre étrangère.”

Preferring the title of "Premier Grenadier de France" to higher honours, La Tour d'Auvergne remained as a private soldier to his death; but in a decree of Buonaparte, then First Consul, preserved in the Musée des Archives, he orders that La Tour d'Auvergne's name should still be kept on the muster-roll of his old regiment; and, when called, the corporal should answer, "Mort au champ d'honneur!"

The moderation and absence of ambition in the character of La Tour d'Auvergne is expressed in a letter to Le Coq, Bishop of Ille-et-Vilaine. He writes,—“Je me prosterne bien plus volontiers devant la Providence pour le remercier que pour rien demander; du pain, du lait, la liberté; et un cœur qui ne puisse jamais s'ouvrir à l'ambition, voilà l'objet de tous mes désirs.”  
La Tour d'Auvergne had a learned dog, which he educated as a soldier; he went through the whole drill, and his master made him always wear boots. He marched in them, on one occasion, the whole distance from Paris to Guingamp.

A horse fair and market were going on at Carhaix. Some of the women wore curious flannel hoods, edged with colours. There were baskets of burnt limpet shells and lime, used in washing as substitutes for soap. In the porch of the church dedicated to St. Tremeur (son of the Bluebeard Comorre) are some of the little skull-boxes so common in the north of Brittany. One was labelled, “Ci gît le chef de Mr. Thomas François Nonet, ancien notaire et maire de la ville de Carhaix le 28 Jier 1776, décédée le 8 7bre 1842.” The curfew bell rings at Carhaix at a quarter to ten.

We left next day for Huelgoat, fifteen miles distant, the road up and down, wild and dreary. At Pont Pierre, about nine miles from Carhaix, we crossed the Aulne, even here a considerable river, with a beautiful thick forest on our right. At a place called La Grande Halte, we turned off the road to the right for Huelgoat, about a mile and a half off. It is prettily situated on a large pond or lake, nearly a mile and a half in circumference, and of great depth (20 feet). It was market day; the men wore brown serge coats, close white breeches and black gaiters, with straw hats bound with black. The countrymen from Saint Herbot were there in their black shaggy goat or sheepskin overcoats, the hair turned outwards (there are flocks of black sheep throughout Finistère), without sleeves, and the white breeches, black gaiters, and straw hats. The women of Huelgoat wear large white turnover collars and caps with long ends turned up.

We first walked to the ricking stone on the slope of a steep hill, considered the third largest in Brittany; the block forming a kind of double cube, that is, about twice the length of its height. It requires a very slight impulse to make it rock. This “fairy stone” is often consulted by the peasants. In the ravine close by, below the path, is what is called the “Cuisine de Madame Marie,” but termed in the guide-books the “Ménage de la Vierge,” a recess formed of large masses of fantastically shaped granite rocks, through which a small stream of water flows, arriving thither from the pond, by a subterranean course. One stone, hollowed out, is called the écuelle of the Virgin, and others have each the name of some different utensil requisite for the “Ménage” of our Lady. The young people managed to scramble to the bottom.

Huelgoat (Breton, “high wood”) is celebrated for its lead-mines, which are now no longer worked. A well-kept path, cut on the top of the ridge, leads to the mines, about two miles and a half distant, along a neat little canal, three feet wide, issuing from the great pond, and supplying the hydraulic machine used to pump the water out of the mine. He deeply wooded valley, along the ridge of which it runs, is traversed by a rushing stream, which runs over rocks; and at a place called Le Gouffre, the rounded granite masses are piled in the wildest confusion, like those of the Ménage de la Vierge, forming a large dark cavern, at the bottom of which the imprisoned river foams and roars, and has forced itself an escape through a gorge at some distance from the place, where it is lost to view. A young girl is said, about a century back, to have fallen down this gulf. Attempting to gather some of the mosses that line the sides of the rocks, she slipped in and perished in the sight of her intended. Her body never reappeared, but our guide assured us that her ghost was seen four years since, and that sighs and groans are to be heard at eve issuing from the fatal chasm.

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>page</b>
Cautious Optimism for the Future – Condensed Reversing Language Shift Update for the Breton Language, Diarmuid Ó Néill	2 - 4
The Fight for Recognition of the Breton Language Goes On – 60 Breton Groups urge MPs to Step up Efforts to Pass Language Law before 2018, from Nationalia.info	4 - 5
What is Natinalia.info, Aureli Argemi	5
Prizioù Dazonr ar Brezheong / Prizes for the Future of the Breton Language	5 – 6
Telenn Sant-Brieg	7
Ar Rededeg – Running for the Breton Language	7
Brittany Commemorates the Centennial of the 1916 Easter Rising in Ireland	8
New Publications on Early Celts François Le Roux & Christian – J.Guyonvarc’h, <i>La Civilisation celtique, Les Fêtes celtiques</i> Venceslas Kruta, <i>Le Monde des anciens Celtes</i> Philippe Jouët, <i>Dictionnaire de la Mythologie et de la Religion Celtiques</i>	8 - 10
A New Book on the Mammals of Brittany Stéphane Brousse & Sandra Lefrançois, <i>Mammifères en Bretagne</i>	10 - 11
Deep Inside a Breton Skull 47 – Merlin Hypothesis, Jean-Pierre Le Mat	11 – 12
Heard of, but not heard – 12 new CDs from Brittany	13 – 14
A Travel Account from 1869 – Mrs. Bury Palliser, <i>Brittany and Its Byways</i>	14 – 17

