

# BRO NEVEZ

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



KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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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.

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## Editorial

In this issue of Bro Nevez you will read about some of the work being done to promote the Breton language as a language of the workplace and media. And you will be introduced to four new members of the Order of the Ermine and to a few new books and recordings. The creativity doesn't ever stop for Bretons.

## Building Brittany: Projects in the Works

The following is an introduction to Construire la Bretagne from their website [www.construirelabretagne.bzh](http://www.construirelabretagne.bzh) (my translation) - LK

**Construire la Bretagne** (Build Brittany) is a group of people engaged in a variety of economic, cultural and social organizations of Brittany. It is a collective with no affiliation to any political party or to any association. These are individuals who understand and listen to each other to analyze issues, and who interact and exchange views to produce reports and ideas that they share and distribute. In order to verify collective ideas before they are communicated (internet site, TV or radio programs done by members for the collective) they have put into place an editorial committee, with an agreed upon honorary president. This is organized in the most flexible and serious manner to validate, produce and distribute shared information. These individuals desire to help the construction of a Brittany which is beautiful, prosperous, in solidarity, and open to the world.

They thus complete three types of work and actions:

First of all, through the publication of 20 dossiers \* for a solid analysis and the proposal of ideas to build a road for the future.

Next, to use the website [construirelabretagne.bzh](http://construirelabretagne.bzh) to relay reactions to this work, and to post other analyses, ideas, documents and projects which seem to us to affirm and build this dynamic.

Then finally, to put forward other existent analyses and project not yet spoken of. In short, the platform [construirelabretagne.bzh](http://construirelabretagne.bzh) serves as a joining point for projects.

- It brings to attention small and large projects that the editorial committee chooses to relay and make known because they embody a forward-moving dynamic.
- It proposes projects to multiple actors who have not been noted and who are building Brittany so that they can become familiar with them.

- It affirms the work of Breton actors, often not well known, who are already working to build Brittany, bringing them to light, and perhaps helping to create a linking of projects.

Editorial Commette: Paul Loret (President), Malo Bouëssel du Bourg, Michel Bouvier, Daniel Cueff, Bernard Hommerie, André Lavanant, Xavier Leclercq, Tangi Louarn, Patrick Malrieu, Jean Ollivro, Romain Pasquier, Anne-Edith Poilvet

You can build! You also are invited to propose projects to be in the site: [www.construitelabretagne.bzh/projects](http://www.construitelabretagne.bzh/projects)

\* See Bro Nevez 135 (September 2015).

## Finding a Job Thanks to the Breton Language

The following is from a July 14, 2016, posting on the Construire la Bretagne website – one that specifically relates to work to promote the Breton language and give it a place in economic and everyday life of Brittany. (my translation)



Stumdi is first of all full of positive attitude and an original and professional pedagogical method enriched by

thirty years of experience in contact with students of all background. Each year 350 adults learn Breton with Stumdi following methods adapted to different public and organizational needs. 150 of them choose the long format, the big adventure! During six months, with the possibility of perfecting their knowledge during an addition three months, they will return to school full time to learn the Breton language. A nice proof of confidence in the future. But confidence isn't from unawareness. The results are reassuring: 80% of students find employment or a training program at the end of this apprenticeship. It is true that motivations are examined for those entering. Preference is given to individuals who have a true professional plan which includes the use of the Breton language.

Over time new learning centers have opened to be nearer to other populations: Landerneau, Brest, Ploemeur, Arradon, Guingamp, Saint Briec ... there have thus been thousands who have sat on the benches of this school. Several are today well known on the Breton scene: Yann Tiersen and Emil Quinquis, Charles Kergaravat, Clarisse Lavanant, Romain Sponnagel, Hervé Lossec, Pascale Berthou, Clément

Soubigou... And one can see they are happy to give testimony to their involvement in the book Stumdi has just published to justly celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Claudie Malnoë has worked hard for the success of this model in creating most notably in 2006 “ar servij heñchan,” a sort of orientation and placement service which matches job offers to organizations' needs more efficiently. These professional trainings are good news for the future of the Breton language. Certainly six or nine months of studious immersion in Breton will not make you an expert, but you will know enough to go further. The experience will push you to take the rest of the journey. In 30 years the method has shown results.

Above all, the statistics are there. Between 2006 and 2012 the number of jobs which required a mastery of the Breton language rose by 40%. Today this concerns over 1,300 positions. 80% relate directly to teaching and this sector is always in strong demand, but other needs have been confirmed: the media of course, but also public or associative structures which want to reach a demanding public in the Breton language. And sometimes it is the activities or motivations of the leadership of an enterprise that creates a demand.

Several teaching organizations today compliment the offerings of Stumdi ([www.stumdi.com](http://www.stumdi.com)), each with its specific operation, but all with the same objective to associate the Breton language with access to employment: Mervent (<http://www.mervent.bzh/>), Roudour (<http://www.roudour.com/>), Skol an Emsav (<http://www.skolanemsav.bzh/>). In 2011 Stumdi became a member of Produit en Bretagne, thus marking its desire to be closer to enterprises. A new challenge and long-running fight, more than ever the Breton language has need of this pioneering spirit.

**From the Stumdi website** (which includes some English):

Stumdi has 26 years [now 30] providing Breton language courses. It offers professional services – language teaching, administration, and career guidance – that address the growing demand for opportunities to learn the Breton language. At Stumdi, students can study the Breton language, no matter what their level. The Stumdi teach (including 15 permanent employees) trains more than 300 students each year. The courses run from September until the end of July and are held in four centers across Brittany: Arradon (56), Guingamp (22), Landerneau (29), Ploemeur (56) [and this has expanded]. Organizations can also request onsite courses for their employees. The name STUMDI comes from the phrase “stummadur dibaouez,” which means “in-house training” and “house of training.”

Stumdi's mission:

Stumdi aims to popularize the Breton language by offering training courses suited to a variety of needs:

- Six-month Breton language training courses, offered twice yearly.
- One advanced-level Breton language training, 3 months long.
- Several shorter theoretical and thematic training courses.
- Custom training for individuals and professionals.
- Breton language training courses for specific fields (e.g., media and children's education).
- A "Reviving Your Breton" course for those raised in Breton-speaking environments.



### Radio in the Breton Language

This is another website posting from Construire La Bretagne from July 7, 2016 – my translation from the

French. Because we include very little text in the Breton language in the pages of Bro Nevez, I have taken the liberty of including the Breton version of this article below. LK

Listening to Breton in your car, telecharging an app to connect to this network of Breton language radio stations, getting podcasts of broadcasts and Breton lessons free .. This is possible thanks to the site [www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/](http://www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/)

Of course, Brittany is the only European region with a perfectly original Celtic language to have not one general radio to assume its promotion. In 2016 an accounting of the total official medias shows a maximum of 1 hour, 7 minutes, per week in Upper Brittany (on France Bleu Armorique) and several quality broadcasts in Lower Brittany on France Bleu Breizh Izel that one can find on podcast (in searching carefully). <http://direct-radio.fr/france-bleu-breizh-izel/podcast/Erell-Beloni-Michel-Pages/Breizh-O-pluriel-E-Brezhoneg>.

Taking action, the associative milieu got organized and produced a marvel with pitifully small means. Today it federates four local non-profit radios in the Breton language with two additional ones as partners:

Federated radios are:

- Arvorig FM (Komanna) : <http://arvorigfm.com/>

- Radio Kreiz Breizh (Saint-Nicodème) : <http://kreizbreizh.radio.fr/>
- Radio Bro Gwened (Pontivy) : <http://www.radio-bro-gwened.com/>
- Radio Kerne (Quimper) : <http://www.radiokerne.bzh/br/>

Partnered radios are :

- Plum'FM (Sérent) <http://www.plumfm.net/>
- RCF Penn-Ar-Bed (Brest) : <https://rcf.fr/>

The platform [www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/](http://www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/) was initiated in 2007 and has been operating since 2011. The site [www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/](http://www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/) has thus become the reference for those who want to begin learning Breton, to perfect their knowledge, or to have the right to hear this language when they want to.

It is acceptable to broadcast this site and to insure its promotion, to hope for technical evolution over time, and to hope, for example, for the generalization of radio bands in car radios. All the Celtic countries have had radio and TV channels for years. "Welsh 4 Channel" was created in 1980 – painfully it is true – and has been a stimulus for a renaissance of the Welsh language. Radio was the trigger, the strategic element. Bretons, numbering 4.5 million people, have almost nothing. Corsicans, numbering 320,000 people, have also started that way and from there on TV media like Via Stella have been unstoppable.

The site [www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/](http://www.radiobreizh.bzh/fr/) tries, without any real promotion, to fill this gap. Supported by the Region, other TV initiatives like Breizhoweb ([www.breizhoweb.com](http://www.breizhoweb.com)) also allow for some progress. In view of institutional blockages (the double planting of TV Breizh by the SSA for example), everyone hopes in the long run for an increase in presence for media in Breton. As everywhere in Europe these media reinforce linguistic dynamics, insure a natural commercial promotion of our artists to the Breton population or those visiting, and quite simply provide information about the region and promote the regional culture. As we wait for democracy, rights, the awakening of Bretons, and maybe even one day the existence in France of a country for the "rights of man," let us promote what exists and make it known. In this line, other internet initiatives also offer free access to Breton courses via the web, and the opportunity to improve one's Breton: for example Kervarker [http://www.kervarker.org/en/lessons\\_01\\_toc.html](http://www.kervarker.org/en/lessons_01_toc.html). A list of websites – rare enough – is also found on the Div Yezh school site of Bruz: <http://divyezh.bruz.free.fr/joomla/index.php/apprendre-le-breton>



## Radioioù e brezhoneg

N'eo ket simpl hiziv klevout brezhoneg er mediaoù. En Europa a-bezh e vez kavet e pep bro skingomzoù ha skinweloù evit brudañ yezhoù minorel. Siwazh, n'eo ket heñvel tamm ebet e Bro C'hall. Er vro-se, kenderc'hel a ra ar Stad da vezañ enep ar yezhoù hag ar rannyezhoù. N'eus nemet ur yezh e Bro C'hall : ar galleg. N'eo ket aotreet gant ar pennadurezhioù skignañ yezhoù war mediaoù ofisiel, pe dost. C'hwitadenn TV Breizh –stanket div wech he hent gant ar CSA- a ziskouezh mat ar skolioù niverus lakaet war an hent ha pegen diaes eo mont war-raok. Moarvat e vez skignet bremañ komzoù bev e brezhoneg gant mediaoù nevez. Ur stourm eo. Hiziv e vez kavet abadennoù e brezhoneg war France Bleue Breizh Izel. Tu zo ivez klevout ar yezh war « France Bleue Armorique » (abadennoù kinniget gant Glenn Jegou) (d'ar sadorn ha d'ar sul, etre 12<sup>h</sup>30 ha 13<sup>e</sup>). Da skouer, tu zo da bodkastiñ abadennoù dedennus war <http://direct-radio.fr/france-bleu-breizh-izel/podcast/Erell-Beloni-Michel-Pages/Breizh-O-pluriel-E-Brezhoneg>.

Cheñch a ra ar jeu, dreist-holl, gant an teknologiezhoù nevez hag an araokadennoù graet gant radioioù kevredigezhel. Radio Kreizh Breizh ha Radio Bro Gwened a zo bet lañset e 1982 ha 1983, goude ma voe aotreet ar skingomzoù dieub. E 1998, Arvorig FM ha Radio Kerne 'zo ivez war ar stern, e-barzh ar jeu. Tamm ha tamm e teu ar sonj da unaniñ skingomzoù evit skignañ anezho war ar rouedad. Hiziv, ur seurt kengred zo etre pevar radio breizhat lec'hiet e Breizh a-bezh (Radio Bro Gwened, Arvorig FM, Radio Kerne ha Radio Kreiz Breizh). Daou skigomz all, RCF Penn-Ar-Bed ha Plum'FM, a gemer perzh er raktres-mañ peogwir e vez kinniget ganto abadennoù e brezhoneg.

A -benn ar fin, n'eus ket kalz a dra e brezhoneg war ar mediaoù ofisiel. Met ur spi 'zo degaset gant intrudu ar bobl. N'eo ket aes tamm ebet skignañ pe reiñ startijenn d'hor yezh e Bro C'hall. Met tamm-ha-tamm e vez graet e vragoù da Yann. Diwar gentod Lionel Buannic e vez ivez bremañ ur chadenn skinwel e brezhoneg war ar rouedad (<http://www.brezhoweb.com/>). Siwazh, diaesoc'h eo kavout kentelioù evit deskiñ ar yezh. Ul listenn chomlec'h zo kinniget amañ da-heul.

War lec'hienn Kervarker, moaien 'zo poskatiñ kentelioù e brezhoneg.  
[http://www.kervarker.org/en/lessons\\_01\\_toc.html](http://www.kervarker.org/en/lessons_01_toc.html)  
Skol Div Yezh Bruz a ginnig ivez chomlec'hioù evit kaout « boued » pe loazioù e brezhoneg.  
<http://divyezh.bruz.free.fr/joomla/index.php/apprendre-le-breton>



## A New School Year for the Breton Language

Detailed statistics are not out yet for the new school year, but it looks like Diwan and bilingual public and Catholic schools are seeing continued growth. Some 700 students have been added this school year from pre-school to secondary levels.

Nine new sites opened for the bilingual public schools: one in Loire-Atlantique, three in Ile-et-Vilaine, two in Morbihan, two in Côtes d'Armor and one in Finistère. The Catholic bilingual program added two sites in the Morbihan, but had to close one other site. The immersive Diwan program added a site in Saint-Herblain (just outside of Nantes). At the secondary level two new tracks were opened in the Finistère.

More details to come in the next issues of Bro Nevez ...



### The Order of the Ermine Adds Four New Members

This September the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro) inducted four new individuals into the Order of the Ermine. The

Order of the Ermine is one of Europe's oldest military and honorary orders, created in 1381 by Jean IV, Duke of Brittany. It was distinctive in being open to women and commoners. Like all of the chivalric orders of France, it was abolished with the French Revolution. In 1972 the order was reinvented to pay honor to René Pleven who had presided CELIB, (Committee for the Study and Relationship of Breton Interests). In 1988 the Cultural Institute of Brittany took up where CELIB left off in 1973 and has awarded the medallion to four or five individuals each year for their life-long service to Brittany.

The Cultural Institute uses this occasion to also award a special medal to organizations for exceptional work for Brittany. This year the Diocese of Quimper and Léon is recognized for its digital library (<http://diocese-quimper.fr/bibliotheque/>) and Kendalc'h is recognized for its pedagogical work with *La Famille Pikett* / *Ar Familh Pikett* (games, reading and activities to help children explore all aspects of Breton history, geography and culture - [www.kendalch.com/confederation1/la-jeunesse/la-famille-pikett](http://www.kendalch.com/confederation1/la-jeunesse/la-famille-pikett)).

This annual ceremony gives us the opportunity to introduce four remarkable Bretons. My English translation (from the French) follows the Breton introduction provided in the program invitation.

## Nolwenn Korbell (Douarnenez, 1968)



Brezhonegerez a-vihanik eo Nolwenn Korbell, ha goude studioù e Skol arz ar c'hoariva e Roazhon eo deuet da vezañ kanerez, komedianez, skrivagnerez ha sonaozourez. Etre 1990 hag ar bloavezh 2000 he deus bevet etre Kembre ha Breizh ; kanañ a rae neuze er strollad folk-rock *Bob*

*Delyn a'r Ebbillion*, ha evel soprano el laz-kanañ *Arsis Théâtre Vocal*.

Ar pladennoù he deus graet gant Coop Breizh goude bezañ distroet da Vreizh da vat o deus graet berzh : *N'eo ket echu* (2003), *Bemdez c'houlou* (2006), *Red* (2007), *Noazh* (2010), *Skeud ho roudoù* (2015). Kalz a sonadegoù zo bet da heul : an Erer Kozh, Festival du Bout du Monde, Gouel Etrekeltiek, Olympia, Nuits Celtiques (Pariz-Bercy), Nuits Atypiques (Langon), C'hoariva Kerne (Kemper), TNB (Roazhon)... En estrenvro ivez (Skos, Belgia, Italia, Japan, Polonia...).

War dachenn ar c'hoariva he deus labouret gant Guy Pierre Couleau (leurenner ha rener ar greizenn c'hoariva *la Comédie de l'Est*) evit krouadennoù (*La Chaise de Paille* ha *Marilyn en Chantée* gant Sue Glover, *Rêves* gant Wajdi Mouawad), ha savet he deus ar sonerezh evit *La Fontaine aux Saints* gant Synge. E 2012, 2013 ha 2014 e c'hoari er pezhioù *Maître Puntila et son valet Matti* gant Bertolt Brecht, ha *Cabaret Brecht* leurennet gant G.-P. Couleau. Kemeret he deus ivez perzh e *L'Intervention* (V. Hugo), leurennet gant Yves Beaunesne. Adalek miz Here 2016 e c'hoari e *L'Opéra de 4 sous* (Bertolt Brecht), leurennet gant Jean Lacornerie.



A Breton speaker from birth, she has had a successful career since her studies at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique in Rennes as a singer, actress, author and composer. From 1990 to 2000 she moved between Wales and Brittany and sung in the folk-rock group *Bob Delyn a'r Ebbillion* and as a soprano in the ensemble *Arsis Théâtre Vocal*.

She returned definitively to Brittany and produced very well received recordings with Coop Breizh: *N'eo ket echu* (2003), *Bemdez c'houlou* (2006), *Red* (2007), *Noazh* (2010), *Skeud ho roudoù* (2015). There followed numerous concerts: Vieilles Charrues, Festival du Bout du Monde, Festival Interceltique, Olympia, Nuits Celtiques (Paris-Bercy), Nuits Atypiques (Langon), Théâtre de Cornouaille (Quimper), TNB (Rennes)... and

overseas in Scotland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Japan, Poland ...

In theater she worked with Guy Pierre Couleau (producer and director for the Comédie de l'Est) for the creations *La Chaise de Paille* and *Marilyn en Chantée* by Sue Glover, *Rêves* by Wajdi Mouawad), and was part of the musical realisation of *La Fontaine aux Saints* by Synge. In 2012, 2013 and 2014 one found her in the shows *Maître Puntila et son valet Matti* by Bertolt Brecht, and *Cabaret Brecht* produced by G.-P. Couleau. She acted in *L'Intervention* by V. Hugo, produced by Yves Beaunesne. And from October 2016 on she performed in *L'Opéra de 4 sous* by Bertolt Brecht and produced by Jean Lacornerie.

## Jean Cevaer (1931)



E bed an tireoulerezh en deus labouret ahd e vuhez micherel, goude e studioù ijinour kimiour (ENSC Roazhon, aotreegezh war ar skiantoù).

Ur wech war e leve e sammas karg melestradurel Kreizenn stummañ uhelañ SantNazer etre 1989 ha 1996. Dre e emouestl

evit Breizh en deus kemeret perzh e krouidigezh kevredigezhioù hag en o C'huzulioù-merañ : Unvaniezh Bretoned Bro-Velja, Organisation des Bretons émigrés, CELIB, Radio-bro e Pariz, CUAB (comité pour l'unité administrative de la Bretagne) ma voe prezidant etre 1989 ha 1966, Alternantes, ma ra wardro kronikenn ar c'hCUAB, Skol Uhel ar Vro, ma'z eo prezidant ar C'huzul skiantel hag ezel eus ar C'huzul-merañ, Emglev libr Europa, POBL, ma voe bez-prezidant ha prezidant war-lerc'h, Identité bretonne, Institut de documentation bretonne et européenne, kronikour evit Breizh da zont, Bretagne Prospective, association culturelle bretonne sud Bretagne ha festival Anne Vreizh, Credib e Sant-Nazer, Agora de l'Estuaire ma'z eo prezidant evit bremañ...

E oberiantiz he deus roet tro dezhañ da skrivañ pennadoù ha d'ober prezegennoù, en tu-hont d'an amzer en deus tremenet en emvodoù hag o vont hag o tont !



His engineering studies (ENSC in Rennes and licence ès sciences) predestined him for a career in the petroleum industry before retiring to take on administration responsibility for the Centre de Formation supérieure in St-Nazaire from 1989 to 1996.

His Breton engagement is shown through a long suite of participations in the creation of associations and/or in contributions to their administrative councils: Amicale des Bretons de Belgique, Organisation des Bretons émigrés, CELIB, Radio-bro in Paris, and CUAB (comité pour l'unité administrative de la Bretagne) for which he was then president (1989 to 1996). Also Alternantes where he was responsible for the CUAB news, the Cultural Institute of Brittany for which he became president of the Scientific Council and member of the Administrative council. And also the Alliance libre européen, POBL (where he served as vice president and then president), Identité bretonne, Institut de documentation bretonne et européenne, and writer for the journal l'Avenir de la Bretagne. Also Bretagne prospective, the Association culturelle bretonne sud Bretagne and the festival Anne de Bretagne, Credib in St-Nazaire, and Agora de l'Estuarie for which he is currently the president.

His action did not fail to lead to his production of multiple articles and conferences, not to mention time spent in meetings and travel.

#### Yann-Fañch Jacq (Concarneau, 1954)



Goude bezañ graet studioù mekanikerezh ha metalouriezh e tap Yann-Fañch Jacq un diplom desaver hag e labour e-pad seizh vloaz e Kan ar Mor e Douarnenez. Bet eo bet ivez rener Oaled Treglonoù e-pad nav bloaz. Goude-se eo aet da gelenner brezhoneg e lise Diwan Karaez.

Savet en deus e 1984 an ti-embann Keit vimp bev, evit embann levrioù e brezhoneg evit ar vugale hag ar re yaouank, un 300 levr bennak a zo deuet er-maez abaoe an deroù, hep ankounac'haat ar gelaouenn Moutig ha Rouzig (170 niverenn).

Abaoe 2005, e teu er-maez ingal ar gelaouenn YA, an hini sizhuniek nemeti e brezhoneg. Krouiñ ur gelaouenn a zo un dra, padout a zo un afer all ! Deuet eo a-benn Yann-Fañch Jacq, unan all eus e varregezhioù, da strolañ ur skipailh da genderc'hel gant e labour. Ha n'eo ket a-walc'h, abaoe ar bloavezh 2000 e skriv levrioù (istorioù, romantoù, bannoù-treset...) 24 en holl evit bugale ha krennarded.

Evit ar re yaouank, ar re a vo ar yezh en o dalc'h !



Finishing up studies in mechanics and metallurgy, he leaned toward the completion of an education diploma which led to 7 years of work with Kan ar Mor (Douarnenez) then nine years as the director of An Oaled in Tréglonou. Following this he became a professor of Breton at the Diwan high school in Carhaix. At the same time he created in 1984 the publishing house Keit vimp bev, specialized in works in the Breton language for youth (about 300 titles since its creation to which one must add magazines such as Moutig and Rouzig, each with 170 issues out so far!).

In 2005 he launched *Ya!*, the only all-Breton journal which has been produced weekly without fail since that date. To launch a journal is already in itself an adventure, to insure its continuity is another! And Yann-Fañch Jacq knew how to put together a team capable of doing this, not the least of his merits. To top it all, since the 2000s he has written books (history, novels, bandes dessinées – 24 titles adapted to different ages) for children or teens. They will be the ones to give Breton a future.

#### Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez (Brest, 1975)



Ur master kargad studi en diorren lec'hel en deus (U.B.O.) ha setu 17 vloaz 'zo emañ o labourat e Kemper. e bed an ekonomiezh. Dimezet eo, daou vugel dezhañ. Sevel a ra kartennoù ha skrivet en deus un dek levr bennak, en o zouez *Atlas de Bretagne/ Atlas Breizh* bet savet asambles gant Divi

Kervella e 2011, gantañ ivez en deus labourer war kalz a raktresoù all. Al levr divyezhek-se eo an atlas Breizh kentañ bet embannet e brezhoneg.

Er memes dastumad en deus embannet gant Erwan Chartier-Le Floc'h *Atlas des mondes celtiques*. Un arbennigour eo war ar bihanniveroù broadel ha kenurzhiet en deus ur skipailh ugent den evit sevel an *Atlas des nations sans État en Europe*. An atlas-se a gaver ivez e saozneg.

Labourat a ra Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez war danvezioù a bep seurt : *La musique classique bretonne* (kenlabour gant Aldo Ripoché) pe c'hoazh *Les symboles et drapeaux bretons...* setu penaos en deus broudet, brudet ha krouet banieloù evit ar vro. Prezidant ar gevredigezh *Bannieloù Breizh* eo abaoe 2015.



Abaoe pell eo dedennet gant an teknologiezhioù nevez hag krouet en deus e 1999 porched ar bihanniveroù broadel *Eurominority.eu*, hag, e 2006 bepred gant skoazell Divi Kervella en deus savet ar porched douaroniel *Geobreizh.bzh*. Emañ e-touez diazezerien ar *.bzh* gant ar c'hannad Christian Menard ha gant David Lesvenan.



Holding a masters in research studies in local development (U.B.O.), married and father of two children, he has worked in Quimper for 17 years in the field of economy. Cartographer, he is author of a dozen works, notably atlases such as the *Atlas de Bretagne / Atlas Breizh* co-written in 2011 with Divi Kervella with whom he has collaborated on numerous projects. This bilingual book is the first atlas of Brittany edited in Breton. In the same collection he co-wrote the *Atlas des mondes celtiques* with Erwan Chartier-Le Floc'h. A specialist on national minorities, he directed a team of twenty people to produce the *Atlas des nations sans Etat en Europe* which is also published in English.

Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez has also taken on diverse subjects: *La musique classique bretonne* (written with Aldo Ripoché) or *Les symboles et drapeaux bretons...* with numerous projects to promote Breton flags, especially through the association Bannieloù Breizh (flags of Brittany) which he has presided since 2015.

Interested very early on by new technologies, he created the website for national minorities *Eurominority.eu* in 1999, and in 2006 with the help of Divi Kervella, the geographic website *Geobreizh.bzh*. He was among the first supporters of *.bzh* with the Deputy Christian Ménard and the current president of the [www.bzh](http://www.bzh) association David Lesvenan. His petition launched in 2006 helped to sensitize the general public, local collectivities and the Regional Council to what was at stake in having an internet extension unique to Brittany.



Including the new inductees, currently active members of the Order of the Ermine are the following:

Philippe ABJEAN, René ABJEAN, Dan ar BRAZ, Gweltaz ar FUR, Philippe ARGOUARC'H, Andrea ar GOUILH, Yannig BARON, Mikael BODLORE-PENLAEZ, Yvonne BREILLY-LE CALVEZ, Yves-Pascal CASTEL, Jean CEVAER, Yann CHOUCQ, Denise DELOUCHE, Tereza DESBORDES, Yann GOASDOUE, Viviane HELIAS, Jean-Jacques HENAFF, Rhisiart HINCKS, Job an IRIEN, Angèle JACQ, Yann-Fañch JACQ, Dodik JEGOU, Michael JONES, Tugdual KALVEZ, Yann-Fanch KEMENER, Jean KERHERVE, Marie KERMAREC, Goulc'han KERVELLA, Riwanon KERVELLA, Nolwenn KORBELL, Lois KUTER, Yves LAINE, Catherine LATOUR, Jean-Louis LATOUR, Donatien LAURENT, André LAVANANT, Joseph Le BIHAN, Joseph LEC'HVIEN, Xavier LECLERCQ, Jean-Guy Le FLOC'H, Nicole et Félix LE

GARREC, Jacqueline LE GUEN, Ivonig Le MERDY, Pierre LEMOINE, Pierre LE PADELLEC, Pierre-Yves LE RHUN, Pierre LOQUET, Lena LOUARN, Tangi LOUARN, Patrick MALRIEU, Patrick MARESCHAL, Claudine MAZÉAS, Martial MÉNARD, Rozenn MILIN, Jean-Jacques MONNIER, Rita MORGAN WILLIAMS, Frères MORVAN, Jean OLLIVRO, Mona OZOUF, Yvon PALAMOUR, Gabriele PESCATORE, André POCHON, Jordi PUJOL, Eugène RIGUIDEL, Gilles SERVAT, Claude STERCKX, Alan STIVELL, Erwan VALLERIE, Jean-Bernard VIGHETTI, Jean-Pierre VINCENT, Ewa WALISZEWSKA

The following now deceased members are certainly worth noting for the lifetime of contributions they made to Brittany:

Soeur Anna-Vari ARZUR, Herry CAOUISSIN, Vefa de BELLAING, Albert BOCHER, Jacques BRIARD, Jean-Christophe CASSARD, André CHEDEVILLE, Anne. CORRE (Naïg. ROZMOR), Per DENEZ, Ivetig an DRED-KERVELLA, Jean FREOUR, Yvonig GICQUEL, Pierre-Roland GIOT, Pierre-Jakez HELIAS, Roger ABJEAN, Ronan HUON, Yvonne JEAN-HAFFEN, Pierre LAURENT, Raymond LEBOSSE, Henri LECUYER, Chanig LE GALL, Charles LE GALL, Robert LEGRAND, François LE QUEMENER, Emile LE SCANV (GLENMOR), Pierre LE TREUT, Jean L'HELGOUACH, Louis LICHOU, Georges LOMBARD, Henri MAHO, Ivona MARTIN, Joseph MARTRAY, Jean MEVELLEC, Pierre-Yves MOIGN, Polig MONJARRET, Robert OMNES, Bernad de PARADES, Martial PEZENNEC, Michel PHILIPPONNEAU, René PLEVEN, Yann POILVET, Albert POULAIN, Henri QUEFFELEC, Maryvonne QUEMERE-JAUOEN, Annaig RENAULT, Yves ROCHER, Loeiz ROPARS, Frère Marc SIMON, Pierre TOULHOAT, Albert TREVIDIC, Jean TRICOIRE, René VAUTIER



## Deep Inside A Breton Skull 49: Laïcité

Jean Pierre Le Mat



"Laïcité" is a word impossible to translate in a proper way from French to English, together with "galanterie", "conversation" or "grande cuisine". These words are too linked with French history, emotions, culture, roots. It is like trying to

translate in French the American "wilderness" or the English "fair play".

"Laïcité" is usually translated as "Secularism". But, you know, it is not really that.

The concept of "laïcité" appeared in the eighteenth century to mean freedom of conscience. Driven by



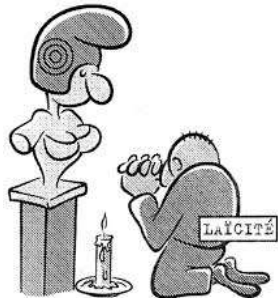
strong writers like Voltaire, Diderot and many others, it has become a significant feature of French culture.

During the Revolution and the nineteenth century, "laïcité" amalgamated anti-clerical and anti-religious passions, together with high aspirations and rancid hatreds. Finally the Third Republic came in 1871. It gave to "laïcité" a goal. The goal is to penetrate the French legislation, and to submit everyone to it.

Thus, through a rather banal reversal, a libertarian claim ends up as a clenched legislation, secured by a strong government. "Laïcité" was seen as the sacred fire that would burn all our bad manners, before scattering the ashes on the altar of the common motherland. Today the holocaust has stopped without finishing its work of purification. The sacred fire is not a great popular blaze. It is now a well-ordered flame in the temple of the French Republic.

What does the word "laïcité" mean for a Breton?

"Laïcité" was the victory of State power over religious power. The Bretons have been considered a strong Catholic people. We are not good "laïques". We are suspects. In 1903, the Parisian writer Laurent Tailhade described us as follows: *"There is no better Christian than this scoundrel of Brittany; None is more refractory to civilization (...) . He is the nigger of France."*



Well, it is true that we are refractory somewhere. We are said also to be mystic people. I don't know if we changed a lot since the times of Laurent Tailhade, but the traditional target of "laïcité", the clerical organization of the Catholic Church, has now almost disappeared. Now "laïcité" would have to oppose

the rising religion, Islam. It's what the hottest internet "laïques" sites in France are doing. The tone has changed. "Laïcité", when attacking clericalism or Breton particularism, was rather haughty. With Islam, it is worried, distraught.

"Laïcité" was also the victory of Paris over the old provincial society. It is the triumph of city dwellers over peasant manners. But it is not only that. It is not only the bourgeois freedom facing old beliefs and morals. It is the great project of merging tribes, peoples and individuals in the cauldron of one language and one nation. "Laïcité" is linked with the republican enthusiasm.

Unfortunately for us, this enthusiasm has been regularly directed against Breton language, Breton manners, Breton religiosity, Breton history.

The leaders of the French revolution warned us:

- "You are Bretons? The French are ruling" (Count of Mirabeau)
- "We must eradicate this coarse language which extends the childhood of Reason" (Abbot Gregoire)
- "No selection has to be done in this damned country. There could be only guilty people" (Joseph Fouché, sent by the Paris revolutionaries to Nantes in 1792)

What could the future be?

"Laïcité" is part of the Gutenberg galaxy. Historically, this period began with invention of printing and with the Italian Renaissance. It is the period of the printed message, standardized and accessible to everyone. It is the era of nation-states, industrial production and representative democracy. It is the era of reason, rationalization everywhere, rationalism.

With the new century, times are changin'. Peasant manners, tribal solidarities and Breton culture could be back. We are entering an era of connected devices, personal messages, customized products, collaborative platforms. One can be a member of several communities, real or virtual. The homage to a unique reference controlled by the nation-state is outdated. French "laïcité" is the mummy of a political utopia, linked with obsolete technologies.

I take pity on this old enemy of the Breton way. French people gathered around common beliefs, common language, common institutions. I can understand that.

"Laïcité" is not operational any longer. But there is still nothing to replace it. Here, the alternative to "secular" is not "clerical", but "multicultural". However, multiculturalism is only a tolerance, not an ideal. It does not bear such strong values such as Christianity, which celebrates Love, or "laïcité", which celebrates freedom of conscience.

History is terrible with ideas and people. When Christianity or "laïcité" became official and legal, the enthusiasts were drowned under conformists, profiteers, moralists and law supporters.

And I hear a little voice, deep in my skull: Jean Pierre, beware not to legalize Brittany too much!



## New Books from Brittany



**Légendes Celtiques de Bretagne.** Yoran Embanner. 2016. 422 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-89-4.

There are many collections of tales and legends of Brittany, but if you wanted to find a cross-section of the best known and most interesting, this new book would be the place to go. Included are King Arthur, Merlin, Tristan and Iseult, saints and heroes of Breton history, and the legend of how the ermine became a symbol of Brittany. And then there are all the creatures (mostly of the night) that torment Bretons who happen upon them – the Ankou, washerwomen of the night, korrigans, Gourel and fairies, the white woman of the marshes, horses and dogs, and the devil. Also included are tales about sorcerers, magicians, sirens and omens of death or misfortune.

The sources for the tales are quite varied – some drawn from well-known collectors of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – Emile Souvestre, François-Marie Luzel. Anatole le Braz ... Others are from Bretons of more contemporary times and today who interpret a tale in their own way. Often a bit more context is added to enhance the tale. While there is no author attributed to this collection since it pulls from so many sources, it is the product of long work on the part of the publisher, Yoran himself of Yoran Embanner, who selected the texts and illustrations. Many of the tales are uniquely Breton but many are shared in the Celtic world and Europe more widely.

This is a book where you can jump in at any point to read just one tale or you can go from beginning to end. There are lots of illustrations – modern and more old-fashioned in a variety of styles. I particularly enjoyed the little illustrations at the corner of each even-numbered page that changed with each selection in the book – a nice touch. This is the first in a series of books called “Légendes des pays d’Europe” with the second book to focus on legends and tales from Alsace.

I have but a small collection of books featuring legends of Brittany, and some of the same tales are included in each, yet told in a different way as legends should be. It would take thousands of pages to include all the tales and legends of Brittany. The one book I have that most resembles the *Légendes Celtiques de Bretagne* in the diversity of topics and tales is Lewis Spence’s *Legends & Romances of Brittany*, published in 1917 by this Scottish scholar and nationalist (1874-1955). Included in his 400+ pages are many of the same cast of characters, but Spence includes a great deal of

“analysis” along with tales themselves, including discussion of similarities and differences to be found among Celts. Included here is a bit of his discussion of standing stones of Brittany and their connection with fairies.

### *The Ile aux Moines*

*The Ile aux Moines (“Monk’s Island”) is also situated in the Morbihan, and has many prehistoric monuments, the most extensive of which are the circle of stones at Kergonan and the dolmen of Penhapp. On the Ile d’Arz, too, are megalithic monuments, perhaps the best example of which is the cromlech or circle at Penraz. The folk-beliefs attached to the megalithic monuments of Brittany are numerous, but nearly all of them bear a strong resemblance to each other. Many of the monuments are called Grottes aux Fées or Roches aux Fées, in the belief that the fairies either built them or used them as dwelling-places, and variants of these names are to be found in the Maison des Follets (‘House of the Goblins’) at Cancoet, in Morbihan, and the Château des Paulpiquets, in Questembert, in the same district. Ty en Corygannt (‘The House of the Korrigans’) is situated in the same department, while near Penmarc’h in Finistère, at the other end of the province, we find Ty C’harriquet (‘The House of the Gourels’ or ‘Nains’). Other mythical personages are also credited with the erection, most frequently either the devil of Gargantua being held responsible for their miraculous creation. The phenomenon, well known to students of folk-lore, that an unlettered people speedily forgets the origin of monuments that its predecessors may have raised in times past is well exemplified in Brittany, whose peasant-folk are usually surprised, if not amused, at the question “Who built the dolmens?” Close familiarity with and contiguity to uncommon objects not infrequently dulls the sense of wonder they should otherwise naturally excite. But lest we feel tempted to sneer at these poor folk for their incurious attitude toward the visible antiquities of their land, let us ask ourselves how many of us take that interest in the antiquities of our own country or our own especial locality that they demand [author’s footnote: The writer’s experience is that unlettered British folk often possess much better information concerning the antiquities of a district than its ‘educated’ inhabitants. If this information is not scientific it is full and displays deep personal interest.]*

### *Fairy Builders*

*For the most part, then, the megaliths, in the opinion of the Breton peasant, are not the handiwork of man. He would rather refer their origin to spirits, giants, or fiends. If he makes any exception to this supernatural attribution, it is in favour of the saints he reverences so profoundly. The fairies, he says, harnessed their oxen to the mighty stones, selected a site, and dragged them*

thither to form a dwelling, or perhaps a cradle for the infant fays they were so fond of exchanging for human children. Thus the Roche aux Fées near Saint-Didier, in Ille-et-Vilaine, were raised by fairy hands, the elves collecting “all the big stones in the country” and carrying them thither in their aprons. These architectural sprites then mounted on each other’s shoulders in order that they might reach high enough to place the mighty monoliths securely in position. This practice they also followed in building the dolmen near the wood of Rocher, on the road from Dinan to Dol, say the people of that country-side. But the actual purpose of the megaliths has not been neglected by tradition, for a venerable farmer at Rouvray stated that the fairies were wont to honour after their death those who had made good use of their lives and built the dolmens to contain their ashes. The presence of such a shrine in a country-side was a guarantee of abundance and prosperity therein, as a subtle and indefinable charm spread from the saintly remnants and communicated itself to everything in the neighbourhood. The fairy builders, says tradition, went about their work in no haphazard manner. Those among them who possessed a talent for design drew the plans of the proposed structure, the less gifted acting as carriers, labourers, and masons. Apron-carrying was not their only method of portage, for some bore the stones on their heads, or one under each arm, as when they raised the Roche aux Fées in Retiers, or the dolmen in La Lande Marie. The space of a night was usually sufficient in which to raise a dolmen. But though ‘run up’ with more than Transatlantic dispatch, in view of the time these structures have endured for, any charge of jerry-building against their elfin architects must fall to the ground. Daylight, too, frequently surprised the fairy builders, so that they could not finish their task, as many a ‘roofless’ dolmen shows.

There are many Celtic parallels to this belief. For example, it is said that the Picts, or perhaps the fairies, built the original church of Corstorphine, near Edinburgh, and stood in a row handing the stones in, one to another, from Ravelston Quarry, on the adjacent hill of Corstorphine. Such is the local folk-tale; and it has its congeners in Celtic and even in Hindu myth. Thus in the Highland tale of Kennedy and the claistig, or fairy, whom he captured, and whom he compelled to build him a house in one night, we read that she set her people to work speedily:

And they brought flags and stones  
From the shores of Cliamig waterfall,  
Reaching them from hand to hand.

Again, the Round Tower of Ardmore, in Ireland, was built with stones brought from Slieve Grian, a mountain some four to five miles distance, “without horse or wheel,” the blocks being passed from hand to hand from the quarry to the site of the building. The same tradition applied to the Tower of Abernathy, in

Perthshire, only it is in this case demonstrated that the stone of which the tower is composed was actually taken from the traditional quarry, even the very spot being geologically identified. In like manner, too, was Rama’s bridge built by the monkey host in Hindu myth, as recounted in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana.

While there are more “accurate” accounts of how the stone megaliths in Europe might have been constructed, who cannot enjoy the imagery of fairies carrying massive stones in their aprons or passing them hand to hand. The images of fairies building megalithic structures can seem a bit whimsical, but much of Breton lore is of a darker nature – human encounters with spirits and supernatural beings who are highly dangerous, and encounters with death itself, the Ankou, or the Devil. Sometimes death and the devil are outwitted, but often not.

A great deal has been written about legends and beliefs related to death – most famously the book *La Légende de la Mort chez les Bretons armoricains* by Anatole le Braz, re-edited from the original 1928 edition by Yoran Embanner in 2011. Also highly recommended is Daniel Giraudon’s collection *Sur les Chemins de l’Ankou – Croyances et légendes de la Mort en Bretagne et pays celtiques* (Yoran Embanner, 2012). Besides books which collect and comment on beliefs and legends, Breton authors have used traditional tales and customs to give color to novels, as is the case for the new detective novel reviewed briefly below.



**Yann Ollivier. *Proella, le chant des âmes perdues*.** Yoran Embanner. 2016 246 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-86-3.

As one learns in the book *Légendes celtiques de Bretagne* noted above, the proella is an ensemble of practices formerly performed on the island of Ouessant (Enez Eusa) to

give rest to the soul of fishermen and sailors lost at sea. An all-night vigil is performed with a special prayer-leader – a woman of the island who has particular skills in prying the soul of the deceased from the Devil. A small wax cross is confected and laid out in the home of the deceased to take the place of the body for this wake. The next day the priest would lead a procession of family and friends to the church with this substitute body and a mass would be performed. The wax cross would then be stored with others like it representing those who had died in the past year and all would be taken to a special monument in the graveyard on November 1 – All Souls Day. That’s a very simplified account of proceedings which include other important details, but will give an idea. There are sites on the island of Ouessant particularly associated with the



“otherworld” where the mournful song of those whose souls have been lost can be heard.

This mystery novel nicely describes the tradition of the proella and the natural places and villages of Ouessant, also evoking the powerful role Breton customs can have. The characters of the novel come to life as a series of brutal murders are investigated – all of tourists from Paris. The invasion of the “French” tourists and gendarmes investigating the murders on the island are treated at times with a wry humor. One develops a sympathy for the island dwellers who try to resist the impact of conquering outsiders who disdain the old Breton traditions and impose a different lifestyle. This is an enjoyable read that makes you root for the islanders, an in particular the murderer himself!



## Heard of But Not Heard – A Few New Recordings from Brittany

I was able to glean just a few new recordings for this issue of Bro Nevez – more to come next time!



### **Championnat des bagadou – Brest 2016**

This is a CD and DVD of the February 2016 championship contest for Brittany’s top bagadou. A bagad is a uniquely Breton bagpipe band which incorporates bombards along

with percussion and bagpipes. And for contests and concerts a range of other instruments are often present as well. The contest in Brest is the first of two (the second in Lorient in August) to determine the best of Brittany. For the Brest segment each bagad must draw from a specific musical territory in arranging its suite of melodies and dances. This CD includes the top 15 of Brittany’s bagadou who have selected a range of traditional territories: Vannetas, Bigouden, Fisel, Loudéac, Montagnes, Paludier-Vannetais Gallo, and Aven.



### **Dastum. Pays de Ploërmel — Chanteurs, sonneurs et conteurs traditionnels.**

La Bretagne des Pays 3. This is the third in a series of CDs focused on particular cultural

regions of Brittany – in this case Ploërmel in Upper Brittany. This double CD has 74 selections of ballads, melodies, “march” songs for walking, and songs for dances, as well as a bit of storytelling. Also included are instrumental selections with accordion, harmonica, and use of an ivy leaf. Recorded between 1959 and 2016, the 68 performers may not be known at all to Americans, but are certainly locally renowned in

Brittany as masters of their tradition. A 144-page booklet accompanies the CDS providing a portrait of the Ploërmel area, its oral traditions, dances, and a history of the collection work done. Including images and photos, the performers are introduced, and song texts are provided along with a presentation of each performance. As is always the case in a Dastum production this is a of beautifully documented collection of just a sample of the rich song and music tradition still to be found in Brittany.



### **Etienne Grandjean & Soig Siberil. La Tempête.**

Marzelle.

This is a duo of well know performers: Etienne Grandjean on button accordion (and vocals) and Soig Siberil on acoustic guitar. This

CD includes 12 selections: 7 compositions and 5 arrangements of traditional songs and dances. 8 of the selections are instrumental and 4 are songs. Dances include Rond de St Vincent, an dro, hanter dro, kas a barh as well as waltz and jigs for a variety of rhythms. The title song “La Tempête” was composed in 1810 and is about a Napoleon era soldier of that name who bids adieu to his lover.



### **Les Frères Herrou. Beilhadeg ar Releg.**

Jean and Mikaël Herrou perform here on bronze-strung Celtic harps with 17 selections: 4 Breton ballads and a variety of dances (gavottes, plinn, reels and strathspey). They are joined

in a few selections by singer and harpist Violaine Mayor (their mom and teacher), as well as by Joel Herrou on bodhran (their dad and teacher in instrument-making). This is a live concert performance recorded at the Abbey ar Releg.



### **Tiúin. The Waiting.**

This is a quartet composed of Jo Van Bouwel (song, harp and bodhran), Nicola Hayes (fiddle), Philippe Lamézec (guitar and flute) and Tangi Boulic (bass fiddle). This second CD includes 12 selections

of traditional songs and tunes primarily from Ireland, but also including a Flemish song and Klezmer, Bulgarian or Breton melodies and rhythms.



## **An Introduction to Brittany from 1900 – Part II**

Edward Irenaeus Prime-Stevenson was born in Madison New Jersey in 1858. After studying law he became a writer and journalist and moved to Europe where he died in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1942. The

following is part of a series called "A Reading Journey through France" for *The Chautauquan* magazine. This monthly magazine was published for the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle based at the Chautauqua Institute for adult education in western New York State. This is the second part of the article below. See Bro Nevez 137 for the first part of the article.

## **IX. Around Brittany** **By Irenaeus Prime-Stevenson**

*The Chautauquan* Vol. 31, No. 3, June 1900

... When a tour in Brittany is arranged, there is not too much time allowed if it be expected to consume a couple of months, instead of the ever-provided "fortnight or ten days." And let it be said here that a whole summer in France can not be more healthfully spent than in this province: what with a magnificent air, comfortable if not often big hotels, sea-life and inland farm-life, and all that is to interest the artistic sense or the study of Bretons.

As to touring-lines, to any American reader, let me point out that the configuration of Brittany, or the system on which you travel through it, rather suggests Long Island. There is a North Shore, with its railroad (the Chemin de Fer de l'Ouest) and by that of the offshooting lines or roads from it (constantly necessary to you), the towns and natural sights of the North Shore are pursued. There is a South Shore, corresponding, with its straight-out and main railway system (part of the Orléans Company's line) running along the sea; including branches needful to you, unless you omit many special localities closer to the sea-coast than the venerable trunk-line of this southern railway's course. There is no trunk-railway, "straight-across" middle Brittany, east and west, from say Chateaubriant (or Angers, back of the old Breton frontier) to Brest. But at each end of the peninsula, and at the four or five medial points, the respective shore-routes are connected, the connecting railways often dropping down and across inland districts of much Breton individuality. You will thus have a "belt-line" all around the peninsula, with the means of crossing to one or another part of the belt, at choice or need. The average tourist would best pursue the outside circuit, from Rennes or Dinan along the English channel neighborhoods to Brest, and then turning down the remote Atlantic end of the province, to old Quimper, he returns by the ocean-shore, past Quimperlé, Lorient, Auray, the Morbihan inlet, ancient Vannes and Redon to Nantes.

To such a tour, the traveler who has been stopping at Pontorson or Avranches in Normandy, with the Mount St. Michael an object of inexhaustible beauty in the sea-scape, will find Dol a mild yet suitable preface. We are often asked whether St. Michael's Mount is in Normandy or Brittany. It is almost the exact landmark

between them; for the River Couesnon, stealing across the sands, is the old line, and by so few rods includes the Mount to one's right hand, that an ancient Breton distich complains:

"The silly Couesnon, just see  
Has given our Mount to Normandy!"

Dol's cathedral, a monument of ecclesiastical Brittany of the past (though still unfinished), is a dignified big church, oddly built of borrowed materials from older and ruined edifices in the place, and dedicated to St. Samson. The name "cathedral," by the by, is still used in Brittany (as in other French provinces) in referring to ex-cathedrals – to churches that no longer have any really episcopal relations. The Revolution abolished with a high hand, and frequently with cruelty, a great number of ancient and small bishoprics, and their fine houses of worship became merely parish-churches. This degrading of their importance was greatly to the lightening of heavy charges on the congregations and on the revenues of the New Régime.

In the outskirts of Dol stands one of the first Druidic monuments the traveler encounters in North Brittany. It is of the sort called *menhir*; exposed, detached, unknown monoliths, set up on end, like rude gravestones – but not raised as such memorials. This *menhir* is nearly thirty feet high. I have already mentioned that there are thousands of these relics in Brittany; in the present article only a few collections of them in certain localities can be specified. No large area is lacking in them; nor is any considerable section devoid of primitive stone structures related to the Druidic epoch.

Rennes, a large city southward of Dol, on the direct (upper) Paris-Brest railway line, is a city possessing some stately examples of Breton importance; and in establishment goes far back into the days of Armorica, when the tribe of Redones flourished. It is now the chief town of the Ille-et-Vilaine Department; but of old it was the capital of Brittany. In 1491 it was the scene of the marriage of the Duchess Anne, by which event Brittany was turned over to France. Unluckily a general town-fire in 1720 swept away a vast deal of old Rennes, the Rennes of the dukedom. Its gray, handsome cathedral and other churches such as Notre Dame de Ste. Melaine, Toussaints, and St. Sauveur, its Palais de Justice, its Hôtel de Ville and many other striking buildings are all of modern dates. The Palais de Justice is of the first half of the sixteenth century, and is certainly a fine structure. The chief remnant of the town's early self is the Mordelaise Gate (part of the fortified Breton circumvallation) and sundry antique houses in the vicinity. Rennes is a military center of great importance to the Republic, but it is not a place of active movement. During the trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus, for treasonable correspondence, the dull and

conventional aspects of it were a perpetual complaint of literary sojourners in it.

We return to Dol once more to proceed on the westerly track. In a general way this portion of the province is Norman in its traits. But we are not quite yet to be clear of the particularly contemporary and conventional side of Brittany – of the Brittany not only of this nineteenth century, but of the very last quarter thereof, so far as summer-life at famous coast-resorts of its north shore emphasizes them. Just west of the Bay of St. Michael, to be reached either by the railway from Dinan, or by steamer-route along the pretty Rance river and inlet, are grouped several of the most fashionable places for a French “season.” St. Malo itself suggests to the American his ancient St. Augustine, in Florida. Underneath the gayety and the commonplaceness of a new development of its hotel exploiting, are relics of the historic and military antiquity of the place. The Castle of St. Malo, the sea-washed ramparts, completed in the sixteenth century, and in exceptionally fine preservation (almost all the towns of provincial France have imitated Paris, by making wide circular boulevards out of the ground covered by their old walls), and the picturesque if unconventional old streets, attract one.

St. Servan, Dinard and Paramé are much less inviting; they are simply beautifully situated resorts of summer pleasure-seekers, sea-bathing creations of the day, and you might as well spend your time in Newport, Bournemouth, Trouville or Biarritz so far as historic or rural “atmosphere” is considered. Dinan, however, at the inland beginning of the Rance, has much more Breton character. Dinan is an old place in fact; with rustic Brittany and bits of Brittany’s history integral to it. As a military relic its fortress is notable; being a castle of the thirteenth century, where the dukes and duchesses often resided, and which has been shrewdly besieged and defended in the English wars with Brittany. The Jerzual-Gate, the numerous old-time private mansions, the poetic church structures, all refer us back to a Dinan of the fourteenth century, to the strife of the League, and the post-ducral epochs of Breton annals. The heart of Constable du Guesclin was buried here, in the town which that brave soldier captured in 1359, when it was held by England.

A little removed – less than a mile – from the Bay of St. Brieuc, on a little river, the ancient town of St. Brieuc stands; notable for elevation and for its awkward plan, scarred by ages, and appearing as a picturesque North Breton city. The name of the town honors a British monk, who came on a missionary expedition to the locality. He not only founded a monastery and wrought much righteousness, but became canonized, in process of time. The saints of Brittany have a large interest in the calendar of the province today, and are not displaced by those of more universal acceptance. St. Maclou (or Malo), St. Servan, St. Mériadec, St. Pol, St.

Ives, Ste. Mélainie, St. Tugdual, St. Corentin, St. Tudy, are among these bright stars of early work against the influences of Breton heathenism; and many of these good pioneers became martyrs.

The town of St. Brieuc refers, as a sizeable place, to the fifteenth century. It became speedily a city of wars, sieges, captures and recaptures during centuries later. When the long fights between the factions of Blois and de Montfort came on in the fourteenth century, then St. Brieuc had a large share of the coast-campaigning. In 1375 the bluff Constable Olivier de Clisson took it, and in holding it against the Duke of Brittany he fortified the severe gloomy cathedral. The warrings of the League, the Spanish Invasion of 1592, and other harsh influences took their course in St. Brieuc, and in 1601 the Black Death made it a desolation. The Chouan war in 1799 brought tragic incidents to St. Brieuc, and it has lost many notable witnesses to the past, by fires in it. But the town has plenty of color and quaintness, with passing vistas of dignified old houses, built of oak and chestnut, especially on such streets as the St. Jacques, the Basse-Fardel, and the Gouet.

Beyond St. Brieuc, following the bay eastward, you will reach a famous district of military story and fine Breton scenery of the coast. The whole neighborhood is in the Garde-de-Saint Cast district, today a cultivated and highly productive region, full of peace and plenty. But it has seen events conspicuous in the naval history of France and England, especially one episode, in 1758, of Marlborough’s unlucky Breton campaign, when the English army was checked in getting away from the shore by the forces of the Duc d’Aiguillon. The rocky landscape here is renowned. Cape Fréhel, a tremendous projection into the Channel, is as wild a bit of granite Brittany, lashed by the sea, as even Finistère exhibits. Some five miles away from Cape Fréhel, on the ancient Plevenon road, rises the Fort du Latte. This stronghold – at least as a locality – dates back to the period when Bretons were always in need of defenses against Norman invaders. The present structure was built in 1689; and perched on a high cliff, it is a bold detail of man’s work in a locality where nature often seems to us rudely dominant.

Reverting to the direct North Brittany railway-line, the traveler, or reader of a travel-route, reaches Guingamp, on the River Trieux. Guingamp is a town of almost nine thousand people, in an environment of irresistible attractiveness. Thence, one can go either northward, to a third succession of extremely interesting localities more directly on the Chanel coast - or southward, inland, across what is called the Basse-Bretagne district. There was no railway down (connecting through this with the Orléans “*reseau*”) until quite recently. The district opened up is far more Breton, characteristic of the people as agricultural folk, and of their national



characteristics as still primitive, than the countryside nearer the sea can show you.

The Breton and Bretonne are fishers and wives and sweethearts of fishers, and living by and “off” the ocean is of course a distinctive matter. But the farming Brittany inhabitant is a type of no vague individuality. The Basse-Bretagne – particularly about Carhaix – with its inland restrictiveness is, even now, inhabited by a folk a hundred years behind the times in ideas, prejudices and customs. Their piety is marred by secret superstitions or by openly heathen impulses; practices harking back to the Druidic epoch. Their virtues and vices are not new-fangled, any more than their clothes. I am sorry that I cannot enter into any descriptive details of just this region, and of what goes on in it. But to do so would be a matter of detail and explanation demanding a long article. The curious reader can, however, readily inform himself of it by travel-papers devoted to the localities concerned; or if he is traveling to the province he can learn by the more acceptable method of quiet personal observation during a cross-trip of a leisurely kind. You cannot tear the heart out of the Basse-Bretagne in a week. I confess, or in five pages. Better let Brittany altogether alone. But that is a counsel of perfection for travelers.

Cheerful Guingamp itself used to be one of the chief places of North Brittany. It was the seat of the great and warlike, and generally pretty bad, Counts of Penthièvre. I beg to say here that if any reader wishes to peruse about the most stirring and fiercely dramatic chapters of Brittany in the time of its old ducal wars, he can find what he wants in the story of the Penthièvre and Clisson doings. They carry along an amazing tale of obstinate hostility – stratagems, frays and worse – often by thrilling struggles. You wonder that the bones of the men (yes, and the women) who fought it out are at rest in their tombs today.

Jeanne de Clisson, Countess de Penthièvre, who lived at Guingamp, was an Amazonian figure in this special chronicle – *“femme terrible, démoniaque et sans sexe”*: and that vindictive lady (in fine justice of fate) was a special cause of ruin, ultimately, to her family line. Guingamp was thrice besieged during the League; but it has not lost its antique look by any means. Its celebrated Church of Our Lady “of Good Help” (in Breton speech “huël-goät”) is famous, architecturally, as a structure. Here every summer occurs a “Pardon” with its curious and attractive incidents for tourists’ observation.

Yet of more importance than a stay at Guingamp is the excursion to the coast directly north, along the widening Trieux, taking in Pontrieux, Plouha, Plovezec, Paimpol, Lézardrieux, Tréguier and smaller neighborhoods. This is a district excellently representative of the sea-faring life of North Brittany. From Paimpol, the fishermen sail

off on the Iceland cruise, and to Newfoundland and to Labrador. They are often splendid examples of physique. Pierre Loti, the novelist, has made a fine and truthful use of the Breton life and character of the Paimpol vicinity in his “*Pecheur d’Islande*”; and in that intensely sympathetic – and extremely subtle – novel you meet with numerous references to the River Quinic, to Ploubazlanec, Pors-Even, and the like, as well as to Paimpol.

Tréguier is an old capital-town in itself interesting, with its architectural remains of past epochs of Brittany, including the splendid old cathedral, of ponderous Gothic edification, built in the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries, with a fine cloister. As for Lannion, a town once part of the large Penthièvre ducal property, it overflows with striking and curious aspects. Not only is there here and there the antique in dwelling-houses; for the “Place” of Lannion has been lucky enough to preserve intact one whole side of its old buildings; and what is called the Maison du Chapelier is frequently termed the most remarkable timber house in Brittany. Out on the Tréguier road is the imposing ruin of the Castle of Tonquedec, embosomed in orchards and greenery, owned by the strong Coëtmen family in the thirteenth century, and several times destroyed and rebuilt till Richelieu shattered it for good, in pursuance of his “centralizing policy” for France.

A ramble in Brittany, even in as guide-bookish a tone as the present article must follow to perform its duty, means some inconsecutiveness in matters to be noted; so let a word be said here as to Breton costumes. The costumes of either sea-folk or land-folk largely have disappeared in the rest of France. Here they still are quite generally retained [1900]. There are many varieties, and they vary from dark and quiet effects to brilliant stuffs and gay embroideries. The men away from large cities, eastward in the province, still wear the short full breeches, round hats, wide collars, long hair, and other modes of their fathers. In female dress, the caps are a continually differing article of headgear, and when a Bretonne is not in her sober work-day array she is given to bright petticoats, gaudy bodices, laces and eye-taking embellishments. On the south coast, there is more of this pleasing element. The equation, however, is a fluctuating one and not of every-day. A religious festival on a Sunday elicits it more or less strikingly according to the neighborhood. Quimper is a place for its occasional luxuriance. Yet even in the sober Breton attire there are beautiful, if subdued, harmonies of hue and fabric.

*To be continued ...*



## Learning Breton, Bit by Bit ... or in this case Bite by Bite

My daily commute to my job has increased by a good half hour each day due to railway issues – don't ask, it's a long story and I am likely to rant a bit. This means I have been getting more reading done, and one little publication I like to pull out once in a while helps me improve the tiny knowledge I have of Breton. This has a long title: *Bemdez, ur frazenn ouzhpenn – 365 frazenn bemdesiek*. Produced by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg in French, an English language version is also available. It has the title: *Each day, a new Breton sentence – 365 phrases of everyday life in Breton*. I have some extra copies of this little booklet so let me know if you want me to send you one!

So I have included here the phrases for the month of October (which will be upon us in no time). Half of the days focus on phrases to help buy or order food in a restaurant – hence the title above. You'll also learn a few phrases handy if you go out to the movies or want to purchase some clothing.

### Here / October

1. Kouign-amann zo?

Do you have some kouign-aman?

[It's not likely you will easily find this very buttery pastry here in the U.S., but substituting any food will work = Orañjez zo?]

2. Gwell eo an tarteiz suraval din.

I prefer eating lemon tart.

3. Lodennoù kig-ha-farz zo ganeoc'h?

Do you serve/sell kig-ha-farz helpings?

[Kig-ha-farz is another Breton specialty]

4. Sivi eus Plougastell zo ganeoc'h?

Do you have strawberries from Plougastell?

5. Orañjez, mar plij. / Oranges, please.

6. Peseurt mod ho po anezho?

How would you like them?

7. N'eus ket re azvoc'h? / Any riper ones?

8. Mont a reomp da zebriñ d'ar preti.

We're going to eat at the restaurant.

9. Ar gartenn, mar plij. / The menu, please.

10. Ur roll-meuzioù zo evit ar vugale?

Do you cook special dishes for children?

11. Boued-aod zo? / Do you have seafood?

12. Dour, mar plij. / Water, please.

13. Degasit dimp bara c'hoazh, mar plij.

Would you bring us more bread please?

14. Me am bo un alumenn-vioù gant saladenn c'hlas.

I'll have an omelet with salad.

15. Pa vezan er preti ne'm bez nemet ur meuz.

At the restaurant, I usually have a single dish.

16. Ur steak gant fritez. / A steak with French fries.

17. Peseurt dilenn-skorn ho peus?

What kind of ice cream do you have?

18. Ar gont, mar plij. / The bill please.

19. Ur plas evit an abadenn gentañ.

A ticket for the first showing.

20. Daou blas, mar plij. / Two tickets please.

21. Ne blij ket din bezañ er renkoù kentañ,

I don't like being in the first row.

22. Da bet eur e krog ar film?

At what time does the film start?

23. Un distaol bennak zo hiziv?

Do you grant a discount today?

24. Me a garfe prenañ ur bragoù.

I'd like to buy a pair of trousers.

25. Ur bragoù hir am eus c'hoant da gaout.

I'd like long pants.

26. Me a garfe prenañ un hiviz/ur roched.

I'd like to buy a shirt/blouse.

27. Mat eo deoc'h ma tigor an ar prenestr?

Do you mind my opening the window?

28. Mat eo dit e lakafen kreñvoc'h son ar radio?

Do you mind if I turn the radio up?

29. Drenket o'ch ma vutunomp?

Do you mind if we smoke?

30. Grit! / Please do!

31. Grik eben ken!

Keep quiet! / Don't talk anymore!

*If you retain nothing else from these phrases, you should know how to say "please" in the Breton language.*

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

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The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 175,000 to 200,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

### Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

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

### What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?

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

### Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 15-20 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. In November 2006 we published our 100<sup>th</sup> issue.

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

The newsletter can be e-mailed as a PDF file you can share with others, and back issues can be found on our website. We are happy to send complimentary copies (ideally by e-mail) to organizations and individuals in Brittany active in work for their language and culture.

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

On our website we have published a guide to Breton music (updated in 2006), a guide to learning materials for the Breton language, an introduction to and map of the Celtic languages, a presentation of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools, and two documents presenting the Breton language and why it is endangered and what is being done about it. Bretons themselves have created many great websites to present their country and its culture, and we provide links to a large number of excellent and reliable sites created by Bretons themselves.

### Other Action

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

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

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

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

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