

BRO NEVEZ

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



Paludier de Batz, from Mrs. Bury Palliser's, *Brittany and its Byways*, 1869 – see pages 13-17.

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/March, May/June, August/September and November/December. 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.

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

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Editorial

With this December issue of Bro Nevez I send my best wishes of

Nedeleg laouen ha bloavezh mat

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



State of the Breton Language

Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg (www.brezhoneg.bzh) continues to serve as an important resource for those seeking assistance in locating schools or adult classes, in expanding a public presence for Breton, and in looking for help with translation and learning resources. Its website is also an excellent source for basic information about the Breton language. The following statistics are drawn from that website. They are my summary and/or translation of information (from French). My apologies for any misinterpretations.

Key Numbers for the Breton Language

206,000 active speakers of Breton (TMO-Fañch Broudic 2007 survey)
Under 200,000 today's estimate]

17,758 children in bilingual school programs - 2017 school year
[Diwan, Public schols and Catholic schools]

By Department:

Finistère	8,390
Morbihan	4,556
Côtes d'Armor	2,592
Ille-et-Vilaine	1,490
Loire-Atlantique	730

Number of students by type of program

Public schools	8,009
Catholic school	5,431
Diwan schools	4,318

514 establishments with a bilingual program – 2017

167 Communes with a primary school bilingual program – 2017

8% of pre/primary school establishments in Brittany have a bilingual program – 2016 school year

Finistère 16.9%
Morbihan 12.9%
Côtes-d'Armor 7.6%
Ille-et-Vilaine 3.1%
Loire-Atlantique 1.4%

Top 10 Breton cities by number of bilingual school students - 2017

Rennes	808
Quimper	715
Brest	649
Carhaix-Plouguer	572
Vannes	572
Lannion	545
Nantes	539
Landerneau	449
Plougastel-Daoulas	443
Lannilis	366

5,027 students taking a Breton option in the secondary school level – 2016

Middle school	4,547
High school	480

7,830 students having an introduction to Breton at the primary school level

920 college students – 2016
462 in a Breton language track

3555 adult learners - 2016
3,237 in weekly classes
318 in intensive 3 or 6 month long training

The following is a bit more information from Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg for the 2017 school year:

The Academy (school district) of Rennes is schooling 17,028 students in Diwan and the bilingual public and Catholic schools. The Nantes Academy is schooling 730. This is a gain of 734 students – the strongest gain since 2009.

12 new sites were opened in the pre/primary school level and 8 new classes were opened at the middle school level, breaking the bar of 500 bilingual sites.

Each of the three school tracks had a rise in students, but the rate in growth varied. The public schools profited from the State-Region convention and for the first time since its creation in 1982, ten new classes were opened at the pre/primary school level, with an 8.6% increase at

the pre-school level, a degree of growth not seen for 14 years. In contrast, the Catholic schools have not had a development program put into place and have not succeeded in gaining more than a few new teaching posts. Diwan has also been challenged in winning new teaching positions and also has the ongoing problem of finding public locations to open new sites. On top of this, Diwan was hindered this new school year by the question of new contract funding needs for school aides.

Also from the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg site:

The sociolinguistic situation

Breton was classified by UNESCO as a “language seriously in danger.” The development of teaching and political support from public powers have nevertheless given positive signs for the future of Breton.

The evolution of the number of speakers

Policies enacted to insure the exclusion of Breton in schools at the end of the 19th century (punishment of children who spoke it at school) strongly marked spirits and led to a rupture in the transmission of the language.

According to the survey by the INSEE during the 1999 census, 60% of Breton speakers were then over 60 years old. Thus the number of Breton speakers estimated at 206,000 in 2007 (TMO survey – Fañch Broudic) is probably situated today at below 200,000.

At the other end of the demographic chain among youth, the numbers are in constant progression. The Diwan schools created in 1977, complemented by bilingual classes in the Public schools (Education Nationale) begun in 1982 and the Catholic schools starting in 1990 have seen enrollments grow each year, from the preschool through high school levels (up 60% between 2006 and 2016). With 17,024 students in the 2016 school year [17,758 in 2017] and planning for the development of bilingual education undertaken by the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg in collaboration with the whole of the education community, the dynamic growth of bilingual classes is a very important sign of confidence in the future of the language. Thus, the work of the Observatoire des pratiques linguistiques [of the Ofis Publik] projects that with a sustained development of Breton teaching, by 2020 to 2025 the percentage of speakers among children under 12 could become greater than that of the population as a whole. By 2040 the number of Breton speakers could make an upward climb after more than 100 years of decline.

Today the “generation gap” is found in the 20 to 50 year olds. But there too, the number of learners has been rising for weekly classes with 3,233 adults, as well as for intensive training sessions for 3 to 6 months. The number of students in professional training went over the

300 mark in 2015/16, doubling the number since 2010. To reinforce these tendencies, attention should be given to the development of pre-schooling options such as day care and maternal assistants, to insuring continuity in bilingual teaching through graduation, to the implementation of complete programs for introducing students to Breton (now involving 14,000 students), to the development of training for adults, and diversification in post-baccalaureate options.

Absence of a legislative statute

The Breton language has been excluded for a long time from the public space and is still the only Celtic language without a legislative statute.

Thanks to the initiative of local governments and organizations, the visibility of the language has been much more developed over the past 30 years. Today, in three departments (Finistère, Morbihan, and the western part of Côtes-d'Armor) bilingual directional signage is systematically done. Communities have equally moved towards bilingualism in signs at the entry and exit of their territories.

Progressively, other supports have become bilingual:

Directional signs
Road name signs
Electronic signage
Paper brochures
Internet sites.

Finally, the Regional Council of Brittany was the first collective to prepare a plan for linguistic political action in 2004. Its action for the language spans culture, transportation, tourism, public buildings ... In 2016 the Department of Finistère, for its part, became the first department to adopt a linguistic plan.

Editor's Note: While it is true that local government agencies and the work of Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg have been effective in increasing the public presence of Breton, it is important to note that the militancy of Breton language activists was critical in setting a spark to this. And Bretons continue to protest and commit acts of civil disobedience in areas where the public presence of the Breton language is woefully lacking and only grudgingly introduced.

A case in point ...

In September the tribunal of Quimper decided that the Breton name Fañch could not be registered as the legal name for a baby born in May. This was because the ñ is not recognized in the French language. In the interest of French unity and equality, the name must be spelled Fanch. While this is an aberrant case, it is just one more instance to Bretons being denied the right to their

linguistic heritage. And it is an unnecessary burden on parents who must fight in court for the name – in this case with support of the Breton organization Skoazell Vreizh who has for many years supported those imprisoned or in need of legal defense because of their insistence on being Breton.



Project to Support a Memorial to Nominoë

Work is underway to raise funds for a monument to commemorate the victory of Nominoë over Frankish King Charles the Bald in 845 at the Battle of Ballon, located in Bains-sur-Oust (near the town of Redon in eastern Brittany). This victory led to the

recognition of Nominoë as the king of an independent Breton kingdom. The organization Poellgor Gouel Ballon (www.bretagne845.bzh) has as its aim the promotion of Breton history and the modern sculpture planned as well as a statue of Nominoë will be supplemented with educational information about the site and its importance in Breton history.

The project is supported by the Cultural Council of Brittany, the Regional Council of Brittany, the Cultural Institute of Brittany as well as local communities and individuals. Additional funds are needed, however to meet the goal of inaugurating the site in May 2018. Support can be sent via the website www.helloasso.com by entering "nominoe" or by sending a check (in euros) made out to "Memorial fete de Ballon" to Comité pour la Fête de Ballon, Mairie, 35600 Bains-sur-Oust.



Breizh Amerika now active in San Francisco (www.breizh-amerika.com)

Breizh Amerika maintains an informative website and there is no better way to describe this organization than by quoting from their website (which is in French, Breton and English):

Breizh Amerika is a non-profit organization established to create, facilitate, promote, and sponsor wide-ranging innovative and collaborative cultural and economic projects that strengthen and foster relations and cooperation between the United States of America and the region of Brittany, France.

Through the development and sponsorship of ambitious artistic projects we hope to increase awareness of

Breton culture, language and film to American audiences. We are guided by a passion to develop unique exchanges and collaborations between Breton and American musicians and artists, while inciting economic actors to expand opportunities and build durable Transatlantic links through our projects.

While much of the work of Breizh Amerika has been initiated in New York City, Bretons in San Francisco, California, will launch an active group there with a Christmas dinner on December 13, and will actively participate in the May 19-27 festivities for Gouel Breizh. While promoting cultural awareness of the Breton heritage the group will also foster economic exchanges between businesses in Brittany and San Francisco.

You don't need to be Breton to become engaged with Breizh Amerika. Friends of Brittany are most welcome. For more information about Breizh Amerika and the new San Francisco initiative check out the website www.breizh-amerika.com

Bernard Hinault at the Cycle Zydeco in Louisiana

While Breizh Amerika has fostered a number of musical and economic exchanges between the U.S. and Brittany, they have also been involved in a sportive initiative to bring Breton cyclist Bernard Hinault to the annual Cycle Zydeco race in Louisiana in May 2018 (4 to 8th). Hinault has been active with the cycling club "Souffles d'Espoir Contre Le Cancer" to raise money for the cancer center Eugène-Marquis in Rennes, and contributions from his Louisiana trip will also go to that cause.

If you are a fan of bicycle racing, you will definitely know who Bernard Hinault is. If you don't know him, here's a summary from Wikipedia: "He is one of only six cyclists to have won all three Grand Tours, and one of two cyclists to have won each more than once (the other being Alberto Contador). He won the Tour de France in 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982, and 1985. He came second in 1984 and 1986 and won 28 stages, of which 13 were individual time trials." He retired from professional racing in 1986.



Heard of but not heard – 22 New CDs from Brittany

Short notes are drawn from information Ar Men magazine 220 (Sept-Oct 2017) and 221 (Nov-Dec 2017) as well as from the Coop Breizh website.



The Celtic Social Club. A new Kind of Freedom.

10H10 productions. Called a rock band which originally formed for a performance at the 2014 festival Vieilles Charrues, this group is still at it and draws from the dance and song traditions of Brittany and

Ireland especially. The group on this CD includes singers Jimme O'Neill and Shjane MacGowan with Man Masko, Ronanle Bars (uilleann pipes), Pierre Stéphan (fiddle), and Mathieu Péqueriau (harmonica).



Championnat des Bagadoù, Brest 2017.

Bodadeg ar Sonerion This is a 3-CD set presenting the performance of 15 of Brittany's top category bagads at the 2017 championship competition (one of two competitions for the best of the best).

Cap Caval won this leg of the competition.



Coeff.4. Du vent dans les cordes.

This CD includes 12 selections of tunes and songs composed and drawn from the traditions of Brittany, Ireland and Quebec. Musicians making up Coeff.4 are David Boulange on fiddle and the unique

foot percussion of Quebec, Ciàran Somers with flute, whistles and uilleann pipes of Ireland, and Bretons Nicolas Quemener on guitar and vocals, and Gaël Lfèvre on bombard and vocals.



Pays Montagne – Chanteuses et chanteurs de tradition (1916-1978).

La Bretagne des Pays 5. Dastum.

The "mountains" of western Brittany are known for the kan-ha-diskan response style of singing

used to power the dance of this region, the gavotte. This was also the area where the fest noz was re-invented in the 1950s and masters of the Breton song tradition (songs for dance as well as the gwerz or ballad) dusted off their repertoire and inspired new generations of singers. Produced by Dastum, this double CD includes a booklet richly documenting the singers and the songs. Recordings date from 1916 through the 1970s.

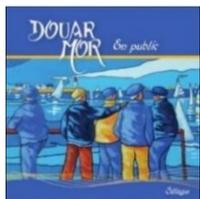


Digresk. Kengred.

This 3rd album by the group Digresk includes a varied selection on Breton dances in what is described as a "trad-electro-rock" style. Dances include polka, circle circassien, hanter-dro, galop nantais, and rond

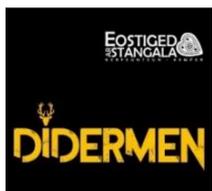
de Loudeac. Also featured is an 11-minute suite plinn in honor of the maritime work done by the Sea Shepherd

Conservation Society. And a 9-minute suite *fisel* recognizes the fight for LGBT rights and respect. Great music for dancing, but also a social message or two!



Douar Mor. *En public.*

This is a live recording of a performance by this maritime group from April 2017 in Plescop. The CD includes 14 selections of songs newly composed and drawn from a variety of the world's maritime traditions.



Eostiged ar Stangala. *Didermen.*

Based in Quimper, the dance group Eostiged ar Stangala has been performing since 1948 and they are known for their highly innovative choreography of Breton dances. This CD presents 4 suites of music with

17 selections (66+ minutes in all).



Jean Charles Guichen. *Breizh an Ankou.*

Guitarist J-C Guichen pays homage to Breton dance (*laride*, *gavotte*, an *dro*, *plinn*...) in a series of 16 selections. Besides the guitar of Jean Charles Guichen, musicians include

Claire Mocquard on fiddle and vocals, Olivier Carole on bass, Mickael Bourdois on percussion, Sylvain Barou on flute and uilleann pipes, and the Bagad Sonerien Bro Dreger. Dan ar Braz adds electric guitar on one selection and Denez brings vocals to another.



Yvan Guillevic and Anne Sorgues, *Do it your way.*

This CD includes 10 songs – in English – composed and arranged by Yvan Guillevic and Anne Sorgues. The style is described as a uniting of jazz, soul, and rhythm and blues, with

the pop sound of the Beatles and the blues of Eric Clapton or Jeff Beck with a touch of Pink Floyd. Guitarist Yvan Guillevic brings the pop/rock/blues edge while Anne Sorgues, singer and choir leader of Gospel Morbihan, brings the jazz and gospel swing. They are joined by drummer Patrick Boileau, pianist Frank Le Masle and bass players Bernard Clémence and Dominique Braud.

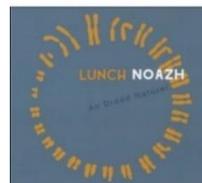


Yann-Fañch Kemener Trio. *Dañs !*
Coop Breizh CD1121.

Yann-Fañch Kemener is famous in Brittany (and beyond) as a master of traditional Breton language ballads and song for dances. And he has partnered with a number of

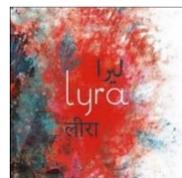
musicians for always-interesting arrangements of the

Breton traditional repertoire. Here he brings his voice to lead songs for Breton dances in collaboration with Erwann Tobie on accordion and Heikki Bourgault on guitar.



Lunch Noazh. *An Droed Naturel.*

Centered around saxophonist Julien Vrigneau, the group Lunch Noazh has a soul, jazz, and funk beat. This CD include 21 selections of tunes and melodies with songs in the Breton language.



Lyra, Lyra

This group is composed of six musicians - **Antoine Péran, Pierre Droual, Aziz Ouertani, Youssef Ben Dhifallah, Ilyas Raphaël Khan and Parveen Sabrina Khan** – who pool

their talents and musical roots in Brittany, India and Tunisia. Bretons have never been hesitant to collaborate in very interesting ways with musicians of other cultures and here is yet one more example of how great music can come from such meetings.



Menguy-Bérenguer, *Spring Days.*

Klam Records.

This is the first CD by this duo composed of flute player Erwan Menguy and guitarist Erwan Bérenguer. The wooden flute is not a

“traditional” instrument for Brittany, but has become so in the past decades as Bretons master it to interpret Breton music. Most start by mastering Irish music with this instrument and most of the selections on this CD are drawn from Ireland. However a suite of Balkan dances as well as a suite of Breton tunes are also included.



Duo Hamon-Martin and Annie Ebreil. *Fest-Noz Symphonique.*

This ambitious performance features traditional Breton dance with symphonic orchestral performance.

This original creation was composed by Erwan Hamon (flute and bombard) and Janick Martin (accordion) and was arranged by orchestra by Frédérique Lory and Grégory Dargent (who adds electric guitar). Annie Ebreil brings her mastery of traditional Breton language song and Antonin Volson adds percussion. The Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne is under the baton of Aurélien Azan Zielinski. Nine selections include a melody (*Al lann melen*), *ridée* in 6, *scottish*, *plinn* suite, *cercle circassien*, *kas a barh*, and *gavotte*.



'Ndiarz. Son 'Rod. Paker Production
This is the second album by this “fest noz band” who also explore complex melodies, drawing from Breton tradition as well as musics of Turkey, Libya, Brazil or Romania. With roots in the Kreiz Breizh Akademi, they

favor modal sounds and an improvisational style. The group includes Youn Kamm on trumpet, Timothée Le Bour on saxophone, Yann Le Corre on accordion, and Jérôme Kerihuel on percussions, with guest artists François Corneloup baritone sax) and Nicolas Krasik.



Les Ramoneurs de Menhirs. Breizh Anok. Du-man haDu-hont.

Any photo of this band will immediately identify them as “punk,” but this is a band that combines a rock sound with biniou-bombard, and on this CD (as with others) they bring

in the Bagad Bro Kemperle for added punch. And as usual, traditional singer Louise Ebrel is on board as well, giving her voice and high energy to a selection for dance called “Pach Punk.”



Gilles Servat. 70 ans ... à l'Ouest. Coop Breizh CD1123

For his 70th birthday, singer-song writer Gilles Servat has recorded a CD which includes a number of songs from his long career – rearranged and augmented in many

cases. With texts in both French and Breton (with a few verses in Gallo) the CD includes his own compositions as well as texts by Breton poets (René Guy Cadou, Yann Ber Kalloc'h and Anjela Duval).



Soldat Louis. Quelques nouvelles du front

This very popular rock band, Soldat Louis, celebrates its 30 years of performance in 2018 with a new CD of 13 previously unreleased titles.

The group includes electric guitars, bagpipes, snare drum, banjo, keyboard, fiddle, uilleann pipes ... and lots of voices (in French).



Trio Tartare. Ventouere.

12 selections of dances including kost ar c'hoat, hanter-dro, pile menu, gavotte, scottisch, kas a barh, avant-deux ... and others. Notes from Coop Breizh indicate that this is a trio of three wind-players, but I could not

find out more. While a Google search is usually great in finding more information mine took me only to food recipes!



Valier. Le Grand Frison. L'Eglise de la petite folie.

Patrick Chevalier (Valier) was active on the Rennes music scene with the group Complot Bronswick, but here gives us a solo CD with French song, rock and electro-acoustic

compositions. And the CD includes a performance of the traditional Breton ballad Evit bevañ gan levernez.



Jean-Michel Veillon and Yvon Riou. Deus an Aod d'ar Menez. VPC Productions.

While both of these well-known musicians of Brittany have remained active over many years, it has been a while since they have recorded as a

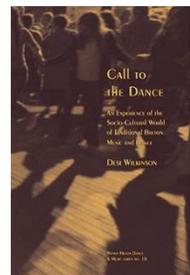
duo – Jean-Michel Veillon on wooden flute and Yvon Riou on guitar. They draw from the traditional dances and melodies of Brittany for these finely tuned arrangements.



Les artistes breton contre le cancer.

19 selections from a variety of Breton artists – of varying styles – to benefit Halte au Cancer. Performers are Dan ar Braz, Denez, Soldat Louis, Gilles Servat, Gérard Jaffrès, Ronan Le

Bars, Didier Squiban, Louis Capart, Gwennyn, Yvon Etienne, Les Mat-lots du Vent, Maestral Quartet, Laurie Guillou, À Virer, Les P'tits Yeux, Les Marins d'Iroise, Clarisse Lavanant, Les Gourlazous and Nautilus.



A New Book about Breton Music

Desi Wilkinson, Call to the Dance – An Experience of the Socio-Cultural World of Traditional Breton Music and Dance. Wendy Hilton Dance and Music (Series No.18)

In mastering fiddle, uilleann pipes, and the wooden flute, Bretons have delved into the traditional music of Ireland and there have been many exchanges between the two countries. While the fiddle is traditional to some areas of Brittany, the flute and uilleann pipes are not. This has not stopped dozens (hundreds?) of Breton musicians from using these instruments to interpret both Irish and Breton music – traditional and more newly composed.

This new book is by Irish flute player Desi Wilkinson who lived in Brittany from 1992 to 1994, learning and playing Breton music. He also has a foot in the academic world with studies in Ethnomusicology, so this is not simply a memoir of good-times in Brittany, but offers an analysis

of music and its social context. The book explores changes in Breton culture between 1970 and 2010. The 70s and early 80s were a period when Breton music was taking off as singers and musicians explored traditional roots and there was an explosion of new bands especially for dances at festoù noz. As both a musician and scholar, this book is sure to offer an interesting perspective on Breton music and its performance.

The book was launched in Ireland (Dublin and Belfast) in early December.

ABER Literary Review

www.aber-bzh.info

In the June 2017 issue of Bro Nevez this Breton literary review was introduced and we have been invited to continue to reprint abstracts from it. To reintroduce ABER, it was created in 2000 and has been directed by Pierette Kermaol with a number of Breton writers contributing to each quarterly issue with original works as well as translations from other languages. Its objective is “to foster literary creation and criticism and in a broader sense intellectual life in Breton. ABER aims at expressing the world in a Breton perspective.”

Reproduced here is a selection called “The garden of languages,” by Jorj Abherve-Gwegen, from the Autumn 2017 issue of the journal (No. 69)

Liorzh ar yezhoù (The garden of languages)

The English domain: English, the language of the elite. In the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* (2016-07-11), Yves Eudes wrote in an article that it is not just ordinary people who voted for the *Brexit*, but also many Britons belonging to the international elite. The *English-speaking world*, is the world of their own and as they are used to travelling days and nights across this area, they really do not care where they live. They feel at home in London, San Francisco, Sydney, Toronto, New York, or even in Dublin. These rich or famous people form, united, cohesive and enduring *anglo* communities in European capitals and don't want to integrate the culture of the people that welcome them.

Basque Country: the evolution of the Basque language, from the Middle Ages to the present day. A handbook intended to learn Basque language has just been published: *Ni lernu l eŷskan* (Let's learn Basque language). One of the authors of this work is the Basque writer Ator Arana, who had already published a Basque-Esperanto/Esperanto-Basque dictionary in 2015.

In the preface he wrote for *Ni lernu la eŷskan*, he provides an overview of the history of the Basque language and its situation nowadays. There is no trace of a written literature during the Middle Ages. “The first

book was published in 1545. From the previous periods there are only a few sentences, lists of words and one or two letters” he says. From older periods there are a few words dispersed in Roman texts, some peoples' names or place names. It was not until the beginning of the 18th century that the first dictionary and the first grammar were published.

It was absolutely necessary to create a standard written language to enable people who mainly spoke dialects to understand one another. It was a hard work throughout the 20th century. This unified language was first used in literature, at school and in the media. Gradually, its use became general so that there are thousands of people using it in the Basque country today.

Basque language has a vast and strong literature with many high-level writers and translators; however the status of the language remains very fragile: if the number of people speaking the language increases as it did in the last 40 years, it would take 200 years for everyone to speak it in the Basque country.

Italy: Primo Levi and the prison of languages

Primo Levi (1919-1987), an Italian Jew born in Turin, was deported in 1944 to the Monowitz concentration camp. Among the difficulties the deportees had to face, the Italians had one more: the language. The well-known writer explained in an interview in 1983 that there were only a few Italian-speakers in the camp where he had been sent, a hundred people out of ten thousands. Consequently, it was impossible to communicate with the other deportees: he didn't understand them and they didn't understand him. And among the Italians almost no one was able to speak the German or Polish language and only a few spoke French. This linguistic solitude was especially cruel because in the concentration camps keeping social links was the best way to survive.

As Sephardic Jews, the Italians couldn't speak Yiddish either. Thus they were rejected by the Eastern Jews who considered them as foreigners. In fact they were foreigners among foreigners! They felt as weak as Greek Jews, even weaker, because Jews Saloniki had had to harden by contact with the Greek orthodox population, which was not the case of the Italian Jews.

A Few Notable Bretons of the 19th & 20th Century – Part 4

From: Jean-Loup Avril, *Mille Bretons – Dictionnaire Biographique*. 2nd edition. Portes du Large. 2013

As I did for the last few issues of Bro Nevez, I am continuing here to include short biographical notes about Bretons who have contributed to the Breton language and culture. The three included here were all Breton

language writers born near the turn of the 20th century. References cited are those of the author. These are my translations and I take all responsibility for any misinterpretations that might be found. – Lois Kuter

Abeozen (Fañch Elies)

Breton writer. Born in Saint-Sauveur, south of Morlaix, February 20, 1896; deceased in La Baule, June 3, 1963. Professor on the Faculty of Letters and friend of Roparz Hemon, he was also a linguist and specialist of Welsh. He participated in the edition of *Breizh Atao*. He published theater piece and novels: *Hervelina Geraouell* and *Dremm an ankou*. *Mabinogion* is his translation into Breton of epic Welsh tales.

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Loeiz Andouard

Breton writer. Born in Binic (Côtes d'Armor) June 16, 1904; deceased in Lamballe June 14, 1985. Son of a customs officer, Louis (Loeiz) Andouard entered the École Nationale de la Marine Marchandise of St. Malo in 1921. He navigated for the Compagnie Havraise Péninsulaire and obtained his captain's license for ocean vessels. Put out of work due to the economic crisis of 1931, he became a journalist for *La Voix du Marin* published by the association created by Père Lebreton and the sea captain Ernest Lamont of Cancale. From 1935 to 1939 he was the head of the Secrétariat Social Maritime de Bretagne.

A friend of Yann Sohier, Loeiz Andouard mastered the Breton language and Gaelic, and published many articles in Breton journals – studies and translations. In 1940 Roparz Hemon appointed him director of the journal *Arvor*. In 1943 he joined the central committee for maritime fishing in Paris where he remained until 1969, retiring to Pléhérel. He then consecrated all his time to the Breton language. One owes to him *Brezhoneg ar mor*, a French-Breton dictionary of maritime vocabulary, a biography of Jacques Cartier in Breton, a Breton-Irish/Irish-Breton dictionary, as well as an anthology of contemporary Gaelic literature. His daughters gifted his library of Breton and Celtic materials to the City of Rennes.

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Roparz Hemon (Louis Nemo)

Breton writer and philologist. Born in Brest November 18, 1900; deceased in Dublin June 29, 1978. Admitted to the teaching post of English in 1924, he was a professor at the high school of Brest when he created a cultural quarterly supplement in 1925 for the journal *Breizh Atao*. In 1926 this supplement, published in the Breton language, became independent and came out monthly, taking the name *Gwalarn* (northwest). Not a Breton-speaker by birth, from his adolescence on he devoted himself to a study of Breton with passion. Roparz Hemon's action was focused on a renewal of the Breton language, an elaboration of a unified orthography, and an adaptation of vocabulary by creating new words based on the roots of the language. One owes to him the *Cours élémentaire de breton*, complemented by a *Grammaire élémentaire*. His *Petit dictionnaire pratique breton-français* (1929) has had several editions. Among his numerous works in Breton we cite: *An Aotrou Bimbochet e Breizh* (1925), *Alanig an Tri Roue* (1950), *An Ti a Drizek Siminal* (1956), *Ar Tri Boulomig Kalon Aour* (1961), *Mari Vorgan* (1962), *Tangi Kerviler* (1971) and *Nenn Jani* (1974).

During the 1939-45 war, Roparz Hemon was secretary for broadcasts of Radio-Bretagne controlled by the Occupant [Germany] who hoped to see linguistic and nationalist demands develop. He was also president of the Institut Celtique. In 1944 he fled to Germany and was judged in 1946. He went to Ireland where he pursued his linguistic studies and became a professor at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. In 1947 he published *La language bretonne et ses combats* (The Breton language and its combats), considered the best study on this subject.

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From the Editor: A Bit of Explanation

While Roparz Hemon can be considered one of the most (if not the most) important scholars and writers of and in the Breton language, he has served as a lightning rod – long after his death - for politicians and others who want to brand Breton nationalists and efforts to promote Breton language and culture as Nazi collaboration. Schools and cultural centers named in his honor have

been pressured to drop his name – a case in point being a Diwan middle school in 2000. Not the last effort to discredit his legacy. Hemon did not take up arms with the Bezen Perrot, but accompanied them when they retreated to Germany, returning after a year to Paris where he served time in jail. He was acquitted at a trial in June 1946 of collaboration with the enemy. Nevertheless, he was condemned to 10 years of “national indignity” (see the explanation below)

The history of World War II and the role of Bretons in collaboration with Germany as well as in the Resistance is a complex and painful topic, and myths persist. The following summary of the impact this history has had on the Breton language was written by Reun ar C’halan (René Galand) – who served in the Resistance - in an article “Poets and Politics: The Revival of Nationalism in Breton Poetry since World War II” (World Literature Today, Vol. 54(2), Spring 1980). I take the liberty of including a section of this article here since it provides useful context to understand the stigma that has remained attached to work to promote the Breton language and culture. - LK

It is impossible to discuss Breton literature today [1980] without mentioning politics. Choosing the Breton language as one’s literary medium is in itself a political act. Most Breton writers see themselves as soldiers waging a desperate battle against an alien power bent on suppressing their ethnic identity. Their efforts, over the past third of a century, have greatly suffered from the grievous mistakes made by the generation of Breton nationalists which preceded them. By the late 1930s the leadership of the Breton Nationalist Party had passed into the hands of men ready to use any means to achieve their goal of an independent Brittany, totally separated from France. Like the Irish rebels of 1916 who had sought German help against British authority, they turned to Nazi Germany for support. Their hopes were soon disappointed. After the French defeat of June 1940, the German government found it more expedient to deal with the collaborationist Vichy government of Marshal Pétain. By the end of 1940 the Breton Nationalist Party had split into two factions: the majority, under the direction of opportunistic leaders, attempted to negotiate at first with the Vichy government and, at a later date but to no avail, with the Anglo-American Allies. The pro-German minority still placed its hope in a final German victory. Its military organization, the *Bezen Perrot*, followed the retreating German armies to the bitter end.

Neither faction, however, took into account the true feelings of the Breton people, who were among the first to respond en masse to the call of General de Gaulle. Bretons were soon to make up half of the Free French Forces and a third of the Résistance. Only a handful of Bretons, on the other hand, actually enlisted in the Bezen Perrot; seventy-two at the most. Their action had dire consequences: it served as a justification for the

repressive measures taken against all Breton nationalists after the liberation of France in the summer of 1944. In November 1944, in one single week, 1,000 Bretons were arrested. Most of them were soon able to prove that they were innocent of any collaborationist activity and were released, but eight members of the Bezen Perrot were executed for treason. The pro-German leaders of the Breton Nationalist Party had managed to escape abroad; they were tried in absentia and sentenced to death. Others were given long jail sentences. Many members of the Nationalist Party had to spend several months in jail before coming to trial. Most were sentenced to several years of *indignité nationale*, which was tantamount to the loss of all civil rights – e.g., the right to vote and to hold office, the right to be a lawyer or teacher, the right to run a bank or to publish a newspaper. The repression was so harsh that the British government, prompted by the Welsh members of Parliament, felt compelled to lodge a protest with the French authorities.



Deep inside a Breton skull 54 – The old woman of Broceliande

(A tale from my book -in French- “Inquiries about the Merlin’s prophecies”)

Jean Pierre LE MAT

In my youth, I was good-looking and proud. I was rich and powerful. Great lords moved away from my path as I passed. They glanced at me. When I was just near them, they spoke in a low voice.

I have been a beautiful woman; today I am old and alone. The maids and the little servants who watched over all my wishes are gone. Now, when I have no more fire, I have to go in the forest to gather dry wood. Nobody comes to help me, nobody cares. I am alone and my beauty is gone.

I was rich and powerful. My father was a lord of high extraction. Our family comes from Hoël le Third and our ancestors were linked to Salaün, the great king of the Bretons. We possessed lands, from Dol to Ploërmel.

Ralph was not a Breton; he was born from a dynasty of Saxon kings ...

When my father married me to Ralph, Alan III, Duke of Brittany, was my witness. So was also Knut, King of England and Denmark. I had two kings for witnesses. My pride knew no bounds. That day, Knut and Alan gave to Ralph the Kadwallader's sword, sharp and black. The earls and barons offered us precious gifts. The mac'htierns, with the last fires of the Armorican clans in their eyes, smiled at us. A delegation of Welsh scholars brought us a damascened book, adorned with rich illuminations. The warriors and wise men of the two Britains surrounded us. I never saw such a feast.

Ralph was King Knut's best warrior. His red hair was like fire; his look was a sword blade. The little skinny princes called him Ralph the Staller. It is true that he shared with his horses a strange friendship.

My father gave me to Ralph. I was proud to be the wife of such a man.

He went to war against the Norwegians. At the peak of the fight, his giant size dominated the pack. His war cry filled his enemies with horror. He was the first to plunge his sword into the bowels of the Norwegians. He was the last to leave the battlefield after killing the wounded enemies. The fugitives carried with them, engraved inside their skull, the fear of meeting this terrifying colossus once again.

When Edward acceded to the throne of England, Ralph kept the honors due to his rank. But he remained taciturn. He did not like the bigotry and intrigues of the new court. The devotees murmured that it was him who killed the very Christian Olaf Haraldsson, King of Norway. His companions told me that it is true that he bore the banner of King Knut during the great battle.

Ralph did not like Christians. Our stays in Brittany, in my domain of Gael, became more and more frequent.

Ralph spent long days riding alone in the forest of Broceliande. He watched woodsmen and robbers there. None would have dared to lay hands on him, even if they had caught him in his sleep, at the foot of a lonely tree. He hunted wild beasts tirelessly, fulfilling a hidden need. One day, he told me that he met an old druid, who revealed to him secrets of the forest. Without knowing why, I was scared. I cried secretly.

I found happiness with my young son Raoul. When I look at the mothers rocking and kissing their babies, warm memories come back to me. I, too, rocked and kissed my dear son. I sang songs to put him to sleep. As I sang, I watched his eyelids closing and I was exulting in my young heart.

I raised my son in the Breton tradition. I saw in his eyes the flower of youth sprouting. How happy I was! He played in the gorse and the swamps. He wore on his forehead a light of purity. I cherished him tenderly.

Raoul grew up. I saw the pride of his race rising in his heart, my own pride. I saw the hand of a god above his young head and I shivered, as the mothers shiver. I saw my son becoming a man and getting tough. I wanted to scream. I wanted to curse. But I smiled at my dear son. I kept for myself the pain tearing my heart. I suffered at birth and I suffer for him again. God, the fate you have set for mothers is terrible.

I remember that night of terror, when it was revealed to me that Raoul would go away from me. The embers were glowing in the fireplace. Outside, the rain hit the stone walls like javelins. Lightning flashes illuminated the trees twisted by the wind. Thunder covered familiar noises. I imagined the saraband of the damned souls in the forest; I looked at my man and at my son. Like every night, Ralph was reading the Welsh book. In the light of the flames, I looked at his face. His eye sockets were empty, like those of a dead man. I panicked. I shouted, but no one heard me. As I fled out of the room, I felt Raoul's look on my back, like a dagger. I took refuge in the old tower. Throughout the night I sobbed, curled up against the damp wall.

In the early morning, when the storm had calmed down, I heard rumors in the stable. Ralph was saddling his horse. When he left the castle, I saw through a slit of the rampart that he was armed for war. Near him rode Raoul, my son.

That morning, a foreign soldier was found dead near the fountain of Barenton. His chest had been pierced by a spear and he was drained of blood.

Raoul returned seven days later, armed with Kadwallader's sword. He was smiling and he had soothing words for me. For a few years, he was a caring son, watching over my health and my desires. I realized that Ralph would not come back to live here anymore, and that Raoul had become the new lord of Broceliande.

Great news came to us, I remember, in the year 1065 after the birth of the Lord. William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, was preparing a warlike expedition against England. Raoul could not contain his excitement. I wondered if, in order to preserve our possessions on the island, he was going to side with the Saxons. A few months earlier, William ravaged part of Brittany. Although our domains had been spared, the Normans were our enemies.

Raoul gathered our vassals and the old companions of his father. To my astonishment, he suggested to join

Guillaume. To my second astonishment, they all accepted enthusiastically. There was a mystery there that I did not understand then. Raoul left with his troop. He was beautiful. Kadwallader's sharp, black sword was with him.

The news that came to me were similar to those which came to me thirty-five years ago, when Ralph was fighting against the Norwegians. Raoul had inherited from his father a colossal stature, and a blazing and taciturn mind. In the incandescent melting pot of battles, he dominated the bloody pack. His war cry, like that of his father, sowed terror among the Saxons.

William offered him, as a reward for his deeds, not the open crown of an earl or a baron, but the closed crown of a king. He offered him one of the richest kingdoms on the island, East Anglia. Raoul found his father there. I was told that they greeted each other as if they never were separated.

They organized their lands as warriors. True, East-Anglia was the shield of the island against the attacks of the Norwegians. William could only praise them for their carefulness, although it seemed excessive. I undertook to join them. I was so eager! The great wind of the sea was good for me. When I arrived there, my husband and my son welcomed me with joy. With them I met the new dignitaries of the island. I also saw some former administrators who had kept their estates and offices at court.

Relationships took up all my time. After the loneliness of Broceliande, I got drunk with relations. I frequented William's court. Meanwhile, Ralph and Raoul were always on the roads of their kingdom. They rode with their lieutenants, visited villages and bastions. They governed their domains with an iron fist, making sure to maintain obedience everywhere. They never left their weapons. Around them were Welsh and Breton mercenaries, fierce and ready to strike.

After one year there, I realized that my presence was becoming heavy to them. I left the swamps of East Anglia, I greeted my friends of the royal court. I went back to Broceliande.

Everything had changed. In the absence of the lords of Broceliande, the brigands had become bold. They attacked the Barenton castle and looted its riches. The villagers organized their own defense. My return comforted them. They allowed me to live in the ruins of the castle, blaming my stubbornness.

I wanted to stay here. Nothing could change my mind. I wanted to understand the spell that was put on us. I wanted to ward off the fate of my family. Misfortune compelled me to break the mystery. Now, I had a chance to contemplate what I was not able to see

before. Like the Knights of Arthur, I dived into the great adventure, watching for the signs that the Divine Guide would send to me.

All day I wandered in the forest, looking for a clue. I hunted and I fished. I searched the ruins of the castle. One autumn evening, I discovered the Welsh book in a chest crushed under a big stone. I grabbed it and for three days my hand shook. Since then, when night has come, I read the book.

I have become wild. A too curious brigand approached one morning from my shelter. He wanted to see the crazy Barenton woman. Long before he came near me, I grabbed my bow. With an arrow, I pierced his forehead. Then I unsheathed my knife. As if Ralph was guiding my hand, I engraved on his body, which was still fluttering and bleeding, the sign of the horned snake. The next day, his companions came to get his body. From a distance, I watched them. Fear distorted their faces. I was jubilant with their terror. Formerly, I was a gentle and nice woman. I was a tender mother. I have become wild.

It was in the Welsh book that I discovered, little by little, as a veil rising subtly, the answer I was looking for. Merlin's prophecies announced the reconquest of Britain and the defeat of the Saxons. Through victory will appear a new Arthur, a Breton and not a Norman bastard. The Cornish lineage of the first Arthur ended with Kadwallader. Then would succeed an Armorican lineage. I understood confusedly my wedding, the tired smile of the mac'htierns, the journey of Welsh scholars, the destiny that God had fixed on Raoul, my son. My heart swelled to the breaking point.

I wander all day in the forest. I hunt and drink the water from the fountain. I read the book. I have been alone for so long. The memory of my joy fades as the seasons are passing superbly above the collapsed walls of the castle. Around me the gorse grows and invades the ruins. I am alone and waiting.



Every year, on the first day of the black month, a messenger brings me news. He arrives at dusk. He ties his horse to the big beech tree. He takes off his helmet, finds his way among the scree and comes towards me with a slow step. He tells me his message in an impassive voice. He does not look around, he does not ask questions about me. He speaks of the deeds of Raoul, Lord of Broceliande and Breton Armorican. When his speech is finished, I realize that the night is here, probably for a long time. He puts on his

helmet, he unfastens his horse. He goes into the darkness.

During his first visit, the knight told me that Raoul had challenged King William on behalf of the Bretons, in the name of history written in books written by the hand of God. He showed to the king that his role as conqueror was temporary. In the sacred books, it is written that William will lead a people dressed in wood and iron corsets who will give back their homes to the first inhabitants of the island. But now the Red Dragon has to launch its victorious offensive. Under the Normans' armors, the great Serpent was about to arise. And he would give the coup de grace to the White Dragon.

William was not surprised. He gathered his expedition under the flag of the Red Dragon. It is why the Breton knights joined him. He knew the rough warriors of Brittany. He fought against them. He knew that the dream of reconquest haunted their hearts. Their help was precious to him. He knew that one day, despite the gifts and promises, the most impatient of them would challenge him.

The battles were bitter and confused. Men of the North landed in East Anglia. William did not know exactly whether the Bretons were fighting with them or against them. The Breton lords followed their old war traditions and refused to fight in open ground. They sowed terror and death in villages and garrisons. Raoul's warriors struck, burned, disappeared.

In the second year, the messenger told me about Ralph's death. He told me that his memory would remain in the hearts of all Britons. He spoke to me during a long time about Ralph. His eyes were shining.

After his departure, I remained awake all night, mechanically stirring the embers of the fire with a stick. I knew that Ralph was dead. I knew it well. For several months, I felt his powerful breath in a wind here. The mortal wind had crossed the sky and echoed between the stars, and finally it rested on our old stones. This wind of shadows and memories weighed on my neck and shoulders. Ralph and his horses are haunting the forest roads of Broceliande.

In the sixth year, the messenger told me that Raoul took refuge in the country of the Danes. That year, I did not know more. When the messenger turned his back I almost screamed, but my voice died in my throat. For a year I hunted with the night in my heart. My mortal arrows whistled ominously between the trunks of the tall trees.

The following year, the messenger told me that Raoul returned to Britain. He married the daughter of William Fitz Osbern, one of the greatest lords of the kingdom. In his domains and at the Welsh borders, he built several

bastions, among these the mighty Monmouth Castle. Raoul appealed to the men of the North and assembled a great Viking expedition. Two hundred drakkars followed my son. They failed to break the Norman defenses.

Now it is the first day of the black month. Night falls. I hear the footsteps of a horse. It's not the messenger. Now is coming a huge man. His armor is soiled. Under the iron, clothes are torn. I knew him right away.

He tied his horse to the big beech tree. He found his way among the ruins and he came slowly towards me. Before he removed his helmet, before he showed me his face, I recognized the high stature of my beloved son. He sat next to me, without saying anything.

I remember his features. I know his gestures. He remains silent. The flames dance. The heat of the fire makes him feel good.

I look at him and silently. I repeat his name, the name of my son. Every day my heart bled and today it is bleeding again. Raoul is back. He is near me. He will not be the great hero whom the finger of God will point to the Bretons. Raoul was defeated. He says nothing. He does not look at me. My heart is bruised and I am tired from having cried so much. Continuously, I repeat the name of my beloved son, I revive my pain.

Yet, deep down in my sorrow, I find my consolation. I know my son was not unworthy of the Red Dragon. One day, the fight will be victorious.

And I know that in the fury of the battles, his sword heavy with blood, foaming with sweat, screaming his formidable power, he had the beauty of the lion.



Travel in Brittany in 1869

For the past few issues I have been featuring excerpts from George Wharton Edwards, *Brittany and the Bretons* (1910). In this issue of Bro Nevez we go back a bit in time to 1869 with a description of the Loire River area – St. Nazaire, Croisic, Guérande, and the salt marshes of Batz. As is customary in travel writing of this period the author throws in bits of history with a description of scenery and costumes.

Fanny Bury Palisser (1805-1878) was the daughter of Joseph Marryat of Wimbledon, England, and Charlotte Frederic Geyer of Boston. She married Captain Richard Bury in 1832 and lived well beyond his death in 1852. They had six children. She is best known for her history of lace and this book on Brittany seems to be her only travel account.

Mrs. Bury Palliser. *Brittany and its byways – Some account of its inhabitants and its antiquities during a residence in that country.* 1869. London: John Murray. Pages 228-246

We descended the Loire by steamer, passing by vast granite buildings, built as magazines for colonial imports, called Les Salorges, in front of which the horrible noyades of Carrier took place, and these warehouses served as a temporary place of confinement for the victims. We next steamed past the island of Indret, the great manufacture of steam-engines for the State. Here we landed some market women, in caps of the same form, with high combs, as those of clear muslin worn by the Nantaises, only of a coarse material, and edged with black. On the right was Couëron, where Duke Francis II. died in consequence of a fall from his horse. The battle of St. Aubin-du-Cormier had decided his fate and that of his daughters,—a humiliation from which he never recovered. His faithful friend Rieux, who commanded his army, defeated by the youthful Louis de la Trémouille; the chivalrous Louis of Orleans, a prisoner in an iron cage in the "Grosse Tour" at Bourges; and the safety of his daughters at the mercy of King Charles VIII., or worse, of his imperious sister, the Regent Anne de Beaujeu, who would have committed some act of spoliation, had not the Chancellor Rochefort saved the duchy by his integrity, declaring to Anne that "a conqueror without right is but an illustrious robber."

At Les Pellerins, barges were loading with hay, and heaps of it standing on the river's edge ready for embarkation. On the left bank is Paimbœuf, where diligences run to Pornic, a favourite little watering-place south of the Loire.

St. Nazaire is a bustling seaport town, now the point of departure of the transatlantic steamers for the West Indies and Mexico. A Mexican, in his picturesque costume, all the seams of his dress fringed with hanging silver buttons, was living in the same hotel with ourselves. St. Nazaire has now a large floating basin, opened in 1858, capable of holding 200 ships of large size, and another is in course of construction.

It was from St. Nazaire that Prince Charles, the young Pretender, sailed on the adventurous expedition of '45, furnished with a frigate and a ship of the line by Mr. Walsh, of Nantes. Among the noble cavaliers who had sacrificed everything to follow the Stuarts into exile was

the Walsh family, originally from Ireland. They had shared the wandering fortunes of Charles II., returned with him at the Restoration to find the greater part of their property confiscated; but they did not hesitate to sacrifice the rest when James II. abdicated the throne, and a Walsh commanded the ship which carried the King to France. Sent on a secret mission to England, he was recognized, denounced, and arrested. James II. created him an Earl at St. Germain. Two of his sons had retired to St. Malo and Nantes, and engaged in commercial speculations, endeavouring thereby to restore the fortunes of their house. Commerce was strictly forbidden to the Breton nobles; but, when war or misfortune had reduced their fortunes, they were allowed to enter into commerce, or any other profession, without derogating from their rank, provided they first deposited their swords with the Parliament, to be again claimed when their circumstances were improved. All will remember the anecdote in the 'Sentimental Journey.' As a book, called 'The State of Nobility in Brittany,' published in 1681, sets forth: "When nobles are engaged in commerce, their noble blood sleeps; but when the derogatory works are over, it revives. It is never lost but in death."

But to return to the Walsh family. One of the brothers had embarked the remains of his little fortune in the business of "armateur"—a kind of shipowner, or one who fits out and charters ships, and sometimes commands them himself—the profession of Jean Bart and Duguay Trouin. * It was to this Anthony Walsh, and a banker of Dunkirk, that Prince Charles addressed himself to fit out an old worm-eaten seventy-gun man-of-war, the 'Elizabeth,' they had just obtained from Government for his expedition. True to the hereditary loyalty of his family, Mr. Walsh not only devoted all he possessed to the armament of the frigate, but also fitted out a brig, called the 'Doutelle'—both intended as privateers to cruise against the English—and took the command of her himself. On the 28th June, 1745, furnished with about 4000l. of money, Charles Edward embarked on the Loire, in a fisherman's boat, to join the 'Doutelle' at St. Nazaire, and the 'Elizabeth' at Belle-Isle. He passed for a young Irish priest, and wore the habit of a student of the Scots' College at Paris. The ships encountered an English man-of-war, the 'Lion.' At the sound of the first shot, the Prince rushed on deck and asked for a sword. Mr. Walsh, by virtue of his authority as captain, took him by the arm and said to him sternly, "M. Abbé, your place is not here; go below with the passengers." The Prince obeyed, night separated the combatants, and on the 18th of July he was safely landed in Scotland. On Michaelmas Day, the following year, the disasters of Culloden again threw him an exile on the shores of Brittany.

From St. Nazaire we took a carriage for Guérande, to visit that remarkable district called the Canton de Croisic, and consisting chiefly of that place and the Bourg de

Batz. We first came to Escoublac, a corruption of *Episcopi lacus*, deriving its name from a lake belonging to the bishop of the diocese.

The old town has been entirely buried by the moving sands which have blown over it, and, in 1779, its inhabitants transferred their houses to the present site. Hills of sand surround it in every direction.

Here we left the high road, and turned off to the left to Poulignan, a little white bay, as its name implies; a charming retreat, with beautiful white sands and picturesque rocks. This is a favourite watering-place with the Nantais. Its whole population appeared to be in the water. A row of small wooden *châlets* are built along the shore for the bathers, no machines are used.



44. Salt-pans, with Le Croisic in the distance.

From Escoublac begins the large extent of salt-pans in which consist the riches of this country. They reach to Batz and Le Croisic, the peninsula which forms this district having formerly been an island which gradually has been transformed into a marsh.

These salt-pans, cut out into small squares, have the appearance of one great chess-board, interspersed with occasional hamlets and woods. The working of them employs the whole population of the district.

They consist of large basins, dug at different depths, into which the water of the sea is introduced, and are divided into squares called "*œillet*." The salt-water is turned upon the marsh by canals styled "*étiers*," edged with narrow paths or roads called "*bossis*," elevated, some of them, three or four feet above the marsh; on these the newly collected salt is generally laid. The water passes by a subterranean conduit, the "*coëf*," into the "*vasière*," where the first evaporation takes place; and then successively into the "*cobiers*," "*fares*," and "*adernemètres*," until it flows finally into the "*œillet*," where the salt is definitively formed. Each "*œillet*" is about 20 feet by 30. The heat of the sun and the wind effect the evaporation, which the paludier assists by stirring the water from time to time. The salt which forms

on the surface resembles a kind of white cream, and exhales an agreeable perfume resembling violets. This is the finest salt; that which falls to the bottom of the salt-pan is of a greyish cast. The salt when formed is then scraped off, drained, and the women collect it and stack it on the "*bossis*" into conical heaps, which they cover with a coating of clay, to render them impervious to weather. In the salting season, the salt marshes with their innumerable hillocks of white salt have the appearance of a vast tent-covered camp. Each "*œillet*" produces about 150 lbs. of salt. The same salt-pans are worked from century to century by the same "*paludiers*" or their descendants. The proprietors may change, but the workmen remain, considering the salt-pans their prescriptive inheritance. For payment, they receive one-fourth of the salt.

The dress of the paludier is a smock-frock of irreproachable whiteness, with pockets, white shoes, gaiters, and linen breeches, an enormous black flap hat turned up on the side in a point or horn. The young man wears the point over the ear, the married turns it behind, and the widower in front. We reached the Bourg de Batz in time for vespers, and had an opportunity of seeing the people in their Sunday dress. The men wear three or four cloth waistcoats, all of different lengths, so as to let the various colours, red, white, and blue, with which they are bound, appear one above the other in tiers, a muslin turnover collar, full plaited breeches of fine cloth tied at the knee by garters of floating ribbon, white woollen stockings with worked clocks and light yellow shoes, their flap hats ornamented with a roll of chenille of varied colours.



Paludier of the Bourg de Batz, in his working dress and wedding dress

The headdress of the women is singular and most intricate. The hair, in two rolls, twisted round with white tape, forms a kind of coronet across their heads; over this, a piece of net is drawn tight, forming a sort of cap, describing a peak behind, and crossing in front like a handkerchief.

The dress consists of several petticoats of cloth plaited, red body, turned-up sleeves, and large coloured bibs or plastrons which they call "pièces," of the same stuff as their dresses. The girls' aprons are plain, without pockets, but the women's are of coloured silk, some of a rich brocade. A shawl with fringed border completes the costume. Some of the women had their heads and shoulders wrapped up in a triangular, black, shaggy sheepskin mantle; these were widows.

At the inn where we alighted, they keep the splendid costumes worn by the people at weddings and other great occasions; and, by paying them for their trouble, they will put them on for inspection. The bride's costumes are of great magnificence; they array themselves in three different dresses on their wedding-day. First, a gown of white velvet, with apron of moire antique; secondly, one of violet velvet; and the third equally costly. Embroidered sleeves, the "pièce" of cloth of gold, the petticoats looped up with a wide sash, embroidered in gold, and gold clocks to the stockings.

We were shown a state bed, or "lit de mariage," a tall four-post, painted red, with green reps tester and curtains, embroidered with yellow chenille. The great sign of wealth is to have the bedding reach to the top of the bedstead. To effect this, the base is formed of bundles of vine-stalks, over which is spread the straw, and when this scaffolding has been raised some feet, a paille is placed over it, then the feather-bed, so that it literally requires a ladder to ascend to the top of this mountain of bedding, and then it is difficult to crawl into it. There were a bolster and two pillows covered with velvet, which, with the sheets, were all trimmed with a kind of lace or cutwork.

The houses are solidly built of granite, and slated; the windows large. The furniture is good, generally comprising a well-waxed carved oak armoire, upon which are arranged earthenware plates of various colours.

The paludiers of Batz preserve their original type distinct from the peasants of the environs; and form, like the Jews, a separate people, intermarrying among themselves, retaining their own peculiar manners and customs. They are supposed to descend from a Saxon colony. The paludier is tall in stature; their women remarkable for their fair complexions, which contrast strongly with their sunburnt neighbours. They are loyal and devout, true to their word, courageous and enduring; though the paludier is miserably poor, from the oppressiveness of the salt-tax, he never complains. Begging is unknown. Their food consists of rye bread, porridge of black corn, potatoes, and shellfish. They are sober, and drink wine in small quantities.

Formerly the salt was distributed over the adjacent provinces by means of "saulniers," the journeymen labourers of the paludiers. Dressed in their picturesque costume, with a train of mules, whose tinkling bells announced their arrival, the saulnier was welcomed in every village where he sold his salt or exchanged it for other merchandize. "Le sucre des pauvres," as salt has been aptly called, was severely taxed under the old régime; distributions of the "sel royale" were yearly made by the Government among the gentry of the provinces, but the poor, who had no such privileges, severely felt the oppression, and smuggling was consequently extensively carried on, and the "faux saulnier," with his double bag across his shoulders, secretly sold salt upon which the gabelle had not been paid. With a faux saulnier originated the great peasant rising in Brittany, the Chouan war; a war to which Napoleon said, "All preceding wars have been but games." Jean, father of the four brothers Cottureau, was a maker of wooden shoes, and lived in a forest near Laval (Maine). From his solitary life he had acquired such sombre, wild, melancholy habits, that people gave him the name of Chouan, Maine patois for Chat-huant, and his family received the sobriquet long before the insurrection of 1792. Jean Cottureau was the most celebrated faux saulnier of Maine; he had accidentally killed a revenue officer in one of his encounters, and his heroic mother made a journey to Versailles, barefooted, "sur le cuir de ses pieds," to obtain his pardon. Jean's master and patron was guillotined, his two sisters shared the same fate, and one of his brothers died of his wounds, and his body was disinterred by the Revolutionists. These personal wrongs, the treatment of the King, the interdiction of the Catholic religion, its processions, its bells, the persecution of its ministers, all goaded the Breton peasantry to revolt; and Jean was the first to fire a gun against a Republican at the cry of "Vive le Roi." The rising began with a few peasants, armed with a gun or a stick, dressed in short breeches open at the knee, with leather gaiters, and coloured garters; their long hair streaming over the shoulders, their heads covered with a wide-brimmed hat, or brown or red cap, sabots tipped with iron, and, in cold weather, a loose coat of goatskin. The Chouans assembled in small bands and attacked the Republicans at night in ambuscade, and when they had killed a few "Bleus" disappeared among the corn-fields or the furze-bushes. Simple peasants, they fought against the Republicans in defence of the altar and the throne. Their "commandements" ran thus:—

"Ton Dieu, ton Roy, tu serviras
Jusqu'à la mort fidèlement.
Docile à tes chefs tu seras,
Afin de vaincre sûrement.
Sobre et discret te montreras,
Buvant peu, parlant rarement;
De ton chef jamais n'agiras
Attendant le commandement;
Violemment rien ne prendras,

Mais en payant exactement.
 Age et sexe respecteras,
 Etant soldat et non brigand.
 Les comités corrigeras,
 Et les mouchards chrétiennement;
 Né Breton, tu n'oublieras,
 Afin d'agir loyalement.
 Dans le succès clement seras;
 Dans le malheur, ferme et constant.
 Chaque jour ton Dieu tu prieras;
 Que peux tu sans son bras puissant?"

Such were the first Chouans: they had no organisation until they followed Larochejaquelin and the Vendean army to Granville, and accompanied them in their retreat; when their numbers were materially increased and their character completely changed by the deserters and brigands, who joined and eventually succeeded the peasantry.

The church of Batz is of cut stone. It has a square tower, surmounted by a cupola steeple, which with that of Le Croisic serves as a landmark to vessels having to steer between the two dangerous rocks Le Four, in front of Le Croisic, and Les Blanches, situated near the mouth of the Loire.

The choir is inclined, like that of St. Pol and others in Brittany. On one of the bosses in the interior is a grotesque carving of a man torn to pieces by the seven capital sins. On others are the Santa Veronica, the Good Shepherd, Ste. Barbara, &c. Near the church are the pretty ruins of the chapel of Notre Dame-du-Mûrier.

We drove on to Le Croisic, in Breton, "Little Cross;" so called from the small chapel of the Crucifix, built to commemorate the baptism by St. Felix, Bishop of Nantes, in the sixth century, of the Saxon colony who occupied the peninsula. Le Croisic was one of the first towns in Brittany which received Christianity, and bears for its arms a cross between four ermines. Along the road-side are cisterns or wells dug in the sand, and girls were filling with water the classical stone pitchers they carried upon their heads—quite an Eastern picture, suggestive of Rebecca and the damsels of her country. Le Croisic is almost surrounded by the sea, low, and without shelter, which renders it cold, damp, and exposed to the winds; turf is almost the only fuel used.

It is much frequented as a watering-place, and has an Etablissement. It is also a sea-port, with a rocky entrance to the harbour, and the dangerous rock with its lighthouse, called Le Four, extending for a league in front. The inhabitants of Le Croisic are principally engaged in the sardine fishery, and the curing of these fish consumes much of the salt of the marshes. The people complain this year they have no large orders for sardines, and there is but little white salt.

The chapel of St. Goustan, on the edge of the harbour, is singularly built; its western gable perched upon a little rock, half of which is inside and half outside the building. The church is no longer open for Divine service; but the peasant-girl who desires to know if she will be married this year, tries to pass a pin through the bars of the northern window without touching the wall. On the opposite side of the estuary are Périac and La Turbale, both seats of the sardine fishery. Returning the way we came, we stopped at the Plage Valentin, another bathing-place in a pretty little bay; with dressing-rooms and a small Etablissement. An omnibus conveys the bathers from Le Croisic, for two sous. The sea looks more inviting here and at Poulignan than at Le Croisic, where there is so much seaweed in the harbour. We returned through Batz; the cathedral tower of Saint Aubin at Guérande is to be seen at a great distance, and is a prominent object in the scenery; the whole country is covered with salt-pans. Guérande stands on a height, and turning back, the view of the whole district is most extensive. We passed through Saillé, where Duke John IV. married Joan of Navarre, afterwards the second wife of Henry of Lancaster.

Guérande, built on a vine-covered granite slope, is a singular old feudal town of the fifteenth century. It was fortified by Duke John V., and is nearly surrounded by granite walls, with ten towers and four old gateways, placed at the cardinal points of the compass. St. Michel, the principal gate, or rather a fortress, is flanked by two high towers, and contains the prison, archives, and hôtel de ville. A moat formerly surrounded the walls; but it has long been filled in, and boulevards substituted. From the battlements hang festoons of honeysuckle and ivy, and the moat is full of the yellow iris and water-lilies; nevertheless, Guérande has an austere, sombre aspect. There is a fine terrace walk, called the Mail, commanding a view of the whole country over Poulignan, Batz, and Le Croisic—a tented plain of salt.

The church of St. Aubin has Romanesque columns, with grotesque capitals. In one, two persons are sawing a third, stretched upon a wheel. On the left of the double-arched porch, is a pulpit outside the church, and there is some good painted glass within. Notre Dame Blanche, a chapel of the fourteenth century, is a pretty little building with stone pulpit and a sculptured group of Notre Dame-de-la-Salette with the two peasant children of Alsace.

* The late Vicomte Walsh has written "Gilles de Bretagne," and other novels, will all a Breton nationality. His son, the present representative of the family, occupies the beautiful Château of Chaumont on the Loire, devolved to him by right of his accomplished wife, the widow of the Comte d'Aramon.

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