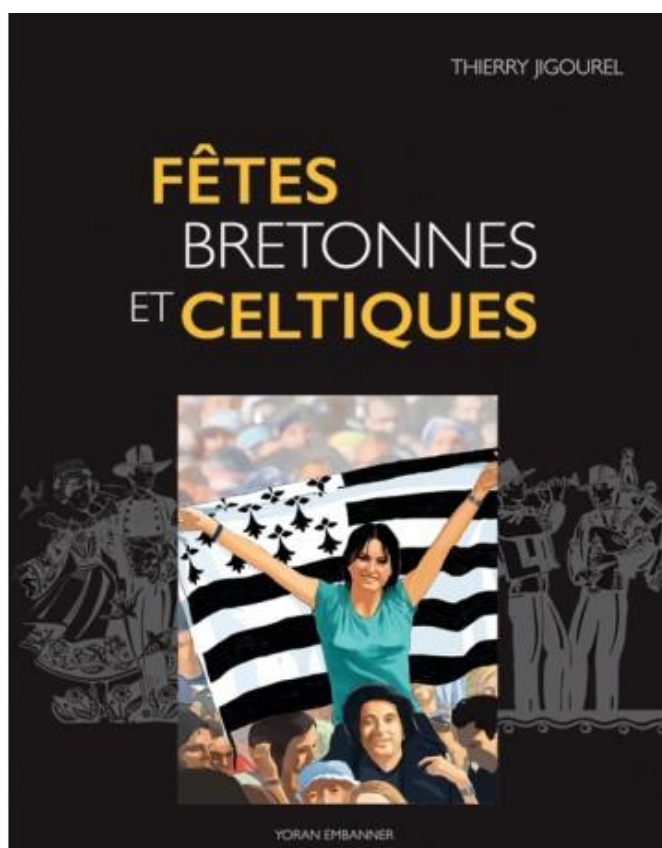


BRO NEVEZ

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

This newsletter can be sent as a PDF file attached to an e-mail instead of the print version. Just let the Editor know how you would like to receive it. The e-mail version is much more colorful than the photocopied print copy!

Back issues of Bro Nevez can be found on the U.S. ICDBL website

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



Editorial

As you will read in these pages of Bro Nevez, Brittany has not stood still during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a more rural area it has been less impacted by other areas of France and Europe, but nevertheless Brittany's economy has been hit hard. While tourism flourished other areas suffered, and this was especially so in the cultural world where festivals, concerts and festoù-noz were very limited or cancelled. But I have no doubt that dancing and music making and the socializing that is so much a central part of these will be back as soon as Bretons are able to amp things back up. LK

On the Cover – See a book review of this new work by Thierry Jigourel later in this issue of Bro Nevez (page 9).

A New School Year for the Breton Language

The Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg posts numbers each year for the school year and the presence of Breton in the classroom. Despite Covid-19, bilingual programs continue to grow with 20 new sites at the pre- and primary school levels this fall.

In the Region of Brittany (four departments) under the Rennes Academy Diwan opened a third Breton immersion school in Quimper for pre-schoolers. Public schools opened 11 new bilingual programs, down from 15 new openings the previous school year. Catholic schools opened 6 new bilingual programs, the largest number of new openings in fifteen years. Finistère has the most schools with just two communes with a population over 5,000 without bilingual options. In the Nantes Academy (Loire-Atlantique) 2 new programs opened in Nantes and Saint-Nazaire, up from just 1 site in the past year.

At the secondary level there is also good news with the opening of a second Diwan high school in Vannes. In the public schools a new bilingual stream was added at the middle school in Callac. Four new Catholic bilingual programs were added to three middle schools and the high school in Sainte-Anne-d'Auray.

In all, that's 26 new bilingual programs for this school year – 20 at the pre and primary school level and 6 at the secondary level.

Diwan has 48 schools, 6 middle schools and 2 high schools with some 4,200 students. But the Covid-19 crisis hit Diwan hard since it limited (canceled) important fund-raising events. Sadly the Diwan school in Questembert was unable to reopen.

And the Diwan school in Landerneau – the special school linked with the U.S. ICDBL? A newspaper article in May announced the reopening of the school on May 14 after closure in March like other schools. As of early June some 40 primary school children of 82 children (both pre and primary levels) attended the spring re-opening, while the preschool level remained closed. Parents, teachers, and school staff worked hard to put all the necessary health protocols in place.



Skol an Emsav Lessons for English Speakers

Skol an Emsav has offered virtual learning opportunities for some ten years in addition to classes and face-to-face learning opportunities for adults for the past fifty years.

They are working with Breizh Amerika to promote a new weekly online class which spans 30 weeks from this September to June 2021. Classes are 1 ½ hours per week and tuition is 200 Euros (with a 10% discount for Breizh Amerika members). The course is designed for beginners to lower intermediate learners and will cover the basics to teach you to communicate in everyday life.

As Breizh Amerika puts it, this is the opportunity to “learn the coolest Celtic language in the world, from home” – no disrespect intended to Welsh, Cornish, or the Gaelic languages of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man.



Breizh Amerika has been active in a number of initiatives to link the U.S. to Brittany, most notably in the exchange and tours of musicians. They also launched a

successful start-up contest for small business of Brittany, and made news with the development of a craft beer called “Breizh Amerika” brewed at the Brasserie Lancelot in Brittany. Breizh Amerika has an excellent website loaded with information about their work and about Brittany. Check it out for more information on the Skol an Emsav Breton language classes: www.breizh-amerika.com



Breizh 5/5 Celebrates Five Years

For five years Breizh 5/5/ has rallied Breton communities, and economic and cultural activists to join its push to reunify Brittany – getting the department of Loire-Atlantique officially recognized along with Ile-et-Vilaine, Morbihan, Côtes d’Armor and Finistère as Brittany. 71 communes have become members and some 280 signs have been put up to show support of reunification. Activities in cultural, sporting, economic and commercial worlds have also been organized such as the annual “Rencontres Breizh 5/5” in partnership with Bretagne Prospective.

While Bretons continue to push for the reunification of Brittany, resistance and antagonism to this by the French government also continues. Definitively separated from Brittany in 1941 by Petain, Loire Atlantique is administratively part of the Pays de la Loire. But culturally there is little doubt of the Breton identity of this department and the role of Nantes historically as Brittany’s capital underlines this. Despite the fact that the Breton language was not spoken in most of the department historically, Breton language signage and bilingual schools have been embraced. When it comes to music, dance, festivals, and other cultural events, there is no border between Loire-Atlantique and the rest of Brittany despite efforts to convince people there that their identity is of the Pays de Loire. Economically as well as culturally, people of the Loire-Atlantique department recognize the advantage of a strong Breton identity and some 40+ companies there use the label “Produced in Brittany” to market their products.



Kenleur – A New Partnership for Breton Culture

Both Kendalc’h and War’l Leur have been around for many years as federations of cercle celtiques and Breton cultural groups. Kendalc’h was launched in 1950 and War’l Leur in 1967. While they seemed to have the same goals of engaging youth in Breton culture – fostering music and dance, as well as teaching the Breton language and history – the emphasis was different enough for each federation to remain on parallel tracks. In June 2020 the 22,000 members of these federations voted to combine efforts. And this will be a good thing! While still a work in progress, keep an eye on their new website kenleur.bzh for news.



SKOL-UHEL AR VRO
INSTITUT CULTUREL
DE BRETAGNE

Six New Members of Brittany's Order of the Ermine

On September 26 in Guerande the Cultural Institute of Brittany /Skol Uhel are Vro will welcome six new members of the Order of the Ermine. The Order of the Ermine was established in 1381 by Duke of Brittany Jean IV to affirm the preeminent role of Dukes and Breton nobility and a desire to unite behind their sovereign. The Order was unique in being open to women and commoners. As with all the chivalric orders, the Order of the Ermine was abolished with the French Revolution and the last medallion that ornamented the tomb of Jean IV in the cathedral of Nantes was destroyed. At the initiative of Senator Georges Lombard, president of CELIB (Comité d'Étude et de Liaison des Intérêts Bretons) the medallion was given to René Plevin on September 29, 1972. In 1988 the Cultural Institute of Brittany, followed upon CELIB to continue to honor men and women who give a lifetime of service to Brittany.

Ordinarily four individuals are inducted each year but this year's honorees include members of the musical group Tri Yann – Jean-Louis Jossic, Jean Chocun and Jean-Paul Corbineau – for their 50 years of promoting Breton music. Also to be inducted are Anna Mouradova, a teacher, translator and author in the Breton language; Jorj Belz, a teacher of Breton, singer and collector of the Vannetais tradition, and Pascal Jaouen, a master and teacher of Breton embroidery and its use in contemporary design.

The biographical presentations and photographs below are from the Cultural Institute of Brittany with my English language translations (from the French).

Jorj BELZ :

Treizher pinvidigezhioù bro Wened

Ganet eo bet Jorj e Plouharnel e 1951.

Jorj a zo bet kelenner brezhoneg, istor ha douaroniezh, soner ha kaner eo ivez, dastumer hag enklasker.

Buhez en deus roet d'ar strollad **An Drouzerion**, krouet e 1974, e lec'h ma oa bodet tud a bep seurt oad eus remziadoù disheñvel. Graet en deus ul labour dastum a bouez ha treuzkaset tonioù ha kanaouennoù hengounel a vro Wened. A-drugarez dezhañ ez anavezomp teñzorior kanet gant tud evel Job Kerlagad pe c'hoazh Jean Le Meut.

Embannet en deus, e div levrenn, un dastumad kanaouennoù eus bro Wened. Enno e kaver, estreget ar c'homzoù hag an tonioù, skeudennoù kanerien ha dañserien. **Sonamb get en Drouzerion** (emb. Hor Yezh).

Ur mailh eo war istor al lennegezh e brezhoneg ha skrivet en deus bet meur a bennad er gelaouenn **Hor Yezh**.

Eñ eo en deus strollet ar pezh a oa bet dastumet gant Pêr ar Go eus Baod (1860-1941) el levr *Œuvres de Pierre Le Goff (1860-1941) : Proverbes bretons du Haut-Vannetais, les mystères bretons, petite histoire littéraire du dialecte de Vannes* embannet gant Skol Uhel ar Vro e 1986.

Anavezout a ra mat-tre ivez oberoù ha buhez **Yann Bêr Kalloc'h**, skrivagner eus Enez Groe.

Ingal e ra prezegennoù diwar-benn orin hag istor ar pardonioù e bro Wened, diwar-benn al lidoù, ar relegoù, ar c'hantikoù hag ar feunteunioù. Aozañ a ra ivez stajoù kanañ. Ezel a-enor eo eus laz-kanañ paotred bro Bondi **Kaloneu**.

Brezhoneg eo yezh ar gêr, ar pezh a ziskouez kempoell e enouestl dibleg evit Breizh hag ar sevenadur.

E vamm a oa kemenerez ha fererez koefoù, n'eo ket souezhus neuze en defe dastumet gwiskamantoù ha koefoù. Un diskouezadeg a zo bet dalc'het e Pondi ha Jorj a oa eno evit displegañ ha respont da c'houlennnoù ar weladennerien.

Ur vuhez a-bezh gouestlet d'an dastum ha d'an treuzkas e kement stumm a zo evit mad sevenadur ar vro.



Jorj Belz

Transmitter of riches
of the Vannetais
Pays

Former teacher of
Breton and
history/geography,

he is a musician and singer as well as a collector, gatherer and researcher.

He was the mainspring of the group An Drouzerion, created in 1974, which included several generations. He took on work there to collect and pass along a traditional repertoire of the Vannetais Pays. He made known and transmitted song treasures from personages such as Job Kerlagad and Jean Le Meut.

He published a collection of songs of the Vannetais Pays in two volumes. These books contained the words and music and were enhanced by photos of singers and dancers. *Sonamb get en Drouzerion* (Ed. Hor Yezh 1985). He is a recognized expert on literature in the Breton language and contributed to articles for the journal

Hor Yezh. He was the one who put together the impressive collection of Pierre Le Goff of Baud (1860-1941) in *Oeuvres de Pierre Le Goff (1860-1941): proverbes Bretons de Haute-Vannetais, les mystères Bretons, petite histoire littéraire du dialecte de Vannes*, edited by the Cultural institute of Brittany in 1986.

He is equally a recognized specialist on Yann-Ber Kalloc'h, writer from the Ile de Groix.

He regularly leads conferences on the origin and history of pardons in Pays Vannetais, on rites, relics, cantiques and fountains, as well as gives workshops on song. He is a member of the men's choir of Pontivy Kaloneu.

Breton is also the language of his family and shows thus the coherence of his unfailing engagement for Brittany and its culture.

His mother was a seamstress and ironer of coiffes, and it was quite natural for him to put together a collection of costumes and coiffes which were central in exhibits in Pontivy where he was very much present to lead discussions and answer visitors' questions.

All of a life in service to the conservation and expression of Breton culture in all its forms.

PASCAL JAOUEN

Pascal Jaouen a zo bet ganet e 1962 e Kemperle. Tremenet en deus e vugaleaj e Banaleg. Abred-tre eo bet desachet gant ar gwiskamantoù a veze douget gant ar merc'hed er gouelioù. Kroget en deus da zastum kartennoù-post gant gwiskamantoù warno ha dizoloet pegen liesseurt e oa dilhad ha koefoù ar vro.

Adalek 8 vloaz e kemer perzh e Kelc'h Keltiek Kemperle ha goude-se e hini Eliant hag e hini Konkerne. E 1995 emañ e hini Pont 'n Abad hag e vo prezidant ar c'helc'h e-pad seizh vloaz.

Tremen a ra kalz a amzer o tastum gwiskamantoù, doareoù ober dibar, teknikoù gwriat hag an danvezioù implijet. Renabliñ a ra tresoù ha teknikoù Kerne, ar stummoù implijet hag ar poentoù brodiñ na gaver ket el levrioù, met a zo bet treuzkaset dre gomz a rumm da rumm. A bouez e oa evitañ saveteiñ ha treuzkas arz ar vroderien vreizhat.

E oberenn gentañ a zo gwiskamant eured ur plac'h nevez, giz Eliant, evit ur vignonez. Goude e reas ur gwiskamant brodet evitañ e 1980. Evit brozh badeziant e verc'h en deus heuliet ali ar vroderezh Viviane Hélias, eus ar gevredigezh War'l Leur. Deuet da vezañ akuit, en deus roet kentelioù brodañ er stal-labour *Le samedi du brodeur* e Mirdi Breizh Kemper

E labourioù a vez diskouezet ingal : e Biennale Bayeux e 1995, e diskouezadeg etrebroadel Tokyo e 1998. Krouiñ a ra dilhad evit diskouezadeg "Métissages" el Louvres e Pariz e 2001 hag e 2002 hag evit meur a hini all goude (Brazil, Mec'hiko, Stadoù-Unanet).

Digeriñ a ra e 2003 ur stal wriat evit krouiñ dilhad war goulenn. Abaoe 2008 en deus graet dilhad evit ar c'hanerezh Gwennyn pe Nolwenn Leroy da skouer. Brodet en deus ivez ur gwiskamant akademisian. Abaoe ez aoz dibunadegoù dilhad, hag e kendalc'h da stummañ ha d'ober stajoù.

Tri levra a zo bet savet diwar e oberoù : *Le Brodeur Bleu* gant Danièle LE PAPE ha Florence GRALL (Emb. Le Télégramme 2005), *Gwenn ha Du* (Coop Breizh 2014), *War an hent - Sur la route de Bannalec à Compostelle* gant Danièle LE PAPE ha Béatrice LE GRAND (Emb.Ouest- France 2019).

Desket en deus e vicher e-unan hag entanet eo gant e labour, anavezet eo evel ur mestr e bed an dilhadouriezh. Dastumet ha gwarezet en deus ur glad prizioù ha treuzkaset d'ar rummadoù da zont e ouiziegezh hag e ijin.



Pascal Jaouen

Born in 1962 in Quimperlé, he spent his childhood in Bannalec. Very early on he was fascinated by the costumes worn by

weighty ladies at festivals. Beginning in 1971 he collected post cards and discovered the diversity of costumes and coiffes from one area to another. When he was eight he joined the Cercle Celtique of Quimperlé, then those of Elliant and Concarneau. In 1985 he joined the Cercle of Pont-l'Abbé which he presided for seven years.

Through a collection of costumes he investigated the techniques, needles, and material used. He catalogued the motifs and techniques of Cornouaille, procedures, and needle work not described in writing but transmitted orally, conscious of the urgency to save

and transmit the art of Breton embroiderers. His first work, a marriage dress copied from a costume at Elliant, was for a friend. Then, an embroidered costume for her in 1980. To create a baptismal dress for her daughter he followed the teaching of the embroiderer Viviane Hélias with the confederation War'l Leur. A quick learner, he led embroidery classes also at the workshop "Le Samedi du Brodeur" at the Musée Breton in Quimper.

In July 1994 he created L'école de broderie d'art de Kemper. Alone at the start he developed the structure with five teachers there today and some fifteen schools. He put together workshops in France and other countries (Switzerland, Belgium, Rumania, Canada).

His work was exhibited at the Biennale de Bayeux in 1995 and the international expositions of Tokyo in 1998. In 2001 and 2002 he participated in the creation of several rooms for the exhibit "Métissages" at the Louvre in Paris, followed by others (Brazil, Mexico, U.S.A.)

In 2003 he opened a shop to make personalized creations. Since 2008 he has created dresses for singers Gwennyn and Nolwenn Leroy. He embroidered a costume for Academicians. Since then he has organized showings of new collections, pursuing training and workshops as well.

Three books have been published about his work: *Le Brodeur bleu* with Danièle Le Pape and Florence Grall (Ed. Le Télégramme 2005), *Gwenn ha Du* (Coop Breizh 2014) and *War an hent – Sur la route de Bannalec à Compostelle*, with Danièle Le Pape and Béatrice Le Grand (Ed. Ouest-France 2019).

Passionate about self-teaching, recognized master of high fashion, he has collected, saved an inestimable Breton patrimony, and initiated a creative new impact in transmitting his knowledge and innovative capacity to future generations.

Anna Mouradova
Анна Романовна Мурадова

Anna zo bet ganet d'an 12 a viz Kerzu 1972 e Moskov. Graet he deus studioù e Skol-veur stad ar yezhoniezh e Moskov (1990-1992) hag e Skol-veur Roazhon 2 (1992-1994) goude-se, echuet he deus gant he studioù e Moskov (1994-1997).

Desket he deus brezhoneg hec'h-unan gant hentenn Tricoire ha troet goude-se oberennoù skrivagnerien rusian (Tchekhov, Gabriadze, Astafiev, Tendriakov) a-raok kregiñ da skrivañ war-eeun danevelloù e brezhoneg o tremen e bro Rusia en devezh a-hirie.

Bet eo hi an hini nemeti na vefe ket Breizhadez o kaout priz Imram, ur priz a vez roet bep bloaz e Sant-Malo d'un den evit hollad e oberennoù e brezhoneg.

Plac'h ar yezhoù eo Anna Mouradova, barrek eo da gomz un dek bennak, en o zouez saozneg ha kembraeg, galleg hag ivez arameeg modern peogwir eo a-orin asiriad. Liammet eo hec'h anv d'ar brezhoneg dreist-holl, ha reiñ a ra ur plas bras d'hor yezh en he skridoù.

En tu-hont da se, he deus savet meur a levr hag en o zouez un hentenn evit ar rusianegerien da zeskiñ brezhoneg, ur romant polis e rusianeg, steuñvenn an istor a zo diwar-benn un dornskrid brezhoneg bet kollet, skrivet he deus ivez ur studiaden *Kudennou an treiñ diwar ar rusianeg e brezhoneg* hag ul levr danevelloù *Un dornad kraoñ-kelvez* (embannet gant Skrid) tapet ganti Priz Pêr Roy, (USV) evit ar skrid-se.

Emañ bremañ o chom en he bro orin e Tbilissi e Jorjia.

Anna Mouradova, skrivagnerez ha pedagogourez he deus roet an tu da lakaat anavezout yezh ha sevenadur Breizh d'ar pobloù broioù kevredet Rusia.



Anna Mouradova

She was born December 12, 1972 in Moscow. She studied at the State

University of Linguistics of Moscow (1990-1992), at the Université de Rennes 2 – Haute Bretagne (1992-1994), before terminating her studies in Moscow (1994, 1997).

After learning Breton on her own using the Tricoire method, she translated Russian authors into Breton (Tchekhov, Gabriadze, Astafie, Tendriakov) before writing her own short stories in Breton in which the action takes place in today's Russia.

She is the only non-Breton to have been given the Imram prize, awarded each year in the Corsair city of Saint-Malo to a person for the body of their work in Breton.

Truly passionate, Anna Mouradova has mastered a dozen languages from English to Welsh, in passing through French as well as modern Aramaean, being of Assyrian origin. Her name is nevertheless associated above all with Breton for which she has given a choice place in her work.

In addition she has been at the origin of multiple projects, notably a method for Russian speakers who want to learn Breton, but also a crime novel in Russian in which the mystery revolves around a missing Breton manuscript, a manual *Kudennou an treiñ diwar ar rusianeg e brezhoneg* (translation of cultural realities of Russian in Breton), or yet a collection of short stories called *Un dornad kraoñ-kelvez* (a handful of hazelnuts) which was awarded the Prix Per Roy by the AEB.

She resides in Tbilissi in Georgia which is her land of origin. Anna Mouradova is presented thus as a teacher and writer who has allowed peoples of the Federation of Russia to discover and learn the Breton language and culture.

TRI YANN

E dibenn ar bloavezhioù 60 e sene Jean Chocun ha Jean-Paul Corbineau tonioù Hugues Aufray pe ar Beatles gant ar gitar. Kejañ a reont neuze gant Jean-Louis Jossic en unan eus o abadennoù noz, hemañ a zo ezel eus kelc'h keltiek Jacques Cassard hag e laka anezho da soñjal e vefe mat krouiñ ur roll tonioù dezho o-unan diazezet war ar sonerezh keltiek hengounel, hini ar vro dreist-holl.

D'ar 27 a viz Kerzu 1970 en em gav an tri c'hamarad e Plouharnel gant un toullad mignoned hag e sonont gant ar gitar hag ar fleüt iwerzhonat ur gavotenn ar menez ha pastourelenn Sant-Juluan. Un nebeud sizhunvezhioù war-lerc'h, un den sot-pitilh gant o sonerezh, a ra an **Tri Yann an Naoned** diouto. Setu diwanet ar strollad.

Gwelloc'h eo ganto an abadennoù evit ar balioù breizhek, alies e vezont e ti ar yaouankizoù hag e kreizennoù sokiosevenadurel. Mont a reont war roudoù an Namnediz a veze klevet un toullad bloavezhioù a-raok, o klask lakaat asambles ar yaouankizoù a selaou Bob Dylan hag ar Rolling Stones gant ar re a zañs war mouezhioù kanerien Gemene.

Gilles Servat bet e unan eus o abadennoù e penn kentañ 1972 a ginnig dezho enrollañ ur bladenn gentañ e ti Kelenn. Skoazellet int bet gant ar mediaoù (José Artur, Jacques hancel) ha dibabet int bet, hag int-i amatourien c'hoazh, gant Juliette Gréco evit kanañ e lodenn gentañ hec'h abaden. Deuet int da vezañ tud a-vicher e 1973.

Muioc'h-mui a dud a ya da selaou anezho, met an Tri Yann n'int ket gwelet mat gant an emsav a-bezh. Cheñch a raio an traoù gant ar bladenn *La Découverte ou l'Ignorance* deuet er-maez e 1976, un taol ruz evito, echuiñ a ra ar bladenn gant ur pennad skrivet, ur manifesto, diwar bluennt Morvan Lebesque : *Est Breton qui choisit de l'être*. En o fladennoù e vez atav un tem dibabet bennak, alies e savont ton ha son ha difenn a reont, int-i Breizhiz ar Glad, an Ekologiezh, an Istor, ar Justis, ar Peoc'hgarouriezh...

Tremen a reont eus ar folk d'ar rock, gant levezon ar sonerezh a-vremañ. Ne zisoñjont na pinvidigezhioù kan an Azginivelezh nag an arz barokhep ankounac'haat al leurenniñ. Ne reont ket pladennoù hepken met mont a reont dirak an dud, leuniañ salioù evel ar Zeniths pe kanañ e Stad Bro-C'hall gant I Muvrini.

Ar pezh a chom goude un hanterkantved : 3 200 000 pladenn gwerzhet, 1700 abaden e Breizh, e Bro-C'hall ha pelloc'h c'hoazh. Stumm adveret ar **Bro-Gozh** a zo bet selaouet alies mat war ar rouedad, tost d'ur 1 000 000 gwech. O strollad eo an hini en deus padet ar pellañ e Bro-C'hall a-bezh, 50 vloaz war al leurenn a drugarez d'ur vignoniezh start ha d'ar c'henemglev a ren en o skipailh.



Tri Yann

End of the 60s: **Jean Chocun** and **Jean-Paul Corbineau** were strumming music of Hugues Aufray, the Beatles When **Jean-Louis Jossic**, a dancer with the Cercle Celtique Jacques Cassard, met them at one of the evening gatherings, and whispered into their ears the idea of creating a personal repertoire based on Celtic and especially Breton tradition.

The three pals were at Plouharnel on December 27, 1970, with several friends and played a gavotte des montagnes and pastourelle de Saint-Julien with guitars and Irish flute.

Several weeks afterwards one of their fans called them Tri Yann an Naoned. The group was born.

They favored concerts over the *bal breton* and multiplied appearances at youth clubs and socio-cultural centers. They proceeded following the path of An Namnediz of several years before: to gather two sets of youth – those who listened to Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones, and those who danced to the voices of the Chantous de Guéméné.

At the beginning of 1972 Gilles Servat went to one of their concerts and asked them afterwards to record their first album with Kelenn. Supported by the media (José Artur, Jacques Chancel) and chosen, still as amateurs, by Juliette Gréco as an opening act at the Olympia, they went professional in 1973.

Their public grew but Tri Yann wasn't unanimously embraced within the Emsav. This skepticism gave way with the release in 1976 of their album *La Découverte ou l'Ignorance* unanimously hailed by the press, which closed with a text by Morvan Lebesque as a sort of manifesto: "Those are Breton who choose to be." The albums to follow all had a "theme" with a big place given to creativity and what was in their hearts to defend as Bretons: patrimony, ecology, history, justice, pacifism ...

Moving from folk to rock and crossing with contemporary musical influences, they did not forget along the way the richness of voices of the Renaissance or Baroque, even with visuals. Because beyond records, it was on stage that they expressed themselves, filling the Zéniths up to the Stade de France in 2004 appearing with I Muvrini.

Accounting for a half-century: 3,200,000 albums sold, nearly 17,000 concerts in Brittany, France and beyond, the most viewed version of the *Bro Gozh* on the internet with nearly 1,000,000 views, the longevity record for hexagonal [France-wide] groups with 50 years of performance, thanks to an unshakeable friendship and the participation of all their team.

Medal of the Cultural Institute of Brittany

Also part of the annual ceremony to induct new members of the Order of the Ermine is the awarding of a medal to organizations active in promoting Breton culture and Brittany. This year the medal was awarded to two organizations:



Rugby Club de Vannes

This rugby club is known for its vigorous singing of Brittany's anthem the "Bro Gozh ma Zadoù" – with some 8,000 supporters belting it out before each game. In 2018 the club was awarded the Prix Bro Gozh by the Comité Bro Gozh ma Zadoù and has also been recognized by Prizioù ar Brezhoneg for its public use of Breton. Brittany has over 70 rugby clubs.



Comité des Vins Bretons

This organization created the annual event in Nantes called Grande Tablée Bretonne to promote Breton wines and gastronomy. They also have their own Triskell d'Or, d'Argent and de Bronze to award the best Muscadet wines.

Deep inside a Breton skull N° 64 **Children of the ermine**

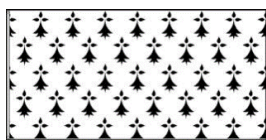
Jean Pierre Le Mat

Alan Barvec, duke of the Bretons in the 10th century, while he was at war against the Vikings, saw an ermine being chased by a fox. Instead of crossing a muddy pool to escape, it whirled around and faced its attacker. The duke deduced that it did not want to get its fur dirty. The little animal preferred death than corruption.

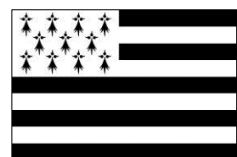
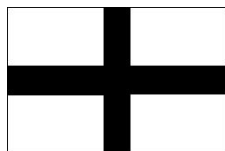
The same legend is attributed, not only to Alan Barvec, but also to the queen Anna Vreizh, almost 600 years later. It is also attributed to Conan Meriadec, the founder of Armorican Brittany, at the end of the 4th century.

According to other versions, it was not a fox chasing the ermine, but a group of peasants, furious with the chicken-stealing animal.

Historians tell us that the first duke who brought heraldic ermines to Brittany was Pierre Mauclerc, at the start of the 13th century. They were present on the coat of arms of his family. A century later, Duke John III made the heraldic ermine the symbol of Brittany. Nothing to do with Alan Barvec, nor Anna Vreizh, nor Conan Meriadec... The Breton flag was then a white



flag dotted with black ermines. Previously, during the time of the Crusades, Breton knights gathered around a



area dotted with black ermines. Through history, we have kept the black and white colors, which are also the colors of the flag of maritime piracy. I don't explain this coincidence...

The abundance of versions around this story vaccinates us against the temptation to bow down in front of a single historical truth. Our truths are more varied, more colored. Yes, we are the ermine children, probably for a very long time. Like the ermine facing the fox, the Armoricans opposed the Roman legions, the claims of the Franks, the invasions of the Vikings, the incursions of the English pirates, the soldiers of France. Before us, we do not have a muddy pool, but the immense sea.

Let's say that the ermine suits us well. The Bretons do not pretend to be a model for the other human beings. Same as us, the ermine does not try to become the king of animals. It is not competing with the lion. The little animal leaves all the masters of the world or all the carriers of universal truths to their brilliant job.



The ermine does not favor hierarchical relationships. It does not want, like the peacock, to be admired. It does not want, like the rooster, to be heard.

It knows the cycle of life, but also the cycle of the seasons, and the swing between day and night. Its fur is white in winter so it can sneak through the snow without attracting attention. Its back is brown in summer for dancing invisibly under the ferns. It is active during the day in summer and at night in winter.

The end of the story of the ermine, which favors death over stain, is not known. Deep in my Breton skull, I try to imagine it.

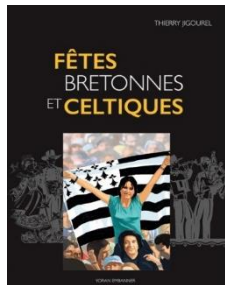
What happens to the ermine in front of the fox? The attacker is surprised. Really, it feels close to his prey. They are both discreet carnivores. They live in the same country. They have known each other for a long time. The fox chases the ermine, but itself, as well, it doesn't want to get its fur dirty in the muddy pool. The fight begins. The energies merge. The cunning spirit of

the fox intertwines with the fierce will of the ermine. The bodies penetrate each other. From the fusion of the two animals appears a being that was believed to have disappeared. There are no more foxes or ermines, but a dragon now groans near the muddy pool. The landscape around takes on the colors of old times.

What happens to the ermine facing the peasants? One of them rushes forward. He captures it and shows it to everyone. Then a cry rises "Let's crucify it!". Not everyone agrees, but a policeman who was there approves the popular sentence. The ermine is then crucified on the door of a henhouse. The silhouette of the small animal, with its white fur nailed to the black planks, pervaded the brains of the peasants there. They transmitted the image to their descendants, like an unconscious gene or a lost memory.

The judges who wear ermine fur tell us that it is a symbol of purity. The little animal does not deserve such a distinction, neither the judges, nor even the Bretons. But the story of the muddy pool whispers to us something else. There can be strange reasons to sacrifice its own life. Nevertheless however, in modern times, life has become a sacred value; I am not sure the ermine message can be very popular nowadays.

Yet I deeply feel that we are the ermine children...



Book Review

Lois Kuter

Thierry Jigourel. Fêtes Bretonnes et Celtiques – De l'Antiquité à nos jours. Yoran Embanner, 2020. 199 pages. ISBN 978-2-36785-024-5.

If anyone doubted the ability of Bretons and Celts to celebrate with dance and music, this book will eliminate those doubts. Thierry Jigourel provides an enjoyable and educational panorama of the many ways Bretons have marked events with festivals – both past and present.

He emphasizes that Celts and Bretons have been known for their desire to celebrate – eat, drink and be merry – yet they have been depicted in folklore and travel accounts as melancholy and gloomy. And if there is despair and suicide in Brittany this is not a natural part of Breton personality but the result of economic pillage and destruction of traditional society and the systemic persecution of Breton identity and the Breton language. Both in his introduction and concluding pages Jigourel does not hesitate to point

out the role of the French State in stifling the organization of festivals with rules and regulations which limit Bretons ability to organize events and which in recent years has pitted amateurs against professional musicians. Historically both the Catholic Church and the State have discouraged if not outright banned what they considered licentious gatherings for festivities.

But the large part of this book celebrates the many ways in which Bretons and Celts celebrate life. He begins with a description of ancient Celtic seasonal festivals – Samain, Imbolc, Beltaine, and Lughnasad – and their link to modern pardons and celebrations in Brittany and the Celtic lands. In linking 19th century and present day festivals to more ancient seasonal observations, the author draws on travel accounts, folklorists, and historians. He does this too in a chapter devoted to marriages and their festive nature as events gathering large numbers to feast, drink and dance. And Jigourel provides a historical perspective in presenting pardons – religious celebrations of Brittany's hundreds of saints – which remain occasions for more secular celebration and dancing.

The chapter "Les Bretons en scène" discusses the fear at the end of the 19th century that Breton culture would be lost, and indeed economic changes, emigration, and pressure from France to civilize Bretons posed a threat to the "old ways." In consequence one saw the creation of "folklore festivals" in the early 20th century – seen by some as fake and degrading with their parades of costumes. But these festivals were in fact an opportunity for Bretons to take pride in the beauty of their costumes as well as music and dance. Jigourel presents well this period and the organization of groups to "save" the Breton language and culture. And beyond that, groups that would support a reinvention and unimagined flowering of music and dance by the mid 20th century with the creation of Bodadeg ar Sonerion and hundreds of Cercles Celtiques. "Folkloric" in the worst sense? – yes, at times, but also Bretons creating new forms of expression rooted in their heritage.

Nothing could exemplify this better than the renaissance of the fest-noz, and Jigourel describes well how a specific rural practice evolved into the *fest-noz mod nevez* that was fostered in the 1950s and proliferated in the 60s, 70s, 80s and up to today. I particularly like the description of this event by Dastum: "The fest-noz isn't a "folklore fête"; it's a massive and convivial social practice where the show is well among the dancers – people of all ages and social conditions – rather than on a stage." (my translation). The Covid pandemic has had a major impact on this event where dancing and socializing draw thousands of Bretons year-round throughout Brittany with the cancellation of an estimated 1,000 festoù-noz this spring and summer.

This has not only impacted the livelihoods of singers and musicians, but eliminated a major social opportunity for those who love to dance. Given the popularity of the fest-noz, I have no doubt it will be back as soon as safety permits and organizers are able to repair the damages done.

Nearly half of *Fêtes Bretonnes et Celtiques* is devoted to large festivals of more recent years – some with a long history, some more recently created, and some that had a relatively short life span and are now gone. Chosen are some 25 events representing the diversity of music and dance that Bretons celebrate in large annual festivals. There are the big ones like the Lorient Interceltic Festival and Quimper's Fête de Cornouaille as well as smaller locally focused or theme focused festivals like the Gallo festival in Monterfil, the Fête des Chants de Marins, and Festival de la Harpe Celtique in Dinan

There are festivals which include a strong element of competition – the Gourin championship for sonneurs de couple, the St. Loup dance festival, and the Bogue d'Or and Kan ar Bobl for song. And there are festivals where less traditional styles of music are featured, often with an international presence of performers – Hellfest and Veilles Charrues. And then there are some lost festivals, much regretted by the author, such as Kaolmoc'h (and other musical events in the town of Spézet in the 60s and 70s), as well as carnivals and mardi gras parades and celebrations discouraged by clergy and beaten down by French regulations and over zealous enforcement of drunk driving laws.

Thierry Jigourel has no intention of presenting all the festivals of Brittany and in researching the listings from 2000 to 2019 in Dastum's magazine *Musique Bretonne*, I counted some 130 festivals that took place during a decade - pretty evenly spread in all five Breton departments. Not all still exist and some were short-lived, but there seems to have been at least 50 festivals each year in Brittany. Clearly Bretons have the ability to organize large and smaller events of all kinds. Here's a rough breakdown of the types of events I found listed:

- 12 contests spanning several days to a series of events over a month.
- 37 large festivals of four to ten days
- 59 smaller festivals of two to three days (sometimes just one)
- 9 festivals made up of a series of events spread over a fifteen to thirty day period
- 24 festivals/events organized specifically by the Bodadeg ar Sonerion, Kendalc'h or War'l Leur.

And then there were a number of one-time "anniversary" festivals – 40 years for Dastum, 40 years

for La Boueze, 85th birthday for singer Marcel Guillou, 30 year anniversary for the Mod All workshops in La Chapelle-Neuve, among others.

While Jigourel's book focuses on festivals, there are other events which gather Bretons in celebration, combining music, dance and feasting – *veillées* and *répas chantés* (dinners where people sing), *balades chantées* (walks in the countryside with singing), *joute chantée* and *contée* (duels between singers or storytellers) and workshops and classes often capped with a big celebration. In reading nearly all 264 issues of *Musique Bretonne* in the past four decades it is clear to me that Bretons continue to incorporate musical celebration in a number of events which might not qualify as "festivals" but include many of the same social and celebratory elements. And then there are all the more formal concerts and dance performances.

Thierry Jigourel's description of several dozen festivals as well as other seasonal celebrations, is not without a strong dose of nostalgia and humor, but the author presents a wealth of historical information and commentary by participants and musicians. I certainly found myself thinking back on those festivals I had the good fortune to experience during my year in Brittany in 1978-79 and on the all-too-rare visits since. And this book will bring great pleasure to all those who have celebrated at Breton festivals and events like the fest-noz. Someone who has never experienced live Breton music and dance events may not "get" all the references and descriptions without a bit more context. Certainly there were some comments whose meaning I missed. "Inside jokes?" No matter.

Certainly important in bringing Breton festivities to life for any reader – from the 19th century to the present day – are the abundant photos and illustrations, several on nearly every page. This hardback book is both a pleasure to the eye and to the reader seeking to learn more about the wealth of music and dance in Brittany.



Heard of but not heard – 17 New CDs from Brittany

Information for these notes was drawn from *Musique Bretonne* 263 (avr.-mai-juin) and 264 (juil.-août-sept. 2020), *Ar Men* 236 (mai-juin) and 237 (juil.-août 2020), as well as from the Coop Breizh website and other web searches.



L'Armée du Chalut. *Pêcheurs de chansons*. OPCI Ethnodoc.

The maritime repertoire on this CD is drawn from Brittany, Vendée, Normandy and Guadeloupe with a strong

representation of “complaints” (ballads) which describe the life of fishermen. Most songs are lesser known, and one in the Breton language is included. The singers are all well versed in the maritime song traditions: Pascal Servain, Bernard Subert, Michel Collet, Didier Quéval, Césaire Berchel, Maurice Artus, and Gaël Rolland. The CD is accompanied by a booklet that can be downloaded from the internet.



Bab El West. *Houdad*. Big Banana Music BBM 002/1.

This group formed in 2011 with the meeting of singer-guitarist Habib Farroukh with drummer Marc Dupont and

bass player Clément Vallin as well as Nidhal Jaoua on harp and cithara. For this second CD they add flute player Jean-Luc Thomas and sax player Yannick Jory. The sound is described as a mix of soul, groove and afro-folk with blues-rock and a bit of influence from Ireland.



Bagad Cap Caval. *Stil*.

This double CD by the Bagad Cap Caval includes 44 selections presenting ten suites prepared for the top level bagad championship contests from 2015 to

2019 recorded live in Brest and Lorient. This bagad has won five championships in recent years adding to those of 2008, 2009 and 2010, making them the most titled bagad for the past twenty years of competition. This CD shows off well their particular “stil” / style.



Sylvain Barou, Yannig Noguét, Roland Conq. *Sylvain Barou, Yannig Noguét, Roland Conq.*

This CD includes ten selections of dances (with one melody) including laridé, hanter dro, ridée, plinn, scottisch, and gavotte. These three musicians have worked for some twenty years in a number of groups and in 2018 decided to form a trio. They draw from traditional dance tunes but also compose new music of their own.



Bodh'aktan. *De temps et de vents*.

The music of this group is described as drawing from Celtic, Quebecois, polka, punk, Irish and Breton musics with elements of rock, traditional, pop and fusion styles. This is the fourth album by this Celt'Rock ground made up of Alexandre Richard (vocals, guitar, bouzouki), Alain Barriault (electric and acoustic guitars), Ben Claveau (vocals and bass guitar), Marc-Etienne Richard (flute and vocals), Éric Gousy (drums and vocal), Éric Tanguy (accordion, electric guitar and vocals) and Luc Bougeois (bagpipe, whistle, electric guitar and vocals).



Robbe Gloaguen Quartet and Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra. *Garder votre sang-froid*. Mazeto Square.

This double CD pays homage to composer and jazz master François Tusques who influenced a blooming of Breton free jazz music in the 1970s. The first CD features the Robbe Gloaguen Quartet which includes Robbe Gloaguen on piano, Jérôme Gloaguen on drums, Tanguy Le Doré on bass and Éric Leroux on sax. The second CD is a concert by Tusques' Intercommunal Free Dance Music Orchestra recorded in 1984, featuring some bombarde work by Jean-Louis Le Vallégant.



Les Gogotiers. *Il avait mangé du hareng – chansons portuaires*. OPCI Ethnodoc.

This five-title CD features maritime ballads – several composed in the 20th century by sea captains of Fécamp as well as compositions by the group. Singer Pascal Servain is accompanied by Guillaume Pelé on chromatic accordion and Fred Jamet on guitar.



Mathieu Hamon and Sylvain Girault. *Le ronde joute et les chants vagabondent*.

The duo of singers Mathieu Hamon and Sylvain Girault are masters of traditional song of Gallo Brittany. The twelve selections of melodies and dances on this CD draw from tradition, adding some new compositions for new times.



Gweltaz Hervé and Steven Vincendeau. *À travers moi*. Collectif à l'Envers CALE 004/01/1.

This duo of saxophones and accordion (with electronic effects added) recreate a concert that accompanied an animated film by Pierre Morin about a monkey who travels to the land of People-Birds. The feel is a meeting of world music with jazz and classical sounds. There's a combination of energetic rhythm with more somber and serene atmospheres.



Jérémy Kerno and Marc Clériver. *À haute voix*.

Both Jérémy Kerno and Marc Clériver are rooted in traditional music and dance of eastern Brittany. They use unaccompanied song here – à haute voix, at full voice – to present dances, ballads and marches, including a technique called “gavottage,” a special method of accompanying dance vocally without a song text, akin to Irish lilting. Notes detailing the sources of their repertoire are available by downloading a booklet on the website marc-clerivet.com.



Yann Le Gall and Hélène Brunet. *Heklev an drone.*

This is a duo of Yann Le Gall and Hélène Brunet on guitar and oud with a selection of ten traditional and arranged tunes and melodies. Yann Le Gall has worked with numerous groups including Pevar Den, Hiks and the trip-hop group from Nantes White Elephant. Hélène Brunet has worked with Nolwenn Korbell and the group Tan de'i and was part of the first Kreiz Breizh Akademi. They are joined by flute player Sylvain Barou.



Arnaud Le Gouëfflec. *L'Orage.* L'Église de la petite folie.

Arnaud Le Gouëfflec is a writer and designer for "bande dessinés" (stories and novels with comic book style illustrations). Here he turns his talents to composing songs and music with a rock beat. He is joined by musician John Trap (bass), Régis Boulard (drums), Thomas Poli (guitar, keyboard), Olivier Mellano (guitars), and ooTi (vocals).



Ronan Le Gouriérec and Philippe Chasseloup. *Par le bout du nez – histoire à danser.*

This CD and booklet is designed by saxophone player Ronan Le Gouriérec with Philippe Chasseloup providing drawings and design for the accompanying booklet. Aimed to present a variety of dances from Brittany and elsewhere to children, they have created a story about a badger with psychological issues who embarks on a trip of discovery with his family. Le Gouriérec is able to draw a range of sounds and moods from his baritone sax to accompany the attractive booklet presenting the story and dances.



Menace d'Éclaircie. *Menace d'éclaircie.* Kamm Records KR112.

This is a blues-rock band which has built an audience at festivals and street performances. Musicians of the group are Florian Juillard (bombarde and veuze), Youenn Paranthoën (accordion), Jean-Marie Stephant (percussions), Nicolas Chatelet (baritone sax), and Julien Tual (electric guitar).



Nâtah Big Band. *Drioma.*

This is the second CD by a group of seventeen musicians from Rennes who draw from the Breton tradition, adding new compositions as well to their arrangements. For this CD of ten selections they add ten guest artists – a truly "big band" – including flute players Lucie Montebessaux and Jean-Mathias Petri, the Hamon Martin Quintet, rapper Mathieu Al Hachimi, and kan ha diskant singers Elouan Le Sauze and Youenn Lange.



Gilles Servat. *À cordes déployées.*

With over 50 years on the Breton music scene, Gilles Servat is one of the best loved and known of Breton singer/song-writers. Here he offers 13 selection of his songs in French – three not recorded previously and eight totally rearranged. In this new direction Servat is joined by Philippe Turin on piano, Floriane Le Pottier on violin and Mathilde Chevrel on cello.



Jean-Luc Thomas. *Oficina itinerante.* Hirustica HIR 140175.

Jean-Luc Thomas is a flute player from the Tregor area who pulls on his Breton roots but also draws upon travels to Africa and Brazil with an influence from Ireland as well. He is accompanied by Carlos Malta on sax and Bernardo Aguiar with percussions.

A Travel Account from 1868 – Carnival in Nantes

In view of the strong place devoted to carnivals in Thierry Jigourel's book *Fêtes Bretonnes et Celtiques* (reviewed above) it seemed fitting to reprint a travel account about carnival celebrations in Nantes. This was first printed in *Bro Nevez* 53, February 1995, but I suspect few readers will mind a repeat.

This account was published in the magazine *All The Year Round* which was directed by Charles Dickens, incorporating an earlier magazine *Household Words*. Equivalent to television of its day these 19th century magazines were a collection of relatively light-weight stories, poetry, and tales of travel to exotic places. In this case, two English gentlemen travel to the city of Nantes and get caught up in Carnival celebrations in the streets. While travel accounts by American and English writers are not always reliable ethnographic accounts, this one is certainly vivid. Original spellings have been retained.

"Carnival Time in Britany" *All the Year Round*, Vol. XX, no. 485, August 8, 1868

At daybreak one crisp February morning, we entered the quaint old city of Nantes, escorted by a motley caravan of peasants, who were wending their way with their various stock to the market square on the quays. After we had passed the seven ancient bridges which conduct from the southern bank of the Loire, over as many islands, to the northern bank, whereon the old Breton capital mainly lies; after we had taken a glimpse at the stunted-looking cathedral, which rears its square towers above the city, and had for an instant stopped to gaze at the old ducal castle, standing in an enormous ditch, half below the level of the street; we

reached at length the square on the crest of the hill upon which Nantes is built, where stands, inviting to a rather gloomy hospitality, the Hôtel de France.

Here took place a brief but lively struggle between hunger and weariness; but the garçon having conducted us to one of those almost oppressively comfortable rooms which you find sometimes in provincial France, and having, moreover, imparted to us the fact that breakfast would be served at eleven, and not an instant before, Tompkins abruptly declared for sleep by dropping heavily upon the bed – boots, coat, and all – and sounding a nasal trumpet in honour of tired nature's triumph. I have to thank my companion's snoring for the confused and martial dreams which followed me. Once I thought that the bugle blasts of the Black Prince were sounding in my ear, summoning me to the attack on the old Breton Castle; but I was held back by a crowd of screaming bonnes, with their long lace caps, who raised, with their shrill voices, a perfect pandemonium about my ears. In the midst of all this hubbub I awoke, rubbed my eyes, and turned over. More regularly than the ticks of the fantastic clock on the mantel, sounded still the snores of Tompkins; but an instant after I, lying there wide awake, heard the same screeching of bugles and yelling of bonnes, which I had thought a horrid dream.

I aroused Tompkins.

"Perhaps," said he, a trifle pale, - "perhaps it is a revolution!"

This gave a practical turn to the matter, and it luckily happened, that the garçon just then summoned us to breakfast.

"But what is all this hubbub?" asked I, in the choicest of "conversation-book" French.

"In the square, monsieur?" said the stolid Breton, as if nothing unusual were going on.

"Of course."

"To-morrow is the Mercredi des Cendres, monsieur," in a tone which expressed, "You're a noodle not to know it."

What to-morrow had to do with to-day's uproar, I could not exactly see, and so I intimated to him.

"The day before Ash Wednesday, monsieur, is Carnival day; therefore it is the Carnival which has disturbed Messieurs les Anglais."

You must know that Nantes, on all the days of the year exempting two, is the most droning, humdrum, stupid, sleepy old town between Biscay and the Bosphorus.

But the two days when the ex-capital of Britany is galvanized into something resembling a wide-awake city, are the Sunday and Tuesday before the beginning of Lent.

We hastily consumed the conventional Breton breakfast which was set before us – the soup and St. Emilion, the fried fish and filet de boeuf, the sour bread and preserves, the shrimps and watercresses – and Tompkins, for once, in his anxiety to get out, forgot to grumble at the absence of coffee.

A Nantes merchant, who was a bachelor, and lived at the hotel, hearing our conversation, politely offered to show us the sights.

"I beg you, messieurs," said he, in the grand Breton style, "not to wear holiday suits."

"Why not?"

"Because," he replied, smiling, "orange juice gives a somewhat unpleasant variety to the colour of one's cloth."

Later in the day we knew what he meant, to our cost.

Accompanied by our new friend, we passed from the hotel court into the square. The steps of the theatre opposite were covered with a perfect forest of bonnes' caps. The tops of the houses, with balconies and windows, and the side-walks were crowded with lookers-on, who were boisterously enjoying the scene. Here was a totally new phase of the Breton character, which I had thought from previous experiences, solid and phlegmatic. It was not such a scene as you witness in the bal masque at the Paris Opera. It was more free and boisterous, more overflowing with homely fun; far more original in the costumes, the antics, and the contagious high spirits of the actors. I almost shrank back into the sheltered precincts of the hotel, as I saw a party of screaming bonnes come rushing towards where we stood, blowing their tin trumpets and waving their brawny arms.

Groups of men and boys were scattered over the square, in every conceivable caper, crowding and bustling and shouting, maliciously pursuing the bonnes who were not disguised, but had only come out to see the fun, lustily blowing uncouth horns, and each trying to outvie the others. Perhaps the most amusing of all were the multitudes of little wild gamins – poor ragged urchins, whose home is the street, whose bed is the doorstep, and whose food comes how and when chance ordains – and chimney-sweeps, with their sooty merry faces; these held high orgies in the streets.

After observing the scene in front of the hotel awhile, our obliging Breton friend conducted us through the long and narrow Rue Crebillon, the main thoroughfare of Nantes, which was already so crowded with masques and spectators that we moved with great difficulty, and were persecuted by the merry-makers at every step. The old houses were supplied, on every story, with long iron balconies; and upon one of these we took up our positions. From the point at which we stood, we could sweep with our eyes the whole street, terminating in a square at either end; and here it was that we saw the Carnival in all its glory.

Tompkins, despite the benevolent warning of monsieur, or friend, had insisted on wearing the shining silk hat which he had just purchased at Bordeaux; for he is somewhat foppish, and had caught sight of the damsels who, in jaunty French costumes, filled the windows in every direction. We had hardly taken our places on the balcony when poor Tompkins's hat danced off sportively in mid-air, closely pursued by a shattered orange, until both were lost sight of in the surging crowd beneath.

We were now pelted with a storm of the same too juicy fruit, which came from right and left of us. Orange women, with huge basketsful of their popular stock were pressing to and fro in the throng, selling their oranges by the dozen at a time, while the air was thick with the yellow fruit as it sped to and from the balconies. It was an equal warfare between man and man; the strongest arm and truest eye were sure of the victory. On the balconies on either side of the street might be seen groups of jauntily dressed gentlemen, each with his stock of oranges; and when any peculiarly amusing masquers passed in the line of vehicles, these would open the battle by pouring down upon them fruity hail. Then would ensue a most vigorous retort, the carriage of the attacked party stopping, and delaying the whole procession until they had "had it out," Tompkins was in a measure consoled by seeing hats, but not as glossy as his own, flying crushed in every direction, and falling to the ground, trodden to flatness by the crowd.

Now, the ridiculously long proboscis of some Carnival Achilles is whisked off and sent flying yards away; now, a monkish beard is shaven close and clean, and its loosened hairs fall in a shower over the people round about. Sometimes, the combatants with their stubborn Celtic blood, are goaded to a momentary warmth on either side; then the oranges fly quick and fast and at haphazard, and are thrown, in the blindness of sudden choler furiously into the crowd at large; where, mayhap, they yield their fragrance on the person of an unoffending priest, as in long gown and broad-brimmed hat he hastens nervously along; or attack some pompous old coachman, in wig and livery, who, as he is soberly conducting his master's carriage through the

throng, receives an orange plump in the eye, or, before he knows it, finds his gold-banded hat missing from its horsehair pinnacle.

But these orange battles were not confined to manly combatants; there were Amazonian jousts, which threw the others far into the shade. Now and then a squad of gendarmes would rush in upon a party of combatants, and with loud voices and much gesticulation seek to end the fray – for this orange pelting is really against the law – but then the opponents of those thus interfered with, would pour down a resistless volley upon the agents of order who would thereupon ignominiously retreat. No one was safe from the juicy missiles, which flew to and fro as far as the eye could see on either side; and the screaming, and laughing, and howling and "sacrrre-bleu"-ing could be heard echoing everywhere through the narrow streets of the usually drowsy old town.

The shops were all closed, excepting that here and there some enterprising tradesman had lent out his windows (at a napoleon a-piece); the church bells were ringing lustily; over the public buildings the national tricolour had been raised in honour of the festivity; and every now and then would emerge from some side street a long train of peasants, in the quaint costume of their district, who had trudged, mayhap, some dozen miles that morning, to have their share of the Carnival frolic.

In the street which lay below us, narrow and enclosed between six and seven-story houses, a rolling, running, shouting crowd were tiding this way and that, without method or distinction; a mosaic of peasants and shopkeepers, of portly old aristocrats and blue-blouses, of boys and policemen, of devils and crusaders, harlequins and Turks, Bottoms and bandits – the scene and colour changing with kaleidoscopic swiftness; a pandemonium of noises, from the famous Breton fish cry, to the discordant squeaks of violins and the many-keyed caterwauling of the less musical mass.

In the midst of the crowd struggled painfully the long line of vehicles which made up the procession of the Carnival. These were of every imaginable sort; there were carriages and four of the prefect and of the mayor, sandwiched between boxes on wheels and rustic donkey carts; there were the stately lookers-on from the aristocratic Cour St. Pierre, and the humble but witty masquers from the neighbouring villages. Mingled together, and jumbled into an almost indistinguishable mass, was this medley of classes, for one day democratically free and equal, enjoying that "one touch of nature," love of humour, which "makes the whole world kin." I never shall forget Monsieur the Prefect, as he sat in his carriage with its heraldic blazon, its powdered and gold fringed coachman and footman, with a half-embarrassed smile upon his face;

while all about him was this weird mass of boisterous masquers, waging their orange war, and giving to the picture of official dignity a must ludicrous frame indeed.

The vehicles which contained the masquers were laughable enough. Now, you would see a moving castle, with its bastions, its turrets, its port holes, and its donjon-keep; and from its towers, burlesque knights in cuirass and helmet would pelt right and left, supplied with an armory of oranges; while their paper shields would soon yield to the energetic response of the balconies above. Next would come an imitation house, out of whose windows masculine bonnes were leaning and fighting with Amazonian force. Anon, you would observe a countryman, in the costume of some remote village, prancing along on his donkey, and mimicking to the life rustic angularity. A favourite joke seemed to be to imitate the street beggars who were familiar to the town. There was a cart fitted up as a circus; and here were chattering clowns, and mock acrobats, and pretentious ballet dancers, ludicrously like. There were men dressed as bonnes, who rushed about with bonne-like nervousness, and seized upon the opportunity to kiss the genuine bonnes (provided they were pretty), who were so unlucky as to come in their way. One little urchin, besmirched from top to toe, who was mounted on a donkey cart, whisked off a gendarme's chapeau, and clapped it on his own stubby head, replacing it by his greasy and fragmentary cap; then rode dancing off, screaming with glee; while the guardian of order, inclined to be severely indignant yet unable to resist the infectious merriment about him, hastened laughing after him.

One of the spectrums that whisked by, was a sheaf of corn, whose ears flapped to and from in harmony with its movement, and which showed certain very clear indications of being a sheaf of the gentler sex. In the midst of the procession was a Tower of Babel, with little figures of workmen employed in erecting that piece of presumptuous architecture. Here, stalked by an apparently marble pedestal, which anon would stop, and stand stock still, as if it had been rooted to the spot for ages; and confidential couples, who had something very particular to say, would conceal themselves behind it, the occupant of the pedestal listening with great glee to their muttered confidences.

The variety of illustrations from natural history – the bears, and kangaroos, and gorillas, and giraffes – would have shamed the Zoological Gardens; while the Grand Exposition was well nigh outdone by the representative of all nations, who hurried along. Underneath the windows, where the Breton belles sat laughing at the scene, a group of serenaders, decked in romantic costumes, would stop, and howl forth a burlesque lute scene from Don Giovanni; while at a little distance, some dancers, setting a table on the

side-walk, would proceed to perform thereon a rollicking “break-down” to the general delight.

And so round and round, for four mortal hours, this quaint procession wound, and the thousands of throats, becoming hoarser and hoarser as the day advanced, sustained their unremitting hubbub. At length the carriages and the donkey-carts, the chaises and the castles, as they repassed, showed signs of a long and severe siege. There were oranges and orange-juice everywhere, broken pieces of orange lay in piles within them, and stuck to their wheels and sides; the dresses, hats, and faces were covered with the yellow stain of oranges. The warriors of the day began to look jaded and worn; to take off their heavy hats, stifling and dilapidated masks, and sit limp in their seats, and refresh themselves with wine and rest.

Shortly after four (the Carnival having begun at noon) the crowd began to slacken, vehicles began to drop out of the route, and the procession to show long gaps in its line. Everybody seemed to be hastening to the square and the steps of the theatre, and soon the procession had disappeared, excepting that now and then an unusually persevering party came rollicking up the street, singing some rude Breton song, and trying to provoke one last battle by launching the flattened oranges, which yet remained, at the tired crowd. By this time the masquers were somewhat the worse – or, considering their greater vivacity and humour, perhaps somewhat the better – for the white wine, which is freely drunk, as may be imagined, on Carnival day; and in the square, and on the portico of the theatre, the orgie was still kept up, until the thick dusk of a moonless February evening threw a damper on the revellers, and sent them reeling, singing, frolicking homeward.

“A curious sight,” remarked Tompkins, as we descended, and passed into the street, “but after a fellow has been travelling all night, a little too long to keep one’s interest alive. I’m glad it’s over.”

“Over?” said our Breton friend, with a shrug and lifted eyebrows. “Then monsieur does not care to see how they finish the Carnival?”

“By Jove! Is there anything more?”

“If monsieur is not too tired, after dinner, we will go to one of the cabarets, and see the Carnival dance.”

Tompkins consented with a grunt; for, tired as he might be, he was determined, as he said, “to have his money’s worth out of these Frenchmen.”

We passed through a zig-zag labyrinth of narrow streets and dingy alleys, and finally descended to a cellar some steps below the level of the street, where

we found ourselves in a buvette, with a sanded floor, and where some labourers were busy drinking the favourite white wine. Our guide led us along a dark narrow passage to a long, low-studded, rudely-built hall, with brick floor, and tallow candles disposed at rare intervals along the wall. The guests were of the working classes, and were dressed in their every-day attire, the long lace coifs of the damsels being conspicuous everywhere.

We had just taken our seats when a portly, jovial old fellow, his head surmounted by a square paper cap, entered, followed by two garçons, who brought in a large table, and set it in the middle of the room. Anon the landlord reappeared with a huge bowl, from whence a savoury steam arose and filled the air. Shouts of delight greeted the good cheer; glasses were quickly filled; while a great brawny fellow with shaggy red hair, jumped upon the table, and gesticulating as only a Frenchman can, burst into a loud, wild drinking song. When he came to the chorus – which was something about oh yes, we'll drink till the dawn, or some sentiment equally original – it was roared out lustily by the rest; men and women jumped on the table and waved their hands, or danced with a wild glee which was positively caching.

Another round of punch brought out, in spite of the law, the glorious Marseillaise, which sounded even grandly, so fervid were the voices, and so earnest the faces. The drinking over, the table was quickly pushed aside, the floor was swept, and partners were chosen. Two sprightly blue-bloused fellows stationed themselves on a raised bench, with fiddle and trumpet, and forthwith struck up a lively waltz. And such waltzing as ensued! Without rhyme or method, these lusty folk whirled off at every angle, regardless of consequences, and wholly given up to the moment's ecstasy. Now and then there would be a general over tumbling, couple after couple coming to the ground and presenting to the beholder a confused spectacle of petticoats and cotton stockings hopelessly mixed up with blue blouses and wooden shoes.

The revel ended with a grand jig, a combination of an Irish jig and fashionable ballet, performed by a blue blouse and a *bonne*. So frantically did they distort their bodies, and pose themselves; the man throwing the girl over his shoulder, she kneeling and he bounding over her head; that every moment you almost expected them to fall to pieces. The man, as he danced, smoked a long cigar; and now and then a long puff of smoke, issuing from his mouth, produced a very ludicrous effect.

Some September Dates in Breton History

The following dates were drawn from Bernard Le Nail's *L'Almanach de la Bretagne* (Ed. Jacques Marseille-Larousse, 2003). I have chosen just a few dates and events – especially those related to the U.S. – but the selection is pretty random.

September 2

1675 – Assassination of Sebastien Le Balp at the Tymeur caste. He was a leader of the Bonnets Rouges uprising in the Carhaix area.

September 4

1776 – Benjamin Franklin lands in Saint-Goustan, the port of Auray, to seek aid from France for the American Revolution. During his time in France he benefits from the hospitality of a Breton (of Nantes) Jacques-Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont, who himself offered considerable financial support to the American cause. Note: His son, James Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont would establish himself in New York State and his two sons would also leave place name legacy: Vincent Le Ray (Cape Vincent) and Alexander Le Ray (Alexandria Bay).

September 7

1488 – Duc François II dies in Couëron. His daughter, Anne de Bretagne, would succeed him.

1852 – Death of Aymar de Blois de la Calande (born in Ploujean near Morlaix in 1760). Besides other naval battles he would participate in some waged by Americans against England in the war for independence. Back in Brittany after the war he became engaged in the Celtic Academy of Brittany, pursuing interests in archaeology and history. With a mastery of the Breton language he was an early collector of traditional songs in the oral tradition.

September 8

1873 – Birth of Alfred Jarry in Laval. He would become a famous writer, best known for his creation of *Père Ubu*, a caricature of a physics professor at the Rennes high school. His play *Ubu-Roi* was first performed in 1896.

September 10, 2020

1901 – Birth of Yann Sohier in Loudéac. He was the founder of the *Ar Falz* movement to promote teaching of the Breton language and history.

1905 – First Fête des Filets Bleu in Concarneau.

September 14

1868 – Birth of Théodore Botrel in Dinan. He was famous for his popular and sentimental Breton song compositions such as “La Paimpolaise.”

1932 – Death of Jean Cras, naval admiral and composer of classical music.

September 15

1792 – Creation of a Service for Lighthouses and Beacons to ensure coastal safety for boats and ships. From 169 lighthouses on the coasts of France in the mid 19th century, there are now over 1,400.

September 17

1820 – Death in New York of Pierre Landais (born in Saint-Malo in 1734). He participated in the creation of battleships in the U.S. but was forced to retreat from this by radical differences with his rival John Paul Jones.

September 18 – see note which follows

September 20

1996 - First visit of a Pope to Brittany: Jean-Paul II.

1980 – Arrival on the French coast of solo Breton rower Gérard d’Aboville from the U.S. after 72 days at sea. He was the first solo rower to cross both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

September 23

1943 – Deadly aerial bombing of Nantes during World War II with 6,000 deaths, 1,200 buildings destroyed and another 3,000 damaged.

September 24

1885 – Birth in Dinan of Paul-Yves Sébillot, a journalist and writer who wrote novels, short stories and theater pieces. He also collected and published numerous volumes of Breton legends and folktales.

September 29

1816 – Birth of Paul Féval in Rennes. He was a famous author to crime fiction, fantasy and historical novels and vampire fiction. Best know perhaps were *Le Bossu*, *Vampire City*, *La fée des grèves*, and *Le Loup Blanc*.

September 30

1894 - Birth of Francis Ruellan in Rennes. He was an ethnographer who explored the Americas, Europe and Asia. From 1941 to 1956 he was on the faculty of the University of Brazil in Rio de Janeiro. He was a participant in a number of geographical expeditions into the Amazon, during which the site of the capital Brazilia was determined.

September 18

While Bernard Le Nail includes some short notes - “On this day...” - on each page of his almanach, each page also includes a longer presentation about an event or person associated with that date. The following is my translation of the entry for September 18: “Brest, Town martyred during the Second World War.”

First French port of war, Brest saw German troops arrive on June 19, 1940. A first-order naval base, the war port would be rapidly put in a state of mobilization and played a critical role in the battle for the Atlantic. In March 1941 the arrival of two cruisers, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* which had just sunk 22 commerce ships in two months and which were joined by the *Prinz Eugen* led the British “Bomber Command” to start systematic bombings of the city, without great results due to the extremely effective German aerial defense and the fighter squadrons just as formidable.

On July 24, 1941, in full daytime, a hundred British bombers appeared in the sky and bombed the city for two hours. There were 84 deaths and 90 wounded among the civilians, the RAF lost 63 aviators who were killed, wounded or made prisoners, but the objectives hoped for [in the bombing raid] were not really met.

When the cruisers left the port of Brest February 11, 1942, the bombings which had already caused nearly 300 deaths and damaged or destroyed a thousand houses, ceased for a little while, but were taken up again by November 1942 against the submarine base which was had begun to be built in Lannion in the spring of 1941. The raids against that base proved to be largely ineffective but the aerial attacks targeted also fuel depots and railroad lines, causing still more risks to hit civilians.

Three large underground shelters were constructed [in Brest], but in February 1943 it was decided to close all the schools and evacuate more than 10,000 people. When the American troops arrived at the entry to Brest in August 1944 the city had already mourned over 400 civilian deaths and over 2,000 buildings damaged or destroyed.

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