

# BRO NEVEZ

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



50<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Dastum

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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# Bro Nevez 162

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## Editor's Note

As spring is in full swing and summer approaches Brittany is coming back to life with concerts, festoù-noz, and festivals once again being offered after the sad absence or limited virtual life during Covid restrictions. Music-making did not stop but large joyful gatherings of festivals did. In this issue of *Bro Nevez* you will be introduced (or reintroduced) to 35 of Brittany's larger festivals, many of which have been held annually for decades!

And you will read of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dastum, an archives for traditional song, music and oral traditions, that does more than just "store" sounds and documents. The act of collecting has in fact served to link generations in the transmission of a very rich heritage. And Dastum's resources have always been accessible to those who want to use them.

But, we start with some news about ongoing work to promote the Breton language – the continued obstacles as well as some victories.

Lois Kuter

## France vs. the Regional Languages Weaponizing the French Constitution

A recent article in *Ar Men* magazine – "Langes régionales, la Constitution trahie par ses interprètes" by Alain Tanguy – gives an interesting overview of how the interpretation of the French Constitution has been used to limit the development of France's regional languages. This was demonstrated in May 2021 when the Constitutional Council of France cut out parts of the Molac law – see *Bro Nevez* 158, June 2021. Considered unconstitutional was the inclusion of immersion teaching – like the Diwan schools for Breton – in public schools. Also shot down was the use of diacritical marks found in regional languages but not in French in civic acts of the state – the case of the name Fañch not being acceptable in registering a child's birth is a widely known example.

In 1992 France revised its constitution, and to show defiance in the face of encroaching use of English, it was decided that Article 2 should state "the language of the Republic is French." Also clarified in this article was the French flag, the national hymn "La Marseillaise" and the national motto "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité." While there was some concern expressed at the time for the respect of regional languages, assurance was given that this constitutional wording did not mean these languages were not valued by France.

It became clear very quickly, however, that Article 2 would be used to block the development of rights for regional languages. To attempt to get constitutional

support for these languages, in 2008 Article 75-1 was adopted stating “The regional languages are part of the patrimony of France.” This is very nice, but has in no way protected advances for regional languages from being declared unconstitutional by the members of the French Constitutional Council.

### And Campaign Promises from Emmanuel Macron

This May Emmanuel Macron was elected to a second term as President of France. As is common in elections, candidates were sent questions to help electors see where they stand on key issues. In France the organization Pour Que Vivent Nos Language sent questions concerning the protection and support of France’s regional languages. Here is the response they received in April from M. Macron. (My translation – apologies for any misinterpretations of wording – LK)

Madame, Monsieur,

(...) I wanted to respond to you personally, as candidate for a new term, to affirm my ambition to promote the regional languages in France. I consider these languages of France to be a national treasure that enriches our shared culture. For decades the transmission of these languages has been insured especially by associations, a remarkable work formidably demonstrated and shared by your collectivity [Pour Que Vivent Nos Langues]. These languages, happily, find their place in public and confessional schooling.

Notable advances have been marked in law, such as the inscription of regional languages in the code of patrimony, and that gives me joy. Following the partial censuring, notably concerning immersive teaching, the government immediately took actions to secure the framework in place for teaching regional languages so that there were clear understandings for the opening of the 2021 school year. It was important that this teaching in regional languages continued as was the case up to the present and could continue to develop.

The new National Council of Regional Languages and Cultures will formulate proposals to take the specifications of these teachings into account and adapt resources allocated to them. You can count on my resolute action to reinforce the recognition and efficacy of the teaching of regional languages. In particular, we will continue to support the rolling out of contracts between collectivities and regions in order to generalize the teaching of all the languages of France in the framework of the normal scheduling for institutions.

Beyond their teaching we will facilitate their usage and the protection of patrimony that the regional languages represent. I take the moment to salute the group Alvan et Ahez which in a few weeks will represent France at

the Eurovision contest with an electro-pop song in Breton [see below]. This is certainly a sign that creativity in a regional language can be of the present and incarnate our country in all its diversity. Also, we will restudy the possibility of ratifying the European Charter of regional languages. \*

If the French will once more put their confidence in me, I know I can count on your mobilization to protect the regional languages which unify our nation, as you can count on me to support this movement. With you, for you, for us all,

Emmanuel Macron

\* In 1999 France signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (at least some of its provisions), but has not yet signed the charter which would be a step towards using it to protect and promote languages like Breton.

### Eurovision Song Contest

The 2022 Eurovision Song Contest was held in Turin, Italy, May 14. Begun in 1956 to add some interest to television programming, the contest is held annually in different cities of Europe. Countries select a song and performers to represent them and the contest has grown over the years to include over 40 countries. This year the winner was the Kalush Orchestra from the Ukraine with a song called “Stefania.” With a popular voting system, it is no surprise that a group from the Ukraine would win hearts, but they had an outstanding performance with an interesting mix of rap and traditional Ukrainian melody and rhythm. You can watch their presentation as well as all of this year’s performers on Eurovision.tv.

Making it to the grand final round was the representative for France – Alvan and Ahez from Brittany. Their song for the contest was “Fulenn,” in a highly electric performance which was unmistakably Breton not only in the Breton language song text but in melody and rhythm. And there was a nod to Breton tradition also in costume embroidery. They finished 24<sup>th</sup> in the contest overall, but it’s no small thing to get to the final round. Alvan is a singer and producer and Ahez is a trio of young women with Marine Lavigne, Sterenn Diridollou and Sterenn Le Guillou. The three met while students at the Diwan high school in Carhaix and have been performing kan ha diskan style song for dance at festoù noz since 2018. And as with their collaboration with Alvan, they are at ease in creating new styles for the Breton language.

Previously the Breton language was presented at the Eurovision Song Contest by Dan ar Braz and Heritage des Celts with “Diwanit Bugale.” He finished 19<sup>th</sup> that year.

## Autonomy for Brittany?

Information for the note below was drawn from *L'Avenir de la Bretagne* No. 557 (May-June 2022) and Agence Bretagne Presse posting on April 10, 2022 which included a link to the Regional Council's proposal text.

At its April 7-8 session the Regional Council of Brittany (4 departments of Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes d'Armor and Ille-et-Vilaine) adopted a proposal from the group Breizh a-gleiz to engage France in serious discussion on legislative, legal, and fiscal autonomy for the five departments of Brittany (including also Loire-Atlantique). This would also mean consideration for the reunification of Brittany to include Loire-Atlantique which was cut off from the rest of Brittany during the Vichy government.

The proposal was adopted by the near totality of parties making up the Regional Council with the exception of the Rassemblement National party. The proposal is called "For an autonomous Brittany in a Republic of territories with fortified democratic foundations" (Pour une Bretagne autonome dans une République des territoires aux fondations démocratiques fortifiées). This follows on the French government's agreement to open discussion with Corsica on autonomy. The most centralized country in Europe, this step toward discussion has been viewed as a significant opening for more legislative and fiscal power for regions of France. And it seems significant that the word "autonomy" seems to no longer be demonized as a threat to the French Republic. Time will tell whether Brittany achieves autonomy and whether reunification of the five departments will be obtained.

## The Breton and Gallo languages gain the floor at the Regional Council

At the May session the Regional Council made the use of Breton and Gallo at its sessions officially welcome – considered a historical step forward since French has been the language for government meetings in Brittany since the Revolution. However, in earlier centuries Breton was used for official proclamations since this was the only practical way to communicate with much of Brittany's population. For more about this, see the article by Bernez Rouz, "Vie publique en breton : une tradition ancienne qui renaît au Conseil Régional de Bretagne" published April 17 on the blog Teñzor ar brezhoneg skrivet / Le trésor du breton écrit. This blog features articles by Bernez Rouz published in *Ouest France Dimanche* in their original Breton version as well as in French translation. A variety of topics are covered in these short and informative articles related to written Breton – history, literature, song and oral traditions, and public presence of Breton.



## Deep inside a Breton skull N° 71 Identity-fiction

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Identities are usually controlled. The chief controller can be a state, a religion, a language, a community. Let us imagine how identities burst out of control. Let us imagine a way, among many ways, to break into the new...

The old man was the last survivor of the Nation Fathers. At night, when everybody sat around the fire, he always told the same story. It was probably the legacy he wanted to pass on to younger generations. His voice mingled with the creaking of the branches and the hum of the fire.

"A hundred years ago, humans were abundant on our planet. They had domesticated the animals, the trees, even the climate. They had suppressed everything they couldn't submit. Long before I was born, there were men of different skin colors, yellow, black, and even white people. Once young women were sterilized and children were born in-factories in the midst of containers and tubes, this social mess was put under control. This fantastic improvement reduced rivalries and disorders. That was called "progress".

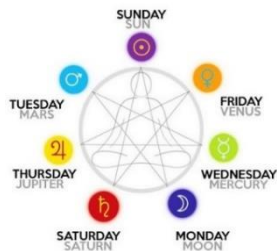
Factories produced children and goods, to meet all the needs. The production was for all human beings, so that the borders disappeared. The old nations melted into the Great Civilization. Powerful computers had worked tirelessly to synthesize all languages and cultures. In all the schools on Earth, children absorbed the same knowledge, which was the way toward peace and universal brotherhood.

For a short time, everyone was equal to everyone else. We had known so many odd things! The people of the mountains gathered together, and there were collusions of the people of the seaside. This happened before the Great Civilization centralized the production of children in a single factory.

No one ever knew where the blow had come from. A few individuals, all of them produced by the Children's Factory on Monday, created a group which gave itself the name "Community of the Moon". They assembled



and laughed at the amorphous mass of those born between Tuesday and Sunday. The craziest of them wore helmets on which they fixed a lunar crescent, like horns. They called themselves "Children of the Moon".



As a reaction, other communities appeared, for each day of the week. The computers were baffled by the phenomenon, by its suddenness and by its power. They could not find a good answer. Anyway, the break was done. Humans had been

birthed throughout the week. And even if they had been born during a single day, communities appeared that were organized by the hour - 9, 10, and so on.

The brotherhoods became, over time, weirder and weirder. Those born on Tuesday took the Mars Planet as their emblem. They made fun of Monday children, who only descended from a poor satellite of the Earth. But things were not limited to astronomical considerations. Those of Tuesday were viewed as aggressive people. Those who were born on a Wednesday took the planet Mercury as their symbol, so that they also had a celestial body of their own. They built all kinds of idols. Sometimes it was a rich young man with winged feet. Elsewhere it was a one-eyed poet, riding an eight-legged horse. Elsewhere still, it was an old man leaning on a stick. Those of Wednesday got the reputation of an overactive imagination. It is true that many artists belonged to the Wednesday brotherhoods.

Those of Thursday strength over all. This gave hope that they would be the saviors of Civilization, that they would clean it of the mystical deviances. They were called upon to take over the social order. But they were intoxicated by political power. They invented a half-naked idol who held a flash of lightning in one hand. There were a few variations here and there, always representing the same powerful bearded man. The Friday brotherhood, in reaction to all the others, presented themselves as kind and tender people. As symbols, they choose a hot planet, and a beautiful young girl. But there again, the mystical fire burned. Beneath the external softness wild passions arose from time to time, like a torrent of hot lava.

Those of Saturday were very peculiar. Their idol was dark and taciturn, and they themselves wanted to be similar to their divinity. When they were meditating, you always wondered if they were thinking or watching the time passing.

The Sunday brothers and sisters devoted themselves to celebrate deaths and births. They did this cheerfully and, let's face it, excessively. The commemorations were so important to them that they seemed to be indifferent to

everything that happened in between. Only the beginning and the end of things seemed to move them. Their symbol was the sun.

The founders of the sects were neutralized. Nevertheless, the number of followers increased and the social order was lost. You could hear laughter in the streets. You could also hear screaming and crying. The adept ones began to disobey Civilization's laws. They attended forbidden meetings. With amazement, the most talkative told their own courage. And they noticed that their story interested their companions.

The great battle around the Children's Factory raged for a week. Each community tried to take control of it, in order to produce only offspring of their clan. But this was to no one's benefit, as the Factory exploded on the evening of the seventh day.



A ruthless war engulfed the entire planet. Factories and computers were destroyed. Armies were organized, destroying everything in their path.

The fighting stopped, for lack of fighters. The War had destroyed all the cities, and there was nothing left of the great Civilization. The survivors had to feed on wild fruits and on the flesh of animals. Children were born from the women once again, and this was considered as a gift from the gods. The humans, satiated with glory and adventure, continued to worship their idols, but paid poor attention to the fact that their offspring were born any day of the week. The children adopted the rites and traditions of their fathers, and called themselves the grandsons of celestial stars. But they paid no attention to coincidences regarding their parents' birthdays. How could they, anyway? The habit of dividing time into seven-day per week was lost.

...Today our nation lives happily, protected by the moon god. If we and our neighbors exist, it is because this world was founded on seven days...for seven divinities...or in seven...or by seven...gods...days... Dies Irae, Dei Ira...Ooooh! My poor head..."

The old man disappeared one day. Time erased him from the memory of the living ones. In the sky, the moon, planets and stars raced on, their duration and diversity bringing peace to anxious humans.

And now, deep in my Breton skull, I try to find an answer. Are the Bretons children of a sect of the Moon? Are The French coming from the brotherhood of Thursday? Cultures and identities can be explained in so many ways that, lacking any clear and unique explanations, it is better to be tolerant.

## Ar Redadeg and Breton Poetry in Motion

Ar-redadeg.bzh



As reported in the last issue of Bro Nevez (No. 161, March 2022), Ar Redadeg is a relay run to raise funds for the Diwan schools and a dozen other Breton language initiatives. These can be for the use of Breton in business or leisure activities, development of media, or workshops and activities for children.

Starting in Vitré on May 20 the run took Bretons of all ages through towns and cities of all five departments of Brittany before ending in Vannes on May 28. Since Bretons are experts at creating celebratory events, the run had activities throughout its course and larger festivals to begin and end it.

A baton carrying a secret message in Breton was passed from person to person during the run and read as part of the final celebration. Here is the text in Breton composed by Maina Audran and Ninnog Louis. You can find this and a French translation on the Ar Redadeg website and hear them recite their Breton text. Following the Breton text is my translation from the French text with some searches in a Breton-English dictionary as well. This is in no way poetic, but it will convey the message carried throughout the Redadeg run. LK

Demat deoc'h ma mab ha ma merc'h,  
selaouit ha adlârit àr ma lerc'h,  
rak un deiz bennak e vo ho tro  
da hadiñ brezhoneg er vro.

Selaouit doc'h an ton a zasson,  
don don en ho kalon.  
Talm ar vuhez hag ar garantez,  
a ziskan get ma hani-me.

Digorit bras ho tivskouarn,  
ha roit din ho taouarn.  
Ne glevit ket a-bell é tonet du-hont,  
mouskan ur bobl hag a son ?

Grait ho pazioù kentañ tamm-ha-tamm,  
ha balbouzit àr-lerc'h ho mamm.  
D'ar skol Diwan tostañ d'ho ti,  
eh aoc'h edan berr da zeskiñ ha da c'hoari.

Redit ha strebaotit a-wezhioù,  
an douar a gren un tammigoù  
edan treid an dud é tostaat a-vostad,  
e-pad mand oc'h-c'hwí é vrasaat.

Mignoned ho peus tro-dro deoc'h,  
evit roiñ kalon deoc'h ha sikour genoc'h.  
Àr-un-dro e taoc'h da benn  
a vonet betek ar penn.

Tostoc'h-tost an dud a gomz,  
ha muioc'h-mui an douar a stroñs :  
a c'hoari, a farsal arsavit un herrad,  
da gompren ar morad a dud é tostaat.

Postit gete, par ma c'hellit,  
ar Redadeg ne chomo ket d'ho kortoz bepred !  
Trapikellit dre an hentoù  
betek uziñ seulioù ho potoù

Tud é tonet a beplec'h  
kozh ha yaouank hag a bep reizh,  
bras ha bihan razh àr-un-dro,  
é huchal "Brezhoneg er vro" !

Nag ur blijadur, ur bam,  
ho kwelet é redek d'ar pimperlamm.  
Dre kêrioù ha minotenoù Breizh,  
e strewit brezhoneg e pep lec'h.

Mar da deoc'h bout klouanek é sonjal  
E braventez kollet ar broioù treuzet gwezharall,  
Taolit ur sell àr-dreñv : arru int pell bremañ  
Ha bec'h m'o spurmanter avamañ

Setu arru ho tro da dapout ar vazh,  
digorit ho torn ha dalc'hit-hi c'hoazh,  
deoc'h eo cheñch penn dezhi,  
hag he zreuzkas a di da di.

Savit ho penn ha sellit diragoc'h :  
ur bed biskoazh bravoc'h,  
ur milendall a hentoù foll,  
a chom da redek evidoc'h holl.

Roit ar vazh d'an hani zo etaldoc'h,  
ho kalon èl-se a vo skañvoc'h !  
Mes n'arsavit ket a redek bemdez,  
dalc'hit da zigor hentoù nevez.

Hentoù nevez evit ar re a zeskey c'hoazh,  
Ma ne zihanint biskoazh,  
A gerzhet hag a gomz e brezhoneg  
amzer dezhe gouiet redek.



Hello my son and my daughter,  
listen and repeat after me,  
because one day it will be up to you,  
to spread the Breton language in the land.

Listen to this music which resonates  
in the very depth of your heart.  
The theme of life and of love,  
which echoes mine own.

Open wide your ears,  
and give me your hand.  
Don't you hear from far over there  
the murmur of a people who rise up?

Take your first steps, little by little  
and say your first words with your mother.  
At the closest Diwan school  
you will soon go to learn and play.

You will stumble on the path sometimes,  
the earth will tremble a little bit,  
with the footsteps of numerous people who arrive  
during the time you are growing up.

You will have friends surrounding you,  
to encourage you and to help you.  
Together you will move on,  
to reach your goal.

Closer and closer people speak  
and more and more the earth shakes;  
Stop playing and laughing a moment,  
to watch the crowd which approaches.

Run with them, as best you can,  
the Redadeg will not wait forever for you!  
Make your path along the roadways  
until you wear out your shoes.

People have come from everywhere,  
old and young people, of all backgrounds,  
big and small united  
to cry "Breton for our land."

What pleasure, what wonder,  
to see you run at full speed.  
Through the towns and paths of Brittany  
you spread Breton everywhere.

And if you are saddened in thinking  
of the lost beauty of the countryside crossed before

look behind you: they are far away now,  
it's only a glimpse if you can see them from here.

Now comes the moment for you to take the baton,  
open your hand and hold it tight,  
it's up to you to take the lead,  
and take it from house to house.

Raise your head and look before you:  
A marvelous world is opening for you,  
an infinity of paths,  
which remain for you to explore.

Give the baton to the person next to you,  
thus your heart will become lighter!  
But don't stop running,  
and continue to open up new paths.

New paths for the future learners  
so that they will never stop,  
walking forward and speaking in Breton  
until it is their turn to run.



## Dastum – 50 Years

Founded in 1972 Dastum celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a double CD *Dastum 50 – Tradition vivante de Bretagne Vol. 21* gathering song and instrumental music of 70 performers. Included are 42 selections from 50 years of recordings made by Dastum as well as 4 not previously released. This is a great tribute to the wealth of the musical traditions of Brittany and to the important work of Dastum to foster collection and performance. A 48-page booklet accompanies the double CD.

The release of this album kicked off anniversary festivities with a fest deiz on May 7 in Pontivy, and singers and instrumentalists came from all parts of Brittany for this – the best of the best, younger and older generations. Also in May Dastum was present for the annual Gouel Breizh / Fête de la Bretagne. In this case a Crêp'Noz in Paris. How can you go wrong with a celebration of both the delicious crêpe and Breton dance? Dastum was also present for number of radio interviews and a seminar on May 31 on archives management and cultural patrimony.

In the Fall of 2022 Dastum will sponsor concerts by two groups that have used their roots in Breton traditions for new music. Dastum has always fostered relationships

with others throughout the world engaged in the performance and transmission of oral traditions, and it has also encouraged Breton singers and musicians to delve into Brittany's heritage to create something new. The two groups to perform are Horvâ, led by Emmanuelle Bouthillier with a creation called "À l'évâillée" pulling from the heritage of Upper Brittany, and the group Modkozmik led by Yann-Ewen L'Haridon with the creation "Menez Kernall" drawing from Lower Brittany.

And certainly, the year-round activity of all of Dastum's partner organizations (see below) will add to the 50-year celebration. Check out the "actualités" section of Dastum's website [dastum.bzh](http://dastum.bzh) for much more information.

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary also brings the launch of a "Fonds de Dotation" for Dastum – an endowment fund which will help build finances for further development of activities and enhancement of physical resources for the archives. With tax relief for donors (in France) it is hoped that this will provide a new base of support to this organization which has offered so much of its resources free of charge to anyone interested.

#### Some Background about Dastum

The following is drawn primarily from Dastum's website which is easily navigated for more information.

Dastum was created in 1972 by a group of young *sonneurs* who also did collection work of Brittany musical patrimony: Yves Berthou, Pierre Crepillon, Guy Jacob, Daniel l'Hermine, Patrick Malrieu and Michel Prémorvan. The goal has always been to collect, preserve, and transmit the immaterial cultural patrimony, in particular oral and musical, of historical Brittany (all five departments). The focus has been on the oral tradition of song, music, tales, proverbs, stories, etc., but also includes a rich documentation of texts and visual materials.

Since 2013 Dastumedia, Dastum's documentary base, has been accessible on the Dastum website free of charge. It includes over 12,000 sound recordings (equivalent to 8,800 hours) and over 50,000 iconographic documents, among other things. Work is ongoing to process material contributed to Dastum to add to this.

Dastum is a 1901 Association (non-profit organization) and receives financial support from France's Ministry of Culture, the Region of Brittany, the departments of Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan and Côtes d'Armor, and the City of Rennes, as well as private donations. While Dastum has ten paid employees, it has always counted on the work of volunteers who contribute not only collection materials, but also expertise.

Over 3,800 individuals and some 40 associations are members of Dastum. In 2006 a network of more locally focused organizations working on the collection and transmission of Brittany music and oral traditions were incorporated into a formal associative status. These work closely with Dastum in the production of print and musical publications and their work is featured on the Dastum website and in the pages of *Musique Bretonne*. They are currently: CAC Sud. 22 Marc-Le-Bris (Saint-Caradec), Dastum 44 (Nantes), Dastum Bro-Dreger (Lannion), Dastum Bro-Leon (Lesneven), Dastum Bro-Gerne (Quimper), Dastum Bro-Ereg (Ploemeur), Groupement culturel breton des Pays de Vilaine (Redon), La Bouèze (Rennes) and Mission Breton – Ti ar Vretoned (Paris).

Dastum works with a wide variety of institutions – schools, libraries, museums and cultural organizations – to insure a wide public access to their work. Thanks to internet access, gone are the days when you had to personally locate and visit one of just a handful of sites to gain access to Dastum's wealth of materials. Today Dastum's physical archives and work site is in Rennes but it has moved as it has grown from more humble locations, including the living room of one of the funding members Patrick Malrieu.

Dastum participates also in the public life of Brittany through conferences, colloquia, and exhibits. In 2012 Dastum brought the inscription of the *fest noz* to UNESCO's list of Immaterial Cultural Patrimony.

#### Beyond the Archives – Print and Recorded Publications

Dastum publishes the review *Musique Bretonne* (270 issues so far), reference books (34 up to now) and sound recordings (94 lps, cassettes, CDs etc. so far). Books – often in collaboration with other organizations – have included analytical studies of Breton traditions as well as three editions of the *Guide de la Musique Bretonne* – a listing of musicians, singers, groups, teachers, festivals, and pretty much any institution related to the production of music in Brittany.



The first edition of 1990 (200 pages) by Serge Moëlo also included an excellent introduction to traditional music and its renaissance in Brittany. The second edition of 1993 was 286 pages and the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 2000 was 445 pages, including some 1,900 musicians, teachers, instrument makers, as well as radio programs, publishers, magazines, record companies, festivals and associations, and anything else related to music you might want to find.



Dastum's Guides not only allowed you to contact individuals and organizations, but served to show the vast numbers of Bretons engaged in the transmission of the music in Brittany. Today the Tamm Kreiz website (tamm-kreiz.bzh) has taken on the function of maintaining such an "annuaire" to locate actors of the Breton music world.

Closing in on 100 recordings, Dastum has produced cassettes, LPs and CDs which are exceptional in the quality of the documentation that has accompanied each. Jacket notes and accompanying booklets range from 50 to 100 or more pages with a description of each performance and performer and background information to put everything into context. Full song texts (with French translations for those in Breton) are always included. And the notes include a generous amount of images – photos, maps, documents, etc. – to bring it all to life.

My introduction to Dastum's recordings was the series of *Cahiers* (lp records and booklets) published from 1973 to 1984. I have in my collection all but the first of this series which focuses on particular areas of Brittany:

- 1 – Panorama des terroirs de Basse-Bretagne
- 2 – Pas de Lorient Hennebont
- 3 - Pays Pagan
- 4 – Pays de Loudéac
- 5 – Pays Fañch
- 6 – Chants traditionnels du Bas-Pays
- 7 - Noal Pondi
- 8 – Chants et traditions, Pays d'Oust et de Vilaine

Similar in idea is the series produced from 2005 to 2021 (so far) called *Breizh ar Broioù / La Bretagne des Pays / La Bertègn dez Payiz*. These CDs are likewise focused on particular areas and include song, instrumental music and stories.

- 1 – Pays Pagan
- 2 – Pays Bigouden
- 3 – Pays de Ploërmel
- 4 – Pays de Châteaubriant
- 5 – Pays Montagne
- 6 – Pays Fisel
- 7 – Pays Pourlet

From 1990 to 1995 Dastum produced a series of cassette tapes with booklets in a series called *Chanteurs et musiciens de Bretagne*. These focused on particular performers, instrumental traditions, or festivals:

- 1 – Mélanie Houëdry (song)
- 2 – Tradition de veuze en pays nantais
- 3 – Bogue d'Or 1989
- 4 – Tradition familiale de chant en Pays Bigouden (3 generations : Lisette Maréchal, Marie-Aline Lagadic, Klervi Rivière)
- 5 – Clarinettes et anciennes danse populaires du Trégor

- 6 – Jean Barbelivien (accordion)
- 7 – Bogue d'Or 1990
- 8 – Fête Plin de Danouët 1993
- 10 – Eugénie Duval (song)

CDs produced in a series called *Grands interprètes de Bretagne* starting in 2006 have focused on some of the "stars" of traditional song:

- 1 – Jeanette Maquignon
- 2 – Manu Kerjean
- 3 – Le Père Jean
- 4 – Marie-Joseph Bertrand
- 5 – Les Soeurs Goadec
- 6 – André Drumel
- 7 – Clémentine Jouin
- 8 – Léonie Brunel
- 9 - Valentine Veillet

A new CD series started in 2019 called *Passeurs* focuses on those doing collection work who also pass along music and song to others. The first in this series:

- 1 – Dominique Jouve

There is more ... nicely presented on the "Éditions" section of Dastum's website.

## Festivals of Brittany



In a May 26, 2022 Blog the organization Breizh Amerika posted the article "10 Festivals à ne pas manquer en Bretagne en 2022." This accurately noted that Brittany is known for its many festivals which are especially rich in the summer, but found year-round. And the Breizh Amerika blog presented the organization Gouelioù Breizh created in 1964 as a federation to promote and support Breton festivals in all five departments. The members of the federation represent some 1,500,000 festival goers, 6,500 volunteers with 90,000 volunteer hours, and 70 events. The Gouelioù Breizh website is a great place to explore the wealth of festivals: [gouelioubreizh.bzh](http://gouelioubreizh.bzh)

The Breizh Amerika blog notes that there are hundreds of small, very local festivals throughout Brittany to celebrate local traditions, dance and music. Choosing just ten to present is certainly a challenge, but the list provided by Breizh Amerika provides a sample of some of most iconic of Breton festivals. Their selection is below and I have provided a short description and added websites.

I have added a number of other festivals that show off the diversity of what you can find. As the Breizh Amerika

blog points out, there is something for everyone, and for all ages, and Breton festivals highlight the rich traditions of Brittany as well as innovative new music and dance ... and many have a very international scope in performances. For larger festivals you will find a mix of concerts, dance performances, parades, exhibits, workshops, song or instrumental contests, sports, and a fest-noz to cap off a day's events.

After cancellations or greatly diminished programming during the past two years due to Covid restrictions, Breton festivals are definitely back, better than ever. If you have the good fortune to go to a Breton festival it is a good idea to check out its website beforehand to get a detailed idea of events, ticketing and location.

So here are the ten festivals highlighted by Breizh Amerika:

**Festival Folklores du Monde** in Saint-Malo (Ille-et-Vilaine)

July 5 to 10, 2022

Folkloresdumonde.bzh

This festival with music and dance from all over the world has been held since 1996.

**Fête des Islandais et des Terres Neuvas** in Paimpol (Côtes d'Armor)

July 10, 2022

Since the 1950s this festival has honored Breton fishermen who died during long and dangerous travels to Iceland and the banks off of North America. Music and dance are also part of the day's events.

**Festival de Cornouaille** in Quimper (Finistère)

July 21 to 24, 2022

Festival-cornouaille.bzh

This is one of Brittany's largest festivals which celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Many travel to this festival to enjoy the show of traditional costumes and dance. In the past the festival has been criticized as being a bit too "folkloric" but it has become a showcase for new and innovative performances today.

**Fête de la Crêpe** in Gourin (Morbihan)

July 29 to 31, 2022

Fetedelacrepe.fr

This is the 30th year for this festival which features music and dance, but also workshops on making crepes and opportunities to enjoy these delicious concoctions. The festival also includes a contest for the world's largest crepe.

**Festival Interceltique de Lorient** in Lorient (Morbihan)

August 5 to 14, 2022

Festival-interceltique.bzh

Begun in 1971 with a focus on bagpipes, it became the Festival Interceltique in 1979 and while bagpipes are still very much highlighted with the championship for

bagadoù, all of the Celtic nations are present for music, dance, sports, arts and workshops. Each year a different nation is highlighted (Asturias this year), but Galicia, Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man all have a regular presence with Brittany. This is a huge festival where traditional and contemporary creations are all present.

**Le Festival des Filets Bleus** in Concarneau (Finistère)

August 11 to 15, 2022

festivaldesfiletsbleu.bzh

This is the 100th edition for this festival which actually had its origins in 1905 as a benefit for sailors of Concarneau. Today it includes concerts, dancing, conferences, games and of course dancing.

**Festival de la Saint-Loup** in Guingamp (Côtes d'Armor)

August 16 to 21, 2022

Saintloup.bzh

First created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this festival has been focused on Breton dance since 1957 with an annual contest for dance ensembles. It also includes lots of activities, musical presentations, and exhibits.

Performers from the Celtic counties and other areas have been invited each year and this year Scotland and Occitania will be featured.

**Le Pardon de la Baule** in La Baule (Loire-Atlantique)

August 25 to 28, 2022

pardon-de-la-baule.fr

Pardons are religious celebrations which always include more secular festivities. The Pardon of La Baule was created in 1947 and includes a religious mass but also a parade, dance, concerts and festoù-noz.

**Les Sonneurs de Gourin** in Gourin (Morbihan)

September 2 to 4, 2022

Championnatdessonneurs.fr

This annual contest for sonneurs de couple (biniou koz/bombarde, biniou braz/bombarde) grew from the first contest held as part of the Fêtes de la Saint-Hervé in 1956. This event has grown far beyond a contest with workshops, concerts, dancing and a focus on younger sonneurs.

**Yaouank** in Rennes (Ille-et-Vilaine)

November 2 to 19, 2022

Yaouank.bzh

This is one of the younger festivals of Brittany begun in 1999. Held throughout the city of Rennes the festival includes formal and less formal concerts and activities. "Yaouank" in Breton means "young" and the focus is on new creation.

You cannot go wrong with any of the festivals listed above, but there are many others well worth exploring. So I have added 25 more arranged by date. In some cases I did not find dates for 2022, but hopefully those festivals will be back for 2023. While most festivals of

Brittany are held over a weekend or a full week for the largest ones, there are also festivals which offer a series of events over the course of a month in various locations. The 10 iconic festivals presented by Breizh Amerika as well as the 25 I have added by no means exhaust the possibilities, especially if you also look at festivals for cinema, rock or jazz music, or book festivals! There is never nothing to do in Brittany.

**Zef et Mer** in various locations  
January 15 to February 6, 2022  
Leszefmer.bzh

A series of concerts and festoù-noz including events for children. Performers include the best known of Brittany as well as up-and-coming singers and groups.

**Roue Waroch** in Plescop (Morbihan)  
February 11 to 13, 2022  
Roue-waroch.fr  
25<sup>th</sup> year for this festival of traditional and more innovative Breton groups with an international flavor from invited groups.

**Deiziou Pays de Lorient** at various sites throughout  
March 2022 (Morbihan)  
Emglevbroanorient.bzh  
This is a series of concerts, festoù-noz, workshops, exhibits, conferences and informal opportunities to celebrate organized annually by Emgleo Bro an Oriant.

**Kan ar Bobl** in Pontivy (Morbihan)  
April 2 to 3, 2022  
Kan-ar-bobl.bzh  
This is the final contest for traditional and new song following a series of eliminatory contests in different regions of Brittany. As for all "contests" in Brittany, there is a highly festive nature to these gatherings with lots of activities besides a combat for the best!

**Concours Interlycées de Musique Bretonne** in Lannion (Côtes d'Armor)  
April 8, 2022  
Contest for high school music groups which has produced a number of stars for festoù-noz and concert performances.

**Fête de Chant** in Bovil (Ille-et-Vilaine)  
April 13 to 17, 2022  
Epille.com  
This is a festival for the Gallo song tradition. While the Gallo tradition has taken a back-seat to the Breton language traditions of western Brittany in the past, this festival like others for song and dance of eastern Brittany show off the vibrancy of the Gallo heritage.

**Printemps de Châteauneuf** in Châteauneuf-du-Faou (Finistère)  
April 17, 2022

For over 40 years this festival has featured traditional song and sonneurs de couple with lots of opportunities for dance.

**Gouel Breizh** in various sites  
May 13 to 22, 2022  
Fetede Bretagne.bzh

This festival includes hundreds of events including concerts, activities for children, workshops, exhibits, and dancing held throughout Brittany and elsewhere in the world where Bretons can be found, including here in the U.S.

**Festival Anne de Bretagne** at Sucé-sur-Erdre (Loire-Atlantique)  
May 15 to 15, 2022  
Just so we are reminded that the Loire-Atlantique is Breton, this festival features traditions of this area and moves to different sites each year.

**Kenleurenn** in Quimper (Finistère)  
June 18 to 19, 2022  
Kenleur.bzh  
Annual gathering of the best of Breton dance ensembles with traditional dance in new creations. The organization Kenleur also puts together numerous smaller festivals throughout the year.

**La Gallésie en Fête** in Monterfil (Ille-et-Vilaine)  
June 25 to 26, 2022  
Gallesie-monterfil.bzh  
A festival to celebrate traditional song and dance of Gallo Brittany.

**Gouel ar Brezhoneg** in Langonnet (Morbihan)  
July 2 to 3, 2021 (2022?)  
This festival immerses you in the Breton language with song, storytelling and theater.

**Kan al Loar** in Landerneau (Finistère)  
July 8 to 10, 2022  
Kan-al-loar.bzh  
A large festival including a variety of styles of Breton (and other) music, and a championship for Breton choral ensembles.

**Fête des Brodeuses** in Pont l'Abbé (Finistère)  
July 8 to 10, 2022  
Festival-brodeuses.s2.yapla.com  
Created in 1954 this festival includes parades of costumed dancers and children, crowning of a Queen of Embroiderers, as well as concerts and dance of traditional and less traditional styles.

**Rencontres Internationales de Harpes Celtiques** in Dinan (Côtes d'Armor)  
July 13 to 17, 2022  
Harpe-celtique.fr

For over 30 years this festival has celebrated the Celtic harp as well as many other harp traditions of the world.

**Les Vieilles Charrues** in Carhaix (Finistère)

July 14 to 17, 2022

Vieillescharrues.asso.fr

30th year for this festival said to be the biggest in France with over 200,000 attendees. Pop and rock styles are featured with some of the most famous names of the world, but you will also find Breton singers and musicians to remind audiences that they are in Brittany.

**Festival du Chant du Marin** in Paimpol (Côtes d'Armor)

August 4 to 6, 2023 (2022 ?)

Paimpol-festival.bzh

As its title says, this is a festival for maritime song with Breton performers as well as other countries represented.

**Le Bout du Monde** in Crozon (Finistère)

August 5 to 7, 2022

Festivalduboutdumonde.com

An international festival for world musics with several dozen acts in pop, rock, and traditional styles.

**Festival Plinn de Danouët** in Bourbriac (Finistère)

August 10 to 11 and 13-15, 2022

Danouet.free.fr

Features competitions for sonneurs de couple, clarinet players, singers and dancers for the dañs plinn.

**Les Celtiques de Guérande** in Guérande (Loire-Atlantique)

August 12 to 14, 2022

Lesceltiquesdeguerande.bzh

Inter-Celtic representation in concerts, dance presentation, street activity, sports and arts.

**Mondial'Folk** in Plozévet (Finistère)

August 19 to 22, 2022

Mondialfolk.bzh

Back after several challenging years with folk/traditional acts from Brittany and other areas of the world.

**Festival Fisel** in Rostrenen (Côtes d'Armor)

August 25 to 28, 2022

Fisel.org

Besides concerts and other presentations, a highlight of this festival is the contest for the dañs fisel.

**Nuit de la Gavotte** in Poullaouen (Finistère)

September 18, 2021 (2022 ?)

Danstro.com

Organized by the organization Dañs tro this is a night of the gavotte where one can spend the night dancing the gavotte.

**Mil Goul** at various sites in Ille-et-Vilaine

September 17 to October 9, 2021 (2022?)

Bertegn-gallez.bzh

Music, dance, concerts and workshops featuring the rich traditions of Gallo Brittany.

**Celtomania** in various sites in the Loire-Atlantique

September 30 to November 27, 2022

Celtomania.fr

33<sup>rd</sup> year for this festival which includes a string of concerts, festoù-noz, workshops, exhibits, films, conferences, and activities for children held in Nantes and surrounding towns.



**Heard of, but not heard**

**16 new albums from Brittany**

In fact, it is quite possible to “hear” samples of new albums from Brittany by doing an internet search for names and titles! Information for the following short presentations have been drawn from *Ar Men* 247 (mars-avril 2022) and *Ar Men* 248 (mai-juin 2022) as well as the Coop Breizh website and some internet exploration beyond.



**Véronique Bourjot.**

This is the first solo album by singer Véronique Bourjot including traditional songs and compositions drawn from the Vannetais Breton language tradition. She is accompanied by Alain Léon on guitar and Marie Wambergue on pedal harp. Bourjot is no newcomer to the Breton scene and has been a vocalist in the group Koun, Jolie Viaine, Loerou Ruz as well as other collaborations.



**Coeur de Bretagne – Danses, musiques et chants. Vol. 2**

This is a recording of a “road movie” featuring some twenty musicians, singers and dancers from the Cercle Eostiged ar Stangala of Quimper. The CD includes 13 selections showcasing new arrangements of Breton melodies and rhythms.



**Epsilon. Six.**

This album with 12 titles – songs in French and instrumentals – is described as “Celtic rock.” The group of six was formed 14 years ago and has seven previous albums. Instruments include accordion, electric and acoustic guitars, bombarde and percussion.



**Robin Foster. Peninsular III.**

Originally from Great Britain, Robin Foster has lived in Brittany for some twenty years. This is the third album in his “peninsula” project. This one, with 9 titles, is focused on the Presqu’île de Crozon. His style is described as “post rock cinematic.”



**Sylvain Giro et Le Chant de la Griffe**

Singer Sylvain Giro partners with four other notable voices: Elsa Corre, Hélène Bourdaud, Youenn Lange and Sébastien

Spessa. They are joined by instrumentalists François Robin on electric beats, duduk, fiddle and veuze for an electro acoustic performance of 11 song compositions in French by Giro. Invited guests include Julien Padovani on keyboard, Anne-Laure Bourgot on percussions and Jacky Molard on fiddle.

**Jean-Charles Guichen. Spi**

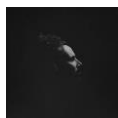
This is the 6<sup>th</sup> album by guitarist Jean-Charles Guichen who first hit the Breton scene as part of the group Ar Re Yaouank.

He is joined by Malo Carvou on flutes, Neven Sebillé Kernaoudour on uilleann pipes, Claire Mocquard on fiddle, Olivier Cavole on bass, and Thomas Kerbrat on drums. And the album includes some notable guests as well – Dan ar Braz, Norbert Krief, the bagad Sonerion Bro Dreger and Alvan. The CD includes 12 selections featuring Breton dances including the fisel, hanter-dro, plinn, kost ar c'hoad and others.

**Gwad. O Red.**

This is the first album by a group described as “folk country-blues” with 8 titles in English (The Ballad of Bill Hardy, Eighteen Thousand

Miles ...), and in Breton (Ur wech e oa ba kemeneven gar, Meilh ar c'hrek ...) and one in Spanish (Brindo por la Locura). The group is composed of Gautier Istin, composer of song texts and vocalist and guitar and harmonica player, Didier Dréau on guitar and Lucien Perron on banjo and guitar, with some noted guests – Johanne Kernin on fiddle and Kentin Juillard on percussions. They evoke the ballad traditions of the U.S., Ireland and Brittany with a touch of blues and South American rhythm.

**Gil Horvath. Histoires diluviennes.**

New CD by a singer from Saint Brieuc who is also an accomplished guitarist, fiddler and keyboard player. Here his songs evoke a

variety of moods and scenarios alternating with instrumental selections. He is joined by Solène Normant on accordion and vocalist Maxwell Farrington.

**Philippe Le Gallou & Pierrick Lemou. Paziou Dañs, Musiques à danser de Bretagne.**

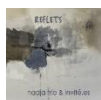
Guitarist Philippe Le Gallou pairs with fiddler Pierrick Lemou for 9 traditional Breton dance selections they have arranged and a march they have composed. Included is a nice variety of dances including ronds de Loire Vilaine, kas-ha-barh, jabadaou, an dro, ronds de Loudia, hanter dro and others.

**Les Biches Cocottes. Les Biches Cocottes chant les marins.**

while Breton maritime music has been dominated by men, here you have three women who give a new twist to some old classics and also present newer compositions. Alicia Du Coustel, Charlotte Bessard and Céline Roucher add harp, accordion and some percussion to their voices.

**Dominique Martin. Enez Glaz.**

This album is a selection of 9 pieces composed and arranged by pianist Dominique Martin based on traditional melodies of Brittany, Ireland and the Isle of Man

**Nadja Trio & invité.es. Reflets.**

This is a trio of three jazz performers – Jean-Mathias Petri on flutes, Jean-Philippe Lavergne on organ, and Christophe Lavergne on drums and percussions. The “invités” for the CD are Raphaëlle Brochet and Serena Fisseau on vocals, Serge Lazarevitch on guitar, and Patrice Legeay on percussion and vibraphone. This is their second album of compositions ranging in themes on topical issues and gentler reflections.

**Philippe Olivier. Au bord d'un monde.**

This is a composition by Philippe Olivier for a multimedia collaboration with dancer Noëlle Desfontaines. This CD of the music lacks the visual element of their performance but evokes the musical moods and scenarios evoked in the creation. Olivier plays the bandoneon with software to enhance the acoustic-electronic sound quality. The bandoneon is a type of concertina popular in South America especially.

**Willy Pichard & Stevan Vincendeau. Nocturnal Alchemy.**

This is the second album by this duo of vielle à roue (hurdy-gurdy) and accordion. They draw from the tradition of Upper Brittany but make their arrangements uniquely their own. They are joined here by Xavier Gainche on Fender-Rhodes piano.

**Startijenn. Talm ur galon – Le battement d'un cœur.**

Paker production  
The musicians of this well established group are Tangi Oillo on guitar, Youenn Roue on bombarde and vocals, Tangi Le Gall Carré on accordion, Julien Stévenin on bass, and Lionel Le Page on biniou and uilleann pipes. Percussionist Jean-Marie Nivaigne is a guest artist for the album which includes 10 titles. There are three songs in Breton and a variety of dances including plinn, rond de Saint-Vincent, ridée, waltz, jig and kas a barh. (You may have noticed that this last dance is presented with a number of different spellings).



## An American in Brittany – 1910

**George Wharton Edwards, *Brittany and the Bretons***  
(New York: Moffet Yard & Co., 1910)

*As I have for many issues of Bro Nevez, included here is a travel account which offers the perspective of an American, George Wharton Edwards. He born in Connecticut in 1859 (deceased in 1950) and was an award-winning artist as well as a writer. He directed Collier's Magazine from 1896 to 1902 and contributed to Harper's Magazine as an artist and writer. Excerpts from his book Brittany and the Bretons have been used in seven previous issues of Bro Nevez. This time we travel to the area of Guérande.*

**Guerande, The Salt Marshes, The Paludiers** (pages 257-266)

We are now at the extremity of the Breton Coast, the Guerande country, which is cut into innumerable semi-inlets by the sea, with the salt marshes on the one hand, and the Grande Briere on the other, both of interest. The town of Guerande may be used as headquarters and is surrounded by granite walls of the XV century, machicolated and flanked by ten fine towers built by John V. Of the four massive looking gates, that of Saint Michel with its two lofty towers is most impressive. For leagues around, the vast shallow marshes are divided into square and rectangles of irregular shapes, walled in by low banks of a grass covered sandy clay, between which the water of the sea is allowed to enter at the tides.

Here a large number of picturesque peasants, called Paludiers, live and labor in the salt beds. During the dry scorching days of July and August, the Paludiers rake the drying crystals of salt, which resembles thin, dirty brown ice, into rows to dry and bleach, after which the women quarter it up and carry it to the great white piles which dot the plain. The annual production is said to be more than 6,000 tons.

Coming upon this region suddenly is like happening upon a vast encamped army, so like military tents in alignment are the piles of dried, bleached salt.

The plains are open to the breezes fresh from the sea over the rocky Grande-Cote, which protects them and the villages of the Paludiers from its ravages. Here are found Carheil with its remarkable Druidical Saint Cado, and an old ruined manor house; the villages of Kervallet, Roffiat and Kermoisan, curious collections of sad looking huts of stone on the Batz where little save pure Breton is spoken. These people, until quite recently, kept exclusively to themselves, scorning the other villages and their inhabitants. They allege that they are of a different race and descended from the Norsemen who

settled on the island after the invasion. Up to within a few years they never married outside their own community, but of late the younger element had disregarded tradition and the lines once so rigid are broken down.

The costume, while peculiar, has not the character one would expect, but it is sufficiently differentiated in detail. At work they wear long white blouses and caps, while the women carrying the salt to the white piles on the plain, wear short skirts to the knee, legs bare, and on their heads is balanced a large pitcher full of the salt. It is rarely now that one sees a Paludier clad in the old costume, save at one of the Pardons, or on a great market day. This costume consists of a great many jacket-like shirts of white flannel, upon which are large collars. Their breeches are baggy to the knee, the legs clad in white knitted stockings, ending in yellow shoes.

The different villages have each their color for the outside shirt. Thus at Saillé, the shirt is red with white trimmings on the sleeves, while at Batz the shirt is dark blue. The whole is topped by an immense felt hat, embellished with various colored ribbons, arranged according to whether the wearer is married, a bachelor, a widower, and so on. Should a widower desire to remarry, he arranges his ribbons accordingly and thus his intentions are conveniently made known.

As for the women of Saillé, they most certainly bear off the palm for uniqueness and originality. They wear heavy dresses of violet or white coarse linen, with bodices of black velvet, and sleeves of crimson stuff heavily embroidered with yellow or gold braid, according to their wealth. The corsage, too, is of lavishly embroidered brilliant cloth, stockings of red or dark crimson wool, and yellow shoes with rosettes of violet ribbon. The combination sounds dreadful, but on the contrary the effect is in good key.

There is a popular fête at Saillé on the fifteenth of August, which is worth a thousand mile journey, in my estimation. The picture made by these peasants in their extravagantly colored costumes is one of great charm and rarity. Crowded into the little old church are long lines of white capped, kneeling women, bordered by standing and kneeling figures of men clad in their blue or figured vests and baggy white breeches, in the incensed gloom of the aisles. The village, like all the others of the salt region, is simply a collection of small, low houses, under what seems to be one large weather-beaten thatched roof, and the effect is that of abject poverty. But step inside and what a surprise! Each door and window is seen to bear the sign of the cross and when one's eyes become accustomed to the gloom, the interior seems to blaze with bright colors, with hangings and portières, of somewhat riotous patterns, but with fine pieces of ancient furniture and most delightfully carved Breton armoires, brightly varnished, and shelves upon

which tall vases of Quimper ware stand laden with artificial flowers. But one does well not to come here with a captious spirit to criticise these strange people who are living out their lives based upon their own peculiar traditions. They are not exploited, in their peculiarities, for business purposes by bric-a-brac merchants, as are the people of Marken in Holland, who have in these degenerate days become almost fakes, and if only for this reason their peculiarities are to be respected.

The district is fast losing its former prosperity. Other localities with better facilities of transportation, and yielding a better and larger crop of salt per annum, have been discovered, so the one time prosperous Paludier is having a hard time to make a fair living.

Occasionally, all along the roads, will be seen the extravagantly dressed figures of the Paludiers, marching beside melancholy looking mules, whose heads are decked with bright red tassels reminding one of Spain and bearing on their backs panniers of glistening white salt crystals. They move along the flat roads in a huge cloud of dust, which can be seen a long distance away, with a great tinkling of bells, rattling of harness buckles, and an occasional not unmusical "Ohe!" from the Paludier. Choked with this dust, we were informed that somewhat farther on we would find "un bon petite Auberge," and so we did – a low stone house of one story, with a huge mossy thatch, over the low door of which hung a dried bush. Here often the same thatch covers both man and beast, and it was over a huge pile of manure that access was had through an open door, with a bench upon either hand.

At one end of the dark room was a small fire on a large blackened hearth, and near this, built into the wall like the berths of a ship, and half closed by sliding doors of cared oak, were two narrow bunks, well fitted with bedding and enormous pillows, with embroidered ends in blue and red figures, looking like Russian peasant work. A cupboard of smaller beds at the opposite side of the chimney was evidently for children. In front of these a capital old carved Breton chest served for storage of clothing, as well as for a seat, and as a step by which to mount into bed. Two plain heavy tables, with benches at each side, ran lengthwise of the room, which had as a floor well swept earth. A large wicker work pannier filled with loaves of bread, each as large as a small cart wheel, hung from the ceiling, and there was also a wooden rack for some rough pewter spoons, which are, as a rule, the only utensils furnished by the aubergeiot. All peasants carry their own knives, and as for forks, they have no use for them.

The smoke blackened rafters of the room were festooned with sausages and bacon, strings of onions, old harness and anything else belonging to the house. An old withered Breton woman sat at the fireside, on a raised sort of stone seat attached to it, busily knitting at a

jersey of blue wool, and three men sat at the table playing some sort of game with dominoes. The men gave no apparent heed to our entrance, but I knew we were being discussed in their patois. We asked for bread, butter, and a pitcher of cider, which was forthcoming, but no knives were brought. Noting our predicament, the three men at once produced theirs, immense horn handled affairs ornamented with a diamond pattern of german silver, and after wiping them very carefully and considerately on their coat sleeves, they opened and proffered them to us.

The Breton cider is, of course, very thin and equally sour, and is an acquired taste, but it is both wholesome and refreshing.

"And now, Madame," said I, "what shall I pay you?"

"Five sous for the cider, M'sieur, there is no charge for the bread, for is not that the gift of Bon Dieu?"

Thus it is throughout this strange land of Brittany. One may travel from end to end away from the large cities, and everywhere meet with the same hospitality. The peasant will willingly share with you what he has in the cupboard, and will not ask you for pay. However, he expects you to give him something, and so I left an offering of silver upon the window sill, among the balls of woolen yarn. I noted that the act was not lost upon the old Bretonne who, when she caught my eye, gave me a charming curtesy and a smiling "Merci, M'sieur."

Below the small village of Turballe, with its poor population of sardine fishers, beyond the point of Castelli, is Piriac, or what remains of it. Once it was a place and port of considerable importance, wealth and population, but it has now dwindled to almost nothing. There are many ruins here of what must have been splendid mansions and even palaces in the XVI century. The ruins of the town may be seen over the masses of rock which are here pierced by deep caverns, in which the waves dash themselves in impotent fury. A few fishermen and their families now occupy the place in most melancholy poverty, yet it is most quaint and attractive from an artistic point of view and the people are invariably hospitable, especially to the painter, who is welcome to all they have. Of course, as may be expected, there are no accommodations for visitors or tourists beyond the houses of the fishermen.

In the place de l'Eglise at Piriac, a small stone cross, evidently once a part of a calvaire, is mounted on a rude pedestal in a walled space of stone with wild briars. The houses opposite are of dark stone, the upper story white washed, with quaint pointed roofs of gray slate, and are apparently additions to what was once a noble manor house of long ago.

I witnessed a funeral here, a cortege of peasants in curious costume, following two by two after a poor shabby hearse, with bedraggled plumes, drawn by an equally sorry looking horse, which was evidently taken from more arduous farm work. The hearse was simply a frame work on wheels, with a sort of canopy, under which was the poor black coffin of painted pine. Beside it walked the priest and a boy carrying a brass pail, in which was a kind of brush. We uncovered and stood at the roadside as they passed, but while they did not even glance in our direction, I am confident they saw and appreciated our action. I do not know where the burial was to be, as the poor pathetic cortege passed on and out of sight, but long afterwards I could hear the melancholy drone of the priest and the high pitched, clear responses of the acolyte. . . .

The fishermen told us that some painters had been there the year before, and a small girl showed us where they had been working. The signs were unmistakable – paint scrapings of lake, cerulean blue and lemon yellow, showed the character of their palettes. The small girl said that they were *foreigners*, and when I asked were they not French, she answered “but yes.” Thus all Frenchmen in this region are called *foreigners* by the Bretons.

A small place called Pouliguen on a narrow bay with beautiful sand is a good stopping place, with comfortable lodgings at moderate prices, and is becoming popular. Some villas are being constructed of raw looking red brick in the French style, and while no doubt they are considered comfortable by the occupants, are strange to American eyes. For instance, they never have any sort of piazzas or verandas like ours, nor are there any shade trees surrounding them. They are, as a rule, set inside of high stone or brick walls, the tops of which are sown with broken glass, point upwards, and tall iron gates with formidable locks give access to the grounds, which are often prettily planted with flowers. These villas, I am informed, are rarely, if ever, furnished with a bathroom. The French do not understand what they are pleased to style our “mania” for daily bathing, but they do sometimes bathe in the summer at the watering places “whether they need it or not.”

Pouliguen life amused us very much, the bourgeois families are so tremendously in earnest in their summer outings, and they do certainly enjoy themselves to the very utmost. The wood of very fine trees, almost to the edge of the water, is very unique.

Near Penchateau is an immense sort of fosse, in which eminent archaeologists affirm once existed a city of the ancient Venetes. Here many antiquities have been discovered, and below this, between Croisic and Guerande, was fought the great naval battle between the Venetes and Caesar, which resulted in their vanquishments.

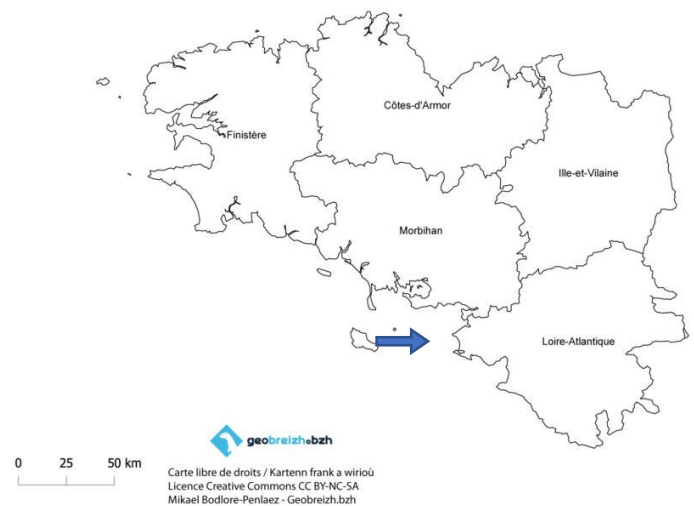
And now we are at the end of Brittany, and of our peregrination. To the eastward lies the mouth of the Loire and beyond that the dim line of Poitou. The bells are ringing for evening services in some one of the churches of this strange region. A deep red sail or two of a fishing boat gleams seaward, and overland the eye follows a thin, winding road across the fields. Over the empty plain a mantle of deep solitude falls with the coming of nights.

Westward against the setting sun the cliffs and gorges take on mysterious shapes and the distant spires are reddened in the glow, but only for an instant does this last – then the sun, sinking behind the glory of the gold-lined purple mantle at the horizon, leaves a pale violet vapor which sweeps gradually over this sad looking plain. It is thus that I remember it – a wide expanse of rock strewn coast, with here and there a gray stone church tower, a wayside cross, or an ancient ruined chateau facing a wild stretch of rushing waters.

### *Following the route of George Wharton Edwards*

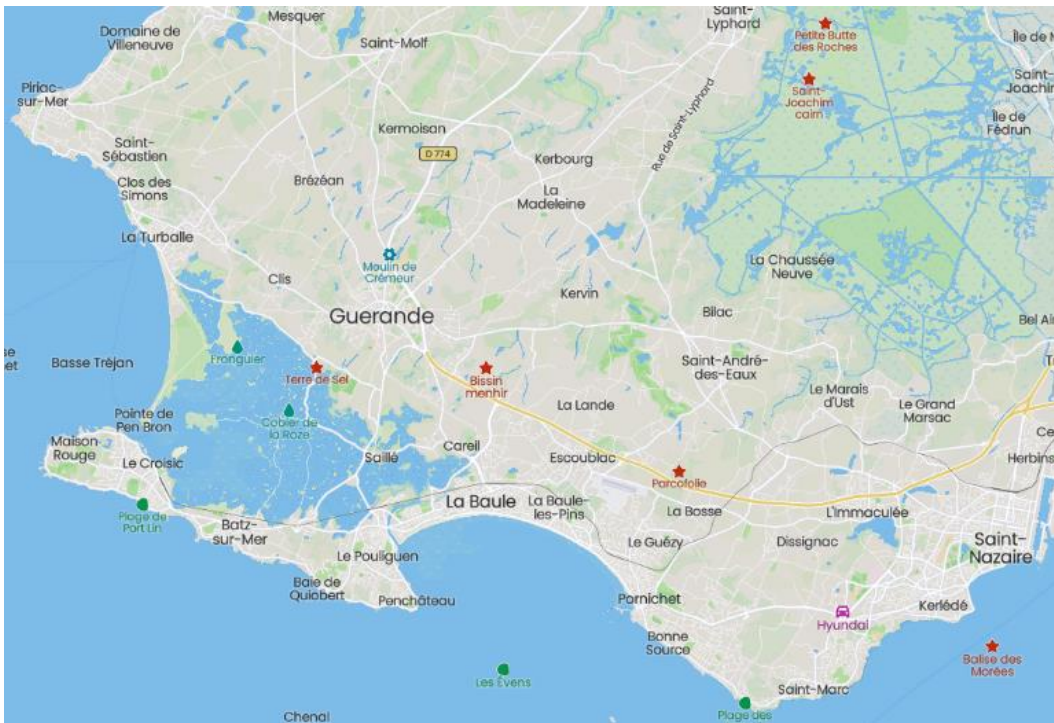
When you do an internet search for a map of Brittany, none out of ten times will include just the four departments of official Brittany.

Thanks to Geobreizh (geobreizh.bzh) I was able to find a simple map with all five departments to show the location of Guerande. I have added the arrow.



It was even more difficult to find a good map showing all the locations identified by Edwards, but I managed to find one that is not too complex and which shows most of the locations. Here are the names of towns and villages he identified with some differences in spellings as they are found on maps today. Edwards usually left off accent marks. Have the names changed, or did he not note them correctly?





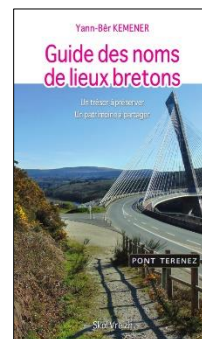
Guerande = Guérande  
 Carheil = Careil  
 Saillé = Saillé  
 Pouliguen = Pouliguen  
 Penchateau = Penchâteau  
 Batz = Batz-sur-Mer  
 Roffiat = Roffiat, part of Batz-sur-Mer  
 Kervallet = Kervalet  
 Kermoisan = Kermoisan  
 Croisic = Le Croisic  
 Turballe = La Turballe  
 Piriac = Piriac-su-Mer  
 Point of Castelli is just below Piriac

### *Learning about the Breton Salt Marshes Today*

For the history and current state of the salt marshes (marais salants) of Brittany a great place to start is the Bécédia website: [bcd.bzh/becedia.fr/les-marais-salants](http://bcd.bzh/becedia.fr/les-marais-salants). With text and videos this shows how salt is harvested and gives a good overview of history. There is also a very interesting article on the Ni Hon Unan website: [nhu.bzh/le-sel-de-guerande-lor-blanc-de-bretagne](http://nhu.bzh/le-sel-de-guerande-lor-blanc-de-bretagne). And if you do an internet search for salt marshes of Brittany, marais salants, or Paludiers de Bretagne, you will find much more information as well as practical information for those who might want to take a visit to this region.

Centuries old, and a source of great wealth in the past, when salt was key to preserving fish and meats, the salt collection in Brittany underwent a downturn after World War II as industry proved to be a formidable competition.

Threatened with disappearance, efforts were made in the 1970s to protect the unique heritage of the Paludiers and the salt marsh ecosystems. Training programs were developed to train new generations in the mostly unmechanized techniques of gathering salt. In more recent years the demand for natural salts has meant that the Breton brand is highly marketable. Restaurants and home cooks seeking the special quality this salt provides. The Guérande area is a major producer of salt from Brittany.



### **A New Book on Breton Placenames**

**Yann-Bêr Kemener, *Guide des noms de lieux bretons – Un trésor à préserver, un patrimoine à partager*.**

Ar Falz, 2022. 164 pages. ISBN 978-2-36758-140-8.

This brand-new book is a guide to Breton language place names arranged by theme with a lexicon and activities to inspire exploration throughout Brittany. As the subtitle indicates, it is a guide to place names – treasures to be preserved and a patrimony to be shared.

The publisher Skol Vreizh has been at work for some 50 years and is part of the movement Ar Falz, founded in 1933 by Yann Sohier. They have produced some 350 books on a range of topics – history, biography, geography, nature, fiction and books for children and young adults – in Breton and French. Check out their website for a catalogue: [skolvreizh.com](http://skolvreizh.com).

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