6,000 demonstrate for the Breton Language — see page 1
(photo from L'Avenir de la Bretagne, no. 425, janvier-février 1999)
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 a newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, May, August and November. Contributions, letters to the Editor, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor. Suggested deadlines for receipt of contributions for Bro Nevez are: January 20, April 20, July 20, and October 20.

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

Membership in the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL includes subscription to Bro Nevez:

Voting Membership: $18.00 (calendar year)
Non-Voting Membership: $17.00

Subscriptions:
$15.00 U.S. and Canada first class mail
$20.00 overseas by surface mail
$25.00 overseas by airmail (printed matter rate)

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to do this. In some instances we are also very happy to establish an exchange of publications.

* * *

The Canadian Branch of the ICDBL was relaunched January 1998. That branch of the ICDBL publishes a newsletter called Brittany (trilingual in English, Breton, French). Canadian Membership including Brittany is $15 (Canadian dollars). A Canadian Membership which includes both Brittany and Bro Nevez is $30. A subscription to Brittany without membership is $10 for the U.S. and Canada and $20 by surface mail elsewhere. Contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, 58 Century Drive, Scarborough, Ontario, M1K 4J6 CANADA (e-mail: jdkoneill@sympatico.ca). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.
More on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages – When will France sign ... and ratify it?

It was back in 1996 that Jacques Chirac promised that France would sign the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, but this idea seemed to be abandoned when France's Conseil d'Etat pointed out that Article 2 of the Constitution of France states flatly that “the language of the Republic is French.” As reported in the November 1998 issue of Bro Nevez, at the end of September the Prime Minister of France, Lionel Jospin, announced that France would take steps to sign and ratify the Charter. This followed the submission of a report in July by Bernard Poignant who was given the task by the Prime Minister to prepare a report on the state of regional languages in France. January 1999 seems to be the date stated for France’s signature of the Charter, but as of the time I am writing this report (February 20), I can find no sign of anything taking place.

But, lots of things have taken place in Brittany in the last few months.

6,000 Bretons demonstrate in the Streets of Kemper

On December 5, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the “Universal Declaration for the Rights of Man,” an estimated 6,000 Bretons demonstrated in the streets of Kemper (Quimper) to demand that France sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (without restricting its interpretation). The demonstration went further to also ask that the French Congress modify Article 2 of the Constitution which makes French the language of the Republic. And the demonstrators also called for measures to be implemented so that Breton language and culture would have the place students and parents have been demanding in their schools by the opening of the September 1999 school year—including recognition of Diwan as a public service, and teacher exams and recruitment specifically for bilingual programs which would insure enough qualified teachers.

The evening before the demonstration the Cultural Council of Brittany and Ti ar Vro, the federation of the cultural organizations of the Kemper area, hosted a conference by international jurist Ferdinando Albanese, a founding author of the European Charter in 1989. He gave his perspective on the potential impact of the European Charter for languages of Europe. So far, 18 European countries have signed the Charter and 8 have ratified it (Croatia, Finland, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, and Switzerland).

Over 750 artists, writers, musicians and intellectuals sign a petition to France

You may recall that in the November 1998 issue of Bro Nevez we included this petition to be sent to one of four cultural centers in Brittany. So I suspect that a number of American artists, writers, etc., are among the very substantial number of cultural leaders in Brittany who have called on France to sign and ratify the European Charter and modify Article 2 of the Constitution. Thank you to all who joined in this effort.

* Several web sites where you can get information about the European Charter for European and Minority Languages include the BZH site (http://www.bzh.com/), the site for Ti ar Vro Kemper (http://www.kerys.com/kerys/tiarvro/appel.htm), the site for the newspaper Ouest France (http://www.france-ouest.tm.fr/langues-regionales/) and the site for the newspaper Le Télégramme (http://www.bretagne-online.tm.fr)
SOME SHORT NOTES

Servij ar Brezhoneg: A New Guide to Breton Classes for Adults

A special sub-group called the “Observatoire de la Langue Bretonne” of Servij ar Brezzoneg (which is part of Skol Uhel ar Vro/Cultural Institute of Brittany) has been working on the collection and analysis of information about the state of the Breton language, including its teaching, use in media, public visibility, economic importance, and role in cultural expression in Brittany. This has resulted in the publication of a very practical little publication (which I have not seen) called “Kenteliou brezhoneg d’an oadourien/Cours de breton pour adults.” This booklet lists 160 different class sites for adults interested in studying the Breton language. Of the sites documented 65 are in the department of Finistère, 27 in Côtes d’Armor, 23 in Morbihan, 12 in Ille-et-Vilaine, 11 in Loire-Atlantique, and 25 outside of Brittany (Paris will be prominent in those). No price is noted, but the booklet can be ordered from Skol-Uhel ar Vro, 1 straed Raoul Ponchon, 35069 Rhoazhon (Rennes).

Servij ar Brezhoneg has been steadily at work to advise and encourage cities, businesses and organizations in the public use of Breton (for signs and advertising, for example).

A Center for the Breton Language and Culture in the Works for Carhaix

A number of newspaper articles have come out in Brittany to present plans to build a major center in the town of Carhaix for Breton language activities. Central in what might be called a “cultural/technological” campus will be a new Diwan high school, due to open Fall 1999, and a Diwan university to follow in a future year. Also planned for this “campus” is a large concert hall, a smaller performance center (still able to seat hundreds), conference rooms, a movie theater, and a media center/library.

The library project will focus on Breton language materials (books, magazines, CD ROMs, etc.) and will function through the Breton language—in the organization of the materials and operation of the library with a professional staff of Breton speaking librarians. Bretons have looked to Wales for their model: the Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru (National Library of Wales) in Aberystwyth. While the focus will be on the Breton language, the collection will include materials in any language related to the Breton language and culture or Brittany more generally. It will be an important resource for scholars but open and inviting to the general public. The library/media center will also host a number of public lectures and exhibits. Meetings are currently being held by a federation of organizations to work out practical details of funding and operation. Those involved so far include the instigating group of Emglev evit al levraoueg (Etre dec’h hag arc’houazh, Levraoueg Breizh, Mignoned Angela [Duval], Unvianezh Bror Dreger) and Dastum Bro Dreger, Radio Kreiz-Breizh, and Unvianezh ar Gelemerien Brezhoneg. Hopes are that the library/media center can be opened by the year 2000.

The development/renovation of the old Chateau de Kerampoull and construction of new buildings where the Diwan high school, library and performance centers will be located has been supported by the city of Carhaix from the start, encouraged by the very successful annual music festival of “Vielles charus” which has attracted 100,000 people to this small city of central western Brittany. One million francs from the festival have been contributed to the construction of the Diwan high school. Of an estimated 15.2 million francs needed, the high school has received 10.5 million francs from he Regional Council of Brittany. The high school has been the cornerstone and catalyst for the development of the Kerampoull site. Some 60 students will begin the first 1999 school year
there, with an estimated 200 to enroll by the opening of the 2000 school year.

This is indeed a very exciting project which will allow Bretons to coordinate some scattered efforts without undermining the many important grassroots projects on a more local level. We will try to keep you informed as the different projects move along.


The Regional Council of Brittany “puts some of its money where its mouth is”

It is “politically correct” these days in Brittany to favor Breton identity and its cultural expression, as it is “politically correct” for French politicians to say they are in favor of regional languages and cultures. It is another thing to actually do something concrete to back up words of support. A January 23rd article in the newspaper Ouest France ("Les ambitions culturelles de la Région," p. 7) reports on the decision by the Regional Council of Brittany to make a 24% increase in its budget for Breton language and culture, architectural patrimony, and audiovisual creation.

In the area of the Breton language and culture, the budget has grown from 12.2 million francs to 20 million. Two new projects are under study. First is the creation of an “Office de la langue bretonne” to be based in Carhaix (another addition to the building of an education/technology “campus” of activity). This would “promote the language, study its evolution, and unify and advise teachers, editors and administrators in the correct use of Breton.” This incorporates the work now being done by Servij ar Brezhoneg, currently under Skol Uhel ar Vro, which would move to Carhaix and maintain an antenna in Rennes with a project also based at the University of Nantes. The second new project is a “Fondation bretonne” modeled on the British Council to help Breton artists promote their work and the Breton language and culture abroad. The Regional Council budget continues to support the work of Skol Uhel ar Vro (which in turn supports a large number of publications, artistic productions, and research) as well as Ti-Embann ar Skolioù Brezhonek which publishes pedagogical materials in Breton for use in bilingual classes (free of charge) throughout Brittany. The subvention for Diwan grew in this new budget from 800,000 francs to 1.5 million—a clear sign of support for Diwan’s continued expansion.

In the area of “architectural patrimony” the Regional Council notes the need to protect a large number of small churches, chapels, fountains and other architectural sites not catalogued and counted among the protected monuments (the Region of Brittany ranks second in France for the number of such documented sites). 26 million francs have been earmarked for architectural restoration, favoring small communities (less than 7,000 inhabitants) and individuals who do not have the means to restore sites on their property. Priority will be given to making sites accessible to the public as they are restored.

In the audiovisual area support is directed to the professional development of filmmakers in Brittany through the support of the production of longer films and television series which can bring a positive image to Brittany and Breton creativity. This directly benefits filmmakers, technicians, and actors involved in such productions.

While there is never enough money to support all the diverse cultural expression to be found in Brittany, this substantial budget increase on the part of the Regional Council of Brittany shows its commitment to fostering Breton language and culture, and its recognition that cultural growth is closely related to economic health.
Reunifying Brittany

On March 6, Bretons will gather in the city of Nantes for a demonstration to demand that the Department of Loire-Atlantique be reunited with the other four Breton Departments. It seems worth including in this issue of Bro Nevez an article by the Comité pour l'Unité Administrative de la Bretagne (CUAB) which presents this issue. This was first printed in Bro Nevez 48, November 1993. Over five years later the CUAB is still hard at work and Bretons are still protesting the amputation of the Loire-Atlantique from the Region called Brittany.

Brittany – The everyday ethnocide in Western Europe
Prepared by the Comité pour l'Unité Administrative de la Bretagne

Brittany, as a nation, has existed since September 851, after the Treaty of Angiers between the Breton Duke Erspoe and the Frank King Charles the Bald. From that time on, the borders of Brittany would remain the same, with minor modifications, through six centuries. By the 15th century, they were definitely set—a situation unique in Europe.

These borders were confirmed in January 1499 when the Duchess Anne of Brittany married the King of France, Louis the XII. They were again officially recognized in August 1532 when the Duchy of Brittany and the Kingdom of France signed a Treaty of Union. In January 1790 when the province of Brittany was divided into five departments, the external limits of the departments were faithful to the limits of the Duchy.

Yet, by its decree of June 30, 1941, the pro-Nazi regime of Vichy separated the department of Loire-Inférieur (now Loire-Atlantique) from the other Breton departments. This was done to punish the Bretons who in June 1940 made up nearly one-third of General De Gaulle's "Free French."

After the war, succeeding regimes were only too happy to maintain this Vichy inheritance. Through a number of decrees and then laws, the jacobin bureaucracy in Paris gerrymandered the country to prevent any attempt at a rebirth of the former provinces on the successful model of Germany's lander.

In this respect, France is the only country in Western Europe where "regions" do not coincide with historical provinces, and therefore do not have the legitimacy of geography, history, culture or even economy. In Western Europe "administrative Brittany" has the unique feature of being the only "region" separated from its historical capital city, Nantes, which is placed by the jacobin technocracy in a totally absurd contrivance, the so-called "Countries of the Loire," of which three of its five departments are not even alongside the Loire River! When this contraption was put together, one of the great French geographers called it "an inept administrative gadget!"

As a result, in over twenty years more than one billion francs of tax-payers' money has been spent to promote this "region," to give it a flag, a palace, an orchestra, etc. Books about its "geography," its "history," and its "culture" have been written and are being used in schools. The obvious objective in Loire-Atlantique is to wipe out every
trace of our past, of our history, of our culture, of our traditions, and of the Breton language which for centuries
has been spoken by more than a quarter of the Bretons of Loire-Atlantique. [Editor's Note: This effort to stifle
Breton identity in Loire-Atlantique has not been totally successful since a survey taken in April 1998 showed that
62% of the people of Loire-Atlantique were in favor of reunification with Brittany.]

Obviously, the Bretons have been protesting this partition of their country ever since the 30th of June 1941—the
first protester being the then-mayor of Nantes, G. Roueau, who was dismissed by Marshal Petain shortly
afterwards.

In spite of continuing protests for more than 50 years from the general public as well as from elected officials, the
Jacobian state is adamant and continues through its local stooges its efforts at "historical and cultural purification"
in the department of Loire-Atlantique—school children being the obvious prime targets. They are taught a falsified
history, an ersatz culture and are deprived of their very roots. A state which cannot even guarantee their future is
robbing them of their past.

***

Brittany and the U.S. – Twin Cities

Rennes and Rochester (NY)

The following note is drawn from the Newsletter of the Franco-American Institute in Rennes (September/October
1998).

After forty years, many Franco-American sister-city relationships end up either being taken for granted or
forgotten altogether. Neither has happened to the Rennes/Rochester twinning, the first such Franco-American
relationship. Following initial contacts in 1956, when Victor Janton (former deputy mayor of Rennes and chair of
the Franco-American Institute) visited Rochester on behalf of Mayor Henri Fréville, the relationship between the
two cities was officially ratified in 1958. Shortly thereafter, Kodak set up a plant in Rennes and the universities in
both cities began exchange programs for their students (Nazareth College and the University of Rochester have
permanent year-long programs in Rennes). Most Rennes high schools now organize annual exchange programs
with Rochester. Rochester's Association of Teen-Age Diplomats (ATAD) quickly became one of the cornerstones
of this relationship, which has not remained exclusively scholastic or academic. There are cultural exchanges, not
to mention sports exchanges or private citizen exchanges. Economic exchanges involving different companies in
both cities have been an additional offshoot. Partly because of this historic twinning relationship, the Institute
[Franco-American Institute] was founded in 1961 by Rennes City Hall and the U.S. Embassy in Paris. From
October 18 to 24 [1998] a delegation from Rochester led by Mayor William Johnson will visit Rennes. Minister-
Counselor Michael Pamly of the United States Embassy in Paris will also be in Rennes for the official twinning
commemoration ceremony at Rennes City Hall on October 23. In conjunction with Rennes City Hall, Rochester
City Hall, the Rochester and Rennes Sister-City Committees, LISAA (School of Graphic Design), and Rennes' 
International House, October's cultural program will pay tribute to this historic relationship.

Brest and Denver (CO)

An article in the January 1999 issue of Armor Magazine briefly noted another celebration of twin city links—this
one between the city of Brest and Denver. In World War I Brest was a major port for the arrival of American ships
and soldiers, and in September 1944 thousands of American soldiers helped liberate Brest from German
occupation in World War II. In 1947 the city of Denver played a key role in beginning the reconstruction of Brest.
While the Franco-American Institute claims that the Rennes-Rochester twinning is the first for France and the
U.S., this article gives that honor to Brest-Denver.

Can anyone in the Denver area send information about the date that Denver was officially twinned with Brest?
Any other information about American cities with twins in Brittany would be very welcome.
New Publications in the Breton Language

The following short notes have been pulled from a variety of sources: *Breizh de Livres* (Skol Uhel ar Vro), 43, janvier 1999; *Keleier Servij ar Brezhoneg* 28, Genver 1999; *Al Liamm* 311, Du-Kerz 1998; and the December 1998 Mouldadurioù Hor Yezh new publications listing. LK

This is a collection of 100 poems (most previously unpublished) by one of Brittany’s best known Breton language poets, Anjela Duval (1905-1981).

This is a collection of 14 short stories written and assembled by the writer and storyteller Yeun ar Gov.

This is an imaginative and humorous look at agricultural issues and their solutions.

This is the first volume in a study of place names in the Plouguerneau area done between 1994 and 1997.

This is a collection of one poem and 15 short stories by Klerg (Marcel le Clerc, 1912-1984) who was the first president of Kuzul ar Brezhoneg and editor of the journal Barr-Hecol from 1954 to 1978.

This is one volume in a series of publications exploring the Breton language and its development of vocabulary and expressions for contemporary life and occupations—math, navigation, economy, politics, philosophy, geography and computers included.

This is a study of the evolution of the short story as a dominant medium for Breton language literature and the promotion of the Breton language.

This is a selection of more unusual family names from among 17,000 family names studied during 20 years of research. Cartoons by Nono enhance the sometimes humorous side to a name.

*Translations into Breton*

This is a novel set in 1947 in which a man ventures across the Welsh mountains in a snow storm and takes refuge in a farmhouse … in which a pretty farmer’s daughter lives.

This includes four short novels translated from Russian into Breton by Anna Mouradova, a winner of the prestigious Imram Prize for her work in the Breton language. These novels are about contemporary Russian life.
New Publications in Breton - continued

This includes three short novels translated from Russian into Breton by Anna Mouradova. The novels are set in the 1950s and have as a theme the struggle between people and their souls and consciences.

Books for Children

This book features the life of penguins.

This book features the life of zebras.

Translation into Breton of the Tintin “comic book” Coke en stock. (one in a series now in Breton)

This is not a book your kids would run to the bookstore to buy, but a math book 7-8 year olds might use in Breton bilingual schools or Diwan schools.

***

Roparz Hemon and Literature in the Breton Language for Learners

Lois Kuter

Because the Breton language was only allowed to enter the schools and school yards of Brittany in the past thirty to forty years, there are a large number of native speakers who never learned to read and write Breton. While classes, grammar books and dictionaries will work to get one going, a language is mastered through practice. In practicing reading skills, it is important to have materials that are interesting and attractive written specifically for learners. Fortunately such a literature exists in Brittany—both in the area of literature as well as non-fiction books and magazine articles. In this issue of Bro Nevez I would like to present a pioneer in the development of Breton literature who not only wrote scholarly treatises about the Breton language and its linguistic history, but also created grammars, basic vocabulary lists, dictionaries and simpler reading matter for those in need of encouragement in their studies.

If one were to single out an individual who has had the most important impact in allowing the Breton language to develop a modern written tradition, it would have to be Roparz Hemon (1900-1978). The following biographical presentation focuses on his work as a linguist. I have translated it from the article in French by Per Denez which appeared in Bretagne des livres (No. 39, mai 1998, pp. 12-13). A “sister article” written by Annaig Renault on the literary side of Roparz Hemon’s work also appears in that magazine, along with a chronology of major dates in Hemon’s life and an excellent bibliography of his work. Those interested in a more complete picture of this famous Breton are recommended to consult that magazine issue.
ROPARZ HEMON, LINGUIST

Linguist? One is a linguist through the acquisition of various languages for work, for the pleasure of communication, and for creation. Roparz Hemon spoke French in his family; his father was an engineer in the Navy, his mother a school teacher. But in Brest, before the war of 1914, Breton was never far away, and Roparz Hemon learned it with his grand-parents, with people who worked in the house, with the small merchants and people of whom he paints such a faithful and moving picture in Nenn Jani [novel published by Al Lann, 1974]. He began early to read the press and books published in the Breton language. One can thus say that French and Breton were the two languages of his childhood; but it was the language of the people that became that of his heart, and very early on he decided to consecrate his life to it.

The languages that he acquired from his adolescence on were fairly numerous: English which he taught in the high school of Brest, German, Spanish, Welsh, and Cornish. He published translations from all of these languages. His translations from Old Irish were done no doubt through the help of works in English and German. Fluent in Esperanto, he published a supplement to his journal Gwalarn in that language. He organized in his journal classes in various Celtic languages and insured a pedagogical end to the bilingual editions of Welsh and Cornish poetry by putting a Breton translation side-by-side with them. For him, translations were done with a plan; with the help of his first team of writers—Youenn Drezen, Jakez Riou, Fañch Elies-Abeozen, to name just the first—he wanted to make the treasures of early Celtic literature available to Breton speakers, and to give them access to their own language to the most beautiful texts of world literature.

Roparz Hemon was also a linguist in the scholarly research he brought to the Breton language, with studies published in international journals and works edited by the Irish Institute for Advanced Studies such as Christmas Hymn in the Vannes Dialect of Breton. A Historical Morphology and Syntax of Breton (which would appear in a Breton translation within several weeks), and others. In June [1999] his last great unpublished work will be published by Skol: the text of Ar Yarn Diwethañ (The Last Judgement), a Breton Mystery play of the 14th century, including a grammar of the language of this text.

His Cours élémentaire featured a city family leading the life of urban dwellers ...

But his most astonishing work is certainly the Geriadur Istorel ar Brezhoneg – Dictionnaire Historique du Breton which will be reedited in forty volumes by Preder.* Until he completed this work, Roparz Hemon would not agree to be hospitalized for the illness by which he was to die soon after. In its 206th issue, the journal Hor Yezh published the texts numbered 1619, 1621, 1530 and 1795 prepared by Roparz Hemon for the book but found in his desk after his death.

Roparz Hemon put his knowledge and his skills as a linguist to the service of teaching Breton. He multiplied works for teaching and gave them a new spirit and new technique: his Cours élémentaire featured a city family leading the life of urban dwellers, and his Petit Dictionnaire was the first to present Breton as a unified language, enriched by its dialects. Besides this, he published Teñzor ar Gwenedeg (Le trésor du Vannetais) and Geriadurig an trosou-lavak poblé (Petit dictionnaire des expressions populaires). Of course, since then more and better work has been done. But Roparz Hemon was also the first to publish hundreds of pages for an all-Breton dictionary.

... provide free, modern and illustrated, non-religious, books to children in schools ...

In the area of pedagogy, his most remarkable contribution was the creation of "Brezhoneg eeu" (Basic Breton). At the period when Gwalarn appeared in Breton cultural life, linguists with international reputations were starting to make lists of most frequently used vocabulary. The best studies were done of European languages which had expanded most widely—English and Spanish. The conclusion made was that the basic language included about 2,000 words, and in order to help learners gain practice of a language very quickly, the study must be based in the beginning on these indispensable words. Roparz Hemon decided to put the research of the pedagogical specialists to the service of Breton. After numerous tries, he established a list with a little more than 1,000 words named "Aic iwez ar brezhoneg eeu" (Key to basic Breton). Then, attached to this, he gave a mass of texts in basic Breton—sometimes true
literature—to those learning Breton, and to those just learning to read Breton. Consult, for example, the story about Christmas entitled *Alarig an Tri Rowe* to see how one can reconcile easy reading with literary pleasure.

When Roparz Hemon arrived in Brest in 1925, he was not content to just create *Gwalarn*. He opened a sort of “Tir ar Vro” where, with his friends, he gave Breton classes and soon organized the work of “Brezhoneg ar vugale” (Breton of children) to provide free, modern and illustrated, non-religious, books to children in schools. It seems to me that one can say that Roparz Hemon never pretended to be a wise man locked in his ivory tower, but that he put himself totally to the service of the language and people.

Per Denez (translation Lois Kuter)

* In 1998 Preder published the 35th volume (Rann 35(2)), 64 pages, ISBN 2-901383-3.

A SELECTION OF BOOKS BY ROPARZ HEMON IN “BREZHONEG EEUN”

* *Alc'hwez ar Brezhoneg Eeun.* Published by Evit ar Brezhoneg (BP 24, 29450 Sizun). 1997. 82 pages. 59 francs. First published in 1935 this is the basic vocabulary for basic Breton, arranged by themes with notes.

* *Alarig an Tri Rowe.* Mouladuriou Hor Yezh (1 plasenn Charles-Péguy, 29260 Lesneven). 148 pages. 50 francs. Christmas story recommended in the above article for its literary quality.

* *Kontademnoù a Vro-Skos.* Hor Yezh (Amzer Nevez – Soe, 56270 Plañzour). 116 pages. 60 francs. Scottish tales redone in Breton.

* *Danevelloù troet gant Roparz Hemon (levrem 3).* Mouladuriou Hor Yezh. 138 pages. 70 francs. Translations of texts including two by Pouchkin.


* *Gaovan hag an den guer.* An Here (Kergleuz, 29480 Ar Releg-Kerhuon). 78 pages. 35 francs. One of the tales of the Round Table.


* *Ur prenest r a oa digor – Re bennavel.* Skol (6 straed Lapique, 22000 Sant-Brieg). 64 pages. 30 francs. Two stories—a police adventure and a humorous science fiction piece.

* *Santez Dahud.* Hor Yezh. 1998. 75 pages. ISBN 2-910699-29-3. Well known legend of the City of Ys with a different twist to the fate of Dahud.

Two Breton Language Writers (and Teachers) Honored

There are many literary prizes given each year in Brittany to recognize creativity and talent. Two of the most important for the Breton language are the Priz lennegel Langleiz (Xavier de Langlais Prize) and the Priz Roparz Hemon. The recipients are chosen by juries and the prizes recognize writers for their significant contribution to Breton language literature and the promotion of Breton more generally.

This December two Breton writers were honored with this recognition. The Roparz Hemon Prize went to EUGÈNE CHALM in recognition of all of his works in Breton with special attention to his book, Skolaer ar Mezven, about his experiences as a teacher in Mayenne during the early period of World War II (to be published in 1999 by Hor Yezh). This 79-year old is also working on the publication of a 360-page Breton grammar. A native speaker from Cap Sizun, Eugène Chalm never had the opportunity to learn to read Breton in school, but that didn’t stop him from writing in it. In 1977 he studied Breton which allowed him to correct his earlier writings, and he also became a Breton teacher to help others learn the language.

The Xavier de Langlais Prize was awarded to LAN TANGI for his collection of poetry, Mousâfîr (published by Skrid/Mouladurioù Hor Yezh at the end of 1997). A native speaker of Breton, and now a teacher with Roudour in An Uhelgoad, Lan Tangi has been a world traveler (even venturing to the U.S.). His poetry is about the people and places he has experienced.

In an earlier article for Bro Nevez on the Xavier de Langlais Prize (No. 47, August 1993), I put together a list of previous winners which seems interesting to reproduce here. These are all people who have indeed made significant contributions to Breton literature and to the future of Breton as a language with unlimited creative potential.

**Xavier de Langlais Prize winners by year**
(dates in parentheses is year of birth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>Goulen; Jacq</td>
<td>1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Per Didier (Per ar Bihan)</td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tudual Huon</td>
<td>1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goulc'h'an Kervella</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Per Boudelles</td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Reun ar Chalan</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Per Roy</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Jef Philippe</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Goulc'h'an Kervella</td>
<td>1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jakez Konan</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Kristian Brisson</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Jakez Konan</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Yann Gerven</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Lukian Tangi</td>
<td>1927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Abbe Jozef Lech'vien</td>
<td>1919</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Franseza Kervendal</td>
<td>1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Josef Abasq (Didrouz)</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Youenn Olier</td>
<td>1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Erwan Evenou</td>
<td>1940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Alan Heusaff</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prize recipients**

- *Pinvidigezh ar paour* (autobiography)
- *Ar veaj-se e oa* (poetry)
- *Ar Chalboter hunvreau* (short stories)
- *La Divina Comedia* (translation)
- *Levr ar blandenn* (poetry)
- *Evel-se e oamp* (autobiography)
- *Tebenn ar c'hî* (poetry)
- *Laenneg* (biography)
- *Pikou, mab e dad* (translation)
- *Skeud* (novel)
- *Kenavo Amerikal* (novel)
- *Brestiz o vresken* (police novel)
- *Jakez, Per, Yann ha ar re all* (short stories)
- *La Bible* (translation)
- *Un aod, ur galon* (short stories)
- the whole of his work
- the whole of his work
- *Nikolazig ar broioù tomm* (novel)
- the whole of his work
1994  Ronan Le Gléau  
1995  Philippe Oillo  
1996  Youenn Gwernig (1925)  
1997  Alan Botrel (1954)  
1998  Lan Tangi (1951)

*Dictionnaire du breton classique*  
*Blaz an holen* (novel)  
the whole of his work  
the whole of his work; poetry  
*Mousafir* (poetry)

Roparz Hemon Prize Winners by Year  
(this is a much less complete list, starting only in the most recent years)

1994  Tereza and Yann Desbordes for publishing work (Hor Yezh, Mouladuriou Hor Yezh)  
1995  An Here publishing house  
1996  Erwan Vallerie  
1997  Gwenole Bihannig  
1998  Eugène Chalm  

*Gerladur Brezhoneg* (first all-Breton dictionary)  
*Traite de toponymie historique de la Bretagne*  
*Douaroniez Breizh*  
the whole of his work; *Skolaer ar Mezven*

---

**Poellgor an Tarv - Academy of the Bull**

As reported in past issues of Bro Nevez, this group has as its goal a meeting of Breton artists—painters, sculptors, musicians, and poets and writers in a bilingual blend of Breton language and French language literature and poetry. It held its first Salon Poésie-Peinture-Sculpture during September/October 1998 in St. Pol de Léon, attracting 2,000 visitors. During the exhibit of art/texts two “Harmony Prizes” were given for works bringing together texts and sculpture.

A second gathering of artists who put their work to bilingual texts will take place in September 1999 and some 25 artists are expected to work with poets and writers to put on the exhibit. Including well known and less known Breton artists, this is certainly an interesting way to promote Breton creativity.

For more information, contact:  
Poellgor an Tarv/Academie du Taureau  
Ti-Ker Gwimaeg/Mairie de Guimaec  
29620 Guimaec
A Call for News (in Breton) for Breton Radio
A Lesson in Translation for a Breton Learner

The following is my translation of a letter I received early in January from the Breton radio station Arvorig FM. The letter was in Breton, so I took this on as a translation exercise—part of my renewed efforts to advance a little in my study of Breton. With the aid of Raymond Delaporte's Brezhoneg-Saozeg / English-Breton dictionary, I think I arrived at a reasonable translation, but I admit to making some guesses. So, I hope those who are fluent in Breton who read this will not be too outraged by any mistakes I have made or a less than ideal choice of words in the translation. This is my first attempt to translate anything in Breton, and as short as it is, this text offered some challenges. Anyone in need of a quick response should probably write to me in French or English! ---

Lois Kuter

Arvorig FM 91.7
Plasenn An Iliiz
29450 KOMMANNA

Komana D'an 03 a viz Genver 1999

Keneil ker,
Ho chomlec'h hon eus bet a-drugarez da "Al Lïamm".

Nevez savet ez eus bet ur radio hollvrezhonek diazezet e Komana hag o skignañ war Bro Leon a-bezh: Arvorig FM.

Evit deomp da bourchas danvezioù liesseurt d'hôr selaouerion hon eus soñjet gouestlañ abadennou d'ar vro e-lec'h emac'h o chom enni.

Ha plijet e vehec'h da gas ur ch'asedig deomp da ginnig ar vro, an dud, ar sevenadur, ho puhez eno, ar sonerezh ha kement tra a gav deoch a zo a-bouez.

Ur raktres all a zo war ar stern ganeomp: sevel ur rouedad brezhonegerion da respont d'hôr goulennoù pe da gas keleier deomp diouzh ma troio an darvoudoù dre are bed.

Dear Friend,
We got your address thanks to "Al Liamm" [which has included a summary of Bro Nevez with my address in some issues]

An all-Breton radio has been newly created, founded in Komana and broadcasting to all of Bro Leon: Arvorig FM.

In order for us to provide varied subject matter to our listeners, we have thought to commit time slots to countries other than where they live.

We would be pleased if you would send a cassette to us to present your country, its people, your life there, music and anything else you find important to you.

Another project is in the picture for us: to gather a network of Breton speakers to respond to our questions or to send news to us as events may take shape [turn] around the world.
Radio Arvorig - continued

Ha prest e vehec'h da gas ho niverenn pellgomz hag ar mare e vehe tu deom pellgomz hag ho niverenn pellelañ.

Louen-bras e vehep da gaoout hoc'h evezhiodennou diwar hor raktresou hag ar doare da do c'has da benn e-ser kinnig d'ar vrezhonegerien ur gwir skingomz en o yezh.

Trugarez en o-raok da gemer perzh e hini pe hini deus ar raktresou-mañ.

Gwellañ hetoù evit ar bloavezhe nevez.

Gant gwellañ soñjoù skipaih ARVORIG FM.

Would you send to us promptly your telephone number and a time to call you by phone, and your fax number.

We would be very happy to have your attention to our projects and to this manner of sending your ideas in order to offer Breton speakers a true radio in their language [this sentence was the hardest to translate!]

Thank you in advance for taking part in one way or another in these projects.

Best wishes for the new year.

With best wishes, the ARVORIG FM team.

NOW FOR A RESPONSE

No, it will not be in Breton .. at least for now. Just so the people at Radio Arvorig got a response within six months of writing me (ne oo ket prest ar resport) I sent a letter in French. But their request for assistance with setting up a network of Breton speakers who can serve as “foreign correspondents” is a project worth further thought. Although I have done 140 radio programs (in English, presenting Breton music, for a local public-supported station in Philadelphia) I have years of work on my Breton before I could utter anything worthy of putting on the air in Brittany. But perhaps among the ICDBL members there are those who speak Breton or who have advanced a bit more in their studies of Breton who might be able to put together a mini-broadcast about the U.S. as requested, or who could serve as a contact for Radio Arvorig. Please let me know! There may also be times when I need a speedier or more professional translation to be done!

***

A READER ASKS ...

"With some surprise I note in Bro Nevez 68 (p.4) the use of "Frañs" for "France." For a half-century or thereabouts I have heard (and said) "Bro Chall" Do we all need a lesson in etymology or plain history or whatever."  Jim Kerr

Clarification on the use of these two ways to name France in the Breton language would be welcome.
New Recordings from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Chants de la Mémoire Morbihannaise / Sonennoù Hengounel A Vro Gwénéd, Par Les Chemins de Rencontre. CR 9802. 61’00.

Here is one of the most pleasant surprises I have had in quite a while. I had been told that some of the best songs and most beautiful melodies in the Breton tradition came from Bro Gwened (Pays Vannetais), and here is a CD to back up that boast. While it was the paired biniou and bombarde that first attracted me to Brittany, the a capella (unaccompanied) voices and traditional songs of both the Breton language and Gallo traditions have truly seduced me.

This new CD from the organization “Par Les Chemins de Rencontre” (see below for a brief presentation of their work) is a wonderful selection of old and young singers from villages and towns of Bignan, Pluvigner, Plumergat, Meriadec, Baden, Vannes, and Sarzeau. All nine of the singers on the CD sing in the Breton language—the “softer” Gwened dialect. They all learned their songs from family and friends, and sing just for pleasure or sometimes in more formal groups for dances or at song contests. The five women on this CD—Myriam Guillevic, Patricia Jicquello, Marie Noëlle Pedron, Marie Claire Louis and Ghislaine le Guillant—are all younger (although no particular age is given), and as the CD notes say, they are some of the most beautiful voices of Brittany. The four men—Chim Le Dorze, Casi Le Tarnec, Dric Le Colletier and Bruno Le Berre—are older, and while their voices might not be quite as sure and clear in tone, they bring a wonderful character and spirit to their singing. It is clear that all of the men and women on this CD love to sing and each selection is a gem in its own way.

Many of the song texts on the CD deal with love and marriage—seduction, longings, and undesired marriage matches made by parents. The CD notes give a brief summary of each song, but unfortunately do not include song texts (perhaps prohibited by the expense—especially given the length of the songs—two being over 6 minutes long). The notes do include very nice biographical introductions to the singers, and for a refreshing change, the print for the notes is not microscopic in size.

The quality of the recordings are excellent—extremely clear so that you can hear every word distinctly. I also found the bird noises (tweeting and wood-pecking) that sometimes followed selections or could be heard very faintly in the background to be very pleasant. For those with an interest in the Breton of Bro Gwened and for those who love song, this is a wonderful new addition to recordings of traditional Breton music. This is, in fact, the second CD produced by “Par Les Chemins de Rencontre.” The first focused on the French and Breton song repertoire of a single individual, Pierre Le Menac’h (see a review of “Je vais vous dire...” in Bro Nevez 64, November 1997).

Like Dastum which has tended to monopolize the production of fine recordings of traditional song and music, “Par Les Chemins de Rencontre” is concerned not just with collecting traditions to be stashed in an archives, but in stimulating the performance and social interaction necessary to pass along a healthy and creative heritage. This organization is unique in promoting not just music but nearly everything that has to do with the life of the Morbihan area in which it works. Indeed, the proceeds from this new CD will go towards
supporting a detailed study of place names (not only towns and farms, but pathways and fields). The group is also concerned with studying everything from legends and stories to tools and trades, architecture, megaliths, and everything related to the history of this region. All of this involves participation by a wide public, invited to contribute their knowledge. This is truly a grass roots effort that encourages people to look into the wealth of their heritage and to enjoy it.

Bravo to the “Par Les Chemins de Rencontre” for a wonderful CD of music and may their many projects have success.

***

Dalc’h Soñj. Lusk ar Galon. YBER Production YBDS01. 1998. (Distribution Coop Breizh).

Here is a second wonderful surprise from Bro Gwened—a new CD from a group called Dalc’h Soñj (literally translated as “hold memory”). This first CD by them is called “Lusk ar Galon” (literally “heartbeat” or “movement of the heart” as in “emotion” which is the sub-title given for the CD in the press release materials I received with it).

Dalc’h Soñj is a relatively new group which grew first from the duo of Alain Langlois (accordion) and Jean-Pierre Le Rallic (bombarde) in 1993. From there it has grown. Langlois has been at the accordion since the 1980s (and has played guitar for over 20 years). Le Rallic has played bombarde for 25 years and adds clarinet and saxophone to this CD. Also in the group are Emmanuel Travers, on guitar and Roland Meleard on biniou kozh. What makes this group most unique is the wonderful voice of Ghislaine Le Guillant who is a master of the traditional repertoire of Bro Gwened. She is heard on Chants de la Mémoire Morbihannaise (reviewed above) and is also part of a group called Loerou Ruz which is made up of five women who have roots in the Gwened tradition (and in the majority, have children in the Diwan schools). Ghislaine Le Guillant has a wonderful voice, and her knowledge of the song tradition allows her to deliver the full power of ballads and the unique energy of dances of this area of Brittany ((hanter dro, laride and ridée).

No matter how much you like a voice, when singers play around with the tradition and work with a group of instrument players, they must be supported by the “accompanying” musicians. This definitely happens with Dalc’h Soñj where—as in all good Breton groups—there is no real accompaniment but a sort of jazz style cooperation (and even a type of consensus) where musicians/singers feed off of each others’ talents. I found this group very refreshing in its new combination of many of the same instruments found in most Breton groups. There was some assistance by a few talented invitees for the CD—a second voice with Marie Claire Louis, percussion by Pierre Le Toux and Antonin Volson, and bass guitar by Mikael Seznec.

The richness of the Bro Gwened musical tradition gives lots to offer talented young musicians who make the commitment to “hold on to memory.” Dalc’h Soñj lives up to its name, but also arranges songs, dances, and the wonderful ambling marches of Brittany in a new and very enjoyable way. This is a “no risk.” “I’ll buy it without a preview” CD for anyone who likes Breton music.

Those who have heard the pairing of singer Yann-Fañch Kemener with pianist Didier Squiban will find few surprises with this new CD. Their first recording together, *Enez Eusa* dates back to 1995 (see review in Bro Nevez 54, May 1995), and a second collaboration, *Ile-Exil* was released in 1997 (see Bro Nevez 62, May 1997). Some of the melodies on this third CD will be quite familiar to those who know Didier Squiban’s solo CD *Molène* (see review in Bro Nevez 65, February 1998). *Kimiaid* offers nothing shockingly new to fans of Kemener or Squiban, but more of the wonderful balancing act between voice and piano they do so well in rearranging traditional ballads and dances.

Other than Kemener’s recitation of poems in French written by Jean Lavoué, the texts of the nine songs on this CD are in Breton. The themes and many of the songs themselves are familiar to anyone who has listened to the traditional song of Brittany. They include tales of departing soldiers and sailors who leave loved ones behind, the seduction of young women, bad marriages and failed elopements, drinking with friends (sometimes to the brink of ruin), and the famous ballad of the villain Skolvan who returns from the dead to beg forgiveness of his mother.

What makes the pairing of Kemener’s voice with Squiban’s piano fresh and interesting is the fact that the piano does not accompany the voice. These two masters have been equal partners in their past recordings, sharing a leading role. But, the piano on this CD seems to be even more prominent and forceful—to the point that those who expect it to be mere accompaniment will be annoyed. The recording quality gives the piano an unusual loudness and brilliance. But once you understand that the piano is an equal voice, you can really enjoy the improvisational style of Squiban. Both he and Kemener are masters of their instruments able to fully bring out the soul of a sad ballad or the joy of dance. While these two have performed some of the pieces on this CD many times in concert—together, solo, or with other musicians—there is a definite freshness and freeness to the collaboration you hear on this CD.

The CD notes include texts of the Breton song with a quick summary in French. These are handwritten and pretty hard to read, and there is really no information about the tunes or songs. Those who want details on many of the texts Kemener has sung on this CD or others he has recorded are referred to his book *Carnets de route*—which includes over 150 song texts he has collected during the past 20 years from singers in central western Brittany. While most people who will look for this CD will probably already be familiar with the work of Kemener and Squiban, a short biographical note and reference to their other recordings in the CD notes would be of interest to those just discovering them.

And if you haven’t yet discovered this duo, I highly recommend this latest CD as an excellent introduction.

***
HEARD OF BUT NOT HEARD

Here are a few other new CD releases from Brittany. Information was gleaned from Musique Bretonne (152, novembre/décembre 1998) and Ar Men (99, décembre 1998).

Erwan Hamon plays bombarde and flute and Jannick Martin plays accordion. They are joined by singer Mathieu Hamon and piano player Wenceslas Hervieux. The focus of the CD is on the music traditions of the Oust and Vilaine area of Upper Brittany with a strong representation of slower airs—music just for listening—without neglecting lively dance tunes, including a gavotte from Lower Brittany.

This "quartet" includes J.S. Riou (fiddle), P. Jezequel (flute, bombarde), Thierry Lahais (bombarde, bagpipes), H. Cureau (guitar). The focus of the CD is dance—half of which are new compositions.

This group of eight women started in 1993. This CD focuses on the dances of Bro Gwened (Pays Vannetais) with kas a barh, hanter dro, lantic, dans trisket, dans klamm, gavotte pourlet. Also included are a few marches and ballads.

This is the second collaboration of singer Erik Marchand with the Romanian band Taraf de Caransebes (see review in Bro Nevez 52, November 1994). Traditional Breton ballads and dances meet the rhythms of Eastern Europe for a very unique and interesting sound.

Kristan Nikolas sings in Breton with Didier Dréau on guitar. The newly composed songs are rooted in the Breton tradition but very modern in theme and musical arrangement.

This quartet of some of Brittany's best singers and musicians directs its talents to a younger audience. Like their previous CD (see review in Bro Nevez 61, February 1997), this one will have a certain appeal for adults as well as children. The group includes singers Gigi Bourdin and Lors Jouin, Soig Siberil (guitar), Fanch Landreau (fiddle) and Jacques-Yves (banjo).

This high energy fest'noz band has had a big impact as a model for "teen" musicians on their way up in Brittany's musical world. These are young musicians with sure talent who are starting to branch out in new solo careers and work with other musicians and groups.

This bagad is one of the best of Brittany and this CD presents the potential of the bagad to do innovative work which is rooted in Breton musical traditions. A "no risk" CD for those who already like the music of the bagad or want an introduction.

Seventeen songs on the theme of love interpreted by 13 excellent traditional singers of Gallo Brittany (solo or in duos or trios). Ballads, dances and marches are all found.
DASTUM - BRETON TRADITIONS FOR THE FUTURE

An introduction by Lois Kuter

Adapted from a series of “fact sheets” on Breton music for the U.S. ICDBL’s working paper, Guide to Music in Brittany

Dastum, a Breton word meaning “to collect”, has become well known in Brittany throughout Europe for its work collecting and encouraging the performance of traditional styles of Breton music. Dastum was founded in 1972 and has continued to expand not only in its collection of recordings and song texts, but also as an archives for photographs and documents related to all aspects of Breton culture. Today Dastum has over 30,000 recorded documents, 30,000 pages of manuscripts and printed materials, 18,000 old postcards and photographs, and over 55,000 press clippings in its collection. But, such figures mean little compared to the total work of this organization.

Dastum has mobilized both scholars and performers who are well aware of social and economic changes which have changed the traditional culture of Brittany. Urbanization and its individualistic life style has helped undermine the communal spirit of rural Breton life. Industrialization and increased mobility, along with changes in the family unit, have affected the human contacts which make an oral transmission of culture possible and creative. And the centralization in France of education and the media has stifled the expression of unique local cultures with the diffusion of a standardized program. For centuries Bretons have been taught that their languages—Breton, a Celtic language, and Gallo, a Franco-Roman dialect—are backwards and, at best, impractical in the modern world.

Dastum has created the means for people in Brittany to use their traditional culture as part of modern life in stimulating a sense of cultural self-confidence and in helping local communities find the resources necessary to creatively use their rich oral traditions. There is nothing nostalgic in the work of Dastum. It is a future-oriented organization, using computers and the most technologically advanced equipment and techniques to support and not replace the invaluable human element of oral traditions which continue to prosper in Brittany.

Collection of Music

Unlike other archives, the primary aim of Dastum is not to store recordings, but to use collected materials. The activity of collection itself is critical in encouraging performance of traditional styles of oral and instrumental music. Collectors are volunteers—usually musicians themselves—using a wide range of equipment and techniques, resulting in a range in quality of recordings. As Dastum has grown, more collectors have gained experience and better equipment has become available, resulting in excellent quality recordings today. Local collection groups are the basis of most activity within Dastum, and these are effective because of their close ties to the community in which they collect. Collectors are not outsiders descending on Breton villages to scavenge a dying culture, but participants in a living culture.

Tape recordings, including radio programs and other oral documents, are consultable in Dastum’s archives in Carhaix, Lannion, Lesneven, Nantes, Pontivy, and Rennes. Rennes is the central office and includes the full collection, while the other sites specialize in their particular area. Tapes are available to anyone interested and copies can be made in some circumstances. Tapes are also used for lectures, music workshops, and by cultural groups throughout Brittany interested in learning more about a specific music tradition or geographical area. All recordings are indexed by cultural areas, performer, collector, date, etc., and computerization makes it very easy for musicians or researchers to find what they need. Dastum has also created a computer index to all commercially produced recordings of Breton music.

Cahiers de musique traditionnelle

Dastum’s early work was focused on the production of studies of different pays (“countries”) within Brittany. These lips/cassettes included 60 to 100-page booklets which documented language, costume, architecture, dance, musical instruments, and song, as well as the particular performers on the recording. Each is an excellent sample of the music to be found. Each selection is transcribed, and the text is given as sung by the performer,
with unique features of language noted, and other versions of the song sometimes also provided. the basic text of each study is in French, so if a song is in the Breton language, a French translation is given. Notes are also included on the performers, musical instruments or specific traditions related to the music. Each study is liberally documented with photographs. Studies produced have focused on Pays de Lorient-Hennebont, Pays Pagan (Bro Bagan), Pays de Mur-Loudeac, Bro Fanch, Pays d’En-Bas (Questembert), Bro Noal (Pontivy), and Pays d’Oust et de Vilaine.

**Chanteurs et musiciens de Bretagne**

“Singers and musicians of Brittany” is a newer series (begun in 1990) which like the “cahiers” provides an in-depth presentation—a cassette with a 70-100 page booklet of information. While the “cahiers” presented a particular region, this series of recordings focuses on a particular performer, musical instrument, or a musical event. The series includes:


**Collection Tradition vivante de Bretagne**

This series of compact discs began in 1993. As with the other series produced by Dastum, each CD includes a beautiful 50 to 90 page booklet including information on the performers and performances, song texts, photos, and background about the particular topic of the CD. These are all excellent samplers of some of Brittany’s best traditional singers and instrument players.

*Gouel 20 vloaz Dastum—Dastum fait le boeuf à Berrien.* 1993. DAS-120. Includes 16 songs and tunes chosen from performances given during Dastum’s 3-day festival celebrating its 20th anniversary.

*Quand les Bretons passent à table—Kanomp ouzh taol.* 1994. DAS-121. Songs and music related to feasting, food and drink, including performers from all parts of Brittany.

*Chant et veuze en Presqu’ile guérandaise.* 1994. DAS-122. This collection focuses on the traditions of southeastern Brittany (the area of Brittany’s famous salt marshes), including 15 singers and 4 players of the bagpipe native to that area, the veuze.


Filai e Langidig. 1998. DAS-130. Singers from the Vannetais tradition with songs for listening—solo a capella ballads and songs to which a chorus (everyone in the room) repeats each phrase. A “filai” is an evening gathering of friends and neighbors—in the past it was the occasion to do small farm chores and sing in the meantime.

Guide de la musique bretonne

Dastum is in the final stages of republishing its invaluable guide to musicians and everything related to music in Brittany. With over 1,250 references to individual musicians in Brittany in the 1993 edition, the 1999 guide will no doubt be even larger. Besides names and addresses for individual musicians, the guide includes a listing of groups, instrument makers, teachers, festivals, magazines, and cross indexes by instrument or vocal style. Watch for more information in a future issue of Bro Nevez.

Musique bretonne

Over 150 issues of this magazine have now been published since 1979. While the look of this magazine has changed over the years, it has always included a wealth of information about traditional music in Brittany. In recent years more emphasis has been put on other newer styles of Breton music—especially with the growth of fest noz bands. But the focus is on the roots of Breton music, both vocal and instrumental. While other magazines include CD reviews or occasional interviews of better known performers, no other magazine gives you the same insight into the wealth of Brittany’s oral traditions and their expression in new styles and performance contexts. If you want to know what is going on musically in Brittany, this magazine is a key source of information. It is published six times a year (primarily in French, with some Breton). Subscription (for U.S. and overseas) is 150 francs.

Other publications and recordings

In its 20+ years, Dastum has produced or co-produced over 100 recordings and books, in addition to over 150 issues of its magazine Musique bretonne. A number of recordings coproduced by Dastum have been given awards by the Academie Charles-Cros for their excellence. In May 1990 Dastum was awarded the Grand Prize of the Premier Salon du Patrimoine Sonore in recognition of its important role overall in promoting and researching Breton traditions.

I have a copy of the 1999 Dastum catalog and order form which includes the above referenced productions as well as a number of other books and recordings. I would be happy to send a photocopy to anyone interested.

Dastum’s central office and point of contact is:

Dastum
16 rue de la Santé
35000 Rennes

Telephone: 99 30 91 00
Fax: 99 30 91 11

If you consult Dastum for information, make your request as specific as possible. No one will be able to take time to answer broad questions which require a 30-page response (or a 300-page response). For instance, you are not likely to get an answer to a question such as "What are the different dances of Brittany" or "Could you give me the history of bagpipes in Brittany". The best Dastum staff could do with such huge questions is to send you some suggestions for books you might consult to find the answer. Do as much homework ahead of time as you possibly can before you consult Dastum. Keep in mind that the small staff of Dastum gets hundreds of requests and tends to put in long hours. If you will be in Rennes and would like to visit Dastum, make an appointment in advance. Keep in mind also, that funds are very tight for Dastum; if you do make use of their services, please consider making a contribution to support their work, if there is no charge for their services.
harp of the Celts 1999
A Festival for ancient wire-strung Celtic harp in Brittany
July 31 to August 5 in Plounéour-Menez

This summer a mini-festival will be held in Brittany by the association Hent Telen Breizh and the school for harp called Abati Ar Releg. This is actually a series of workshops and concerts focused on the ancient Celtic harp with metal strings which has particular playing techniques and a fingering system using long (and strong) fingernails rather than the tips of the finger.

Featured at “Harp of the Celts” will be Siobhan Armstrong from Ireland, Ann and Charlie Heymann from the U.S., and Violaine Mayor from Brittany. Siobhan Armstrong has studied harp, piano, voice and musicology at Trinity College and has researched the playing techniques from the Middle ages to the Baroque period using the metal strung clarsieach. Ann Heymann is probably one of the best known metal-strung harp players in the world. She has researched the early Irish repertoire and techniques, created a few of her own techniques to make the harp sing, and is not afraid of using this old instrument in new innovative ways. She plays with her husband Charlie Heymann in a duo called “Clarsieach” to which he brings song, accordion and other instruments. Violaine Mayor is director of the Hent Telenn Breizh association and a teacher of harp, and she has adapted her expertise in the metal strung harp to the Breton repertoire of airs and dances.

All four musicians will lead workshops to explore the Irish repertoire and to work on the techniques needed to play the metal strung harp. Those who play nylon strings can adapt such techniques and the repertoire to their instruments or can “rent” a metal strung harp for the workshops if enough are available (to be requested in advance).

The dates for “Harp of the Celts 1999” run from Saturday, July 31 (2 pm) to Thursday August 5 (5:30 pm). A full day of workshops is scheduled from 9:30 to 5:30 with a 2-hour break for lunch (a nice time to get to know fellow students and teachers and have a good meal). Two evening events are planned (open to friends and family): on August 1st a concert featuring Siobhan Armstrong and Ann and Charlie Heymann, and on August 3rd an Irish Session to include local musicians as well as festival participants. One can expect that some spontaneous music making will fill up a few other evenings as well.

The cost for the festival/workshops is 600 francs (although information also indicates 1,200 francs). A membership in Hent Telenn Breizh is also required (60 francs). Local housing and meals on site would be additional. Those travelling from abroad are advised to write in advance to clarify price and housing. Those unable to travel but interested in learning about future events and information related to the wire-strung harp are encouraged to take out a membership. The minimum support is 60 francs, but those overseas should consider more since costs for mailings are higher. A check for the workshops and/or membership should be made out (in French francs) to “Hent Telenn Breizh”

Address for more information: Hent Telenn Breizh Telephone/Fax: 02 98 78 93 25
Ecole de harpe du Relec 02 98 78 93 25
29410 Plounéour-Menez France

Or contact me, Lois Kuter, and I will send you the information I have.
Concert Review: The Windbags
Featuring Jerry O’Sullivan, John Skelton, Pat O’Gorman and Tony Cuffe

Lois Kuter

"The Windbags": the name becomes obvious when you go to a concert and the first thing you see is a stage full of bagpipes. Five different types of bagpipes are played by three members of the band: Scottish Highland pipes, Scottish smallpipes, Irish uilleann pipes, the Breton binioù koz, and the Breton bagpipes called veuze (from the southeastern region around Nantes). Other wind is provided by bombarde, flute and tin whistle, not to mention voice. The Celtic harp doesn't fit the "wind" category, but certainly offered the band the opportunity to bring the centuries-old rivalry between harpers and pipers to life—in a very humorous way, and humor was never lacking in the commentary that accompanied the music at this concert.

Each of the four musicians in this band brings mastery of a variety of instruments as well as strong experience in a number of ensembles—how else would you get so much music at a concert and so little time spent tuning drones and reeds? Jerry O’Sullivan is well known as an uilleann piper and has recorded with Altan, John Wheelan, and even the Boston Pops and Dolly Parton. He is also a master of Scottish Highland pipes and while they were not used for this concert, he also plays smallpipes. John Skelton has toured widely with the House Band and travels to Brittany frequently. He is a great bombarde player, and certainly no slouch on flute or tin whistle. And it was really nice to hear him with a medley of tunes on the veuze—Brittany’s more mellow bagpipe. John Skelton has a wicked sense of humor, matched only by that of fellow band member Pat O’Gorman who toured for over ten years with one of my all-time favorite bands—Rare Air. He is one of the few masters of binioù I have heard, or heard of, in North America, and also plays bombarde, Highland pipes, flute, and tin whistle. With John Skelton and Pat O’Gorman in the same band, you can be certain that you get more than just a token of Breton music, and you get Breton music with heart (and how else can you play bombarde and binioù?). Last but certainly not least in this band is Tony Cuffe who has been part of the Scottish groups Ossian and Jock Tamson’s Bairns. He has a lovely voice and wonderful repertoire of Lowland Scots songs. He also plays tin whistle and has the courage to bring Celtic harp to the windbags. Few guitar players can produce the energy to balance the mass of wind produced in this group, but Tony Cuffe succeeds there.

The ability of these four players to produce new and innovative music is based on their respect and strong knowledge of the traditional musics of Brittany, Ireland, and Scotland. Their repertoire includes more difficult slow airs as well as very lively dances. This is an "in your face" (and in your ears) band, not afraid to mix it up with the audience by winding their way through a packed room with binioù and bombarde and Highland pipes at full force. If you love bagpipes, or simply want to experience great music performed by great musicians, don’t miss the Windbags if they have a concert near you. The concert in Wilmington sold out early.

Let me end this short review by noting the excellent work of the Green Willow Folk Club based in Claymont, Delaware, to bring excellent music like this to my area of the world on a monthly basis. Founded in 1983, and run by a group of dedicated volunteers, the Club can honestly say that it is "dedicated to the preservation and growth of Celtic and British Isles folk music." The Green Willow Folk Club seems to be the only club within a 50-mile radius of my house that consistently offers a selection of innovative and high quality Celtic bands. In the big city of Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs it seems that most folk clubs have forgotten that there is music beyond singer-songwriters (yawn). Green Willow concerts in March, April and May will feature Craobh Rua (Ireland), Magical Strings (U.S.), and Artisan (England). The club produces an excellent newsletter to introduce each group they host (and some of the information above is pulled from that). For those who want more information, the address is: Green Willow Folk Club, 205 Woodgreen Court, Claymont, DE 19703 (internet site: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~jlupton/grwillow.html).
A 19th Century Travel Account of Brittany

In the 19th century there was no television, and people read books and magazines for diversion and information. In both the United States and England, magazines provided a variety of news, fictional stories, and features of all kinds. And in those days, it was not quite so easy to hop on an airplane to explore other parts of the world, so you traveled vicariously along with writers who published their accounts in such popular magazines. In such accounts they contrasted the everyday life of American or English readers with the exotic place visited through descriptions of scenery they saw on their travels and the people they met.

Brittany was such an exotic destination for both English and American travel writers in the 19th century, and in past issues of Bro Nevez I have reprinted excerpts from some of these accounts. Sometimes travel accounts include interesting ethnographic details, and in all cases they include lots of opinions and reflect prejudices of the author and his or her times. In reading a number of such travel tales, I have found that writers sometimes enhance the account of what they actually saw with bits of poetry, song texts, history, or descriptions of weddings or customs borrowed from, or at least greatly influenced by, the writings of better known writers of the period (Anatole Le Braz, or Tom Taylor’s English language translation of the Barzaz Breizh by La Villemarqué).

The following excerpt is from The English Illustrated Magazine, December 1885. There is no author given for this account called “Through the Côtes du Nord,” but illustrations accompanying it are by H. R. Robertson. Often the illustrators for travel accounts were also the writers, and in this case the account is written from the perspective of an artist in search of good subjects to draw. You will pick up the account in the middle of the author’s travels which include not only Côtes d’Armor (then called Côtes du Nord) but also Finistère. While many travel accounts are poor in detail, this one includes a great deal of information. Note that I have kept the spelling found in the original article. -- Lois Kuter

“Through the Côtes du Nord”

... Carhaix was our next stopping place; it is very interesting from the architectural point of view, which can hardly be said of Callac [where the author traveled from]. In this old-world town the inhabitants are perhaps more primitive in their style than at any other point of our tour. Many of the buildings are extremely curious, their fronts being protected with slates, which are arranged so as to project over the windows in such a way as to make it difficult to say where the roof ends and the wall begins. The black undressed sheepskin jackets of the men are here the rule, while at most places in the Côtes du Nord they are rapidly becoming the exception. The name of the principal inn is “La Tour d’Auvergne,” the house having been the birthplace of that hero who has been dubbed the first grenadier of France. His memory is kept green by the singular practice of retaining his name on the roll-call of his regiment, his place never having been filled up. When his name is called over duly with the others, it is the business of the soldier next in rotation to reply for the absentee, “Dead on the field of honour.” His statue, by Marochetti, adorns his native town, and on the pedestal are bas-reliefs representing incidents in his life. I recollect particularly the one in which he is seen offering himself as a substitute for a conscript who could ill be spared from his home—it was after La Tour d’Auvergne had retired from the army, and the young man on whom the lot had fallen was the son of an old friend of his, and the sole support of his aged father.
Another fifteen miles by diligence [carriage] takes us on to Le Huelgoet, which is in many respects the pleasantest place to stay at in the district. It has an hotel where the people have been taught something of English requirements. This is owing chiefly to the fact that it is capital head-quarters for those who are in search of sport, whether shooting or fishing. The trout streams in the neighbourhood are everywhere free to all, the only exception I heard of being the large lake close to the village which serves as the mill head. The trout run to a good size and are very abundant, from the obvious reason that they are little interfered with. In the spring half a dozen Englishmen will perhaps be the only anglers who will be fishing with anything like persistence, the native peasant occasionally indulging in the sport, but the French gentleman not at all. When passing through the village in May I saw a fine fish, that the “patron” of the inn had taken, which must have weighed nearly four pounds. In the autumn there is partridge shooting to be obtained without much difficulty, and in the winter woodcock and snipe abound. The scenery is extremely varied; our two illustrations of the place [not reproduced here] which are so very dissimilar in character are not at any great distance from each other.

There are many beautiful walks in the neighbourhood through shady woods or pretty country roads, with occasional bursts of distant view that could hardly be surpassed in their way. Living cannot be regarded as expensive, the very moderate pension of five francs a day at Le Huelgoet not being however singular, but the usual thing in these country inns, the price in the towns being always somewhat higher.

The weird character of the granite rocks at Le Huelgoet is perhaps intensified by the fact that such huge boulders are rarely seen away from high mountains and the Montagnes Noires, as the district is called, are, to use an American expression, “only a little rising ground.” The height above the level of the sea may not be considerable, but, as at Dartmoor, the aspect of the country does not itself express the fact. The piled-up rocks seen in our illustration, with the children dancing, look as if they were part of an old moraine, the river which still winds among these grand rocks having at this point found a bed for itself far below, where, though unseen, its sullen roar rises fitfully to the ear like the sound of a great waterfall in the far distance. Here and there among the rocks are holes through which the seething and boiling water may be dimly described and one wonders at the temerity with which parents allow their children to play by themselves close to such terrible danger. But to our remarks on the subject of this obvious risk the mothers only reply that the children never do fall down the holes, and the flat rock in our sketch is worn white with their dancing. At one place a descent to the river may be made by those who are sure-footed in slippery places, the cavern through which the stream here rushes being named “La Ménage de la Vierge.” The curious hollows worn in the stone by the water are variously called the steps, the cradle, the cauldron, etc., but have nothing distinctive about them, their resemblance to the objects named being of the slightest.

There are other places in the valley besides Le Huelgoet, where, in a similar manner, the river loses itself for considerable distances amongst gigantic granite rocks. In one spot it disappears in a frightful chasm called Le Gouffre. The appearance that the rocks here present is certainly that of having been violently hurled out of their present positions by some tremendous convulsion, and while looking at them it is difficult to quite accept the modern geological views without some slight mental reservation—indeed one can hardly help thinking of the fabled Titans, so like the doings of some gigantic race are these wildly-confused heaps of enormous boulders. It is on record that once, at least, the gouffre was the scene of a frightful accident. Some fifty years ago the owner of the neighbouring lead mines was showing this natural curiosity to a party of friends from Paris who were staying with him, when one unfortunate lady slipped and fell into the abyss, owing, it is said, to the slipperiness of some dry leaves on the brink of the chasm.

It is owing to the square cleavage of the granite formation that, in these districts, as elsewhere
under the same circumstances, we meet with the so-called rocking-stones. Though often traditionally ascribed to the Druids, it is pretty evident that the balancing of these huge masses has been naturally brought about by the gradual wearing away of the parts of the rock exposed to the weather, and consequent reduction of the side on which the stone rests, till only a pivot is left. Besides the rocking-stones which are known as such, there are doubtless in reality very many more, but these being so situated as to be quite inaccessible, are never put to the test. The background to our sketch of the shrine at Ploumanach will illustrate what I mean, for most of the topmost rocks in the curiously piled-up heaps look as if they would rock could one only apply a lever.

The rocking-stone at Le Huelgoet may be visited by those travellers who do not intend making any stay, by leaving the diligence at the bridge and walking across the rocks to where the path rejoins the road. There are always young ragamuffins on the look-out to conduct the tourist for a few sous, and to exhibit their strength at the rocking-stone. Among the rocks I noticed one of those large ant-hills that are not uncommon in the Tyrol. This nest was built on sloping ground, partly against a large stone, and had some branches of the gorse growing through it near the top. It was composed of small pieces of wood, bark, and any other dry vegetable matter that was available. In its greatest height it measured nearly three feet, and about half that where the ground was highest. The ants were a large black species with crimson thorax, and measured about a third of an inch. I noticed that any common ant which happened to meet one of these large black ones on the flat surface of the rock, retired precipitately, or was attacked and promptly killed.

The fact that the wolf has not altogether disappeared from the neighbourhood of Carhaix and Le Huelgoet seems consistent enough with the exceptionally weird character of the rocky gorges. When there I could not gather any very definite information about the wolves, except that the recent disappearance of several gentlemen’s dogs was laid to their account. A book that I chanced to dip into when stopping at the “Tour d’Auvergne,” called *Wild Sport in Brittany*, gave a very melodramatic description of a doctor’s ride by night when chased by a troop of wolves which he managed to scare repeatedly by striking matches. The horse was the object of the wolves’ attention on this occasion, and there seems to be no tradition of their attacking human beings. In Mr. Mountney Jephson’s book (*A Walking Tour in Brittany*, published 1859) an account is given of a wolf hunt in the forest of Guimerck, which locality is also in the Montagnes Noires, but farther west than the places we are referring to. When seeking information from the inhabitants on the subject of the wolf I learned that the wild boar was similarly regarded as not altogether extinct, though rapidly becoming so.

At Le Huelgoet I sketched a group of peasants harvesting their buckwheat, and through the rest of my tour I noticed that a large proportion of the arable land everywhere was devoted to its culture. As it was a somewhat novel sight to me, I venture to think that some description of it may interest others. The buckwheat, *sarrasin* or *blé noir*, may perhaps be best described as a rather shabby-looking version of the meadow-sweet, and as unlike as possible to anything in the nature of our kinds of cereals, all of which are, I believe, cultivated varieties of the grass tribe. Its botanical name is *Polygonum fagospyrum*, and it is said to be a doubtful native of England. The stalk of the plant becomes of a fine red colour, inclining to crimson as the grain ripens, its clusters of small whitish flowers giving place to triangular seeds of a shiny black, in size about half as large as the grain of common wheat. As the grain is in appearance unlike our common wheat, so is the bread that is made from it—the veritable bread of the Breton peasant. To prepare it for the table a paste made of the flour is formed into circular cakes (called *galettes* or *crêpes*) about a foot across and as thin as a penny piece. These cakes are slightly baked, so slightly indeed that the *galette* is quite soft and flexible, and in this state is frequently folded over twice in order that it may be carried in a small basket. Its
texture is not unlike that of a crumpet, which, indeed, it more nearly resembles than anything else to which I can compare it. It is more palatable even in this flabby condition of “cold crumpet” than would be expected, but is really delicious when fried with butter and glazed with a beaten-up egg. I mention these particulars because at the hotels in Brittany these buckwheat cakes are considered quite unfit for the polite traveller, and unless he should go out of the beaten track and familiarize himself somewhat with the peasant life he may probably never so much as see one. Considering how often their ordinary bread is of poor quality and wretchedly sour, it is to be wished that the galette were sometimes regarded by the hotel-keepers as an available substitute. A kind of porridge made of buckwheat is regularly eaten by the peasants, who, however, occasionally vary the recipe by breaking up a galette into a bowl of milk.

Though the culture of the sarrasin forms such an important part of the rural industry, I do not find it even mentioned by the French journals in the agricultural returns of the year which they publish. I believe the reason is that this crop is cultivated almost entirely for home use, and that comparatively little is sold, the bulk of it being consumed by the household of the grower. It is a very nutritious article of food, and one cannot help wondering whether its cultivation might be advantageously introduced into England. The only case that I have ever heard of here was a small patch grown for the sake of feeding pheasants. It would be interesting to know why a crop extensively grown on the other side of the channel should be so absolutely ignored on this.

**Other 19th and Early 20th Century Travel Accounts Published in Bro Nevez**


“A Travel Account from 1868” BN 53, February 1995. (“Carnival Time in Brittany [Nantes]” All the Year Round, August 8, 1868)


“Brittany and Its Byways: Travel Notes from 1869” BN 42, May 1992. (from Mrs. Bury Palliser, Brittany and Its Byways, 1869)

“Breton Calvaires and the Tourist” BN 40, November 1991. (various sources from 1875, 1882, 1885, 1915, 1930)

“Food and Tourists in Late 19th Century Brittany” BN 39, August 1991 (excerpt on buckwheat from Robertson’s article featured here and, 1885, and “A Corner of Brittany,” Chamber’s Journal, July 12, 1890)

“19th Century Travellers in Brittany” BN 39, May 1991 (various sources from 1840, 1869, 1882, 1901, 1910, 1918)


See also the following two-part article in Ar Men:

AN AMERICAN VIEW OF WALES:

Presented by Lois Kuter

For some 8 years now I have been in correspondence with Eric Bowen who has been either co-editor and/or writer for a very meaty little two-page newsletter about Wales called Y Monitor Cymreig/The Welsh Monitor (see below). In this role he has researched Welsh history and culture and has paid close attention to politics and economic changes in Wales over the past decade. Writing for Y Monitor Cymraeg requires thorough and accurate research of events, and the reporting in this newsletter is matter-of-fact and to-the-point.

But Eric Bown has just published a book which allows him the freedom to analyze more creatively what he has seen happening in Wales during the past dozen years. In 64 pages he includes profiles of key players in the political and cultural movements in Wales, essays on the work being done for the Welsh language and home rule, and reflections on his own quest as an American to learn about his Welsh heritage. I have not seen this book (yet) but am confident that it is well rooted in a knowledge of Welsh history and reflects a very objective yet compassionate look at events of the last decade. I am sure that one can learn much from this book about Wales and about how “little countries” can successfully fight for their culture and a future where diversity is honored.

Profits from the sale of the book will be donated to groups working to advance Welsh self-government, communities, economy and language. So you can both enjoy this book and make a contribution to the future of Wales by purchasing it.

To order a copy send $6.50 (+ $0.50 for Washington State residents for sales tax) to: AWEN, Llwyn Cedrwydd, 5933 Longdin Road, Ferndale WA 98248-9417

Y MONITOR CYMREIG / THE WELSH MONITOR

Published bi-monthly, this is the newsletter of the Alliance for the Welsh Nation and it includes a wealth of up-to-date information on what is going on in Wales: politics, media, language issues and legislation, cultural events, history, and other miscellany. From time to time, I have tried to attach it as an insert for Bro Nevez, but I admit to being very negligent. With this issue, I have attached a recent copy so you can see for yourselves what this publication is like.

Subscription is $6 (U.S.), $8 (Canada); it is free to students, pensioners, unemployed and for use as a newsletter insert (which I recommend highly to those who publish more locally oriented newsletters for Welsh-American associations).

Contact: Y Monitor Cymraeg
Llwyn Cedrwydd
5933 Longdin Road
Ferndale WA 98248
THE VIEW FROM WALES
by Royston Jones, Staff Writer

Politics
- The Ron Davies resignation and its aftermath dominated the news here, though it now seems clear that Prime Minister Blair was informed of the details by the police and called Davies to No. 10, rather than Davies requesting a meeting. Davies was allowed to resign, but he had no option. His constituency party rallied round to confirm that he will contest Caerphilly for them and Labour in next May's National Assembly elections.

Davies "resigned" from both his posts, Secretary of State for Wales and (after some deliberation) Welsh Labour leader. The first of those positions was immediately filled by Prime Minister Blair appointing (some would have it "anointing") Alun Michael, MP for Cardiff South and Penarth. As the second post lies beyond Blair's gift, Michael will have to contest it with Rhodri Morgan, defeated by Davies in the earlier leadership contest, though Blair soon made a visit to Wales during which he publicly endorsed his man.

Yet this blessing from on high is part of the problem for Michael, because everybody knows he's London's man, and has been sent in to put a brake on devolution. It's no secret that Blair and his associates were getting very worried by some of Ron Davies's statements, such as "devolution is a process, not an event"; yet because of his popularity in Wales (both within the Labour Party and outside), Davies's position was unassailable. Thus his "grave error of judgement" was a godsend for Blair, to the extent that some see Davies as the victim of a conspiracy.

- The Liberal Democrat Party in Wales chose Mike German of Cardiff to lead the party in the Assembly elections. He beat off a challenge from Christine Humphreys of Conwy, a teacher in a Welsh-medium school. The election was close and seemed to confirm the division within the party between traditional, radical, Home Rule Welsh Liberalism, and the modern, English (often anti-devolution) Liberal Democrats in Wales. The Lib Dems now dream of forming an Assembly coalition with a Labour Party that fails to gain an overall majority.

- The Conservative and Unionist Party also held an election to choose its leader for the Assembly elections. It was won by Rod Richards, who beat Nick Bourne. The loser is an English academic based in Swansea and selected to fight the Brecon & Radnor constituency in May's Assembly elections, while the victor is originally from the Swansea area but now plies his political trade on the north coast, where he hopes to win Clwyd West, the constituency that largely replaced the one (Clwyd North West) he lost to Labour in the May 1, 1997 general election.

The Media
- Televising the National Assembly: Media facilities company Barcud Derwen won the contract to televise sessions of the National Assembly. The successful bid -- one of 12 made -- was largely the work of managing director Siôn Pyrs, tragically killed in a road accident before the announcement was made.

Economy
- Objective One funding for the deprived areas of Wales, where per capita GDP is below 75% of the European Union average, looks increasingly likely. But even if the EU provides the anticipated £2bn, it may not be smooth sailing. First, the new Secretary of State Alun Michael has made curious statements about Cardiff and other prosperous areas "not losing out", even though they don't qualify for O1. Second, local councils and other bodies will have to provide 25-50% of the cost of any project for which O1 is applied. But as these as some of the most run-down areas, will there be central government help available -- via the Welsh Development Agency and other bodies -- if they can't raise the cash? Third, the EU is very strict on what the cash can and cannot be spent on. For example, railways are in favour, roads are out. Fourth, will O1 be used by London as an excuse to reduce the financial settlement made to the Assembly?
• John French, chief executive of the Wales Tourist Board, took early retirement after an extended period of leave. An English army officer who'd moved to Wales, French was the exemplar of a system in which a person is appointed to a job because of what he or she is, rather than whether that person is capable of doing the job.

French's long-awaited departure prompted Ashford Price, owner of Dan yr Ogof showcaves in the Swansea Valley, to say, "I do hope the next person to take over the job is someone with a proven track record in tourism, because we haven't got the time for a learning period." His prayer would appear to have been answered by the appointment of Jonathan Jones, currently the WTB's director of communications and corporate affairs.

• Call centres growing: One of the growth sectors of the Welsh economy in recent years has been call centres. All kinds of claims were made for the scenery or Welsh accent drawing major companies here, but now the truth is out. In a UK-wide survey it was found that salaries paid in Wales are lower than those paid in England; and, perhaps surprisingly, we're even further behind Scotland. For the same, call centre job insurance giant Prudential GIS pays £10,737-£11,500 in Glasgow, £9,650-£11,015 in Chester, and £8,500-£9,984 in Cardiff. In the transport sector, at their Edinburgh call centre Virgin Trains pays £10,500-£11,100, while National Rail Enquiries in Cardiff pays £7,655-£9,330.

• Economic policies criticized: The Commons' Welsh Affairs Select Committee in its report Investment in Industry made stinging criticisms of recent economic policies while suggesting new directions for the National Assembly — primarily that funding be directed at local companies rather than spent in bribing foreign investors; the cause celebre being Korean company LG Electronics, given £240m to set up in Newport, yet now, due to the turmoil in the Asian economies, facing merger with (if not takeover by) Hyundai and an uncertain future with only a small part of the planned investment completed.

• Managing Snowdonia tourism: A study commissioned by Gwynedd County Council suggests that the tourist hordes visiting Snowdonia contribute little to the local economy and must in future be managed. One proposal is for parking charges increasing the further into the mountains one drives, the money raised being used to run bus services from "gateways" where drivers would be encouraged to leave their cars.

One fact making the present situation so unacceptable is that Snowdonia contains former slate-quarrying communities, as economically depressed as towns in the former coalfields. At its height, the slate industry provided 18,000 jobs in Gwynedd; now it's down to 500, and tourism has been no substitute. So the plans for tourism management should dovetail nicely with the Slate Valleys Initiative, a scheme to bring investment and year-round jobs to the area.

Language

• Translating National Assembly Business: Welsh Office civil servants came under fire for suggesting that it could take as much as eight weeks to produce Welsh translations of National Assembly business. Gwynedd County Council demanded better. Councillor Dafydd Iwan said "There are no technical reasons why the translations should not be available within two days".

History

• John Evans bicentenary: The village of Waunfawr near Caernarfon will in 1999 celebrate the bicentenary of the death of one of its most famous sons, John Evans, who set out in search of Welsh-speaking Indians and ended up exploring and naming many of the tributaries of the Missouri river. The celebrations are being organised by local agency Antur Waunfawr, and will include a new play and the raising of a statue, which will be largely guesswork as no portrait was done of Evans before he died in New Orleans at the age of 29. Chief executive of Menter Waunfawr Menna Jones believes that Evans is better known in the USA than Wales, and hopes the celebrations will help change this.

• A O H Jarman died at the age of 87, a man who did so much to rescue Arthur, and even Merlin, from the realms of myth and fantasy and put them back into their Welsh historical context. He was Professor of Welsh at Cardiff until his retirement in 1979.
CONTENTS

More on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1

Some Short Notes: Servij ar Brezhoneg Guide to Breton Classes for Adults; A Center for Breton Language and Culture in the Works for Carhaix; The Regional Council of Brittany "puts some money where its mouth is" 2-3

Reunifying Brittany 4-5

Brittany and the U.S. – Twin Cities 5

New Publications in the Breton Language 6-7

Roparz Hemon and Literature in the Breton Language for Learners 7-9

Two Breton Language Writer (and Teachers) Honored 10-11

Poelligor an Tarv – Academy of the Bull 11

A Call for News (in Breton) for Breton Radio (Arvorig FM) 12-13

New Recordings from Brittany 14-16

Chemins de Rencontre, Chants de la Mémoire Morbihannaise; Dalch Soñ, Lusk ar Galon; Yann-Fañch Kemener and Didier Squiban, Kimiad

Heard of but not heard (short CD notes) 17

Dastum – Breton Traditions for the Future 18-20

Harp of the Celts 1999 – A Festival for Wire-Strung Celtic Harp 21

Concert Review: The Windbags 22

A 19th Century Travel Account of Brittany (from 1885) 23-26


Y Monitor Cymreig / the Welsh Monitor – November-December 1998 28-29