

BRO NEVEZ

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



Happy Birthday and congratulations to the staff and the many writers who have contributed their talent to the Breton-language magazine Bremañ during its first 20 years.



KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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The U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL) was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981.

Bro Nevez ("new country" in the Breton language) is 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.

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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.

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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.

FROM THE EDITOR

You may have noticed that the "May" issue of Bro Nevez has arrived at the very end of May—or for those overseas—sometime in June! Several articles in this issue have been difficult to write, requiring much more time for thought and reflection than the more "matter-of-fact" reports I usually write. As always, just when I think I'm ready to take the newsletter to the printer, more news comes in that causes me to revise things, or I find there are notes I want to add—additional CD reviews, short notes, etc.

You may also notice that this issue of Bro Nevez is just a little thinner than some past issues. This is not for lack of interesting information I receive from Brittany that could be included, but due to a lack of time to prepare new articles or carefully review books and publications I receive. Please keep in mind that I welcome contributions from you. Even a simple "letter to the editor" would be nice once in a while.

But, while this May issue of Bro Nevez may *seem* a bit thinner, I think you will find it has as much content as ever. In an attempt to cut some costs for photocopying and mailing, I have made some compromises on print size in order to squeeze the same amount of information onto a few less pages. The expenses of producing and mailing Bro Nevez continue to rise and the budget to do this has not been increasing significantly.

U.S. ICDBL Memberships and Bro Nevez subscriptions allow us to send a number of complimentary copies of Bro Nevez to people and organizations in Brittany who work for the Breton language and culture. This is important in showing our support and encouragement for the critical work they do (and that is what the ICDBL is all about). We also have a small number of newsletter/magazine exchanges which allows me the chance to gather accurate information that I can pass along to you in the pages of Bro Nevez.

There are several ways to confront the small, but growing budget problems we have each year. The best solution is to find more members so that costs can be spread out further. Word of mouth recruiting has always been our best means of finding new ICDBL members and subscribers. So ... I am counting on you to do a bit of recruiting for the ICDBL. If you know of a newsletter or publication where a short note might be included, let me know and we can send something to the editor—this can even be a short article about the Breton language if they would welcome this. If you know of a publication where you think a paid advertisement would be worth the investment, this is also worth investigating.

A second solution to budget difficulties is to raise dues and Bro Nevez subscription rates. This would be a decision our Board of Consultants would need to consider if all else fails. This is not an option I favor, since many U.S. ICDBL Members are already very generous in adding an additional contribution to their annual dues which goes to the Diwan schools. Our yearly contributions are not huge, but they send a clear message and are very much appreciated for the practical and symbolic support they show.

I thank all those who have supported the ICDBL as Members or as Bro Nevez subscribers. As we celebrate 20 years of work here in the U.S., we can be proud of the support we have offered to people in Brittany working hard for the future of the Breton language and culture.



TERRORISM IN BRITTANY

The information gathered below comes primarily from articles gleaned from the internet which were published by the Ouest France and Le Télégramme newspapers. There is much more to be learned about the events reported below which have provoked a resounding rejection of violence and terrorism on the part of the Breton population and those active in the Breton movement - Lois Kuter

As most Bro Nevez readers in the U.S. have probably heard, on April 19th a bomb exploded at a MacDonald's restaurant in Dinan, killing a 28-year old employee Laurence Turbec. While no one has claimed this bombing, it is believed to be the work of the Breton Revolutionary Army (ARB = Armée Révolutionnaire de Bretagne), a secret underground "group."

THE NEW YORK TIMES **INTERNATIONAL** THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2000

French McDonald's Bombed; Breton Terrorists Suspected

By DONALD G. McNEIL Jr.

PARIS, April 19 — A bomb exploded beside a McDonald's in a small town in Brittany today, killing a restaurant worker. The Interior Ministry suggested that it was the work of an obscure Breton separatist movement.

A second bomb, outside a post office about 35 miles away in Rennes, the region's chief city, was defused.

The explosion, in the Dinan area, went off about 10 a.m. near the restaurant's drive-through window. It hurled the body of the worker, a 28-year-old woman named Laurence Turbec, into shrubbery decorating the parking lot. Only a handful of customers were in the restaurant at the time.

No one took responsibility for either bomb, but the police said three sticks of dynamite found in Rennes were from a cache of eight tons stolen at gunpoint from an industrial depot last September.

The police eventually recovered five tons and arrested a team of suspects from the small Brittany Combat Group and the better-known Basque separatist movement E.T.A.

Another Breton separatist group, the Revolutionary Breton Army, has long been suspected of links with

Basque and Corsican separatists and also with the Irish Republican Army. It has a history of bombings in Brittany, which have surged in the months since the dynamite theft, in which miles of detonating cord and thousands of detonators were also taken.

The Revolutionary Breton Army has claimed responsibility for four recent bombings. But all past ones have been against government buildings, electrical pylons or other property and have killed no one.

Such acts "never before had such dramatic consequences," said a communication from the Interior Ministry, which sent an anti-terrorism unit to investigate. "Their authors don't hesitate to put human life in danger, and they should be forcefully condemned."

In an event that may not be connected, three bullets were fired at the same McDonald's a month ago, the mayor of Dinan said today. That incident remains unexplained.

It is not clear why a McDonald's was chosen. It is hardly a symbol of the French state. As a symbol of America, the restaurants in France have been attacked by farmers protesting globalization and American sanctions on French foods. But José

A fatal bombing in Brittany may be linked to previous blasts by separatists.

Bové, leader of the Farmers Confederation, condemned today's attack "in the strongest possible way," saying his organization conducted its protests openly and without hurting people.

Brittany, in France's northwest, historically has its own Celtic language and was an independent dukedom for centuries until 1491, when its ruling Duchess Anne married Charles VIII, setting the stage for annexation in 1532 when their daughter, Claude, became queen of France. Its autonomy was further usurped during the Terror that followed the French Revolution in the 1790's.

Many Bretons had supported the monarchy and Catholicism, and the new government suppressed them, massacring thousands and outlawing the language. It remained banned for more than a century, but a revival of its use in schools was

tolerated with the arrival of the Socialist government in 1997.

A desire to speak Breton and celebrate the region's Celtic culture — including even bagpipe music — is strong in Brittany, said Maguy Kerisit, an editor working on a Breton dictionary, but sentiment for independence from France is weak.

"This movement was supposed to have disappeared in the 1970's," she said, "but in the past few months it's been created again. It's an illegal movement that's said they've done bombings, so people are in jail in Paris for being members."

Brittany is rich in agriculture and tourist income, with no obvious reason for more than the normal discontent with the French government. "The independentists say France takes the benefits of our wealth and gives back less in exchange," Miss Kerisit said, "but the majority of the population doesn't agree with bombings or extreme political movements."

The police say dynamite from the September theft seems to have been used by E.T.A. in a car bomb attack in Spain that killed a leader of that country's Socialist Party, Fernando Buesa Blanco, in February.

As the article reprinted above from the New York Times notes, this is not the usual target for the ARB which seems to have replaced the FLB—Front de Libération de Bretagne—which appeared in the mid 1960s. Targets have been highly symbolic—tax offices, police stations, and even the Château de Versailles—and there was scrupulous avoidance of injuring people.

There is speculation that younger and more radical Bretons are modeling their actions on the Basque separatist ETA group which has targeted humans in car bombs. Indeed, the ETA and Bretons seem to have been jointly involved in the theft of tons of explosives and detonators from the Breton town of

Plévin (Côtes d'Armor) in September 1999. While some of this has been recuperated, a large stash of explosives is still hidden somewhere and explosives used in Brittany and the Basque land have been traced to this lot. The story of Breton-Basque relations is a very complex one where Bretons have expressed strong sympathy for the Basque cause. However, Bretons who have bombed buildings in Brittany have made the choice to never target humans, and the bombings in Brittany have occurred when all other means of working legally to advance the Breton cause seem totally blocked. Rather than warfare against an enemy, Bretons have tended to use bombings to simply get the attention of French politicians so that more meaningful discussion and action can begin. This is not necessarily a fight to attain independence from France, but simply an effort to gain the power necessary for Bretons to take charge of their own destiny. Are young Bretons so frustrated and impatient that the risk of killing an innocent bystander means less to them than it did to earlier generations of militants who have vehemently condemned the killing of Laurence Turbot? Are those posing such bombs in Brittany simply so inexperienced that they cannot time a bomb properly to go off when all people are safely away from a target site? Or are bombs being planted by fanatics (or secret police) trying to discredit pro-Breton activity, who see the strong boom of pride in Breton identity and culture today as a threat to French nationalism. Some feel that this might not be too far-fetched as a theory.

There are many questions to be answered in this tragic bombing which has outraged and makes no sense to Bretons who have long been active as cultural or political militants. Newspaper reports have sometimes been confusing, and much information about the bombing and its possible perpetrators is highly speculative. While being held as a suspect linked with the bombing in some way, Gaël Robin, a spokesman for Emgann, the political organization which is believed to have close ties with the ARB, is quoted as saying "What has happened at Quévert [the Dinan MacDonald bombing] is unjustifiable and incomprehensible." Emgann has denied close ties with members of the ARB, but some evidence seems to point to the contrary. There is the bizarre story of a message (on diskette) communicated by Gaël Robin to a journalist of CAPA (an audiovisual production agency). In this message, the ARB denies the bombing of the Dinan MacDonalds, but admits to placing a bomb at the MacDonalds in Pornic between the 13th and 14th of April—a package which they say "disappeared." The disappearance seems confirmed in a newspaper report where the MacDonalds manager claims nothing was found that morning in an inspection of the restaurant grounds. But later newspaper reports tell of damages to the Pornic MacDonalds and complaints by the restaurant owner that the police did not come to investigate when called. Why would police have ignored damages that seemed severe enough to merit investigation and where did the "packaged bomb" disappear to?

New York Times

Breton Separatists Deny Bombing of McDonald's

PARIS, April 30 (AP) — A regional separatist group that is considered the prime suspect in a bombing at a McDonald's restaurant in France this month has denied responsibility for the attack, a French newspaper reported today.

It was the first time the Breton Revolutionary Army had commented on the bombing of the restaurant near the western city of Dinan on April 19, which killed a 28-year-old employee.

"We affirm that we have nothing to do with the attack on the Dinan McDonald's," the group, known by its French initials A.R.B., wrote in a

communiqué published in excerpts in Le Journal du Dimanche.

The group seeks autonomy for the western region of Brittany, which has maintained a strong cultural identity based on the Bretons' Celtic origins.

The authorities have said the separatist group is the No. 1 suspect in the McDonald's attack.

Despite denying that attack, the group claimed responsibility for a March 10 bombing on a tax office in which no one was injured, the weekly said.

Alluding to a possible bomb attempt, the group also said that it had

planted "a package" April 13 at another McDonald's in the Brittany town of Pornic but that the material had apparently been cleared away.

Le Journal du Dimanche said the group's statement had been delivered to the Capa television agency.

The authorities have opened a judicial inquiry into the McDonald's attack and a bombing attempt on the same day in the nearby city of Rennes. The police defused the Rennes bomb, which was placed in front of a post office in the city's downtown.

Investigators believe that the two incidents were linked.

Three Breton Separatists Investigated in Bombing

PARIS, May 7 (AP) — Three members of a Breton separatist group were placed under formal investigation today in connection with the bombing of a McDonald's last month that killed an employee.

Two of those under investigation are ranking members of Emgann, meaning "combat" in the Breton language of coastal northwestern France, judicial officials said.

Investigators describe Emgann as the legal front for the clandestine Breton Revolutionary Army. However, in a statement today, Emgann denied any formal links to the group.

In Paris, an investigating magistrate, Gilbert Thiel, placed three suspects under investigation, which under French law is one step short of filing charges.

The Breton Revolutionary Army has denied responsibility for the April 19 bombing at the McDonald's fast-food restaurant in Quevert, about 250 miles west of Paris, in the Brittany region. A 27-year-old employee was killed in the blast.

However, the group claimed responsibility for a smaller bombing of a McDonald's in the town of Pornic on April 14. No one was injured in

the Pornic explosion, initially thought to have been a prank.

Small groups of Breton separatists have long sought autonomy for Brittany, which has maintained a strong cultural identity reflecting the Bretons' Celtic origins.

Those placed under investigation are Christian Georgeault, 47, described as Emgann's secretary for internal affairs; Gael Roblin, 27, a spokesman for the group; and Pascal Laize, a 34-year-old electrician. The police said they found bomb-making material, including a detonator and a timing device, in his car.

Investigations continue and a number of Bretons have been jailed—with a number of others taken in for questioning but released. Evidence and admissions have linked some of those jailed to recent ARB bombings, but no one has yet been linked directly to the MacDonalds bombing.

VEHEMENT CONDEMNATION OF THE MACDONALDS BOMBING

While the facts of this case are yet to be more clearly revealed, what is evident is that the vast majority of Bretons active on the cultural, artistic, economic, and political fronts are clearly opposed to violence as the means of moving forward. On April 22nd, two days after the Dinan bombing, a group mobilized in the town of Plevin to vehemently condemn the bombing. This included singer Yann-Fañch Kemener, writer Michel Le Bris, and the General Councilor of Maël-Carhaix, Joël Le Corisier. Calling themselves "Je refuse" this group called upon Bretons to show their refusal of terrorism. A larger federation of voices has organized under the name of "Breizh diouzh tu ar vuhez" (Brittany is for Life). On May 8th, some 2,500 people met in front of the Parliament in Rennes to demonstrate their opposition to violence. Unlike other Breton demonstrations, this one was devoid of flags and had a single large banner in Breton, Gallo and French proclaiming that "Brittany is for Life." After a minute of silence in memory of Lauence Turbot a declaration in the name of Brittany's cultural associations was read in French by Stéphane Moal, president of the Union of Breton Teachers, then in Breton by singer Ghislaine Le Guillan and in Gallo by Jean-Luc Touxel, President of the Association Bretagne Gallèse. This declaration stated a refusal of violence and affirmed the need for respect of human rights and the continued development of a plural, open and tolerant Breton identity. Alan Stivell also spoke affirming the need to work in peace and with respect for others (of different political convictions) in defending Brittany's culture.

I cannot make a statement for the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL, but would guess that our members share the sentiment of Bretons in condemning bombings which risk (and have taken) the life of innocent bystanders. There are so many alternative actions that can be taken. If you don't like MacDonalds, don't eat there. Better yet, organize a boycott or create an alternative "fast food" place with the same appeal to children and young people where Breton products are promoted. It has been evident that Brittany has the good fortune to have a number of creative entrepreneurs and workers willing to put their energies into the development of a strong Breton economy. And the promotion of Breton identity so evident in recent years is clearly an identity which fosters a respect for human dignity and diversity as it fosters the expression of a unique Breton culture. I hope Bretons will unify their efforts to continue and build upon all the very positive work being done for the Breton culture and economy.

A "WITCH HUNT" IN BRITTANY

Lois Kuter

During the past year there have been a number of articles (especially from the Parisian press) that have attacked Bretons—dead and alive—for their association with Nazi collaboration during World War II or their presentation of history that supposedly glosses over Breton collaboration during that period. Bringing up old demons from the World War II period is not new in Brittany. It flares up especially when Bretons are most successful in their work to foster a positive Breton identity and to promote the Breton language. We are in such a period when the demand for Breton classes is steadily increasing and Breton culture is at a peak in popularity. So, efforts to link pro-Breton activity with Nazism also seems to be peaking. In particular, the linguist Roparz Hemon (1900-1978) has been singled out for attack. This has been fueled by a university thesis by Ronan Calvez of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale detailing Hemon's work with Breton language radio (Radio Rennes) and linking this with Radio Paris which was used for German propaganda. I haven't seen this thesis, but the press surrounding it leads one to *presume* that Hemon's main role in life was to be an evil Nazi propagandist (whether Calvez actually concludes that or not in his research).

Yes, there were Bretons active in language promotion who collaborated with Germany during World War II, and Roparz Hemon was clearly one of them. This is not new information and his role has been documented in many histories of this period. It is easy to create a "black list" of Breton collaborators. Understanding why Bretons collaborated during this period of history requires much more careful thought and study of both the details and a much larger picture. Unlike today, where one has some options to advance the use of the Breton language in schools and media, this was a period when these institutions were tightly closed and there seemed no hope that France would ever open any doors for the Breton language. One couldn't afford to wait for France to open doors for Breton.

For some Bretons who chose to collaborate with Germany, the decision was not dissimilar to the move the Irish made during the WWI period to regain independence from Britain. No one is dragging those Irish "patriots" through the mud today for collaboration with Germany during that period. But, the Germans fighting Britain at that period of history were not so clearly as evil as the Nazis of World War II. From my study of Breton history of this period, it seems that Bretons used the opportunity of German alliance to secure independence for Brittany. This was perhaps an extremely naïve and far-fetched idea, but that's easier to see in looking back. I haven't seen any information that indicates Bretons were interested in establishing Brittany as a Nazi colony for Germany. Although all the recent press about Hemon and Breton "revisionist history" would lead one to believe it, I am not convinced that the Bretons collaborating with Germany in WWII were any more fascist (pro-Nazi) or anti-Semitic than anyone else in other areas of France who collaborated with them for any other reason during that period. There have always been, and still are, fascists in France and Brittany—as there are here in the U.S. I haven't seen evidence that Roparz Hemon was a rabid fascist in favor of the Holocaust. Nor have I have seen any evidence that Breton language activists today condone fascism or neo-Nazism. Indeed it seems that Bretons active in the cultural movement are vehemently opposed to this. Going to great efforts to vilify Bretons like Hemon who did such important work for the Breton language is an insidious way to attack the Breton movement—past and present—as a whole. It is particularly sad to see that Bretons are being bullied into believing it is wrong to honor Hemon's work as a linguist and writer.

It is important to understand history—for all the positive as well as negative things our ancestors have done. Yes, there are things one can be ashamed of, but with all the positive work being done in Brittany today, a witch hunt to denigrate the work of those like Hemon whose lives were less than perfect is a sad thing to see. One should remember Roparz Hemon for his lifetime of important and creative work he did for the Breton language which certainly began well before World War II and ended long after it (see Bro Nevez 69, February 1999). This does not mean ignoring the choices he made during a dark period in French history. This is a painful history and Bretons need to remember it for the lessons it provides. But, there is important work to be done in Brittany to insure a future for the Breton language. Let's get on with it.

NOTE: Keep in mind that the opinions expressed in the pages of Bro Nevez are those of the author who writes them and do not represent ICDBL philosophy or policy.

The DIWAN Schools – News on Negotiations

Since their founding in 1977 the Diwan Breton language immersion schools have asked to be recognized as a public service (they are tuition-free and open to all). Over a year ago, efforts to make Diwan schools part of the public education system of France were spurred on by the Prefecture's invocation of the "Loi Failloux" which limits the amount of "public" support given to "private" institutions. This 19th century law was pulled out to block funding voted by the Regional Council of Brittany to help renovate buildings in Carhaix which would house the Diwan high school (see Bro Nevez 70 & 71, May & August 1999 for this story and Bro Nevez 72, November 1999 for an introduction to Diwan). The high school has gone ahead and so have negotiations to make Diwan officially recognized as part of the public school system.

It has been a year since the large street demonstrations and resistance to the challenge to funding by the Regional Council which led to an invitation from the French Prime Minister to open negotiations between the State and Diwan (and other immersion schools for regional languages). The progress has been slow, as reported in Diwan President Andrew Lincoln's statement for the Diwan general Assembly in April 2000 (*Kannadig Diwan Breizh*, niv. 161, miz meurzh 2000). After France signed the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in the spring of 1999 there has been a period of stagnation, and the Charter has yet to be ratified by France. Negotiations between Diwan and the Ministry of National Education began in February 2000 and the first proposals from the government were received in mid February. These were discouraging in the exclusion of Diwan from a true role in administering the immersive school system. And, there seemed no guarantee that the dominant decision-making role given to the National Education system would not lead to the same problems faced by the bilingual public school classes—lack of teachers and no real plan to solve the problem of inadequate teacher training to meet a growing demand for classes. Despite the unacceptability of the February proposals from the State, Diwan felt this was at least a starting place for discussion.

With a change in the Ministry of Education leadership—Jack Lang coming in as the new Minister in March—there has been hope that negotiations will advance. Three weeks after his nomination to the post, Lang called in Diwan for discussion and meetings were scheduled in April and May for further work. Unlike his predecessor, Claude Allégre, Lang seems to have the regional language issue as a priority. But, there are some sticky points to work out, including the role of Diwan in directing the schools once they are made part of the public education system. Teacher training is also a problem and a mechanism needs to be established to insure that parents do not have to wait several years if they choose to enroll their children in either bilingual or immersion Breton language programs.

There is certainly much work to be done before Diwan becomes a regular option in the National Education system, and time is growing short to be ready for the 2000-2001 school year opening. But recent meetings with the Minister of Education have given cause for optimism that real work will be done instead of endless stalling on the part of the government.

In the meantime, Diwan continues its work. In his report of work accomplished from May 1999 to April 2000, Andrew Lincoln noted that for the third year in a row, Diwan gained approximately 250 new students. Three new schools opened this school year (in Alre/Auray and Gwenrann/Guérande at the primary level and the new middle school for the Morbihan). Growth continues, often with many obstacles and difficult physical conditions for the schools, which call for hard work on the part of teachers, parents and students. The opening of the high school in Carhaix has certainly been a big step for Diwan, and despite very difficult housing and classroom conditions at first, students and parents have persisted. While Diwan has cleared itself from the debts that threatened its future several years ago, finances are a constant challenge, making successful negotiation with the National Education system a goal that must be reached for future growth.

UPDATE ON THE "ERIKA" OIL SPILL

Nathalie Novik

The oil spill created when the tanker "Erika" broke apart in a storm near the south coast of Brittany on December 12th is not over. Six months later, pellets of dense fuel are still landing on the beaches, the clean-up continues, and so far, out of 61,778 birds found oiled and rescued, 95% have died. The French public opinion was scandalized when they saw a seal on television in February that had been found completely oiled but still alive near Lorient; seals are a rarity in France, although they are quite frequently found on the islands off of Brittany. The poor thing has been sent to a specialized sealife center in Brest.

But far away from the coastal areas where tourists have started to show up this May, the battle is now focusing on the political arena. Local fishermen are very unhappy with the slow pace at which compensations are adjudicated by the FIMA, and a group from the Confederation Maritime went to occupy the offices of the maritime brokers in Brest on May 9th in protest. 580 million dollars have been authorized by the government to repair the damages, and out of this total, 38 million have just been released by the government to the Region of Brittany to pay for the damages caused by the oil spill and the hurricane suffered in December. The Nantes Region is getting 58 million for its share. The question now is to see how the money will be used and who will benefit.

More reports are also coming out, and the French Senate has heard the report from its own commission. They squarely put the blame on the captain of the Erika for not informing the maritime authorities in Brest on time that cracks were developing in the hull of the tanker. It is thought now that, had he told them of the cracks on the evening of December 11th, it would still have been possible to reroute the tanker at a slow and safe pace to Brest or a closer harbor. This departs from the report filed right after the first hearings when the captain was exonerated of any wrongdoing.

The relatively good news is that TotalFina is getting ready to proceed with the pumping of the remaining oil in the ship's hull on June 5th. A Breton company has won the bid for the pumping operations, which will mobilize seven ships and 200 men, at a cost of 500 million French Francs (\$73 million). It is estimated that about 6 million tons are left in the rear of the ship and another 6 million in the prow, separated by about 6 miles. The operations will be extremely difficult because of the thickness of the fuel, made even thicker by its long stay under water. It is foreseen that the oil will have to be liquefied with methyl ester of rape, and it will take three months to complete the operations. Numerous safety precautions will be in place in case fuel is accidentally released, and in particular seven

divers will always be on call in a pressurized caisson, to be able to dive immediately to the depth where the sunken ship is located.

Finally, a delegation from the parliamentary commission headed by Jean-Yves Le Drian has just returned from a visit to Washington D.C., where they met with the Coast Guard. The delegation came back convinced that a similar body with the same powers as the Coast Guard should be created in Europe, at a time when the French government is making proposals to the European Commission for improved monitoring and interventions to prevent oil spills from happening. However, it is still not very clear how the EEC would finance such a body or how it would amend its legislation to give a European coast guard entity the same powers given that entity in the U.S.

SOME SHORT NOTES

Lois Kuter

On the Environmental and Historical Front: A New Battle at Saint-Aubin-Du-Cormier

Widespread opposition has been expressed to a project to dump incinerated refuse on the ecologically and historically important wooded site of Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier and Mézière-sur-Couesnon (near Redon). Not only would the project do significant environmental damage to the proposed site, but it is felt that it totally disregards the historical significance of this area where the Breton army was defeated in 1488 in the battle against France. The remains of thousands of Bretons are found on this site. The Cultural Council of Brittany stated that it was totally opposed to this project and asked for its abandonment and work by local communities to find a less expensive and ecologically less damaging alternative. (*Sterenn* no. 14, January 2000)

Poll of French People Shows Favor for Regional Languages

In April, the Institut IFOP conducted a survey of some 955 people over 18 years old chosen as representative of the French population. Survey results indicated that 82% of French people are favorable to the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and 79% are favorable to a modification of the French Constitution to allow for ratification. (*Le Télégramme* 4/16/2000).

Colloquium on "Cultural Diversity and Plurilingualism"

The French Committee of The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, headed by Anna-Vari Chapelain, organized a colloquium at the UNESCO Center in Paris on April 15, 2000, which had the theme "Cultural Diversity and Plurilingualism". This drew some 450 delegates from France (Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Catalan, Corsican, Flemish, Occitan) and overseas French Departments (Creole speakers from Réunion, Guadeloupe, Martinique, etc.) as well as those speaking language of immigrant communities in France (Arab, Berber, Yiddish). The group affirmed the need to modify the French Constitution and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. (Le Télégramme 4/16/2000, flyer from the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages)

University Students Studying Breton

The following statistics from Ofis ar Brezhoneg (Observatoire de la Langue Bretonne) were printed in Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg (Niv. 35, Meurzh 2000).

485 students are enrolled in Breton for the 1999/2000 school year which is up 22% from 399 last year. Of these 69% are at the Université de Haute Bretagne-Rennes II; 11% are at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest; 11% at the Université de Bretagne Sud in Lorient, and 9% are at the Université de Nantes. The Celtic Section at Rennes II has 325 students—less than English (1,618) or Spanish (687), but more than German (268) or Italian (152).

STUR and Some New Computer Products for Breton Learners

STUR is the name of an association founded in 1995 which has been working on computer products and programs in the Breton language. Products available include a CD ROM "spelling check" for Breton as well as a program to find Breton versions of town names (as well as postal codes). A game to find Breton words has also been developed, complete with animation. Another program includes some 200 Celtic and Breton symbols (hermines, triskells, etc) one can use to enhance letters and documents. And you can also order a Breton flag or triskell mouse pad. Information can be obtained at www.stur.bzh5.com or send an e-mail to Tangi Ar Menn at stur@bzh5.com (or, I would be happy to photocopy the little catalog and order sheet I have received).

Al Levrig

Al Levrig is a "federation" of some fifty cultural organizations in the Tregor-Goëlo region of northern Brittany. Besides promoting the many cultural and artistic events of the area, Al Levrig has a "working group" which has helped promote the use of Breton language signs and publicity. This group has also drafted a basic phrase book for those who want to practice speaking Breton and need a bit of help. Al Levrig will soon have its own web site where cultural organizations can be listed in a directory and where upcoming events will be posted. For more information you can contact them at alleurig@wanadoo.fr (see also the listing of cultural organizations in this issue of Bro Nevez).

Librairie Aularge

Those who love books will be interested to learn of the work of Librairie Aularge. Since 1953 this bookshop has been selling used books about Brittany through the mail and now via e-mail (aularge@wanadoo.fr). They have some 20,000 books in Breton, French and other languages, and judging from their catalog, the collection is very interesting, including magazines as well as books. Subject areas include history, the Breton language, biographies, geography, literature, and art. Librairie Aularge has been working with the Regional Council of Brittany to reference all books published on the "Matière Bretonne" (subject of Brittany) since the invention of printing in 1450. So far they have 93,000 works in this reference.

I would be happy to pass along a copy of the catalogue I received from the Librairie Aularge to anyone interested or you can contact them at:

Librairie Aularge
16 rue Marc Sangnier
29000 Quimper
tel.: 02 98 64 22 42

I thank Jean Jacques Goasdoue for his kind letter which states "Congratulations and thanks for the work you are doing for the Breton language."

Summer Camp for Breton Learners

On the pages with follow you will find information about *Kamp etrekeltiek ar vrezhonegerien*. For many years this "camp" for adults and families has helped Bretons perfect their language skills in classes, but also a variety of recreational activities. You need to have the basic elements of Breton under your belt. I would be happy to send a registration form to anyone who may be travelling to Brittany this summer who may be interested in taking advantage of this enjoyable camp.

K.E.A.V.

skol-hañv 2000



PETRA ZO DA ZEGAS ?

- ur sac'h kousket + ul liñsel (pe 2 liñsel ha palennoù)
- peadra da skrivañ, ho yezhadur, ha geriadur (ur c'haier follennoù plastek)
- na zisoñjit ket binvioù-seniñ (gitar, bombard, binloù, telenn, banjo...ha kement zo)
- filmoù da ziskouez (e brezhoneg), pe dastumadegoù kanaouennoù, ha kement zo...
- dilhad ha botoù sport (evit ar re a gar), dilhad kouronkañ (ur poull-neuial a zo e Skaer)

PENAOES DONT ?

Emañ SKAER e-kreiz ur tric'horn KEMPER-GOURIN-KEMPERLE. Gwelloc'h eo d'ar re a zeu gant an treñ diskenn e ROSPORDEN.

Ur c'harr-boutin zo eus ROSPORDEN da SKAER.

Un dachenn-gampiñ a zo ivez e Skaer (2 km eus ar skol).

Pellgomz/Pellaler : 02-98-53 56 34 - KEAV - 22 hent Moulloien - 29000 KEMPER ☎ 02-98-95 59 31
postel : keav@wanadoo.fr

09-15 / 16-22 / 23-29 a viz Gouere

Skaer

kamp etrekeltiek



Skol-hañv 2000

PELECH ?

Dalc'het e vo Skol-Hañv 1999 KEAV (ezel eus Kuzul ar Brezhoneg) e skol-stad Joliot Curie e SKAER (tost da Rosporden ha Kemper).

PEGOULZ ?

Tri frantad-studi a vo kinniget er bloaz-mañ

■ Ar prantad 1añ (09/15)

eus ar Sul 09 a viz Gouere da noz (da 8e noz evit debrñ koan, degemeret e vo an dud adalek 4e goude merenn), betek ar Sadorn 15 da greisteiz.

■ An eil prantad (16/22)

eus ar Sul 16 a viz Gouere da noz (da 8e noz evit debrñ koan) betek ar Sadorn 22 da greisteiz.

■ An trede prantad (23/29)

eus ar Sul 23 a viz Gouere da noz (da 8e noz evit debrñ koan) betek ar Sadorn 29 a viz Gouere da greisteiz.

Bez e c'heller dibab dont d'ur prantad-studi hepken, pe da veur a hini.

PEGEMENT ?

1300 lur e kousto pep prantad staj. Ret eo paeañ an hanter (650, 1300 lur pe 1950 evit an teir sizhunvezh) a-raok dont ha kas ar chekenn gant ar follenn-enskrivañ da gKEAV.

1000 lur e kousto ur prantad evit ar studierien hag an dud dilabour (kas an hanter - 500 lur, 1000 lur pe 1500 lur hervez ho tibab).

Pellegomz/Pelleier : 02-98-53 58 34 - KEAV - 22 hent Mouliouen - 29000 KEMPER ☎ 02-98-95 59 31
postel : keav@wanadoo.fr

ar brezhonegerien

PETRA VO GRAET ER C'HAMP ?

- Kentelioù eus 9e da 12e, hag eus 2e da 5e (a rummadoù bihan)
- Kan, dañs da greisteiz : 1/2 eur kan, dañs hervez kinnigoù ar gelennerien
- **goude 5 eur** (hervez an delzioù) : sportoù, kaozeadennoù, filmoù, pourmenadennoù, c'hoarioù...

EVEZHIADENN

Kamp hañv KEAV zo anezhañ ur bodad tud laouen o 'n em gavout asambles evit klevet hag evit komz brezhoneg e-pad ur sizhun pe div pe telr. Anez gouzout diazezoù kentañ ar brezhoneg (ur bloavezh studi pe zaou) n'hall ket staj KEAV dougen frouezh deoc'h. D'an deraouidi e tegasomp soñj e vez aozet stajoù evite er memes mare.

Evit deoc'h kaout titouroù e c'hellit goulenn diganeomp.

KENTAN HA DIWEZHAN EVEZHIADENN E GALLEG

Le Camp d'été de KEAV, c'est quatre-vingts, cent personnes heureuses de se rencontrer pour entendre et parler breton. Pour chacun, le faire c'est un choix, une volonté et un plaisir. Ce stage ne pouvant profiter véritablement qu'aux personnes connaissant les bases élémentaires du breton (une ou deux années d'études), nous rappelons qu'il existe des stages plus adaptés pour eux à la même période.

Pour d'éventuels renseignements n'hésitez pas à nous contacter.

Un niverenn slummadur dibaouez a zo gant KEAV
(Formation Continue)

Pellegomz/Pelleier : 02-98-53 58 34 - KEAV - 22 hent Mouliouen - 29000 KEMPER ☎ 02-98-95 59 31
postel : keav@wanadoo.fr

CULTURAL ACTIVITY IN BRITTANY -- where to go for information

The following are just some of the cultural organizations which serve as sources for information and which coordinate language and cultural activities in a particular area. They are sometimes federations of many smaller groups. These have been pulled from the 1999 edition of Kentelioù brezhoneg d'an oadourien/Cours de breton pour adultes published by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg. While this publication is intended to help adults find Breton language classes, the addresses below can serve as resources for more general cultural activity. I have added a few additional addresses, and when I had them, I have added e-mail addresses/web sites. This is by no means a complete listing, but just a place to get started. For those interested in music, I highly recommend the Dastum web site: www.dastum.com. This is also a place where Dastum's vast directory of musicians and music-related resources will be accessible (see Bro Nevez 72, February 2000). If you have corrections or have contacted an organization in Brittany (not listed here) which has been particularly helpful in providing information, please let me know.

In using the information note that "Pgz" is short for Pellgomz, or telephone. "E-bost" = e-mail address.

AODOÙ-AN-ARVOR (CÔTES-D'ARMOR)

Al Levrig

91 Hent ar Marichal Joffre
22700 Perroz-Gireg (Perros-Guirec)
Pgz: 02 96 49 80 55
E-bost: allebrig@wanadoo.fr

Steredenn

19, bali Carnot
22000 Sant-Brieg (Saint-Brieuc)
Pgz: 02 96 94 19 18

Kreizenn Sevenadurel Roparz Hemon

Plasenn Verdun
22200 Gwengamp (Guingamp)
Pgz: 02 96 44 27 88

PENN-AR-BED (FINISTÈRE)

Kreiz

2, straed ar Vered/rue du Cimetière
29580 Ar Faou
Pgz: 02 98 81 08 88

Mervent

Plasenn Amiral Ronarc'h
B.P. 29
29720 Pouneour-Lanwern
Pgz: 02 98 87 72 41

Sked

Ti ar Brezhoneg ha Sevenadur Breizh
18, straed Duguay-Trouin
29200 Brest
Pgz: 02 98 80 26 71
E-bost: sked@infini.fr

Ti ar Vro

4 rue Jacques Cartier
29000 Kemper (Quimper)
Pgz: 02 98 90 70 43
E-bost: tiarvro-kemper@wanadoo.fr
www.kerys.com/kerys/tiarvor/

Ensavadur Breizh

12, straed Penn ar Wern
29450 Kommana
Pgz: 02 98 78 04 61
E-bost: ensavdur@bretagnenet.com
www.bretagnenet.com/ensavdur

IL-HA-GWILEN (ILLE-ET-VILAINE)

Skeudenn

10 straed Naonediz/Nantaise
Porzh du Chesne
35000 Roazhon (Rennes)
Pgz: 02 99 30 06 87

LIGER-ATLANTEL (LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE)

Agence Culturelle Morvan Lebesque

24, quai de la Fosse
44000 Naoned (Nantes)
Pgz: 02 51 84 16 07

MOR-BIHAN (MORBIHAN)

Emglev Bro An Oriant

Ti ar C'hevredadoù
12, straed Colbert
56100 An Oriant (Lorient)
Pgz: 02 97 21 37 05

Gevred

Kelc'h Sevenadurel Gwened
6, straed ar Givijerezh
B.P. 21
56000 Gwened (Vannes)
Pgz: 02 97 42 67 00

Amzer Nevez

Kreizenn Sevenadurel
Centre Culturel Amzer Nevez
Soe (Soye)
56270 Planvour (Ploemeur)
Pgz: 02 97 86 32 08

A LOSS FOR BRITTANY

Bernard de Parades

(1921-2000)

On March 13, 2000, Brittany lost Bernard de Parades. His name was not well known outside of Brittany, because all through his career as a pillar of Breton culture, Bernard had remained backstage, never taking credit or bragging about his achievements.

And yet ... This is the man behind some of the most important movements to revive Breton culture, like Bleun Brug, the Festival de Cornouaille, "Tréteaux et terroir," and numerous others, starting in the 50's and early 60's when it took some guts and courage to confront the French and stand for your heritage. He did it with grace and humor, avoiding antagonisms and gradually bringing to light the magnificence of Breton culture.

If you have been to Brittany, you have seen his remarkable work in countless museums (Pont l'Abbé, Landevennec, Carhaix, Quimperlé...), and you might have seen some of the open air shows he created like "Breiz Gwec'hall" and "Heures de Rohan," and so many others in Muzillac, Redon, Chateauneuf-du-Faou... Perhaps you have heard of his daring venture in the 50's to recreate a medieval "Mystery" in front of the Locronan church dedicated to the life of St. Ronan and played by the locals. And if you have enjoyed the Quimper evenings during the Festival de Cornouaille, where artisans, musicians, storytellers and others recreate the Quimper of old, you owe it to Bernard and his "compère," Per-Jakez Helias.

Steeped in tradition by his mother, educated to become a supporter of the arts, Bernard was born in Nantes, but moved to Quimper where he was to spend the rest of his life. He was perhaps the greatest connoisseur of Breton tradition, arts, architecture, costumes, celebrations and religion there was to be, and a staunch defender of both Gallo and Breton languages. He loved not only Breton folklore, but embraced all folklores, all traditions, everything that demonstrated how genial people can be all over the world. He did not like to see traditional pardons and feasts turned into commercial ventures, and while he understood very well the need to finance festivals, dance groups and museums, his belief was that it could be done with taste.

He was rewarded with the "Ordre de l'Hermine" two years ago, but for him, the real measure of his contribution was the memory he left in every village in Brittany, where he worked closely with the tenants of tradition, elders, singers, dancers, musicians, storytellers and others. The immense crowd that came to say farewell to their best supporter at the Quimper cathedral bears witness to the recognition Bernard earned in Brittany and elsewhere.

His friend Michel Scouarnec summarized it in his eulogy by saying "Bernard was a backstage man, as all producers, a man of the shadows who did not like the limelight. Let's pay homage for this work of humility, which consists in emphasizing the value of others rather than putting yourself forward."

Natalie Novik

A NEW BOOK FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Jean-Pierre Le Mat (Editor, Translation and Commentary). **Patrick Pearse et l'insurrection irlandaise de 1916—textes politiques et littéraires inédits.** (Preface by Séamas Ó Buachalla). Coop Breizh. 2000. 187 pages. ISBN 2-84346-096-4.

Bretons have long had a keen interest in Ireland and its history and this new book offers new translations of texts by one of Ireland's famous sons: Patrick Pearse. But, Le Mat's commentary on Pearse and the insurrection of 1916 also gives lots of food for thought for Bretons who might dare dream of independence for Brittany and for anyone who has a streak of rebelliousness in them.

"The Celts are rebels by nature, by opportunity, by necessity, for pleasure, by accident, sometimes by mistake. They invented the boycott. Through the centuries they have joined every army and they have deserted them with the same ferocious enthusiasm. They have refused taxes, incurred excommunication. But they have never been contemptuous of the law, or idealists of disorder. One cannot find among them or find only very few great heretics, enemies of society, or theoreticians of revolution. Constant rebellion is not an ideal; it is instead a mania, a familiar demon." (my translation, page 11)

The insurrection of 1916 in Ireland--just a thousand Irish men and women taking up arms against the British Empire --is one of the subjects of this book and is nicely presented in its historical context in the first 40 pages of the book-. In less than a week from the start on April 24th, the "Easter Rising" was over. Twelve leaders were sentenced to death and executed in early May: Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonough, Thomas Clarke, Joseph Plunkett, Michael O'Harrahan, William Daly, William Pearse, John McBride, Eamonn Kent, Michael Mallin, Cornelius Colbert, Sean Heuston, Thomas Kent, Sean MacDermott and James Connolly. They were buried in a common grave in quicklime so their bodies could not be retrieved by family.

The severity of the sentences—including another 85 death sentences which were commuted, and prison and hard labor for hundreds of others—turned popular opinion around. A new rebellion was spawned which was supported this time by the Irish population and the 26 counties of Ireland gained independence in 1921.

The real subject of this book is just one of the heroes of the 1916 insurrection—Patrick Pearse—a poet and essayist who wrote in both Irish Gaelic and English. Le Mat provides a very interesting biographical sketch and introduction to Pearse in relating his role in the 1916 uprising. The heart of the book (100 pages) is a translation into French (for the first time) of a number of Pearse's works. Included are four poems ("The Fool," "The Mother," "The Rebel," and "I am Ireland"). Four long political essays are also included: "Specters," "The Separatist Idea," "The Spiritual Nation," and "The Sovereign People." And finally, a theater piece is also included: "The Singer."

In these days of television violence where the "good guys" are supermen who act to revenge wrongs of injustice or eliminate criminals, one can learn a lot from Le Mat's essay on "Heroism and Modernity." Heroes are not like our modern superman models who are distanced from emotions in their quest for power, glory and revenge against an enemy. Heroes are everyday and passionate people like the poet Pearse who die for their vision of the future—in the case of this book they die for Ireland and its legitimacy.

No matter how much one knows about Irish history, the interpretation by Le Mat in this book is sure to be thought-provoking. For those who are not thoroughly familiar with this period, Le Mat provides helpful chronologies of Irish history and Patrick Pearse's life, as well as a short bibliography about Pearse—including references to web sites about Pearse and the 1916 insurrection.

SOME NEWS FROM WALES

The following note was sent by the ICBDL Representative in Wales, Gwyn Griffiths. Gwyn has been active with a number of projects well worth noting. He has researched and written about the "Johnny Onions"—the Breton onion sellers who used to cross the Channel by the thousands and still come over to Britain, but in much smaller numbers. Gwyn has prepared an exhibition about the onion sellers for the Council of Museums in Wales and the Roscoff (Brittany) Town Council. More recently he prepared an exhibit for the 200th anniversary of François Alexis Rio who married a girl from Llanover in Wales and played a major part in arranging a visit by Breton song collector La Villemarqué and other prominent Bretons to the Abergavenny Eisteddfod of 1838. Both exhibits have toured in Wales and are now at Celtica, Machynlleth—which Gwyn describes as a sort of "Celtic experience" rather than a museum. Gwyn is now in the midst of writing a book about Brittany—in Welsh—which should come out later this summer. So you can see that the Welsh ICDBL representative has been extremely active in helping his countrymen and women learn about Brittany!

WELSH LANGUAGE DAILY PAPER ON THE INTERNET

For over a century the ideal of a Welsh language daily newspaper has been discussed and debated in Wales - but it never happened. Not until now. On March 1, St David's Day, a daily Welsh language "newspaper" became available on the internet, thanks to BBC Cymru.

The BBC has since the first station was set up in Cardiff on February 13, 1923, contributed immensely to the continuation and, indeed, today's revival of the Welsh language. The corporation now is playing another part in its historic role as a great patron of the language and that by utilising the latest in modern technology.

The massive world-wide news gathering resources and expertise of the BBC is being harnessed to this innovative step in the history of the language. The BBC also has at its command a wealth of journalistic talents and material broadcast on the Welsh language radio channel, BBC Radio Cymru, from BBC Wales's contribution as the news provider to the Welsh language TV channel S4C, and a vast pool of research facilities.

The paper includes a mix of news, features and sport and a specialist team of journalists work exclusively on it. All its content is up-dated all the time.

"BBC Cymru'r Byd" (The World of Wales), as the paper is called, is available throughout the world. Glyn Evans, former editor of the Welsh language weekly "Y Cymro" who has recently returned from Patagonia where descendants of the Welsh colony established there in 1859 still live and speak the language, is the features editor of "Cymru'r Byd". One of his plans is to provide coverage to the activities of Welsh societies abroad. He is keen to hear from Welsh speakers throughout the world. The news editor is Welsh language journalist, poet and author Grahame Davies.

Welsh language pamphlets and journals were hugely influential in forming opinions and attitudes among the people of Wales since the early nineteenth century and the Welsh language could be on the verge of a surge of renewed interest thanks to this new development. Indeed, there are signs that this is happening already with instant responses from Welsh speakers all over the world.

It has been interesting to find people e-mailing their responses from the Celtic Studies departments at the University of California at Berkeley; from a Welshman working in Silicon Valley; a lecturer in living languages in Upstate New York, a lecturer at Ottawa University; and many, many others.

As well as being in itself a news service "Cymru'r Byd" also provides a gateway to all Welsh language sites on the internet. "BBC Cymru'r Byd" can be accessed at: www.bbc.co.uk/cymru

Gwyn Griffiths. ICDBL - Cymru

POTOMAC CELTIC FESTIVAL -- June 10 & 11 -- Leesburg, Virginia

This is just a reminder that this year, the Potomac Festival will be featuring Brittany, and musicians from Brittany to be at the festival are Alan Stivell, the Bagad Lann Bihoué, and Nolwenn Monjarret. There will be Breton dancing at workshops during the festival as well as at the Saturday night ceilidh. During the two days there will certainly be a number of other great acts (including Kevin Burke and Johnny Cunningham who were not mentioned in the press release I included in the February Bro Nevez). For more details on the festival, you can consult the web site: www.PotomacCelticFest.org. -- Lois Kuter

The ICDBL at the Festival

The ICDBL will have a bigger presence than ever with a large tent site to set up posters about Brittany and a display of books about the Breton language, music and culture. In addition we will be raffling a box of Breton goods (books, CDs, muscadet, cookies, and other odd items) for the benefit of Diwan. I will be doing a workshop on the Breton language and other ICDBL members will be doing dance workshops or performing Breton music (see below).

So far we have lined up an outstanding crew of volunteers and we should have great fun at the festival. By the time you get this issue of Bro Nevez, the festival will be right around the corner. We would love to see more ICDBL members from the Washington D.C. area. Please consider stopping by the tent. As you will see from the very brief introductions below, ICDBL members from all over the eastern states will be at the festival. I am looking forward to meeting some ICDBL members for the very first time, and I can attest from my past acquaintance with others in this group, that the ICDBL tent will be a very lively place to be.

ICDBL Volunteers for the Festival

Susan Baker (Gaithersburg, Maryland) joined the ICDBL in 1993. She is a very talented graphic artist and has been studying Irish dancing (just for fun). She has traveled a number of times to Brittany and is one of Alan Stivell's biggest fans. Sue was the one who got me to come to the first Oatlands Celtic Festival in 1994—the forerunner to the Potomac Celtic Festival. Since the first time we put up an information tent in 1994, Sue has been there.

Philippe Berthier (Silver Spring, Maryland) joined the ICDBL in 1998. He hasn't lived in Brittany but certainly is proud of his Breton family roots. He has brought a wicked sense of humor to the ICDBL tent for the past few years.

Matt Cosgrove (Ozona, Florida) joined the ICDBL in 1994. Matt began studying Breton dance in 1988 and lived there from 1991 to 1994. During that time he performed with the Kelc'h Keltiek Roazhon (Rennes Celtic Circle) and was the first American to earn a dance teaching certification from Kendalc'h. Matt has contributed a number of CD reviews and has a strong knowledge of Breton traditional music—as well as a love for its less traditional innovations.

Ashley & Julia Fisher (Covington, Tennessee) joined the ICDBL in 1998. They lived in Rennes and Guipry in Brittany in 1983 and 1987. Ashley was looking up information on his mother's family (Ozanne) from Carfentin (near Dol) and Julia spent some time studying crêpe and galette making. They will be bringing a 250-year old skillet and tools to demonstrate this art (sadly, we don't have the permits to actually produce crêpes or galettes).

Jim Kerr (Easton, Maryland) joined the ICDBL in 1983 and is on our Board of Consultants. Jim's first note to me read "Just read about ICDBL in Fr Journal. Family moved to Scotland from Quimper about year 1100 AD." Jim's history with Brittany and Bretons includes his use of Breton songs as a semi-professional singer and friendship with Breton army buddies during a stint with the French army. He used the pages of Bro Nevez in 1989 to sell a set of Scottish Highland bagpipes for the benefit of the ICDBL.

Mary Primel (Cumming, Georgia) joined the ICDBL in 1988. By printing a letter asking for information about her Breton ancestors in the November 1990 issue of Bro Nevez, Mary was able to track down the great grandson of the brother to her great grandfather who was born in Locmaria Berrien (near Huelgoat). It was not until 1994 that Andre Primel noticed the letter in an old issue of Bro Nevez that he found at his friend Youenn Gwernig's house. Now, there's an interesting story.

Lois Kuter (Jenkintown, Pennsylvania). Yes, I am the founding member of the U.S. Branch of the ICDBL. It's much easier to present everyone else. Briefly put, I have been keeping an eye on the Breton music and culture scene since the mid 1970s; spending time in Brittany to research a doctoral thesis on Breton identity and its expression in language and music. It was the bagpipes that first drew me to Brittany and continue to keep my attention (as you will read in the CD reviews later in this issue). I have set up an information table for the ICDBL at a number of small festivals, but the Potomac Festival has by far been the most fun and interesting.

Other ICDBL Members at the Potomac Celtic Festival

There will be a number of ICDBL members at the festival who have other duties elsewhere.

Cheryl Mitchell (Hyattsville, Maryland) joined the ICDBL in 1986. She is active with the St. David's Welsh-American Society. At the festival she will be manning a Welsh tent, doing workshops, and is part of the festival volunteer staff. Cheryl is also a fine singer and traveled to Wales and Brittany in June 1998 with Côr Cymraeg Rehoboth.

Liam Ó Caiside (Alexandria, Virginia) first joined the ICDBL in 1986 when he lived in New York and was active with the Celtic League. He has participated in the Potomac Festival with Scottish Gaelic and/or Manx information tents and has done Scottish Gaelic language workshops.

Ben Pecson (Wheaton, Maryland) joined the ICDBL 1997 when he discovered us at the festival. He comes to the festival regularly with his wife's Scottish clan. It was at Ben's insistence that we added Asturias to our map of the Celtic countries (which already included Galicia) and he prepared an information sheet about Asturias for us.

Mike Rackers (Cincinnati, Ohio) joined the ICDBL in 1990. Mike will be coming to the festival with a pipe band which will be performing for the first time this year. Like John Trexler (see below), Mike is a piper and bombarde player and has long been trying to convert Scottish pipers to bombardes.

Bill Reese (Fredericksburg Virginia Welsh Society) joined the ICDBL in 1994. He will be involved in poetry workshops at the Potomac Celtic Festival and will be including some Breton language poetry in those.

John Trexler (Charlotte, North Carolina) joined the ICDBL in 1992 and has paid his dues up through 2002! With Virginia Turnage he has an act called "The Dronemaster and the Dancer." John has appeared at the festival for a number of years and will be performing again this year—demonstrating a number of bagpipes, including the Breton biniou and bombarde, hurdy-gurdy, treujenn gaol (clarinet, Breton style), etc. He does a great introduction to Breton and other Celtic musics.

Jan Zollars (Houston, Texas) joined the ICDBL in 1990. Jan will be doing some Breton dance workshops at the festival. She served a number of years as a U.S. representative for the InterCeltic Festival of Lorient and has exhibited her wonderful photography of Brittany and Bretons.

* * *

The ICDBL at the ALASKA IRISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Natalie Novik

The week-end of May 19-21 was a great time for all those interested in Irish music and culture to gather in Anchorage. The Alaska Irish Music Festival, in its 4th year now, was a great success and a testimony to the wide influence exerted by Irish music outside the borders of Ireland. The first evening concert started the Festival with the outstanding performances of Lawrence Nugent on the flute and then Karen Casey (of Solas fame), all accompanied by other musicians. Lawrence Nugent did a rendition of an "an dro" under the title "Snake charmer" with a sinuous and wavy pattern, accelerating and slowing down, and rather difficult to follow if you want to dance.

The next day was the highlight of the Festival, with music, dance and language workshops and local performers all day long, and another concert in the evening. I was requested to hold a workshop on Breton music and culture (rather poorly attended, but the time and place were not the best), and then I was featured among the performers in the afternoon, accompanying a Welsh singer, Andrew Weare, on the harp. This expansion in festival programming to other Celtic countries is a deliberate choice by the Festival Board of Directors to incorporate other aspects of Celtic traditions.

This spirit of openness was further illustrated in the evening concert, by a performance by Athapascan fiddler Bill Stevens. The Athapascan Indians who live in the center of Alaska adopted the Scots-Irish fiddling and dancing traditions brought in by the gold seekers, and Bill's interpretation is lively, brilliant and reflects the older styles of Irish music at the beginning of the 20th century. Following his performance was the group everybody wanted to hear: "Cherish the Ladies". These women are not only remarkable performers, but they are all funny and witty, and the crowd had a grand time. During the whole evening, the O'Hare School of Irish Dance also performed to the various dance tunes to the delight of the audience. The venue for all these events is the oldest theater in Anchorage, where you are allowed to take your drinks from the bar into the auditorium. This naturally creates a more Irish-like ambiance, although nobody got really intoxicated...

And finally, the last day saw a giant ceili, attended by all the above mentioned musicians, a large number of dancers, all the local musicians and a very enthusiastic audience. We all got out of that festival with a feeling of accomplishment, and look forward to next year's. The tourists, who generally don't have much to do in Anchorage, found this a very exciting event, worth traveling to Alaska to attend!

* * *

Harp of the Celts Festival in Brittany, July 1-7

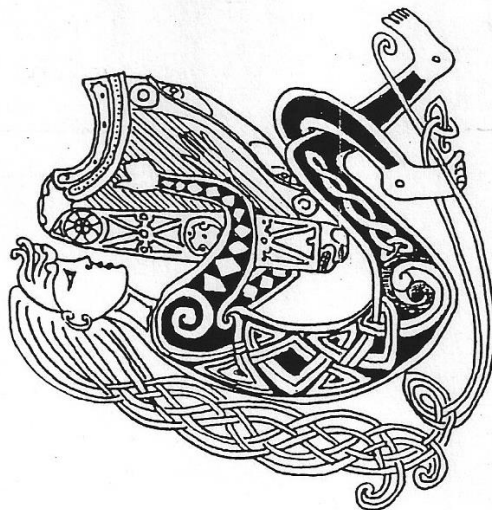
There are literally hundreds of festivals in Brittany during the summer and it would take many pages to describe them all. I have included information on the page which follows of just one very interesting festival featuring the harp. I would be happy to help anyone who will be travelling to Brittany this summer in need to suggestions or information on other festivals. There are certainly some good web sites to consult for details and Dastum's Guide to Breton Music is also a very helpful source for contact addresses and telephone numbers. — Lois

HARP OF THE CELTS

festival

1-7 July 2000

in the beautiful countryside of the Monts d'Arrée in Brittany



***Wire harp class**
***Piobaireachd concert & workshop**
***Fest-noz (Breton dance night)**

with **Ann Heymann, Violaine Mayor,**
and many other artists

HENT TELENN BREIZH, La voie de la harpe bretonne, BP 2,
29 410 PLOUNEOUR-MENEZ, BRITTANY (FRANCE)
TEL/FAX: -33 (0)2 98 78 93 25

HARP OF THE CELTS 2000

PROGRAMM

***Tuesday 4: PIOBAIREACHD CONCERT for harp, voice and pipe** with **Ann Heymann** (worldly acclaimed performer, composer and authority on the wire strung Irish harp, based in the USA), **Violaine Mayor** (performer and teacher on the wire strung harp in Plounéour-ménez within the Hent Teenn Breizh association), **Eric Freyssi** (bagpipe teacher in Brittany, pupil of Andrew Wright, president of the Piobaireachd society), **Charlie Heymann** (traditional singer and musician involved in the research on the ancient clarsach), 8.30 pm, ABBAYE DU RELEC (100 F / 70 F).

***Wednesday 5: PIOBAIREACHD WORKSHOP.** Meeting with harpers and pipers joined by **Patrick Molard**, a Breton master of Piobaireachd. 6 pm SALLE POLYVALENTE (20 F).

***Thursday 6: OPEN PLATFORM, 8.30 pm, ABBAYE DU RELEC.** **FEST-NOZ** (Breton dance night) with traditional singers and musicians including harpers. From 9.30 on, LE RELEC (free).

***Friday 7: DISCOVERY DAY.** Kora (African harp) workshop with Sourakata Diabate dit Dialy (from Senegal). 10.30 am, SALLE POLYVALENTE (20 F).

***Saturday 1-Thursday 6: WIRE HARP CLASS.**

Ann Heymann: Gaelic music. **Violaine Mayor:** Breton music. SALLE POLYVALENTE. *This class is suitable for wire harpers, of course, but also for nylon and light gut strung harps, and for anyone interested in historical playing techniques and traditional music.*

Fee: 1250 F + 60 F subscription to Hent Teenn Breizh association (for non members) for tuition and evenings including concert and workshops, not including accommodation. 500 F deposit at registration.

Evenings: apart from the program above, we dance every night. Partners and families welcome!

Accommodation: Please ask for a list of guest houses if required. Free camping at the Relec Abbaye.

Meals: home made vegetarian and organic food (55 F/meal)

Place: Plounéour-Ménez is located in North-West Brittany, in the Monts d'Arrée, 10 miles south of Morlaix. The modern and comfortable building of the Salle Polyvalente is in the village, and the Relec Abbaye, heritage of the cistercian monks, is 5 kms from there, between the woods and the mountains.

INQUIRIES AND REGISTRATIONS:

HENT TELENN BREIZH, La voie de la harpe bretonne, BP 2,
29 410 PLOUNEOUR-MENEZ, BRITTANY (FRANCE)
TEL/FAX: -33 (0)2 98 78 93 25

NEW RECORDINGS FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Patrick Molard. Deliou. L'OZ Production L'OZ 29 (NV3541-1). 2000. (57'12)

The press release that came with this CD starts with the sentence "Patrick Molard is today considered to be one of the best interpreters of the Scottish bagpipes in Europe," (my translation). Well, I disagree with that statement. I think he should be considered one of the best pipers—of any kind—in Europe. Those who know Molard's work already know how skilled he is on Scottish Highland pipes, both in traditional styles as well as more innovative arrangements of new compositions (see the listing below for the CDs Piobaireachd, Theme for the Green Lands and Ar Baz Valan).

Patrick Molard has won a number of championships for his mastery of the biniou koz in its traditional pairing with the bombarde (see the CD Ar Sac'h Ler). His mastery of the Irish uilleann pipes has been evident in a number of recordings with other musicians (his work with the group Gwerz as the most glaring example). Yes, Patrick Molard is a master of a number of bagpipes and their traditions and there are certainly other pipers who have accomplished this. But, I can think of no one who can play Irish uilleann pipes and capture the soul of a Bulgarian epic ballad like Molard has done on this CD, and I haven't heard anyone play Scottish small pipes for both Galician and Bulgarian dances like him. Not only does Patrick Molard play a variety of bagpipes, but he understands their traditions and the very essence of each instrument.

Each selection on this CD has a different personality—enhanced greatly by the excellent musicians performing with Patrick Molard. "Porz Kloz" is a suite of *ton doubles* for the gavotte, and is performed in memory of Daniel l'Hermine, a bombarde player who played a big role in preserving the particular "mountain" style of gavotte music ("gavotte des montagnes"). Another great bombarde player of this style, Yves Berthou, plays in pair with Patrick Molard on biniou with fiddle and guitars provided by Patrick's brother Jacky, and percussion by another brother, Dominique. While Patrick and Jacky can be found together on a number of recordings, this is the first time all three have recorded together.

In the selection called "Kalinka" the Molard trio is joined by Bulgarian singer Kalinka Vulcheva for a suite of Bulgarian songs which closely resemble the Breton dance *an dro* in rhythm. This is followed by a Breton ballad from the Vannetais tradition to which Kalinka sets her own Bulgarian verses. Patrick Molard plays Scottish small pipes in this selection and the match with Kalinka's voice is lovely. The highlight of the CD for me is definitely

the title track, "Deliou." While "deliou" looks almost like a Breton word, it is the first name of the hero of the Bulgarian ballad sung here by Kalinka. The song tells of Deliou Haidoutin who raises a small army to free Bulgaria from the Turks. Kalinka Vulcheva is a master of Bulgarian song (soloist with choirs for Radio Sofia and the *Mystère des Voix Bulgares*) and she soars here in duet with Patrick Molard on uilleann pipes. At times Molard makes you think he is playing the Bulgarian gaida (a bagpipe he does in fact also play). You don't have to know any Bulgarian to be moved by the drama of this performance and the incredible synergy between these two great performers.

It is evident that Patrick Molard understands very well the emotion of Bulgarian song and dance but he also has a good feel for the piping of Galicia, Spain. "Ton Budiña" and "Ricardo Portela" are lighter in tone as one might expect for a traditional Galician wedding song and a composition by Molard which falls half-way between the Galician dance *muiñeira* and an Irish jig. Patrick Molard plays Scottish small pipes in duo here with Mick O'Brien on uilleann pipes, with Jacky Molard on a variety of strings and Dominique Molard on a variety of percussion. Small pipes and uilleann pipes are paired again in two lively Bulgarian dances ("Petko") taught to Molard and O'Brien by Petko Stefanov, a gaida player and maker from Sofia, Bulgaria. While one might wonder how Breton and Irish pipers could become so comfortable and adept in Galician and Bulgarian musics, the notes to the CD explain that for a dozen years, a multi-national group of solo pipers has been performing in Galicia and Spain. Besides Mick O'Brien (Ireland) and Patrick Molard (Brittany), this group has included Petko Stefanov (Bulgaria), Rory Campbell (Scotland), Carlos Lorenzo (Galicia) and Guti (Asturias).

There is one more musician to mention on this CD who brings yet another flavor to some of the selections with his mastery of electric and acoustic guitar. Jacques Pellen is no stranger to those who have followed the Breton music scene and he has often played with both Patrick and Jacky Molard. Here he can be heard in duet (and solo) in the selection "Bloavezh Mad," a *piobaireachd* composed by Breton piper Perig Herbert. Patrick Molard introduces this lovely melody by singing it in *canntaireachd*—syllables used in earlier times to teach Scottish Highland pipers. He then takes over on the Highland pipes in duo with a variety of guitars. Patrick Molard is a master of Scottish *piobaireachd*—a style of piping in which a simple theme is played with more and more complex variations added. While in "Bloavezh Mad" he plays only the theme without all the variations, this CD includes a second fully developed

piobaireachd called "Flame of Wrath for Squinting Patrick." This piece was composed by Donald Mor MacCrimmon (1570-1640) whose brother, "Squinting Patrick" was killed in an argument. Donald Mor pursued the murderer and in order to get revenge burned down 18 houses, killing many inhabitants in the village of Kintail as well as the murderer. The violence and anger of the story are well captured in the raging electric guitar accompaniment to Patrick Molard's fine performance.

The notes to the CD give lovely little stories in describing each piece and how they were composed and how Patrick Molard came to learn them. Notes are in both French and English and include reference to each musician/singer involved in a particular selection and the instruments played.

This is a CD with many moods and a great deal of passion in the performances. I think that in listening to this CD many of you will agree with me that Patrick Molard is one of the greatest—if not *the* greatest—bagpiper around today, not only in Europe, but in the world. I would love to hear anyone who can top his mastery of such a variety of bagpipes and musical traditions.

A few recordings for more:

Patrick Molard. Ar Baz Valan. Keltia Musique KMCD 87 (1983; reissued on CD 1998).

Patrick Molard. Piobaireachd. Gwerz Pladenn GWP 003. 1993.

Patrick Molard. Biniou Braz. Production Cinq Planètes 022972. 1998.

Pierre Crepillon, Laurent Bigot & Patrick Molard. Ar Sac'h Ler. Coop Breizh CD 453 (1988; reissued 1998)

Dan ar Braz and Patrick Molard. Theme for the Green Lands. Keltia Musique KMCD 48. 1994.

Jacky Molard, Patrick Moard & Jacques Pellen. Triptyque. Gwerz Pladenn GWP 002. 1993.

Gwerz Live. Gwerz Pladenn GWP 001. 1993 (reissued in 2000 by Coop Breizh)

Bagad—Championnat de Bretagne des Bagadoù / Kampionad Breizh ar Bagadoù, Vol. 3 – Epreuve de Lorient Coop Breizh/BAS. CD 898. 2000. 2 CDs (75'39 & 53'13).

I was first attracted to Brittany by its bagpipes—the astonishing little biniou and its pairing with the powerful bombarde as well as the wonderful combination of bombardes and Scottish style bagpipes in the bagad. Coming from participation in small U.S. Scottish bagpipe bands with a very standard and rigid repertoire, the music of the bagad was truly mind-boggling back in the early 1970s when I first discovered Brittany.

And the music that these Breton bagpipe bands produce is still mind-boggling to me today. There is no better way to get a sense of the creativity and quality of the bagad in Brittany than on this new CD which includes live performances from the 1999 championship for bagadoù held in Lorient (the second of two competitions used to determine the championship). This includes ten of the eleven top bagadoù in the first division as well as the winner of the second division (there are six "divisions" in all).

The bagad dates back only to the late 1940s and its invention is credited to Hervé le Menn, Dorig le Voyer and Polig Monjarret. Its development has been fostered by the Bodadeg ar Sonerion which was founded in 1942. Today the BAS has some 5,000 members and there are over 100 bagadoù active in Brittany and in Breton emigrant communities outside of Brittany. Each bagad has some 30 pipers, bombarde players and drummers, and these days the pairing of biniou and bombarde is often included in performances. Percussion has ranged far beyond just snare/tenor/bass drums, and when they perform for competitions or in concerts, a bagad will often include a variety of instruments ranging from clarinets to electric bass guitar or even singers. Often a bagad will have a "junior" version for younger learners. It is certain that the bagad has been the place where many fine Breton musicians first get their training before launching a musical career.

The contest performances on this CD are 10-15 minute suites of beautiful melodies and engaging dance tunes—traditional or newly composed with all combinations of bombarde/bagpipe/biniou and percussion imaginable. While recording such performances live offers a challenge, the balance and sound quality is on the whole excellent, and there is truly that sense of excitement you expect to find in live performance ... and in a hotly contested competition.

The bagadoù on the CD are put in order of their contest standing from first place on down: Bagad Roñsed Mor (1), Kerlenn Pondi (2), Bagad Kemper (3), Bagad Cap Caval (4), Bagad Bro Kemperle (5), Bagad Sonerien an Oriant (6), Bagad Sant Nazer (9), Bagad Meilhoù Glaz (8), Bagad Er Melinerion (11), and Bagad Quic-en-Groigne (10).. The winner of the second division, Bagad Beuzeg ar C'hab, concludes the recording. The first division 7th place winner, Bagad Brieg is not on the CD. One might have thought it might be more exciting to arrange the CD so you build up to the winner as the final climax, but while there is noticeable difference in style and quality between the first and last, there is no feeling of let down when you finish listening to the two CDs. And with over two hours of music here, one is most likely to enjoy these CDs in several sittings.

Notes to the CD include a brief but good introduction to the bagad, BAS, and competitions. Each performance gives a listing of the tunes within the longer suite and

their source and arrangers. Also included is a very short introduction to each bagad with an indication of where it is from geographically and a sometimes not terribly informative description of the bagad's "sound."

If you like Breton music, bagpipes and bombardes, you will most definitely enjoy all two hours of these competition performances.

Bagad Brieg. Gogo Droc'h. Coop Breizh. CD 899. 2000. 58'33.

This recording features the one first division bagad that was not on the championship recording reviewed above—the Bagad Brieg who placed 7th in the 1999 competition. And on this recording you will hear the suite of tunes they played at the 99 Lorient competition as well as a suite of tunes the bagad played for the 1998 championship. But half of the 21 selections on this CD are "other" pieces – including nice arrangements of a traditional melody, and a suite for *dans plinn* and *gavotte bigoudenn*.

While competition performances and arrangements of traditional tunes are pretty innovative and exciting, there are some limits, and when a bagad records a CD they can add a whole new dimension not easily done in competition. It is in some of the compositions that you see how far the Breton bagadoù can 'push the envelope.' The selection called "Maille flowers ar bio ty foule" opens with the sound of a strumming guitar, adding screaming electric bass guitars, a heavy drum beat, as well as jazzy brass to the bagad. The piece "Géranium enneigé" is also highly electric with the bagpipes paired with electric guitars. The composition called "La bourée du Val d'Amour" starts with a duo of bagpipes from south central France—appropriate for the dance *bourée* which comes from that part of France. The full bagad then joins in for a pretty interesting four-minute arrangement.

CD notes include a short introduction to the bagad in French/Breton English—although the only really interesting thing one learns from this is that the bagad was founded in 1978. A list is given of all the selections and members of the bagad are listed (including nicknames). Guests for the recording—a number of bombarde players, the brass and guitars—are also noted. A large color photo of the bagad is supplemented by a dozen smaller and less formal snapshots of the musicians and work and play.

I would have to say that this CD is a good example of the complex and exciting repertoire of the Breton bagad. This would be a great gift to surprise any pipers you may know who can't imagine anything beyond the march/strathspey/reel repertoire of their local pipe band. I was once like that.

Serge Riou and Hervé Irvoas. Gant a vombard hag ar biniou. Coop Breizh CD 902. 2000. (52'36)

I liked this CD as soon as I heard the title and opening track "With a bombarde sand a biniou" which is just a part of a longer suite of tunes from this duo's performance at the 1997 competition for the "Matelin an Dall Trophy." This is a wonderful series of slow marches where the pair shows off a more subtle interplay of these two instruments that should be played as if they are just one. There are other marches and slower melodies on this recording which are equally lovely, but Riou and Irvoas can also get your feet moving with the dances they interpret. Included are a fiery *Gavotte de l'Aven* and a suite for the *Gavotte des Montagnes*.

The live recordings include a bit more percussion than one might like—the foot beats of the pipers themselves seem a bit over amplified at times—but, all in all, the quality of sound is good and live recordings always include a certain spirit harder to capture in studio recordings. There is a certain raw edge that is very refreshing in the live performances. Besides the thumping of the pipers' feet, you sometimes also get the thud of the dancers' feet as well as the overall "din" of the room which will evoke some nice memories for those who have taken part in Breton festivals and festoù-noz.

For me it is the slower melodies and marches which stand out on this CD in showing the ability of these pipers to master the finer points of paired playing. It is easy to impress with a snappy dance tune, but to master melodies which come from the oral song tradition of Brittany requires lots of experience and a real understanding of this tradition. Like many Breton *sonerien* Riou and Irvoas fully appreciate the very subtle "swing" of traditional song where there is no steady regular beat. This is fully evident in their 12 ½ minute salute to the famous Goadec Sisters. This suite shows how perfectly attuned these pipers are to the oral tradition, yet, how comfortable they are in rearranging this music in a new way. It is always enjoyable to hear familiar melodies and dance tunes interpreted in new ways—and in this case with lots of style.

While the pairing of bombarde and biniou is featured on this CD, it closes with a *gwerz* and *gavotte* suite which include few invited guests. In "Gwerz Marc'harit Charlez" you hear the lovely voice of Maire Aline Lagadic. The pretty melody is deceptive (as in many a Breton ballad) since this is the tale of a woman robber in the Carhaix region who is reputed to have drunk a quart of blood a day! The closing gavotte to the CD starts out innocently enough with just Riou and Irvoas, but transforms into a "boeur" (spontaneous mix of musicians) which is often found at the close of Breton dances—adding accordion, saxophone, percussion and piano in this case to the mix of bombarde and biniou.

I was tired when I put this CD on to play and thought that I would probably just listen to part of it, go to bed, and write a review later. But, it was hard to turn off the CD player, and so you have it—my unabashed love for this CD on first listen. If you like the seductive power of the bombarde and binou, you will truly appreciate this new recording by Serve Riou and Hervé Ivoas.

Skolvan. Cheñchet'n eus an amzer. Keltia Musique KMCD 107. 2000. (64'39)

The group Skolvan dates from 1984 and in their sixteen years they have retained a certain distinctive sound. But they certainly know how to change and experiment with new sounds. "Cheñchet'n eus an amzer"—Breton for "times are changing"—certainly demonstrates this.

This band is made up of five great musicians, and the combination of instruments is truly wonderful and rich. From the original 1984 band just Youenn Le Bihan and Gilles Le Bigot remain. Youenn Le Bihan is a master of the bombarde and the softer pitched "piston" which he invented and uses primarily with Skolvan. Gilles Le Bigot is a great guitar player and composed a number of tunes on this CD. But, other members of the band also have a number of compositions included, and all seem to have played part in the innovative arrangements of traditional tunes.

Bernard Le Dréau is often found paired with Youenn Le Bihan, and his saxophone in response to the piston works beautifully. It is clear that he is perfectly at ease with traditional response style of song and instrumental music for Breton dances, but he also shows off the jazzier sounds most often associated with saxophones. Loïg Troel plays diatonic accordion and one sometimes loses him in the mix since the accordion blends so closely in sound with the sax and piston. Last but not least, you have Dominique Molard who seems to play every type of drum possible. This definitely has an impact in defining a tone, whether it be a near eastern or Indian sound, or a more Latin beat—as I enjoyed in the arrangement of scottisches "Tournemine et Gasdebois".

The many dances on the CD are drawn from the traditions of both eastern and western Brittany, including *gavottes*, *rond de Saint Vincent*, *hanter dro*, *laridé*, *an dro*, *plinn* and *scottisches*. There is an irresistible swing to the dances and the tempo is perfect for dancing—no rushing or false energy created by excessive speed.

But the slower melodies are also outstanding, as in the title track "Cheñchet'n eus an amzer"—a traditional Vannetais song drawn from the repertoire of the Kanerion Pleuigner. This is drawn out languorously with a lovely interplay of piston and alto saxophone.

While not dominant, there is an interesting theme that comes in and out during the course of the CD play—the composition "Pedenn" ("Prayer") by Gilles Le Bigot. This is first introduced very briefly by pianist Didier Squiban. It reappears later as Gilles Le Bigot accompanies Yann Fañch Kemener who sings a beautiful song in Breton he wrote in memory of his mother who died in 1991. Gradually added to the guitar and voice is piano and eventually the low beat of bass fiddle and a plaintive call of saxophone. The melody returns again with a lovely arrangement for bass fiddle and piano by guest artists Gildas Basclé and Didier Squiban which is followed by another instrumental arrangement featuring the piston and saxophone in duo.

While the five members of Skolvan offer a great deal of variety in their use of instruments, the addition of guest musicians like Yann Fañch Kemener (who is no stranger to the group) and Didier Squiban and Gildas Basclé add yet new elements. And, the addition of brass to several selections definitely adds some punch to the dances.

One of the jazzier selections on the CD is an arrangement of the very familiar Rogers and Hammerstein show tune "My Favorite Things." But these guys didn't learn it by listening to Julie Andrews in the movie "The Sound of Music." It comes instead by way of jazz saxophonist John Coltrane, and Skolvan has transformed it into a quick paced waltz. Those who have heard the Julie Andrews version one-too-many times will enjoy this refreshing arrangement.

The CD notes are trilingual in Breton, French and English, and each tune is described nicely to give an idea of where it fits into the Breton tradition or how the composition of it was inspired. The text of Yann Fañch Kemener's song is included in Breton with a full French and English translation.

I really like the style of Skolvan. They play with a certain freeness in both their dances and lovely slower compositions, and their performance are always creative and fresh.

Karma. Nozata. Coop Breizh. CD 900. 2000. (43'40)

Karma is a relatively new band, launched in the fall of 1996. But its name has appeared more and more often in festival line-ups and at festoù noz. I first heard a 2-selection sample of this new CD and my initial reaction in a nutshell was: "great band of young musicians who play a little too fast for my taste, but bravo for the strong role for paired bombarde and binou."

But, in listening to the full CD I have a somewhat fuller idea of the band, and while the tempos seemed a bit rushed for the "Rond de Saint-Vincent" and "Ridées 6 temps" included on the sample CD, these guys hit a very

nice stride on the gavotte suite on the full CD—and this is not surprising since this is a dance closer to their home turf in central western Brittany. On this CD they show that they can master not only the snappiest of dances—shown with the three part suite of the “Rond de Loudéac”—but that they have developed a bit of finesse when it comes to slow airs and marches. Karma has the energy one would expect from a younger band, but also the maturity to do a lovely job with slower airs. The rhythm and arrangements of instruments on this CD are complex, and I really liked the contrast of the more steady beat provided by strings and percussion with the more freewheeling style of paired bombarde and binou. In the “Mélodie Gavotte/Ton A-Boz Gavotenn.”

As I noted in hearing just the sample CD, this band gives a central place to the paired bombarde and binou, played by Mikael Le Bihannic and Etienne Bescond. But other instruments are given a strong role and combined in interesting ways with the *sonerien*. Jean-Louis Cadoret plays guitar, Yann Le Corre is on chromatic (piano) accordion, Jonathan Dour plays fiddle, and Kaou Guen provides percussions. There are a few guest artists to add a bit more texture: Stéphane Rama with bass guitar on four selections, Ronan Pellen with cello on the very familiar but jazzy arrangement of the song “Eliz Isa”, and Jacky Molard with guitar on the arrangement of slower gavotte melodies.

Notes to the CD list each of the twelve pieces and their arrangers/composers. While the first eleven pieces were recorded in a studio, the closing selection is a “Circle circassien” recorded live at a fest noz. This dance—imported from Ireland—has become almost a classic at the fest noz in Brittany, and it is lots of fun to dance with its high energy and changing partners. You have to wait a while after the official final selection of the CD ends, but this “bonus track” is worth the wait. It has a strong middle eastern flavor in the choice of percussion which works well with the particular melody played by the bombarde and binou. The dancers are clearly having fun, with lots of shouting and clapping audible.

I like the CD packaging—glossy cardboard with a minimum of plastic. While the color is a dark reddish-orange with bright yellow print, the text of the notes is easy to read. I always read everything on a CD jacket including the information about where and when the recording took place and the acknowledgements. In this case the list of “thank yous” includes the usual range of musical colleagues, but also “our parents,” the “Mayor of Carhaix-Plouguer,” “Morgane and her cat,” “the Diwan schools,” as well as “all the dancers and event organizers who have supported the band.”

While the sample CD with just two selections (what I felt were the weakest ones at that!) would not have led me to highly recommend this CD, the full twelve tracks give a much different picture. This is a wonderful “fest noz band” well worth hearing.

Gwazigan. Y'avait du monde. Coop Breizh. 2000. (53'24)

Gwazigan is a group of five musicians from Brittany, Quebec and Madagascar. The repertoire is from Quebec—reels and dance tunes as well as jazzy songs in French which have been newly composed or pulled from the tradition of French Canada. All five performers bring a great deal of experience and virtuosity to the twelve performances on this CD.

Bernard Simard (from Quebec) brings a wonderful voice which is heard in jazzier sections such as “Cavale” and “Contumace” as well as a more “Folksy” style in the song “Labrador.” But his roots in the Quebec tradition are clear in the way he handles more traditional songs such as “Madeleine.” As in Brittany, French Canadian tradition includes songs for dance, and these test a singer's ability to keep the words flowing. A nice example on this CD is found in the reel “La belle écossaise.” The band members from Brittany are Loic Blejean who plays uilleann pipers and low whistle, Sylvain Barou on flutes, and Dominique Trichet on fiddle and banjo. All three have played in a number of groups arranging both Breton and Irish traditional tunes. Dina Rakotomonga originally comes from Madagascar, but has traveled widely with his bass guitar, playing with a number of musical groups.

When I first listened to a four-tune sampler of this new release by Gwazigan, I wasn't particularly impressed. The sample CD opened with two reels. I know it is fashionable these days on the Irish music scene at least to see who can be the fastest in the world to play a reel, but I found the high speed of the “Mutt's Favorite” and “Flapper's reel” to be distracting and counter to any enjoyment of these wonderful tunes. All the swing seemed to be blurred. While “L'Obstination” and “Le step à ti-phonse” seemed slightly less rushed, there was something ponderous in their performance for me. Perhaps it was the more relentless percussion used to provide a beat—both feet tapping and guitars. However, it became quite clear in listening to the full CD that there are “reels” and there are other “reels” which flowed at a more relaxed and enjoyable pace for me. In hearing all twelve selections of the CD it was evident that this group had a great deal of versatility in their arrangements of traditional dance tunes and performance of newer song compositions.

Notes to the CD give a little introduction to the selections—where they came from especially. As in Brittany, the name of a tune seems much less important than who it was learned from and what particular region it comes from. For the songs, the full text is included, and this is nice since the songs on this CD definitely tell some tales.

Those who are already familiar with the musical traditions of Quebec will enjoy Gwazigan's interesting and varied interpretations, and anyone who likes a good singer will appreciate the strong voice of Bernard Simard.

Jean-Michel Mansano. La Clef. Man Ltd. MAN 001. 1999. (18')

I can't say that I've ever liked the heavy sound of big organs, whether used for church ceremonies or for massive and grand classical compositions. But then, appreciating anything is a matter of learning to hear what's there beyond one's first impressions. And, as with any instrument, the music is only as interesting as the composer and performers make it.

Here's a very enjoyable and interesting little CD (just 4 selections for 18 minutes) to help people like me better appreciate the versatility of the organ. Organist Jean-Michel Mansano brings the organ of the St- Héliér church in Rennes to life in a wonderful composition called "The Key." While the jacket to the CD does not give the story behind the composition, accompanying notes did. As you listen to the four selections—"The Key," "Marionette without Strings," "Boat in a Bottle," and "The Doll"—you can indeed visualize a young man who finds a key in the street which leads him to his childhood home where he explores the contents of an old trunk in the attic.

The organ is at the center of the composition, but what makes the music really interesting is the presence also of bombarde (by Jossik Allot), cello (Anne-Sophie Ratajczak) and keyboard (Mansano). The end result is a very richly textured sound, ranging from joyous carousel-like themes to more ethereal and sometimes spooky melodies—all very much in the mood of the story where a man is mysteriously reunited with toys of his childhood.

Jean-Michel Mansano is conservatory trained but has composed music for films and won competitions for improvisation in a number of concerts and at festivals such as Kan al Loar, and the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival. He teaches organ at the Conservatoire National de Rennes and is organist at the St. Héliér church where he plays the 1,900-pipe organ featured on this CD. While Jossik Allot is the bombarde player on this CD, Mansano has frequently played in pair with Jean Baron and they won the bombarde-organ competition twice at the Tombées de la Nuit Festival in Rennes. That is no small accomplishment.

This is a lovely little CD with lots of color and imagination.

Jean Baron, Christian Anneix, Jean-Michel Mansano. Kerjadenn. (Concert of Sacred and Secular Music of Brittany—Bombarde-Biniou koz-Organ). Keltia Musique KMCD 108. 2000 (72'10)

Like the bagad, the pairing of bombarde and big church organ is a new "tradition" in Brittany. It was only in the 1960s and 70s that bombarde players started this unique combination that works so beautifully for both the religious cantiques and dances and melodies from the

secular repertoire. Today this pairing continues to be popular and an annual contest at the festival Tombées de la Nuit encourages creativity and further development of this music.

While the pairing of bombarde and organ now has four decades of experimentation and growth, the trio of bombarde, biniou and organ is much newer, initiated first by Jossik Allot and Michel Dubois in 1999. On this CD you find two of the most experienced "sonneurs" of Brittany, Jean Baron on bombarde and Christian Anneix on biniou koz, who combine with a great organist, Jean-Michel Mansano. Baron and Anneix have been playing in pair for some thirty years and have produced a number of fine recordings. As the review above notes, Mansano has a distinguished career as an organist and has done some very interesting composition work. Two selections on this CD show that off well. "Entre Chien et Loup" is an organ solo—a dissonant piece that captures the moment when night overtakes the long twilight hours at the end of days in June. I also liked Mansano's other composition "Appel des Bergers/Bateau dans la Bouteille" where the organ really shows off in its alternation of pairing with bombarde and/or biniou.

The CD includes sixteen selections, and although the CD cover gives a subtitle of "Concert of Sacred and Secular Music of Brittany," there are just two arrangements of cantiques. The secular clearly wins out with marches, dances and songs from the Vannetais and Gallo traditions where Baron and Anneix draw most of their repertoire. And this is certainly a rich source.

There is considerable variety in the way the trio works—sometimes playing in trio, sometimes with the biniou or bombarde alternating in pair with the organ. There are four selections where Jean Baron puts down the bombarde and sings a song. I can't say this was always a success for me. It felt like the voice, biniou and organ were on three independent tracks rather than playing with each other. I have to admit that I need a bit more time to adjust to the sound of this trio. The paired biniou and bombarde seemed to dominate sometimes, with the organ used as just a big drone—albeit one which provided a great deal of rich texture and rhythm. At times it seemed as if the *sonneurs* were a bit disconnected from the organ and I felt no real strong link between the instruments. In the "Scottisches pur malt" the heavy chords of the organ seemed to drag behind in tempo at times, while at other times lighter tones were in perfect sync with the biniou and bombarde.

Some tunes worked better than others for me. I liked the rich sound of biniou, bombarde and organ in trio, and the bombarde in pair with organ seemed a very natural fit where the two musicians were creatively responding to each other. Baron's work on the bombarde is wonderful. "L'Allouette," a composition by Paul Ladmirault, shows off in particular his brilliant bombarde work. It is taking me some time to get used to the biniou by itself in pair with

the organ. It seemed to my ears that the organ sometimes emphasized a shrillness in the biniou. (While others consider the biniou to *always* be shrill; I don't usually perceive it that way). That disappeared when the bombarde joined in. Well, I don't have the best CD player in the world, and I am sure the balances would be quite different in a live performance. And no doubt the organ could be heard better not as a mere accompaniment to the biniou and/or bombarde, but as a truer partner in the music.

The notes to the CD are excellent, including an introduction to the history of the pairing of bombarde and organ as well as good biographical information about each performer in both Breton and French. There are two versions to the notes to the selections on the CD. One is bilingual Breton/French, and the other in English if you flip the notes over and start from the opposite cover. Notes to each selection give a brief but good description of its source. In the Breton/French version you also get the words to the four songs (in French).

This is certainly an innovative trio where old instruments are used in creative and interesting new ways.

Morgan. Born of the Sea—Celtic Ballads. Morgane Touze & Thierry Le Nedic TeleN 0698. Distr. Coop Breizh. 1998. (60'38)

Morgan is a singer and harpist from the Bigouden country of Brittany who has explored the Scottish and Irish song traditions as well as American ballads rooted in those traditions. Most of the songs on this CD are, in fact, in the English language—classics that those of us who lived through the folk revivals of the 1960s will recognize. Indeed, some of the songs brought back fond memories of the late 60s when I helped run a coffeehouse called "The Inverse Function" with a handful of other high school students. Mercifully I never sang, but helped with the tasks of making coffee, decorating the place, and making sure we had enough volunteer staff to run the place. The songs on this CD such as "The Trees They Grow High," "The Silky," "She Moved Through the Fair," and "Farewell Angelina" were certainly standards I heard frequently on the little stage of my coffeehouse.

Other ballads on this CD are certainly also well known: "The Banks of Claudy" and the "Silver Dagger" (from Ireland), "Henry Martin" from Scotland, and "Wagoner's Lad" from America. Morgan first traveled to Ireland to study English, and she has certainly mastered this language well judging from her singing here. She is enough at ease in English to have composed a song in it found on this CD—"The Earth Song." While in Ireland she must have paid some attention as well to the Irish language tradition since she also sings one selection here in Irish—"An Crann Ubbhall." Although the English language ballads chosen for this CD all have powerful

and classic stories to tell of love, betrayal, and death, one of the most intriguing texts is in the Breton language song, "Mamm Gozh," which Morgan composed herself. This tells the sad tale of a woman forced to leave home and Brittany to emigrate to Paris—and one is not quite sure why—where she dies in poverty and bitterness. The closing piece to the CD is also in Breton and is certainly much gentler in tone—the lullaby "Toutouig." There is one song in French—a composition by Breton singer Serge Kerguiduff called "Sedition."

I have to say that I found Morgan's voice to be very pretty, but it was also "thin" and a little piercing in its highness for me. But the use of the harp was nicely varied and interesting in its accompaniment. The introduction to a song by the use of natural sounds of the environment was also creative, catching your attention and curiosity. Sounds included everything from crashing waves and rain, to traffic, birds, and voices such as the great aunt reminiscing about her family and men gathered to tell tall tales. All these worked to set moods and provoke your imagination.

Notes to the CD give only the text for the Breton composition "Mamm Gozh" in Breton, French and English. I found that the highness of Morgan's voice made it difficult for me to sometimes hear all the words of the texts unless I concentrated very carefully, so a few other texts might have been welcome. Surely some Breton listeners might have enjoyed being able to follow along with the English texts to the songs.

This is a pleasant collection of classic ballads arranged in some new ways that may bring back some coffeehouse memories of the 60s for those of you of my generation!

HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD

Notes below are drawn from reviews found in Musique Bretonne no. 159 (mars-avril 2000).

Michel Aumont. Clarinettes armorigènes. An.Naer Produktion.

Aumont is currently with the group BF 15 and has played with Quintet de Clarinettes and L'Echo des Luths. Different kinds of clarinets are heard here in music that may not "sound" Breton but is definitely interesting.

L'hiver des oiseaux ... Adsa.

This CD includes a number of top Breton artists and several bagadoù (Stivell, Didier Squiban, EV, Tri Yann, Soldat Louis ...) contributing their talent to benefit the rescue efforts for birds covered with oil from the wreck of the Erika. Proceeds from CD sales go to the Ligue de Protection des Oiseaux and to Bretagne Vivante SEPNEB.

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