

BRO NEVEZ

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

Championnat des bagadoù 2001 ordre de passage

Première Catégorie		Deuxième Catégorie		Troisième Catégorie		Quatrième Catégorie	
BREST 4/02	LORIENT 5/08	VANNES 1/04	LORIENT 5/08	ST-BRIEUC 25/03	LORIENT 5/08	PONTIVY 6/05	LORIENT 5/08
LOCOAL-MENDON	1 1	VIRE SAINT-LO	1 1	PLABENNEC	1 1	SAINT-POL-DE-LEON	1 10
CAP-CAVAL	2 8	PLOUGASTEL	2 9	PERROS-GUIREC	2 6	BAGADIG LORIENT	2 4
BRIEC	3 7	VERM-sur-SEICHE	3 13	GLAZICK QUIMPER	3 10	BAGADIG SAINT-NAZAIRE	3 11
PONTIVY	4 3	LANDERNEAU	4 2	PAIMPOL			4 5
QUIMPER	5 2	CONCARNEAU	5 8	BAGAD LOCOAL			
AURAY	6 5	CAMORS	6 7				
LORIENT	7 10	KERIZ	7 10				
SAINT-NAZAIRE	8 9	CESSON-SEVIGNE	8 11				
QUIMPERLE	9 11	BEUZEC	9 4				
MOULIN VERT	10 6	POMMERIT-LE VICOMTE	10 5				
SAINT-MALO	11 12	GUINGAMP	11				
VANNES	12 4	PENHARS	12				
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KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, 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.

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.

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



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I do enjoy your newsletter. I particularly enjoyed the pieces on St. Yves and the relationship of the Breton vocabulary to other Celtic tongues. I myself have, over the years, discovered many words in the Irish language that are similar to words in the German language.

Also, as a lover of poetry I very much appreciated the "Flanders Field" translation. It is quite beautiful, and I'm sure that in the original it is even more so.

All of us realize that postal rates are, like gasoline rates, going nowhere but up. I am wondering whether the readers of Bro Nevez could spare an extra dollar an issue to help cover the costs of mailing and photostating. This would amount to something like thirty-three cents a month, an amount I think most could spare for a good cause. (Of course if readers cared to contribute anything above that amount, I'm sure it would help.)

As encouragement, I will be sending my contribution in gratitude for the editor's hard work in this cause.

Sincerely, Javan Kienzle

... FROM THE EDITOR

Contributions of money are always welcome as a relief to our very tight budget, but as noted in the last issue I would really welcome contributions from more people to Bro Nevez. How about sending a short note about a good tourist guide to Brittany, a recipe, CD review, a profile of a famous Breton, or a note on some aspect of Breton history. Or how about a description of a great web site you found about Brittany on the internet—a web site review like we do for books and CDs! Aim for November!

SOME NOTES ON ACTION FOR THE BRETON LANGUAGE

(summarized by Lois Kuter from notes and news clippings in Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg, Niv. 42, gouere 2001)

DAO – Deskiñ d'An Oadourien (Teach Adults)

An estimated 10,000 adults in Brittany are studying Breton through evening classes, weekend/week-long workshops, and correspondence classes. In order to insure a high quality for classes and support for the expansion of classes available for adults outside of the university, some 25 organizations and cultural federations of Brittany met in June to form a new overarching structure called DAO. This will work on the development of professional standards for teachers, better and more consistent evaluation of learning levels for adults students, and collaboration to improve and develop teaching materials and methods.

An "administrative council" for DAO will include representatives from the larger and longer established organizations, including Mervent, Stumdi, Roudour, Skol Ober, Skol an Hanternoz, Amzer Nevez, Kentelioù an Noz, KEAV, Skol an Emsav and Al Levrig. Large or small, all organizations offering adult classes should benefit from this new collaboration.

A NEW SURVEY ON THE BRETON LANGUAGE

A new survey on the Breton language taken by TMO-Régions/Le Trégor reveals a strongly favorable attitude in the Tregor area of Brittany towards the Breton language. With lightly different wordings to questions than used in TMO surveys of Lower Brittany in 1990 and 1997, however, the survey shows that readiness to personally support the Breton language might not be as high as favorable feelings more generally expressed in the two earlier surveys.

In the TMO survey of 1990, 76% of those surveyed responded positively to the question "Do you think Breton should be conserved?", with about 11.5% responding negatively. In the survey taken in 1997, 88% responded favorably to the conservation of Breton with just 5% saying it should not be conserved. In 1990 only 42% of those surveyed felt that Breton could be saved, while in 1997 this jumped to 72%.

In the 2001 survey of people in Tregor the question on attitudes towards Breton were phrased differently: "For you, personally, the promotion of Breton is: completely a priority, important, without real importance, something which should not be done." Only 4% of those surveyed felt that Breton should not be promoted, showing a very low level of hostility. However, those indifferent to Breton, responding that its promotion was not really important to them, was 33%. Those placing the promotion of Breton as a high personal priority were 7%, with 55% felling its

promotion was important—totally 62% on the pro side. This is not up to the 88% in the 1997 survey, but perhaps a more realistic measure to people's personal engagement.

Those least favorable or indifferent to Breton were the 15-19 year olds and people over 75 where only 48% felt that its promotion was personally important or a high priority. This represents youth who are least likely to speak Breton and the elderly who are most likely to be native speakers.

In other questions people were asked about their ability to speak and understand the Breton language. Here are the results of those questions:

	Very well	well enough	a few words	not at all
Do you understand Breton?	27.5%	15%	25.3%	32.3%
Do you speak Breton?	20%	12%	31%	37%

While this recent survey as well as the past ones taken in 1990 and 1997 show strong support for the Breton language and a definite shift away for the hostility one found just several decades ago, there is certainly work still to be done to insure that Breton is conserved for future generations. But without the positive attitudes such work would certainly be futile.

See Bro Nevez No. 39, August 1991 and No. 62, May 1997, for the results of the 1990 and 1997 TMO surveys.

STREET SIGNS IN THE BRETON LANGUAGE

While it is impossible to say exactly what percentage of public road signs in Brittany are in the Breton language (or bilingual French/Breton), one can affirm that this is an area of certain growth as towns replacing old signs opt to put up new bilingual ones—minimally at the entrance and exits of the town, if not for directional signs elsewhere. In Finistère and Côtes d'Armor bilingual signs have gone up on departmental roads if not yet on national routes.

Newspaper clippings indicate that a number of towns and cities through Brittany—including Loire-Atlantique—have plans for bilingual signs for businesses as well as streets, although it still seems to take some petitioning to get things done. Some examples of new projects include the town of Carhaix (Karaez) where 83 bilingual signs were put up in March in 43 different street locations. Rennes has recently put up 130 street name plaques where

Breton has equal status to French in size—a continuing projects supported by the Ofis ar Brezhoneg.

Reestablishing Breton for places where Breton names have been massacred in being forced into a French mould can be challenging, and before road signs are printed, it often takes a great deal of study to determine the correct spelling—both to insure some degree of standardization in using Breton, but also to respect local uses of the Breton language and particular spellings still in popular use by local populations. A number of Bretons have been doing detailed studies of place names, and a particularly interesting article can be found in the May 2001 issue of *Ar Men* (no. 121) describing the work of Ofis ar Brezhoneg to work with local organizations to study Breton place names as well as to promote a more public presence for them. (I will be happy to photocopy this article for anyone interested).

While one might lament that Breton still does not have the strong public presence it should have, consider that it was only in the mid 1970s that Bretons began to really mobilize demands for bilingual signs. And during the 1980s it took a great deal of effort to force some change—Skol an Emsav took a leading role in creating letter “stickers” which were used to transform French-only road signs, and Stourm ar Brezhoneg militants were jailed for their action to tar French-only road signs when debate and lawful demonstrations seemed to have no impact. So it has really only been in the last decade that local government officials have begun to really take action—often very costly—to insure a public presence for Breton.

YA D'AR BREZHONEG (Yes to Breton)

In October 2000 the Ofis ar Brezhoneg launched a campaign to engage Breton leaders in a variety of fields to develop plans for the increased public place of Breton in all aspects of their operations. Heads of business and industry, banks, the health industry, sports enterprises, as well as the media, cultural and educational organizations, have been invited to sign an accord called “Ya d'ar Brezhoneg” (Yes to Breton) to get engaged in examining the presence of Breton in their respective areas and to put a plan into place to give Breton a larger presence. This could be in helping employees take classes, in putting up Breton signage, or in more general ways to create a welcoming atmosphere for the use of Breton in all levels of activity.

Ofis ar Brezhoneg will serve as a consultant to assist in the development of action plans as well as a catalyst to encourage and monitor progress. In October 2001 those signing the accord will gather to begin work to examine needs, develop a plan and time line to accomplish it, and determine necessary follow up for the long run. This is not an overnight program, but an interesting and important effort to involve all levels of Breton society (beyond schools, cultural organizations and media) in action to promote the use of the Breton language.

WORK AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL FOR LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The following resolution is one example of ongoing and complex work at the European level to gain more protection for minority languages and cultures.

RESOLUTION 2001-01

The Assembly of Delegates of the Federal Union of European Nationalities in Heerenveen/Netherlands on 24 May 2001 addresses the following resolution to the Council of Europe.

Since its foundation, the Assembly of Delegates of FUEN has been campaigning for the expansion of the Declaration of Minority Rights by concrete and enforceable minority rights. The Assembly of Delegates of the FUEN is convinced that effective protection and promotion of individual and collective rights of people to belong to national minorities represents the only opportunity of reducing ethnic tension and guaranteeing democratic cohesion and pluralism. These rights do not exist as yet.

Two instruments have been created in their place, the European Charter of Regional and Minority Languages [signed but not ratified by France] and the Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Both instruments have lead to positive effect and, in some states, to an improvement in the situation of national minorities. Both of these instruments allow the individual states great room for interpretation and implementation with exceptions and reservations. Particularly in countries where this type of tension is a common occurrence, or in states which deprive national minorities of their existence, the situation is not satisfactory. In addition, the steps taken until now to effectively improve the situation of national minorities have come up against limiting factors: For example there is no binding definition of the term minority in international law; a first attempt at such definition failed at the summit in Vienna in 1993. There are also no enforceable and binding individual and collective rights for those who belong to national minorities.

The Assembly of Delegates FUEN welcomes the renewed attempt by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to finally embed minority protection by means of an optional protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. It requests the Council of Europe to take the necessary steps in this matter without delay in order to reach an international apparatus which promotes and guarantees the preservation of lingual and cultural diversity in Europe and the peaceful coexistence of all people regardless of race, ethnic or religious affiliation.

In particular it requests the Council of Europe to listen to the concerned organizations of the national minorities and to involve them more strongly in the legal and political rules on the matters that concern them.

Reunifying Brittany

There has been quite a bit of activity in Brittany recently to push for reunification of the Department of Loire-Atlantique with the four departments that make up the "official" region of Brittany: Ille-et-Vilaine, Morbihan, Côtes d'Armor, and Finistère.

To provide some background for those who are unfamiliar with the history of this administrative division of Brittany, I have chosen to reprint in this issue of Bro Nevez an article by the Comité pour l'Unité Administrative de la Bretagne (CUAB). This was first printed in Bro Nevez 48, November 1993, and again in February 1999 (No. 69). As the 60th anniversary of the separation of Loire-Atlantique from Brittany is being noted, the CUAB is still hard at work and Bretons are still protesting the amputation of the Loire-Atlantique from the Region called Brittany.

Brittany – The everyday ethnocide in Western Europe

Prepared by the Comité pour l'Unité Administrative de la Bretagne

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

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

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

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

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

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

In spite of continuing protests for more than 50 [now 60] years from the general public as well as from elected officials, the jacobin state is adamant and continues through its local stooges its efforts at "historical and cultural purification" in the department of Loire-Atlantique—school children being the obvious prime targets. They are taught a falsified history, an ersatz culture and are deprived of their very roots. A state which cannot even guarantee their future is robbing them of their past.

* * *

SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

On June 22, 2001, the General Council of Loire-Atlantique voted in favor of the reattachment of the department of Loire-Atlantique with Brittany. After considerable debate on the subject 46 voted for, 3 abstained and 1 voted against the proposal "for an institutional recognition of the Breton identity of Loire-Atlantique." The vote also asked the government "to organize a public debate and necessary public consultation, leading to the initiation of a legislative process allowing the reunification of the five departments of historical Brittany, with an association of neighboring departments who wish it into a larger region." (Philippe Gambert, "Le vote breton de la Loire-Atlantique," Ouest France 23 juin 2001).

The idea of Brittany joining a larger "region of the West" is a sticky point, but seen by politicians as a means to avoid stranding the Pays de Loire which would lose Nantes—the major city of the region—if Loire-Atlantique rejoined Brittany. Without Nantes, the Pays de la Loire would be left without a "capital" and drained of economic clout. On June 29 the Regional Council of the Pays de Loire voted in favor of a "Grand Ouest" region which would combine the Pays de la Loire, Brittany and the Poitou-Charentes area. While this would "reunite" Loire-Atlantique with Brittany, it is not the solution Bretons are seeking!

On June 30th Bretons expressed their rejection of a "Grand Ouest" and demanded reunification of Brittany in a demonstration in the streets of Nantes with an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 people. During the course of the day the presidents of the CUAB, Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro), and the Cultural Council of Brittany were received by the mayor of Nantes, Jean-Marie Ayrault and the president of the General Council of Loire-Atlantique André Trillard.

While a big street demonstration is one way to show Bretons' feelings towards the reattachment of Loire-Atlantique, a recent survey seems to underline a strong popular support for this. This survey of 502 people over 18 in the Loire-Atlantique was conducted by telephone on June 28-29 by the IFOP for Dimanche Ouest France. The survey found that 75% of those questioned favored the reattachment of Loire-Atlantique to Brittany with 16% hostile to the idea. 83% of those surveyed felt a popular referendum on the issue was a good idea (with 14% unfavorable)—up from 70% expressing favor for this in a 1999 survey. The survey showed that those least favorable to the reunification of Brittany were people between 18-24, upper level executives, and retirees where 20-25% were against reunification.

LE 30 JUIN 1941, LE GOUVERNEMENT DE VICHY SÉPARAIT LA LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE DU RESTE DE LA BRETAGNE. L'EUROPE ÉTAIT SOUS LA BOTTE DE L'OCCUPANT NAZI. IL S'AGISSAIT QU'EST-CE QU'IL Y AVAIT DE SI DÉTERMINÉ, EN CE MOMENT, À LA DÉFINITION DE LA BRETAGNE.

60 ANS, ÇA SUFFIT !



NANTES

TOUS À NANTES LE SAMEDI 30 JUIN
FÊTE CITOYENNE TOUTE LA JOURNÉE
DÉFILÉ À 15H

LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE EN BRETAGNE

 **UNE VRAIE RÉGION POUR UNE VRAIE DÉCENTRALISATION**

ANOTHER GIFT OF POETRY from Jan Deloof

As introduced in the May issue of Bro Nevez Jan Deloof is an ICDBL representative for Flanders who lives in Zwevegem, Belgium. He has made a significant contribution to the Breton language through the translations of a number of poems and short stories by some of the best 20th century writers of Brittany.

On the occasion of his 70th birthday, Jan Deloof published a little collection of poems (primarily in Dutch with Breton translations). And, he kindly sent me a copy of these and provided some English translations so we could print a few in the pages of Bro Nevez. So, here is another poem from the collection In de Achteruitkijkspiegel / Er C'hilvelezhour.

TREUZVEVAÑ da Naig Rozmor

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST, THE ZWEVEGEM WAY

eerste bedrijf

mijn halve wildernis puilt uit
van zotte merels

zo nu en dan
kan
de aankomende kater
onze rosse ongetemde
er eentje van verschalken

en daarin slaagt de zwarte
salonpoes
blijkbaar
in alle eeuwen der eeuwen
niet

tweede bedrijf

maar rosse toch!
je liet je nu al
door zo'n rotauto verrassen
- nu al!

en je wist ternauwernood
tot welke hoogten
ze je op kon tillen
tot welke heerlijke limieten
ze je mee kon voeren
- je krolse poes

arvest kentañ

koadoù don hol liorz
a vordilh
gant mouilc'hi mav

ur wech an amzer
hon targazh amjestr
hor rousig krennard
a zeu a-benn da dapout
unan
eus ar vandennad

hag hor c'hazhenn zu
mestrez ziarvar hor saloñs
a gantved da gantved
ne dapo tra

eil arvest

met
va faour-kaezh rousig!
dija
e oas bet friket
gant un euzhvil houarn yud
ur vil a garr-tan dievezh
- dija!

ha
ne oas ket aet
da vat
en inizi ar garantez-loen
a c'helle dizoleiñ dit
da gzhenn zu

chom bev a ra an hini zilignezet

SURVIVE

first act

the primeval forest of our
garden
swarms
with balmy blackbirds

at times
our tom-cat
our untamed red-haired Sunkist
succeeds in catching
one of the bunch

and our black she-cat
uncontested mistress of our
drawing-room
in all ages of ages
catches nothing

second act

but poor Sunkist!
you were already taken unawares
by such a rotten car
- already!

and you did not yet know
altogether
the isles of animal love
that she could show you
your black she-cat

only the degenerated stay alive

SOME NOTABLE NAMES IN BRETON HISTORY and Some Ties between the U.S. and Brittany

Lois Kuter

The following short biographies are drawn from the book Les noms qui ont fait l'histoire de Bretagne – 1000 noms pour les rues de Bretagne (The names which have made the history of Brittany – 1000 names for the streets of Brittany) by Emmanuel Salmon-Legagneur and a team of writers. It includes names of Bretons and non-Bretons who have made a mark on Breton history and would make good candidates for street names (and in many cases already have streets named after them). Included are soldiers, politicians, business and industry leaders, inventors and scientists, writers, musicians and artists. For more information about this very interesting book, see the review in Bro Nevez 66, May 1998.

I have pulled a few names here of people who have ties with the United States. They include primarily Bretons engaged in the American Revolution and American artists of the Pont-Aven school who made Brittany their home. But you will also find the famous ornithologist/painter John James Audubon, writers and filmmakers, and one of a number of Catholic missionaries who came to the U.S. and Canada. The listing is alphabetical; the translations are mine.

ABOVILLE (François-Marie d')

1730 Brest – 1817 Paris
General

He is from an old family of Norman origin solidly planted in the Morbihan region, in the town of Crac'h, near Auray. A hero of the American war of independence, he commanded artillery for Rochambeau at the Battle of Yorktown (1781). On his return to France, he was named general of the division of the armies of Nord in 1792 and took part in the victory of Valmy. He became governor of Brest during the Empire (1809). As an artillery general, he is credited with introducing wheels with metal hubs. His two sons, Augustin-Gabriel (1773-1820) and Augustin-Marie (1776-1843) were also brilliant artillery generals.

AUDUBON (Jean-Jacques)

1785 Les Cayes – 1851 New York
Naturalist

Pioneer in the ornithology of America and in France, he is known in the U.S. under the name of John James Audubon. He was the illegitimate child of a marine officer from Nantes who was established as a plantation owner on the island of San Domingo, and of a young Breton woman, Jeanne Robin, originally from Touches. After the death of his mother when he was just five years old, his father took him to Nantes where he was adopted by the Audubons. It was at Couëron during the Revolutionary period in France that he received an elementary education and found his passion for nature—especially birds. At the age of 15 his father had him learn drawing in Paris in the studio of David. In 1803 he sent him to the U.S. to take charge of a property near Philadelphia. Jean-Jacques showed no liking for business and devoted himself to ornithology studies. He traveled the country, abandoning himself to his passion and neglecting his business, which resulted in being jailed for debts in 1819. The originality of Audubon was the life-

sized reproduction of animals in natural poses and settings. In 1826 during a trip to Europe he collected subscriptions to allow the edition in 1827 and 1839 of Birds of America, a magnificent work in four volumes of remarkable beauty, including 435 pages reproducing his drawings. Following this success he devoted himself to the preparation of another work, The Quadrupeds of America, which had the same success.

BOMPARD (Jean-Baptiste)

1757 Lorient – 1842 Bagnois
Corsair / Privateer

After a brilliant involvement in the American war of independence as a privateer, he was named commandant of the frigate ship *l'Embuscade* in the royal marine. He continued to inflict heavy losses on English squadrons, notably in a raid on New York where he sank the *Boston*. Imprisoned during the French Revolution, then liberated after Thermidor, he received the command of an operation to debark in Ireland which ended in failure. That didn't prevent him from becoming an admiral, but his hostility to the First Consul caused him to be put into retirement in 1801.

BRUTÉ DE RÉMUR (Simon)

1779 Rennes – 1839 Vincennes (MN)
Missionary, American Bishop

After medical studies in Rennes where he was born, he joined the seminary of Saint-Sulpice in Paris where he joined up with the Brothers of Le Mennais. After his ordination, he stayed a long time in Maryland (1810-1834) participating in Catholic missionary work in the Middle West. In 1834 he was named the first Bishop of Vincennes (Minneapolis) and he devoted himself entirely to the organization of his new diocese. He kept ties to Brittany where he worked to recruit missionaries. He figures among the "Fathers of the American Catholic Church."

FROMUTH (Charles)

1859 Philadelphia (PA) – 1937 Concarneau
Painter

After arriving in Concarneau in 1890 he spent almost all his life there with the exception of a few trips. This didn't stop him from exhibiting his art worldwide. A well known pastel artist, his preferred subjects were ships and their reflection on the water which sometimes bordered on abstract styles.

GUILLOU (Julia)

1848 Pont-Aven – 1927 Pont-Aven
Hotel Keeper

Beginning her trade in Concarneau, Julia Guillou made the Hôtel des Voyageurs in Point-Aven one of the preferred spots for artists. This success allowed her to enlarge and build an imposing annex to the hotel. Many Americans stayed there—in particular Robert Wylie, the founder of the art colony. The hotel had a reputation for its endearing qualities; the dining room was decorated with the works of the artists.

HUCHET (Claire)

1898 Geneva – 1993 Paris
Novelist

Daughter of a Nantes father and Morbihan mother from the Île-aux-Moines, her childhood was spent in Le Havre (Normandy), then in Paris. All her life, she remained very attached to Brittany and proud of her Breton roots. As a student she spent a year in the United States and became perfectly bilingual. From 1924 to 1929 she was the first director of *l'Heure Joyeuse* in Paris, the first bookstore for youth created in France. She then married the American pianist Franck Bishop and left with him for New York where she stayed for nearly 50 years. When she became a widow she launched a career as an author for youth, publishing 25 books, some of which had great success. During the last days of her life she very actively participated in creating better relations between Christians and Jews and was president of the Amitié judéo-chrétienne of France from 1976 to 1981. Her life was divided between New York and Paris where she died.

KERSTRAT (Marie de)

1841 Briec – 1920 Pont l'Abbé
Film maker

Marie-Anne Tréouret de Kerstrat was born in the Chateau de Trohanet in Briec, on the outskirts of Langolen. At 56, she left her property of Suler in Pont l'Abbé where she had created the first vacation colony in

Cornouaille, and she left with her son for Quebec to introduce cinema to the New World. She opened two cinemas on 6th Avenue in New York and won acclaim for her own films at the Universal Exposition in Saint-Louis (Missouri) in 1904.

LA ROUËRIE (Armand TUFFIN de)

1751 Fougères – 1793 Saint-Denoual
Military Officer, founder of the Association Bretonne

After a turbulent youth, he engaged at a young age in the ranks of the American Revolutionary insurgents and shined at Yorktown against the English where he received his nickname "Colonel Armand." In June 1788 he rose against the [French] Royal Edicts which were in opposition to Breton freedoms and was imprisoned for a while in the Bastille. In 1792 he started to organize a vast counter-revolutionary organization in Brittany, called the Association Bretonne, to reestablish the royalty which had the sanction of the Comte d'Artois. Having his plan for insurrection traitorously revealed to Marat by his friend the doctor Chevetel, the conspirators were arrested at Fosse-Hingant. He died soon after from pneumonia at La Guyomarais (Saint-Denoual).

RECKNAGEL (John)

1852 Brooklyn (NY) – 1931 Fouesnant
Painter, Pastel artist

An American painter who arrived in Paris in 1891, he set up residence in Concarneau soon after, there becoming friends with Charles Fromuth. He settled definitively in Fouesnant in 1902 where he built his house. He was a portrait painter, using the people of Fouesnant as his models and placing them in their countryside. His works can be found in the town hall of Fouesnant.

WYLIE (Robert)

1839 Isle of Man – 1877 Pont-Aven
Painter

Conservator of the Academy of Philadelphia, he traveled in Brittany in 1864 and 1865 and settled in Pont-Aven in 1866. From there he attracted his friends and was at the origin of the pictorial success of Pont-Aven and its colony of artists. He drew from there his large anecdotal pictures. His *Sorcière bretonne* was the first American painting to win a prize at the Salon de Paris (in 1872).

(Note that there were dozens of American artists who spent time in Pont-Aven and Concarneau in the artist's colonies established there from roughly 1860 to 1910. They could be the subject of a nice little article for Bro Nevez. Anyone interested?)

A NEW BOOK FROM BRITTANY FOR MUSIC LOVERS

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Daniel Morvan and Bernard Galéron. Bretagne, Terre de Musiques. Collection Bretagne Ma Terre. 2001. 142 pages. ISBN 2-95 16936-0-5.

This is a visually beautiful and luxurious book (9 ½ x 10 ½”) featuring portraits of many of the movers and shakers of the Breton music world today—singers, instrument players, collectors and groups. It is a wonderful blend of text and photography. And as the title implies, it is not about Breton music, but Breton musics of a variety of styles.

Born in Morlaix in 1955, the author of the texts, Daniel Morvan, is a journalist with the newspaper Ouest France as well as a literary critic for the magazine Ar Men. On the Breton music beat for Ouest France from 1993-1997, he has gotten to know it well and in relatively few pages of texts, gives a good overview of the wealth of music in Brittany today and its evolution from past decades when it was threatened, or at least much less loved than today.

Born in the Basque country in 1961, the photographer for this book, Bernard Galéron, is a professional photographer for “Vieilles Maisons Françaises” and contributes regularly to the magazine Côte Ouest. His skills in capturing the images of places and things is evident in the way the portraits of musicians in this book are put into a context. The backgrounds (rooms, countryside, or a stone or wooden wall) are critical in conveying a bit of the personality of the person in front of them. But personality is definitely what you get in the portraits of over 60 singers and musicians featured in the book.

And it is the portraits—both text and photo—that make up the bulk of the pages of this book. Each text gives a sense of the musical history of an individual or group and the most interesting of the texts include a bit of “interview” and thoughts from musicians about their music and careers. While there are some essential facts in the texts, they are not biographies, but a portrait to capture an individual in time and space.

To supplement the 140 pages of the book you also have a CD ROM which gives additional photos and some sound bites (interviews and music). I was able to see the CD ROM, but unsuccessful in getting sound – I’m not sure if it’s my computer or my woeful lack of skills in manipulating it! But, what I saw was enough to say that this is indeed a nice supplement, allowing the author and photographer to play around with yet another medium and add some wonderful images that would not fit in the book.

Because it serves as a sort of “who’s who” in Breton music today, I have listed the musicians featured in Bretagne, Terre de Musiques. While I have listed them alphabetically, they are more creatively presented in various sections of the book related to their particular style or instrument, or role as a catalyst in the evolution of Breton music. These sections are “To Transmit,” “To Play” (“Sonner” – bombarde and biniou), “To Dance,” “To Imagine” (harp), “To Triumph” (bagad), “To Mix,” “To Enchant,” “To Overturn,” “To Excite,” and “To Do” (instrument makers). I have put an asterisk after those whose voices/music can be found on the CD ROM.

Christian Anneix
(and Jean Baron)
An Triskell
Dan Ar Braz *
Bagad Brieg *
Bagad Kemper
Bagad Roñsed-Mor *

Roland Becker
Dominig Bouchaud
François Budet
Roland Brou *
Christophe Caron
Patrick Couton
Pierre Crepillon

Gerard Delahaye
Annie Ebrel
Yvonne Etienne
E.V. (group)
Patrick Ewen
Melaine Favennec
The Goristes (group)

Fred Guichen
Jean-Charles Guichen
Youenn Gwernig
Yann Honoré
Mona Jaouen
Yann Fañch Kemener
Gwenael Kerleo
Kohann
Manu Lann Huel
Ronan Le Bars
Gilles Le Bigot
Youenn Le Bihan
Christian Le Maitre

Fañch Le Marrec *
Erik Marchand *
Violaine Mayor *
Jamie McMenemy *
Miossec
Dominique Molard
Jacky Molard
Patrick Molard
Polig Monjarret *
Morvan brothers *
Kristen Noguès
Jacques Pellen
Alain Pennec

Yann-Fañch Perroches
Denez Prigent
Red Cardell (band)
Erwan Ropars
Sedrenn (Celtic harp duo)
Gilles Servat *
Soig Siberil
Skolvan * (band)
Sonerien Du * (band)
Didier Squiban
Tri Yann
Jean-Michel Veillon

In the context of discussion of instrument making, you also have small photos and mention of Gilbert Hervieux & Olivier Glet, Georges Tépho, Jean-Louis Blivel and Marin Lhopiteau. In the context of two recent music events—Heritage de Celtes and Bercy—Alan Stivell is pictured and mentioned (as he is in an introduction section), but does not have his own “portrait.” And there are a few other musicians who have a small photo and caption in the introduction as well.

While three bagadoù are featured, there are two pages where a single photo of individuals or a bagad serve as an album: Beuzec, Penhars, Kevrenn Alre, Pontivy, Ergue Armel, Moulin Vert, Combrit, and Cap Caval.

Certainly limiting the choice of portraits to include in such a book is a major challenge and there will be people who ask “why didn’t you include ____”. And, the authors might have indeed chosen others who were simply not available or agreeable to inclusion. I could not resist thinking of just a few more names for portraits I would have included if I had the brilliant idea and skills to put such a book together. No doubt readers will have their own ideas as well!

Rene Abjean
Anne Auffret
Patrick Bardoul
Thierry Bertrand
Bleizi Ruz
Laurent Bigot
Gilbert Bourdin
Cabestan
Carre Manchot
Chanteurs du Pays de Vilaine
Dastum
Christian Desbordes

Diaouled ar Menez
Alain Genty
Eugenie Goadec & Louise Ebrel
Etienne Grandjean
Mathieu Hamon
Fañch Landreau
Bernard Lasbleiz
Noluen Le Buhé
Patrick Lefebvre
Sophie Le Hunsec
Pierrick Lemou
Patrick Malrieu

Mangeouses d’Oreilles
Pierre-Yves Moign
Myrdhin
Albert Poulain
Quintet de Clarinettes
Yves Ribis
Gwenola Ropars
Loeiz Ropars
Soldat Louis
Michel Tonnerre
Trouzerion
Marthe Vassallo

And there are certainly a number of sonneurs de couple of note one could add. My book would need to be about 300 pages—probably too much of a good thing! After all, this is not meant to be an encyclopedia of Breton music. But, maybe Daniel Morvan and Bernard Galéron would consider a second volume. There are enough more musicians and things to be said about Breton music and dance to merit one.

Although the texts of this book are well worth a careful read and are full of interesting information, you will enjoy this book even if you don’t know a word of French for the photo portraits alone and the artistic layout of each page. This is a book you can pick up again and again to enjoy. It is full of individuals who are great musicians but also people with some interesting things to say.

NEW MUSIC FROM BRITTANY

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Meuriad. D'ar gêr. (Cire Jaune). 2001. 44'51

Meuriad (Breton for "tribe") is a band formed just in 1995 and this CD features Breton language songs composed by the lead singer Youenn Guillanton. He is effectively accompanied by musicians using a wide variety of instruments and music that ranges far beyond Brittany for inspiration. Etienne Tabourier plays fiddle and sax, Gilles Le Roux plays uilleann pipes and accordion, Erwan Alix plays acoustic guitar and bouzouki, Jean Marie Tallec plays flutes and whistles, and Matthieu Nicol performs on an international selection of percussion.

While one might not characterize Youenn Guillanton as a fabulous singer, he is certainly an excellent one capable of a variety of styles from rap-like rapid fire rant to melodic free-flowing slow airs. His style first brings to mind the singer Kristen Nikolas who also composes new songs in the Breton language on issues of contemporary and international concern, drawing on a variety of world influences in musical settings for his songs. While lacking a bit of the edginess of the short-lived but famous 70s band Storlok, the blusey selection "Daou c'hant vloaz on" brings that group's style to mind. And you can hear a bit of Youenn Gwernig's rhythm in "Peñse an eneoù." But Guillanton does his own thing, drawing on a number of styles with perhaps a preference for Irish and Scottish melodies, but not missing a middle eastern flavor and the rhythms of Africa ... and Brittany, of course.

There are a large number of traditional Breton language ballads which remain ever-young in new interpretations, and whose themes are as relevant today as they were when they were composed decades or centuries ago. But, it is important that new songs continue to be written and performed in the Breton language. The eleven selections on this CD touch on a variety of topics—heartbreaking emigration, reflections on the state of the world, the countryside of central Brittany, the future of the Celtic peoples, phantoms of the night, ancient Celtic gods, and dreams and fantasies of many kinds.

Youenn Guillanton started to learn Breton as a teen—like many Bretons, taking correspondence courses and attending workshops when he could. Through hard work he became proficient enough to become a Diwan school teacher. And like many Breton musicians, the members of this band are all self-taught rather than the product of music conservatories. As flute player and manager for the band Jean-Marie Tallec notes in the letter to me he sent with the CD, they all hold down jobs outside the music world as teachers, technicians, male nurse ... Although they have performed widely in concerts and at festivals,

this is their first CD—the result of three years of work. Not a bad start.

In the high quality of performance and variety of themes and styles of song and melody, this CD is certainly interesting and enjoyable, and a testimony to the potential for continued growth of a new repertoire of songs in the Breton language. Notes to the CD include the Breton texts with a very short bit of them in French as well as listing of artists active in any given selection (and that includes some interesting guest artists as well).

By the way, Jean-Marie Tallec notes that the band would be interested in coming to the States to perform—not for fame or fortune but for the adventure it appears—"After all, USA are our neighbors, the first land off Brittany and off Ouessant in the West."

Meuriad has a very good web site. Visit it to learn more about them <http://meuriad.free.fr/>

Skaliero. Beg ar viñs. Keltia Musique KMCD 124. 2001. 55'05.

What happens when you combine bombarde, accordion, harp, a singer, and a massive church organ? One might expect some bizarre music, but not when the recipe is a good one and the ingredients are all excellent. The ingredients of Skaleiro (Breton for "stairs") guarantee that something good is going to happen. The group includes Daniel Le Féon on bombarde, Samuel Le Féon on accordion, Anne Le Signor with Celtic harp, Jean-Michel Mansano on organ, and Marthe Vassallo with vocals. But it is the particular mix of these performers and the choice of a wonderful repertoire of Breton ballads, dances, marches and shorter compositions that makes this CD exceptional.

In most cases you don't find all five playing at the same time, but in pair or trading off in trios—the now familiar bombarde/organ combination, bombarde/harp, accordion/harp, bombarde/accordion, and voice with all combinations of instruments possible. Each instrument (including voice) has the chance to shine in solo moments and all are used very creatively and effectively to enhance the moods of the songs and tunes rather than serve as mere background.

Marthe Vassallo has the opportunity to show off her powerful and rich voice as well as the beautiful melodies of the traditional Breton language song repertoire in a number of selections: "Disput etre ur verc'h hag ar vamm"

(argument between a girl and her mother), "Peñse ar Jentilez" (shipwreck of the Jentilez), "Sonig amourouste" (little song of love), "Distro ar martolod" (return of the sailor), and "Ma c'halonig a zo diaes" (my little heart is anxious). Notes to the CD include each Breton language text with a French translation. In each case the instrumental combinations with song are unique and effective in bringing out the full emotion of the text. Perhaps the most unusual arrangement is found in "Distro ar martolod" which pairs voice with a biniou whose slightly off beat melody captures the awkwardness of a man returning from many years in far away military service to find his wife on the verge of remarrying.

I particularly liked the combination of voice with very colorful instrumental arrangements in the gwerz "Peñse ar Jentilez" where Marthe Vassallo conveys the full drama of the sad tale of fifteen seaweed collectors from the parish of Pleumeur-Bodou who drown in a shipwreck in February 1844. This shorter version of the ballad describes the recovery of the bodies on shore and the grief of families and villagers in learning of the shipwreck. The harp leads off (and closes) the performance, capturing an eerie bubbling of the sea, succeeded by a wail from the bombarde and a sinister low drone from the organ before bombarde and organ burst out in a dramatic rendition of the beautiful melody begun by Marthe Vassallo and the harp.

While high drama characterizes the ballads of death and lost love so typical of the Breton repertoire, one finds a lighter touch and even humor to the closing song, "Ma c'halonig a zo diaes." This is about an unhappy suitor whose object of affection finds various ways to respond to his question "when will we get married?"—all of which boil down to "when Hell freezes over." The discordant cries of the bombarde and circus-like music of the organ seem to mimic the mocking replies of the bride-not-to-be.

Skaliero is not just a group with a lead singer and accompanying musicians. All have a key role to play. Daniel Le Féon and Jean-Michel Mansano have already proven their abilities on other recordings as a bombarde-organ duo and this is featured in "Ar Vorian," a cantique (hymn) from the island of Groix to which Yann Ber Kallo'h set one of his best known poems. The bombarde and organ can be found paired in a number of the selections on the CD, but Daniel Le Féon has the chance to frequently show off the ability of a good bombarde player to take a leading role in both melodies and dances.

Organist Jean-Michel Mansano uses the massive church organ to its fullest with all stops pulled (it seems) for a very heavy and elegant sound at times, and at other times a very light and delicate sound as in "La clef de l'organiste"—a very short bit from his composition "Premiers pas." Both in the huge sound he draws from the organ and the more subtle presence he adds to the texture of tunes and songs, Mansano brings drama and richness to the texture of the performances on the CD.

The Celtic harp is a little instrument that might easily get lost in the presence of organ and bombarde, but not so in the hands of Anne Le Signor. She solos in "Pause de la harpiste" but shines throughout the CD in pair with voice, bombarde and accordion, taking a melodic lead or providing a very creative accompaniment. Who needs a guitar when you have a harp to provide such a rich texture of sounds. After hearing her work in these performances of both slower airs and dances, one wonders why the harp is not used more often in Breton groups.

While the accordion does not have quite as many opportunities to lead, Samuel Le Féon is by no means a silent partner in the group and his skills stand out in a lively "Suite de Loudéac" and in the "Mazurkas."

Skaliero is not so much a group where musicians blend together, but rather a meeting of five very talented people who support each other perfectly as each performs. Rather than "accompany" each other, all seem to have a leading role in solos, duets, trios, or quartets. The title to the CD, "Beg ar viñs" is Breton for "Top of the spiral stairs" and there is a dizzying display of talent in this group who reinvent a traditional repertoire of songs, dances and marches of Brittany in a highly creative way.

* * *

Bagad Kemper. Azeliz Iza. Keltia Musique KMCD 121. 2001. 58'11.

The live performance captured on this CD centers around the gwerz "Eliz Iza"—perhaps one of the most performed and best known of all Breton language ballads. The CD starts with a recording of the Soeurs Goadec singing this classic (sadly, the CD notes do not acknowledge anywhere that those are the voices you hear—although anyone at all familiar with Breton music would recognize the Goadec sound). After several verses, they are joined by Marthe Vassallo who finishes the song solo—a wonderful transition from older masters to one of the great younger traditional singers of Brittany today. The bagad then takes over with a jazzier arrangement of the melody.

Marthe Vassallo is also featured in several other cuts on the CD. She pairs with guitarist Gilles Le Bigot with a composition called "An distro" (her Breton text, his music). Too bad the words to the text are not included in the CD notes, nor is there any summary of content so that non-Breton speakers can get a sense of the content of this lovely song. Also too bad that the saxophone player for this selection who has a prominent solo role is not named (part of the brass ensemble listed in the CD notes?). On a livelier note, Marthe Vassallo also participates in a suite of plinn dances composed by Jean-Michel Veillon and Gilles Le Bigot. She pairs with the saxophone and trades off the lead with biniou/bombardes with the full bagad joining in. And she also sings kan ha diskan with sax and biniou and the bagad in a spirited "Suite de Gavottes" which includes a nice little section where the guitars swing the rhythm of

the melody around before it transforms back to a more expected beat of the gavotte. While the effect of having Marthe Vassallo belt out the gavotte backed by a brass ensemble and bagad gets a bit muddy at times due to the recording quality, this would indeed be a very exciting performance live on stage.

While Marthe Vassallo has a great voice, the Bagad Kemper is the star of this show and you can see from their performance why they have won the bagad championship of Brittany 17 times. The bagad is featured in several selections including a "Gavotte de l'Aven" which starts with traditional pairing of biniou and bombarde and slides into a Latin beat. They also shine on the composition "Amzer Nevez" (which can be found on their 1997 CD Hep Diskrog), and I liked their performance of the "An dro / kas ha barh" suite which had a nice relaxed beat while at the same time conveyed a great deal of intensity and energy. The bagad pairs dramatically with the brass ensemble to close out the CD with yet another arrangement of the Azeliz Iza melody.

There is nice variety in the sequence of performances on the CD in featuring not just the full bagad and the voice of Marthe Vassallo, but also other groupings of instruments and voices. The percussion section of the Bagad Kemper have a place to show off in a composition by their lead snare drummer Xavier Chavry—a jazzy selection called "J'en va pas Max" where the electric guitar adds some additional rhythm. The brass ensemble has its moment to shine in a composition called "Voisins de palier". This has no strong evocation of Breton musical themes or rhythms that I could hear, but was an interesting interplay of low brass with the high "brassy" sound of a solo bombarde. The melody of Azeliz Iza was brought up again in the performance of the choral group Kanerien Sant Meryn. While this was a pretty performance with harp accompaniment, this choral group and the arrangement of music they performed didn't seem up to the standard of the other musicians on the CD. The five minutes of their singing seemed very long.

The photos which make up most of the CD notes imply that this would indeed be a blockbuster of a live performance, and that is indeed the whole point of this meeting of bagad with singer Marthe Vassallo, guitars, brass ensemble and choir. The recording quality does not do justice to the performances in some cases. Bagpipes sometimes disappear in the background, or the bagad, biniou and bombardes get distorted and squeaky in performances when combined with the brass and vocals. Percussion sometimes booms or echoes a bit more than it should. This is all the more reason to see such a performance live—a CD could never capture the same energy. Indeed, Azeliz Iza is one of the highlights of Brittany's two biggest summer festivals with performances at the Festival de Cornouaille in Quimper and at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival.

* * *

Tud. Setu!. Keltia Musique. MCD 122. 54'32.

Dancers, on your feet!. Here's the latest CD from the group Tud, and as was the case for the first two CDs (*Deus Kerne* in 1994 and *La Plume de Paon* in 1997) it features a variety of Breton dances: ridée, hanter dro, gavottes, waltz, an dro, plinn, schottische, rond de Saint-Vincent, kost ar c'hoat and pilé menu.

As one would expect with a gap of four years since their last CD, this band has changed for the better—retaining their warm acoustic sound, but growing much more sophisticated with dance arrangements. And I found them just a bit more relaxed and true to the subtle swing and rhythm of Breton dance (with the exception of the Rond de Saint-Vincent which seemed to me to be a bit off-kilter). There has been a little change in personnel, but original members Eric Ollu (biniou and Breton style "oboe") and Frank Le Rest (guitars, bouzouki, mandolin) remain at the core with Carolyn Langelier (flute) who is found on the 1997 CD. Long-time accordion player for the group, Thierry Beuze, has been replaced by Frédéric Lambièrge (formerly with the bands Strakal and Penoù Skoulm) and Olivier Boedec (bass fiddle) is a new addition for this CD.

Both guitars and bass fiddle add a strong rhythmic swing behind the flute, oboe and accordion which tend to take the melodic lead. While most flute players in Brittany use a wooden Irish-style flute, Carolyn Langelier (an American in origin) plays the metal flute, and this "colder" sound contrasts nicely with the reediness of the accordion and mellowness of the Breton oboe—which is really a soft-toned bombarde with much more punch than the classical orchestral variety of oboe. While the strong melodic lead of the winds keeps the dance firmly on beat, the strings add nice swing and texture, and changing combinations of instruments keep things interesting.

Notes to the CD include a short description of each selection in French, English and Breton—just enough information.

Setu" is the Breton equivalent of the French expression "voilà" which has no really good equivalent in English. My Breton-English dictionary suggests "behold" and the CD notes suggest "this is it." So, behold a great CD for just listening or for dancing along.

* * *

Dremmwel. Glazik. DREM 02. 2001. 48'51.

The group Dremmwel began as a trio in 1986, becoming a quartet in 1994 with harp, fiddle and guitars. After a number of tours in Europe and countless performances at festoù noz, concerts and festivals, they recorded their first CD in 1996 (*Heol Ioar*). In the fall of 1998 they toured in New England (with a side trip to Virginia). With the year 2001 they celebrate 15 years of work and the release of their new CD called Glazik.

The four men of this band bring an interesting mix of instruments to the stage: Daniel Cadiou plays guitar, Marin Lhopiteau plays Celtic harp, Dominique Le Guichaoua plays accordion and biniou, and Rene Marchand plays bombarde, piston (oboe), and veuze—the “other” bagpipe of Brittany from the southeastern Loire River valley region. There are also a number of guest artists for this CD, including an interesting use of traditional singer Louise Ebrel who—through the magic of the studio—sings a pach pi dance with herself, with jazzy backup on trumpet by another guest artist André Losquin who also jams with biniou and bombarde. And you hear a few words from Polig Monjarret about his collection and naming of a melod (“An abed Madeg”) in 1951 which Dremmwel then performs with a lovely harp/bombarde duo with bass fiddle back-up.

There is nice variety in the music on this CD and in the combinations of instruments and arrangements of melodies and dances. Dances predominate with pach pi, laridé, scottische, a Scottish waltz, fisel, gavottes and a gymnaska—a circle dance like the an dro brought to Finistère from Morbihan in the early 20th century. The CD notes suggest that the name is derived from the Breton description for the gymnastics of a cat.

I liked the addition of brass in several selections but the balances of instruments was not always the best—the trumpet seemed to blare above everyone else, and sometimes the biniou and bombarde sounded like they might be coming from a hundred feet away from everyone else. Maybe there's something wrong with my CD player.

While dances make up the bulk of the CD, Dremmwel is not just a fest noz band. I particularly liked the closing melody, “Lament for Jef Le Penven,” a melody by Polig Monjarret composed in Quimper in 1967 on the evening of this famous composer's burial. Dremmwel discovered the air in Scotland many years later where it was being performed by a Northumbrian piper.

Notes to the CD provide a nice introduction to each of the 13 selections, giving the history of their origins and discovery by Dremmwel. The route a Breton tune or melody takes from its origins to a performance in 2001 can make an interesting story.

While Dremmwel lacks the finesse and mastery of some of Brittany's best bands, this is a very enjoyable CD, full of variety and interesting new combinations of instruments.

(Warning: If you are slow to get up to turn off your CD player, you might be startled to hear the bellowing of cows and sheep and a bit of “diddling” by a singer long after the last cut on the CD fades. It appears that the “gwenn ha du” cow with the sunglasses on the CD cover was given a speaking role.)

Jean Baron and Christian Anneix. Dansoù tro Breiz. Keltia Musique KMCD 123. 52'57.

Dansoù tro Breiz is the third CD featuring dances by this very well known pair on bombarde and biniou. The first recording, Danses de Bretagne (Keltia Musique KMCD 07) was released in 1988, and the second, Dañsal e Breiz (KMCD 41) came out in 1993. All three CDs are directed specifically to listeners interested in dance, and the intent is to provide musical examples of a variety of dances as well as information in the CD notes on how to actually do the dances.

While the verbal descriptions and charts juxtaposing numbers for the beats and G, D (gauche, droit) for the left and right feet could not help a beginner get much off the ground, they would be very helpful for those with some knowledge already of Breton dances.

Notes also give the location where the dance is traditionally found including a map pinpointing this. And the map shows clearly that these pipers have done a real “tro Breiz”—circling of Brittany—in choosing dances from around nearly the entire coast of Brittany from Nantes westward to the Bigouden country, up to the Leon country and back east to Dinan and Rennes (although the sequence of the selections on the CD does not follow this geographic route).

Dances on the CD are quite varied in tempo and rhythm, including many rarely heard and certainly not seen at most festoù noz where a relatively limited number of dances of the dozens (and their many variants) found in Brittany are performed. Never fear, Bretons are interested in learning them all and keeping them going, and the Celtic Circles in particular have done a significant amount of research in their own specific geographic areas. With time, I suspect the range of dances at festoù noz will expand as Bretons have the chance to learn more—especially some of the lesser known ones of their own neighborhood. Having recordings like this will certainly help dancers with fine music to use for practice.

So here's the line-up of dances to be found on this CD: Aéroplane, Scottishe, Pilé menu, Ronde de sautron simple, Bal du Rhuys, Gavotte bigoudène, Gavotte d'honneur (Plougastel), Gavotte du Bas-Léon, Ridée in 6 time, Polka simple/piquée, An dro de Kersolan, En-avant deux du Trégor, Danse Keff and Bal Keff (Bro Leon), and Danse Sizun.

While this is a CD for dancers, it is also a CD for those who love the traditional pairing of bombarde and biniou, and you can't get much better than Jean Baron and Christian Anneix. Many times champions of Brittany, their playing is impeccable. This CD gives you good piping plus some lovely dance tunes you're not likely to hear anywhere else.

HEARD OF BUT NOT HEARD

The following are a few new CDs of notes. Information about them was drawn from reviews in Ar Men (No. 120, April 2001, No. 121, May 2001, and No. 123, July-Aug. 2001), and Musique Bretonne (No. 166, May-June 2001 and No. 167, July-Aug. 2001)

Fulup Celtic Swing. Fulup Celtic Swing.

CS 1211. 2001

In 1972 Job Fulup on bombarde with André Thomas on biniou won Brittany's championship for sonneurs de couple. Since then he has turned his attention to the Celtic harp, making a career as a solo singer/harp player. In this new CD he is joined by his sons Edern (guitar) and Tangi (bass guitar) for a jazzy sound.

Añjel I.K. Diank. Griffe Prod. GRI 191472. 2001.

This group is characterized as "techno-Breton" where traditional song and the biniou and bombarde blend with the beat of electric guitars, keyboard, and the "sampling" characteristic of this style. While Alan Stivell and Denez Prigent have already played around in this realm, this band moves things further forward with a very contemporary sound for Breton dances.

Erik Marchand. Kan. RCA Victor 7 4321 848 75261. 2001.

Singer Erik Marchand gathers master singers from Albania, Mali, Galicia (Spain), and Sardinia for a CD which has received very positive reviews. The beauty and diversity of the vocal traditions from these countries (as well as Brittany) stand out in solo performances and Marchand successfully combines singers for a nice cross pollination. If this combination of traditional sounds from very different parts of the world is half as interesting as Marchand's past work with traditions of Rumania, India and the Middle East, we're indeed in for a treat.

Didier Squiban. Rozbraz: 12 images pour piano.

L'OZ Production L'OZ 34. 2001

Third in a trio of CDs featuring piano compositions and arrangements of traditional airs and dance tunes inspired by Brittany's islands and coasts. Like Molène and Porz Gwenn, the music is creative and includes a variety of influences from classical to jazz.

Wig a Wag. Sarah ha Safar. Griffe/Patch D. GRI 19148-2. 2001.

This is the second recording for a band described as being somewhere between the groups Gwerz and Ar Re Yaouank. They perform compositions and include some traditional airs, combining dances with slower melodies.

Instruments include bass, chromatic accordion, fiddle, various percussion and bombarde. The band's singer Loic Chauvigny, also composes song texts in Breton for the group. Reviewers applaud the group for "thinking outside the box."

Docteur Noz. Festnozaïne. ADN 01. 2001.

Includes Ronan Le Gouriérec, Christian Méhat, Tangui Bodin, Rémi Leray, Etienne Maquaire, and Christophe Declercq with five pieces. With some of the musicians coming from the Bagad de Sant Nazer, bagpipes and bombardes have a prominent place in the band.

Penn da benn. Hep fin ebet. Keltiq Musique RS 246. 2001.

Young fest noz group from Bigouden country with a 20-minute CD including three dance suites: circle circassien, plinn and ridée in 6. Instruments include electric and acoustic guitar, fiddle, biniou and bombarde played by Benoît Le Bihan, Julian Favennec, Thomas Richon, Jean-Philippe Jolivet, Pierre Stépahn, and Mikaël Boënnec.

Trio Bass'in. Celtic Session. Bass Records 22. 2001.

This is a trio of bass fiddlers whose repertoire includes everything from Prokofiev to jazz. This CD features a traditional Irish repertoire and shows off the versatility of the bass in three selections.

Bretagne Cornemuse Aventures. EOG Production. 2001.

Six Breton masters of cornemuse—Scottish style bagpipes—are gathered on this CD to do something original. Each plays a solo and then a second selection with instrumental accompaniment. Styles range from piobaireachd to techno with each piper doing what he does best. Pipers are: Alain Cras, Patrick Molard, Gwenaél Le Corronc, Hervé Le Floc'h, Mikaël Cozien and Yann Cariou.

L'empreinte de la Bretagne. Naïve Y225081. 2001

Reviewers consider this a high quality collection of innovative Breton artists including Quintet de Clarinettes, Erik Marchand, Jacques Pellen, Bagad Kemperle, Manu Lanhuel, and Ronan Le Bars among others.

Le Fest-noz d'EOG. EOG Productions. 2001.

Compilation from EOG recordings including a good sample of fest-noz bands: Trouzerien, Arzoustaff, Forzh Penaos, Diwall, Gwenfol and Sonerien Du.

Bagad Championship of Brittany

It's official – with the completion of competition at the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient on August 4th, Kerlenn Pondi is the new champion bagad of Brittany.

Some of you may be wondering what in the world a "bagad" is. For those new to Breton music, a bagad is Brittany's unique style of "bagpipe band." Modeled on Scottish pipe bands, the invention of the bagad can be credited to some of the founders of the organization Bodadeg ar Sonerien (founded in 1943)—Hervé Le Menn, Dorig Le Voyer, and Polig Monjarret. In 1947 the first bagad was formed by a rail workers association in Carhaix, and their example was quickly followed by a number of other towns who wanted their own bagad. By the mid 1950s there were over 100 bagadoù (plural for bagad) in formation, and annual competitions were a regular practice – as they were for the paired bombarde and biniou koz, the tiny high pitched bagpipe native to Brittany.

Today there are some 100 bagadoù in action, encompassing some 6,000 musicians. Starting with eight bombardes, eight Scottish style bagpipes, and four snare drums, two tenor drums, and a bass drum, the formation has grown to a much larger size, often including other instruments for particular arrangements such as the biniou koz, clarinets, the softer toned "piston" or Breton style oboe, and an exotic array of percussion.

Bagadoù who are members of the Bodadeg ar Sonerien and who compete in annual competitions (and most chose to do this) are split into five categories with category 1 being the highest. With over 50 years of development the quality today of the bagadoù in category 3 is thought to be as good as those in category 1 twenty years ago. Indeed, those familiar with the bagad of Brittany can attest to the sophistication and technical polish of the arrangements of music used in long suites of dances and slow airs prepared for competition performance and concerts.

The annual competition for Brittany's championship takes place in two parts with the final at the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient. This is taken very seriously by the bagadoù involved—some might say too seriously by some. But, the quality of the music and excitement of the performances always draws a large crowd. This year an estimated 8,000 people intently followed the finals in Lorient.

For those of you who have followed competitions in past years or who have a favorite bagad you have been watching, here are the results of this year's competition in the top two categories. The city/town in which the bagad is based follows. You will note that the bagadoù usually use the Breton version of their home city in their name.

Category 1

- 1 - Kerlen Pondi (Pontivy)
- 2 - Bagad Kemper (Quimper)
- 3 - Bagad Roñsed-Mor (Lokoal-Mendon)
- 4 - Kevrenn Alre (Auray)
- 5 - Bagad Bro Kemperle (Quimperlé)
- 6 - Bagad Cap Caval (Cap Caval)
- 7 - Bagad Sant-Nazer (Saint Nazaire)
- 8 - Bagad ar Meihou Glaz / Bagad Moulin Vert
- 9 - Bagad Saint-Malo (Saint Malo)
- 10 - Bagad Melinerion (Vannes)
- 11 - Bagad Sonerien an Oriant (Lorient)

Category 2

- 1 - Bagad Gwengamp (Guingamp) who moves to category 1 next year
- 2 - Bagad Beuzeg ar C'hab (Beuzec)
- 3 - Bagad Plougastel (Plougastel)
- 4 - Bagad Penhars (Penhars)
- 5 - Bagad Landerne (Landerneau)
- 6 - Bagad Konk Kerne (Concarneau)
- 7 - Bagad Bleidi Kamorh (Camors)
- 8 - Bagad Keriz (Clichy)
- 9 - Bagad Pañvrid (Pommerit-le-Vicomte)
- 10 - Bagad Sesson-Sévigé (Sesson-Sévigé)
- 11 - Bagad Sant Erwan Bubri (Saint-Yves-Bubry)
- 12 - Bagad Vern Kadoudal (Vern-sur-Seiche)
- 13 - Bagad Vire-Saint-Lô (Vire-Saint-Lô)

For more information about the bagad and the work of Bodadeg ar Sonerien consult their excellent web site: www.ar-soner.org. CDs have been produced for the championships each year and these are a great way to get introduced to the music of the bagad. Many bagadoù also have their own web sites and these are often rich in information. For those who really want to follow the bagadoù of Brittany, the BAS magazine, *Ar Soner*, is excellent and has recently been "remodeled" to include a lot more information and colorful photos.

FINDING FESTIVALS AND FESTOÙ NOZ IN BRITTANY

Some suggestions from Lois Kuter (any you have for a future issue of Bro Nevez would be most welcome!)

From time to time I get inquiries from people preparing to take a trip to Brittany who need help in locating music events. *How can I find a class to learn Breton dances; will there be any festivals during the two weeks I will be staying in Quimper; how do I find out where a fest noz will be held?* It can be difficult to find answers to such questions when people want to pin down a daily travel itinerary many months in advance. But, for those who have some flexibility, there are some good internet resources to help you locate concerts, festivals and festoù noz coming up in the next few weeks or sometimes a month ahead. If you have a favorite musician you hope to see during travels to Brittany you can also do a search to find out if they have a web page – many do!

I have listed just three sites I looked at to see what I could find out about summer festivals, and all three were very good in providing information I would want to have in planning travels in Brittany. All of them also provided links to festivals or musicians who have their own web pages. They also had search options where you could plug in a city or date to see what was going on without sorting through the full calendar listings. Thus, if you were to be only in Rennes for the first two weeks of August, you could quickly find out what was going on there.

The three sites listed below are by no means the only sources of information you can use to locate Breton festivals and musical events, but all three are good places to start. Many festivals in Brittany are annual and tend to stay in the same place on roughly the same dates, so getting information on those occurring this summer (or other months) can help you plan for a trip you may be taking a year from now.

<http://festif.bretagne.com>

This is a site put together by the newspaper Le Télégramme. It provides good descriptions (in French) of festivals and their contents. You can easily see exactly what events are going on during the day you contact the site, or check out a calendar listing of

concerts, festivals, art exhibits, etc. coming up. While some listings include almost no description of an event you can find paragraphs about specific current or upcoming festivals with links to any article that has appeared in Le Télégramme and direct links to web pages for festivals that have one. The Archives for the site provides access to close to 100 articles from Le Télégramme on festivals that took place in July and August.

<http://www.fest-noz.net>

This site provides a monthly chronological calendar of festoù noz (Breton dances) including location (city and department) and a short list of featured performers. For example:

24/08/01 Rostrenen (22) Festival Fisel?
Fest noz avec Karma, Skeduz, Spontus

shows that a fest noz (probably part of the Fisel festival) will be held on August 24 in Rostrenen which is in the Côtes d'Armor department. Musical groups featured are Karma, Skeduz and Spontus and since they are underlined in the listing you can click on the names to go directly to their web sites to find out more about them. When I consulted the site this August you could get access to the calendar of 25 festoù noz in June, 22 in July and 26 for August, with a few also listed for later in the fall.

www.dastum.com

The site for Dastum includes a lot of great information about traditional Breton music and the very important work Dastum does to promote it and preserve it as an archives. In the "Actualités" section of their web site you will find a calendar of events, and when I checked it out, it included 25 festivals, concerts and festoù noz held in August. In a section called "Les stages" you can find upcoming workshops and classes to learn Breton dance, song, or specific instruments. Dastum has information available in French, Breton and English. If you click the English button it will give you menus in

English which is very helpful if you don't know any French. However, these lead you to the same French version of calendars, book and CD notes, news of Dastum, etc. This is certainly not an obstacle when looking for information on musical events, since the key information--names of the festival, town it will be in, and who's performing--will be French or Breton anyway.



And for lots of other information ... whether you're planning a trip to Brittany or not!

<http://www.breizh.net/icdbl.htm>

I often use the links found on the U.S. ICDBL web site, and with some 160 to choose from, I have certainly not yet explored them all. Don't forget about this excellent resource, and if you have links you think should be added or suggestions to improve our web site contact our keeper, Mary Turner: marybzh@swbell.net.

And here's another site that has great links to Breton sites:

www.og-man.net

Everything Celtic on the Net! Does indeed cover nearly everything you would want to find out about the Celtic countries (including Galicia and Asturias) and their emigrant communities. When you get to the main page choose the "Breton" option which will take you to 126 links to Breton web sites.



What if you don't have access to the internet?

Don't worry, there are still some great guides to Breton culture in print (although they are not readily available in the States).

Guide Culturel Bretagne 2001

This is an annual guide to Breton culture put out each May. I have not seen it, but publicity for it notes that it includes over 5,000 contact addresses in 280 pages of listings. Included are concerts and festivals, music, theater, crafts, art galleries, history and patrimony, books, magazines, audio-visual, leisure activities,

regional products, and other useful addresses. This would surely be a good place to find information on a variety of topics that might be very useful in planning a trip to Brittany or to contact an organization or individual with a specific question. This guide can be ordered via the internet:

www.guidculturelbretagne.com/ or from the publisher: AD LIB Editions, 10 rue Alain Gerbault, 35000 Rennes. Telephone 02 99 67 11, 44; Fax: 02 99 67 11 45.



FINDING DANCE AND MUSIC CLASSES IN BRITTANY

Getting lined up for dance or instrument lessons during a short trip to Brittany is not an easy thing to do, since most formal lessons are arranged on an ongoing weekly basis for learners rather than in a one-time workshop. However such things do exist and it may be possible to line up a private lesson with a teacher (if the price is right, you set it up far in advance, and you already come with a little experience).

In the last issue of Bro Nevez (No. 78, May 2001) I included a page on "Cultural Federations in Brittany—where to go for information." This provides a number of organizations which could provide you with information on already scheduled music/dance workshops, or teachers who might be able to negotiate a private lesson.

I have recently received information also from a music school that has a long established program of lessons for music and dance (see the page which follows to get an idea of the range of subjects available). While I don't know how often they are able to accommodate a passing traveler, this school certainly would offer a high quality of instruction.

Contact information is as follows:

Centre Breton d'Art Populaire

(Kreizenn an Arzoù Pobl)

5 rue Marengo, 29200 Brest

telephone/fax: 02 98 46 05 85

e-mail: CBAP@chez.com

internet site: <http://www.chez.com/cbap>



stages de danses

Tout au long de l'année scolaire, des cours réguliers vous sont proposés dans des disciplines aussi variées que l'accordéon diatonique, les danses bretonnes, le chant choral, la bombarde...
Vous trouverez dans ce dépliant les activités qui sont enseignées au Centre Breton d'Art Populaire.
Cette liste d'activités décrites n'est pas limitative.

De 6 à 8 ans, votre enfant découvre la musique : Ecoute, fabrication d'instruments, approche rythmique... Bref, une bonne base pour intéresser vos enfants à la musique en général.

A partir de 8 ans. C'est l'instrument idéal après l'éveil musical. Avec un doigté rudimentaire, la musique celtique devient un vrai jeu d'enfant. C'est peut être aussi l'occasion aux adultes de démarrer une activité musicale (même sans avoir un seul instrument auparavant).

A partir de 8 ans. La sonorité de la bombarde est devenue incontournable en Bretagne. Facile d'approche, les progrès se font sentir rapidement lors de son apprentissage. Il existe également des cours pour adultes (débutant

Il existe peu de cursus de formation de ce genre

en Bretagne. Ce cours, ouvert à des sonneurs confirmés, permet d'acquérir un style et une expression dans des terroirs aussi différents que le Pays Montagne, le Pays Vannetais, l'Aven, le Léon... Une expérience enrichissante qui fera de vous un couple autonome, le but étant de sonner en fest-noz.

**Une équipe enseignante,
jeune et dynamique, vous encadre
tout au long de l'année.**

BRETONNES
La danse traditionnelle
en Bretagne mérite
un enseignement
approfondi pour en
restituer l'essence même

formules d'appuis, terroirs, historique, évolutions récentes... Ce cours, ouvert à tous à partir de 12 ans, s'échelonne sur plusieurs niveaux (débutants, continuants, perfectionnement).

Le kan ha diskan, forme de chant traditionnel unique en son genre accompagne la "dañs-tro" (gavotte-nlenn-fisel) du ce

La connaissance du breton est souhaitable pour cet apprentissage, ouvert sur 2 niveaux (débutants, continuants) à partir de 12 ans.

Encadré par un chef de cœur
de qualité, le répertoire
proposé est cholsl dans le riche
patrimoine des chants bretons
(en breton et en français).

Il n'est pas nécessaire de parler breton. Cette chorale est destinée aux adultes et adolescents à partir de 15 ans.

issus de la vie musicale bretonne actuelle, les enseignants vous feront partager leur passion de la traditionnelle : musique de Bretagne d'Ecosse et des pays de l'est. Ce cours ouvert à tous : enfants à partir de 10 ans, adultes, débutants ou non.

C'est la cornemuse bretonne qui depuis l'origine accompagne la bombarde. Ces cours sont peu dispensés en Bretagne et permettent d'acquérir une autonomie et une technique essentielle pour pouvoir sonner en couple.

Contrairement au binlou-koz, cet instrument a été adopté par les bretons après la guerre. Les cours sont basés sur la technique d'apprentissage, en débutant sur l'avant d'aborder l'instrument. Les écossais, irlandais et gallois commencent essentiellement l'écossais, irlandais et gallois. A partir de 10 ans débutants ou

Dans ce cours seront étudiés des arrangements de musique bretonne et celtique, joués de la manière classique. Ouvert à partir de 8 ans, sachant qu'une Formation Musicale est souhaitable pour les débutants.

L'instrument et le répertoire, ainsi que le style et la technique, sont différents de la guitare classique. En effet, c'est en "open tuning" (a) que seront travaillés des répertoires de musique essentiellement bretonne traditionnelle ou actuelle. A partir

Des stages spécifiques à chaque instrument sont susceptibles d'être organisés au cours d'année.

traversière
en bois

Nouvel instrument traditionnel breton,
la flûte traversière en bois se pratique au
Centre Breton dès l'âge de 9 ans.
Cours collectif ouvert à tous les niveaux.

Ce cours est ouvert à tous, tous niveaux, à partir de 9 ans. Différents terroirs sont enseignés : aussi bien la musique bretonne qu'irlandaise ou écossaise, ainsi que des pièces de musique sud-américaine. Dans le cursus d'individus sont inclus des ateliers par niveau.

Cet instrument assez facile à débiter et entraînant, n'a plus sa réputation à faire en Bretagne.

Les cours sont ouverts à tous (dès 8 ans), ils se déroulent en individuel ou en groupe, selon le niveau. Répertoires abordés : Bretagne, Irlande. Pays de l'Est, divers

La formation musicale

Plus communément appelée "soifège", cette matière, plus théorique, a pour but de compléter la formation instrumentale. Par le chant et l'apprentissage de pas de danses traditionnelles, sont abordés les différents modes rythmiques et mélodiques.



Notes on a Few Upcoming Events

It is impossible to profile all of the hundreds of events that go on in Brittany (and the rest of the Celtic world) during the summer and fall, but here are just a few upcoming events worth noting.

Festival International du Film Insulaire

Île de Groix – August 30 to September 2, 2001
International Festival of Island Film

This is a brand new festival to be held on the Île de Groix off the southern coast of Brittany (find Lorient and head due south). During the festival 21 documentary films chosen from a field of 55 with an island theme will compete for awards. The opening evening of the festival will feature a preview of the documentary-fiction film "Océanie" by Charles Belmont with the presence of Marie-Claude Tjibaou, the widow of a Kanak leader active in fighting for his people's identity in French colonized Polynesia. The evening will also include Breton and Polynesia song and dance and a concert by Gilles Servat who has adopted the Island of Groix as his home. Music will find its place during the next three days of the festival as well, but the focus will be on films, including some classics from the archives. And of course there will be plenty of opportunity for festival goers to discuss film over good food and drink during the course of the festival.

For more information about this festival contact its web site: www.filminsulaire.com

This island film festival follows close on the heels of Brittany's major annual film festival—the Douarnenez Festival of Cinema (Gouel ar filmoù) to be held August 18-25. Now in its 24th year, the Douarnenez Festival features a different people/nation each year and this year will be featuring the Maories of New Zealand with films as well as music. The festival will also feature competitions of films from Brittany as well as a competition of fictional films of Europe in minority languages. For more information contact: www.kerys.com/festival

Festival Bro Gwened

Vannes/Gwened – November 9-11, 2001

While most festivals in Brittany are concentrated in the summer months, there are some good ones held in other months of the year. During the three-day festival in Vannes you can find stands displaying books and presenting various cultural organizations, workshops to introduce Breton dance, music, embroidery and the Breton language, and an exhibit on Gouren, a Celtic style of wrestling very much alive in Brittany.

The festival kicks off Friday night (11/9) with a concert by the group Kornog. On Saturday (11/10) Gérard

Delahaye performs especially for children, you can hear a lecture by historian Loeiz Le Bec on the territories of Brittany, and you can attend an original composition performed by the Bagad Melinerion and Cercle Celtique de Vannes. All this is followed by a fest noz featuring the groups Filifala, Follenn and Kamalata. Sunday starts off with a Mass conducted in the Breton language, followed by a lecture on Breton wrestling by Erwan Puillandre, and a competition for young musicians (under 20) for music for Breton dance.

Congratulations to the City of Vannes and its commission for Breton culture on the organization of an interesting festival and for the production of a colorful flyer on the festival which is in both French and Breton—a fine example of how the Breton language can be brought into public view in publicity.

For more information contact: www.vannes-bretagne-sud.com

Celtic Women's Conference

Milwaukee, Wisconsin, U.S.A. – October 11-13, 2001

Organized by Celtic Women International, Ltd., this conference features a mix of music and lectures on a variety of topics, including:

Marjorie Warren "Tartan and Beyond—The Method to the Madness"; Alice Taylor "A Woman's Poetry", Trefor Williams "Under Milkweed by Dylan Thomas", Meda Ryan "Biddy Early", Jeanine Semon "Women's Unique Pride and Power: Her Breasts", Morgan Llywelyn "Irish Women in Politics", Marjorie Warren "The Kilbarchan Project: Tracing Scottish Roots of Appalachian Weaving", and Alice Taylor and Meda Ryan "Growing up in County Cork".

Music includes a concert by Dolores Keane as well as song and instrumental performances of Irish and Scottish music and folktales during the conference by Eileen Neihouse, Marjorie Bennett, Margaret Bennett, Flora MacDonald Gammon, Deborah Quigley and Betsy McGovern

I have a number of brochures I would be happy to mail anyone interested, or you can contact:
www.celticwomen.org / telephone: 414 257-3770
e-mail: cwi@celticwomen.org

A Traveler's Account of Brittany In 1925

From: Elizabeth Shackleton, Touring Through France (Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Company). 1925

The following account is Chapter VII ("The Tip of Finistère") of a book on wider travels in France published in 1925. We join the author and a driving companion as they explore the southwestern part of France.

In promising sunshine we started to the westernmost tip of France, the Pointe du Raz and the Bay of Trépassés, both on the end of Finistère. England has a Land's End and France another, Finistère, names for their westernmost headlands coming down from the days when the earth was believed flat.

Everybody, *toute le monde* was coming into Quimper that forenoon; leading ponies, leading pink pigs, sitting high on two-wheeled carts, two and three on a seat. Velvet ribbons were flying, coifs bobbing. Carts were in groups of seven or eight as if they had started and kept together. All were full with butter baskets and small produce. We met the carts in climbing a fifteen mile kilometer hill toward Douarnenez. Through dark pines and yellow-blossoming gorse, again we were near the sea, but at a town set high above its inlet. There was an ideal place to look down at the sardine boats and all the attendant industry. The fishermen in Douarnenez walked the streets in rose-pink trousers and round coats of rough linen. Hardly had we grasped this astonishing color when a group of men clad in brilliant ochre, with black felt hats pulled out over their eyes, came by, striding along in flat wooden shoes of great size. Why should men always wear sombre hues? In Douarnenez they blossomed as the rose, not one, not ten, but a whole town of them, lighting up the street with their brilliance.

We gazed down to see a boat load of sardines—the town record is two million tins a year—a silvery tonnage handled by rose-pink men. An ochre group would have been ochre and silver. The imagination reaches out for such a color combination. But a squall came in from the angry

sea. We sought shelter in the car and ran before the wind out of the rain.

The children were playing at the crossroads, at Comfort, where stood the best *Calvaire* we saw in all Brittany, a great outside stone shrine, high-set, surmounted by a cross and a score of statued saints. All the road was the kneeling place.

Hard living was all we saw in this country, with only sheep pastures on the land. At Pont Croix we turned in to see an old abbey whose famous great tower had five centuries of age to its credit and was the model in double duplicate for the towers in Quimper. This bit of architectural wisdom on the part of the bishop in 1850 fixed on Quimper the reputation of being the finest cathedral in Brittany and he built them by a collection of *sous*.

The headland of Finistère narrows toward solemn-named Trépassés—departed souls. We came into Audierne, with broad quays, blue water and many yawls manned by standing rowers. Long, sky-blue seines were garlanded from pegs to dry in the sun. There were knots and groups of old mariners and fishermen—one is never confused with the other. They all had shrewd, seafaring eyes and were clad in bright ochre linen and had trouser legs as big as skirts.

A *tambour de ville*, the town crier, was rolling his lively drum and calling out an auction. We ate in a glassed-in terrace and saw the auction and when we started the car, which had been standing on the quay, two old ochre-clad men came from basking in the sun to tell us how to get on the bridge. They wanted to talk and have news to tell their cronies. One would get his shoulders in the window and the other would say: "sh-sh" to him

and pull him out. Then in would come another blue beret and he would gallantly tell us the turns to take. No wonder they talked of the narrow bridge at the wide harbor river. The wheels of the car could just enter the roadway. Our running boards overhung the beams which stoutly bounded the strait and narrow way. We were told not to enter if anyone was coming the other way. But supposing someone came—the thought kept us on the move.

Wind-driven hills looked down upon the sea. The distorted oaks and the flat-topped pines grew fewer. A squat, square tower with a dome on it, St. Tugen's, was strange enough, lying down by the sea, to belong to the mythical land of Is.

Bleak windmills, bare armed, stood on low cones, outlined against the sky. Trees ceased. We came to a sandy beach where strong, black-capped women and ochre-clad men were gathering seaweed. They carried the slippery, yellow, ribbon-like weed, heavy and sodden, on stretchers to carts, fighting with the sea for fertility for their fields.

Advancing on the headland, a few sheep sheltered in small fields behind intricate stone walls, monuments of toil, patterning the green fields. The bare houses covered close to the green earth singly or in wind-driven hamlets. They had strong quoins up the edges and along their gables. Stones, like reversed corbels, were laid over the slates to hold them down in the piping wind. These low cottages had no windows and their doors were on the side away from the sea. The stones of their wells were chained down. A high lighthouse and a wireless station, whose great frame lay prone, crushed into the earth, were on the cliff.

This was Trépassés, the legended lonely end of the earth; the place of the dead. The road stopped. It was Finistère.

Underfoot, the spongy green looked like grass but it was dwarfed furze. We beat our way to the edge of the cliff and saw the ever-driving surf and the snarling waves. Two low lighthouses were on spray-hidden rocks, beyond the white area of

breakers which shimmered and spread, gathering and breaking in terrible and terrifying impulses. At our feet hollowed caverns in the rock moaned and echoed. Far at the right was a foaming sea, and close in, a bay of white sand beaten by cruel surf. This is the most feared and dreaded coast in Europe for those in peril of the sea; the coast of the Breton prayer: "Help us, our boat is so small; the sea is so great." It covers the land of Is which sank into the sea, where legended church bells ring under the waves, where a king's daughter left the sea-gate open for a lover.

The shelter of the car was a haven to us, breathless and deafened by the wind. Again we went past the stone walls lying like twisted chains thrown upon the green ground, past Plozevet, a cottaged street with shops for bare necessities. It has a statue of a Breton, just a sad, quiet old man with his hat off beside a long bronze list of names.

The long road back brought us into the trees again, and then into a land of mossy, lichenized orchards. We had the excitement of seeing an armoire of Louis XV's time on a woodpile and a carved oak bed-end fronting a pig-pen. The carts were returning from Quimper. Two women, covered head and all with blankets to keep off the wind, sat like upright bundles beside their men. At one tavern fifteen horses stood, noses in, carts out, while their owners were inside.

Again putting our bags on the running boards we started for the southeast to Beg-Meil and Concarneau. Climate shows a gentle side in this south-facing coast of Brittany, and we journeyed to Le Foret, through fantastic woods shining with holly. There were grotesque knots of tree stumps covered with English ivy and rich pine woods and oaks still full with leaves. The roads became narrow lanes near Beg-Meil and one stretch was sunken between abrupt banks feathery with ferns. A mother and two toddlers were all three gowned and coifed alike. A man was thatching a roof that had a wooden chimney. We passed a group of fairy-tale cottages, romantic and pictorial, flowery and bosky, almost make-believe in their loveliness. At Beg-Meil there were wooded sand dunes and

forty sail-boats on the quiet sea. Great blocky rocks were loose upon the shore.

Even the hotels were bowered in climbing roses and had shiny magnolias and camellias in their gardens. The green distortions of araucarias showed their writhing branches over garden walls. It was the verdure of the tropics.

Here we ate in an inn with a floor sanded in flourishes and patterned sweeps. Our coffee was made over a handful of twigs crackling under a copper pot. Thinking more of the sanded floor and the eight kinds of roses in blossom than of our route, we soon saw we were on a byroad, but it settled two points for us. There are thousands of men in Brittany who, even after years of army service, can speak no French. Here we found two men who were helpless at our queries, though manifestly desirous to answer. They had to fetch a young sister who could speak French. The second point was—we had wondered over it often—were these elaborate, immaculate coifs worn in their homes on workaday occasions? Out came two girls from this remote house. Each had her coif as perfect as on a Sunday in Quimper, but her apron was dark and heavy, not the gay one of display.

From this balmy coast we journeyed on along roads reddened by blood-colored seaweed dropped from field-going carts, through Foesnant and its bridge. Thus we came around a very curved bay to Concarneau, where carts were shaped like boats, reminiscent of Conestogas, and other carts were half circles of wood as if made of great staves. It was a rosy paradise in November.

... Each old stone bridge on the south coast of Brittany was the nucleus of a town such as the next one, Pont-Aven. The valleys had grown abrupt, much like ravines. In five of them we saw small groups of thatched roofs, mossy like the fields, under the level of the modern road with no wheel path leading to them, survivals of pack-horse and foot-path days.

Just one hundred kilometres brought us from Quimper to Quimperlé. We were looking for a

picturesque town and went on a hill where the church was perched like a scared hen on a pinnacle. Finding no place up there to stay we descended an utterly impossible road, on assurance it was *facile*, a road still slippery from a rain. Once down by the river's brim there we proposed to stay. The square tower where we had been was above us, almost at the zenith. We had the happy thought to search for a convent which proved to be on the river's bank just past a double row of clipped *tilleuls*. It was entered by an arch centuries old. The car stayed the nights under a cedar of Lebanon, with the moon overhead, in the quiet of a garden enclosed.

There was a great fluttering over us in the convent. Only one lamp *functioned*. A candle was offered, fitting in an old convent. It took two to light the candle. They at once decided I was very tired from driving. There were two hours before dinner. They tucked me in bed and blew out the candle and tiptoed off down the echoing corridor—with the matches!

The bare floored room was peaceful. The little fireplace was closed with a pictured saint. The bed was snowy. The bare washing table had a big bottle marked cognac, for a carafe. The windows looked out into a walled orchard with a watery moon, unpropitious for a car sleeping out, shining over the rising hills beyond the brimming river.

A gentle old nun, a working sister, for there are very marked layers of society in convent walls, brought my breakfast—and a footstool. She talked, her eyes beaming with interest. She had been out to see the car. One had never been within the gates before. They showed us their garden, sweet with rosemary and lavender, their cow and the water-gate on the river.

We went with an old French lady of seventy-five, as active as fifty, by the round Church of St. Croix whose manifest newness had grieved us with thoughts that the heavy hand of the restorer had been laid on it. But our French friend told us, in passing, that her brother had seen it fall in 1861 and the dust took a day to settle. We greatly enjoyed hearing her running comment on things

as we passed. The prefecture had been a Benedictine convent, another hotel had been the Dominican rival; a curious balustrade, over a gateway, had fallen down that very autumn. We peered in a wood-yard housed in a thirteenth-century abbey, and gained from her an explanation for a building whose windows were green shuttered on its three stories, with an opening aimed only at the sky. It was the jail! With her, we saw a valley owned by the American, -no other name known—who here manufactures cigarette paper in great quantity. “Of what,” we asked, “straw, rice, wood?” “*Non, chiffons*,” which is not as dainty a word in French as in English.

All this we had as we went with her to see a double wedding party dancing on an open *place* at the top of the high-town. Rain fell in showers and each time we sought shelter in doorways, of mansion, garage, and wood-seller’s hovel in succession—any *porte* in a storm. Always prefacing to us “The peasants are sage in affairs of the weather,” she asked a passing countryman. Each time she received a careful answer after a scrutiny of the heavens. Finally from a scrap of blue sky a fine afternoon was promised and it came.

We climbed by iron-railed stairs to the height that had so bothered us in descent by motor, to the old church of St. Michel whose two great buttresses spread out like props to hold it on its perch. They spread so far that a street goes under each of them in an arch. Shops were built against its walls on the bare, open square where the double wedding parties were supposed to be dancing on the pavement. They weren’t there! Madame was desolately disappointed. She asked and asked—no one knew anything. (They were the same ones who had sent us down the rapid descent the night before and we agreed with their own estimation of what they knew.) To assuage her distress we looked in the church at centuries-old ship models hung from the high roof, before shrines, as votive offerings for return from dangerous voyages. In came our friend—she had found the wedding party in the market.

Three long tables spread with white cloths were at one end. Great kettles of chicken were there, and plenty of cider and bread. All the other end of the market-house was filled with happy dancers, sixty partners on the floor at once, sixty high-set white coifs and gay beribboned aprons, sixty whirling full, black skirts! The men wore their flat black hats with silver buckles and flying ribbons, with long-legged trousers that showed up to a high waistline with a short round jacket of velvet and cloth. Old and young, the men had profiles like Roman coins. The wedding is an outdoor dance in Brittany; to-day it was in shelter only on account of the rain. Only a few had sophisticated dress and they were far from being the leaders of the day. The two brides had new velvet-banded black dresses, white silk aprons and extra pretty white coifs and each carried a bouquet with white paper folded around it. The music was not the traditional bagpipe and fiddle played on top of a barrel. This was regrettable, but it was an accordion, what Bernard Shaw calls a “squiffer.” It was in the hands of a man who knew how to make it go!

The whole floor was filled with couples, young and old, all gay. The infectious music began to play, a sort of “pop-goes-the-weasel” air. Suddenly, hands joined and with a bow backward, and a run forward, a gallant led off with a string of twenty behind him circling into a tangling maze. Many mazes began at once, until the whole floor was filled with serpentine lines of gay white caps and the velvet and silver hats of the men. They danced with spring, heads held high.

Skirts twirled far out, the men crooked a knee and snapped thumb and finger in the air. Old dames, old men, all joined in; all were gaily footing the dance, winding in, and winding out again, with rhythmic tap as they went. We were seeing one hundred and forty Bretons dance their famous gavotte, as it had been danced for a hundred years.

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