

BRO NEVEZ

INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE BRETON LANGUAGE
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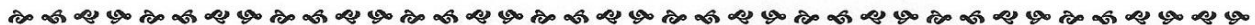
The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: February, 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. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above. Dues and contributions can also be sent electronically via the U.S. ICDBL web site – see below

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FROM THE EDITOR

The opening article in this issue of Bro Nevez has the title: "French – The Only Language for France?" As you will read in this issue, France seems very determined to make certain that the regional languages of France, like Breton, are given as little assistance as possible. Indeed, France's refusal to sign, ratify, or follow European and international treaties and agreements that are intended to protect cultural and linguistic diversity indicate that this country has no interest in the future of the rich cultural heritage within its borders. The French government seems incapable of imagining a world – and especially a France – where linguistic and cultural diversity is something positive instead of something threatening. This is demonstrated in its blind refusal to recognize the success of the immersion style of teaching used in the Diwan schools not only in giving children the chance to master the Breton language but also in turning out academically sound French speakers.

In view of what seems to be an increasing antagonism in France towards the development of regional languages and cultures, our support is needed now more than ever. We applaud those in Brittany who are working – as generations have before – to break down the walls of intolerance and foster the continued growth in Brittany of a culture rich in diversity and open to the world. And, as a spearhead in the development of an enlightened educational system where Breton is fostered as a living, breathing language, we wish Diwan well in its efforts to meet its financial challenges and continue to grow (U.S. ICDBL Members, you can help !! – see page 4).

French – The Only Language for France?

The following press release was received January 5, 2003, from the organization called "Identité Bretonne." It presents clearly the attitude of the French State towards the regional languages in France. I found this a chilling account of French linguistic imperialism and a sad tale of France's inability to join the rest of Europe in even the feeblest level of support for cultural diversity. The translation is mine and I take responsibility for any misinterpretation – Lois Kuter

One Does Away Well with the Languages

The adoption of the Charter of the Council of Europe on regional or minority languages, in the form of a convention, was the result of a long process begun in 1984 in a public forum at the European Palace in Strasbourg. Following this forum, the "Conférence Permanente des Pouvoirs Locaux et Régionaux" (C.P.L.R.E.) [Permanent conference of local and Regional Powers] – an organization that reports to the Council of Europe – decided to prepare a charter project on the issue. This task was given to a committee of experts which included, among others, two representative from the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, an organization created at the demand of the European Parliament and financed in part by the European Community. On June 25, 1992, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by a large majority as a constraining convention (that is, obligatory) for signing countries. Twenty-one (21) countries voted for this; a single one against (Greece) and four abstained (France, Great Britain, Cyprus and Turkey). France attempted to reduce the efficacy of the Charter by requesting that it just be a simple "recommendation" (judicially without any constraints) and not a "convention". The Charter was opened for the signature of countries on November 5, 1992, as a "convention".

In parallel action, the reaction of France was to introduce the idea of singleness of the French language in the French Constitution with the addition to its Article 2 of the phrase "the language of the Republic is French." And France voted (all political parties together) on June 23, 1992, for this addition with the single pretext to block the expansion of the English language. It was in pointing to this Article 2, thus catastrophically modified, that France refused on the following November 5 to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Language while 11 other members states were the first to accept it. This attitude brings to mind the Ordinance of Villier-Cotterêt in 1539 which was officially directed against

the use of Latin in the courts and civil service, but which marked in reality the fight against all Roman dialects as well as the languages of people not yet called minority language speakers.

In an official visit to Quimper on May 29, 1996, President Jacques Chirac proclaimed himself to be favorable to signing the European Charter but would, nevertheless, need to have the advice of the Council of State. Thus, on September 24 of that same year, the latter put out a negative opinion reminding us that one must not "be unknowing of the obligations stemming from the Article 2 of the Constitution" which stipulates that "the language of the Republic is French." When this modification to Article 2 was voted on, the greatest promises were made for the respect of regional or minority languages and that the Article would not be used against them.

At the request of the Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, a long report was presented on July 1, 1998, whose conclusion suggested "to start, judicial expertise should be consulted on the compatibility of this text [the European Charter] with our Law." This expertise was delivered by a constitutional jurist who concluded that France could sign the Charter with the condition of "clarifying the stipulations likely to be taken into account by France in this Charter in view of our constitutional rules and principles." In October 1998, in reading this report, the Prime Minister announced his intention to sign the European Charter for Regional or Minority Rights. Then on May 7, 1999, during a meeting for the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Council of Europe in Budapest, France finally decided to sign the European Charter – but in limiting its engagement to 39 paragraphs (of 98) that could not be applied in any case until France took the next step to ratify the Charter. In studying these 39 engagements, one can only conclude that these are no more in fact than what has already been achieved for regional or minority languages in France.

The Constitutional Council called together on May 20, 1999, by the President of the Republic rejected certain clauses in the Charter on June 16th which "constrained" the contracting parties. It was felt they were "contrary to the principles of indivisibility of the Republic, equality in front of the Law, and singleness of the French people, in the measure that they tended to confer 'rights specific to linguistic groups' within the territories where those languages are practiced."

In not ratifying The European Charter which a great majority of democratic states have not only proposed, but voted and ratified, France becomes one of the rare countries in the European Community to consecrate a privileged position for a unique official language in its constitution. This embarrassing position in view of the Council of Europe is aggravated by the fact that the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is a prerequisite imposed on all candidate countries wishing to join the European Union. In addition, France refuses to compensate for this linguistic imperialism with a statute recognizing other languages historically rooted in its territory – some there before the appearance of French (Basque and Breton in particular).

On last November 21, 2002, fifty (50) Deputies against 39 rejected a new modification to Article 2 of the Constitution proposing the addition to the paragraph stating “the language of the Republic is French” the mention “in the respect of regional languages which are part of its patrimony.” This feeble participation - 89 present of a total of 577 seats – shows well the weak interest France has for the languages in her charge.

In conclusion, the refusal by the French State to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages by insisting on its incompatibility with the Article 2 (modified specifically to create this incompatibility in 1992) while at the same time requiring candidate states joining the European Union to respect and apply the principles of this Charter constitutes a flagrant contradiction. It is a hypocrisy without precedent, unmask the type of linguistic imperialism one believed shelved in a history museum.

Finally, to confirm this conclusion, we cannot resist quoting the last phrase of an academic address entitled “Au secours du français” [“to the aid of French”] made by Mme Hélène Carrière d’Encausse, Permanent Secretary of the Académie Française, on December 5, 2002, at the Palais de l’Institut in Paris for the IX Summit of Francophonie de Beyrouth: “Isn’t it time to make French the great national cause for the beginning of this century?”

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French Deputies Say No to Respect for the Regional Languages of France

As noted in the previous article, on November 21, 2002, and amendment to Article 2 of the French Constitution was proposed in the National Assembly of France by 23 UMP Deputies (led by Marc Le Fur of Côtes d’Armor with Bretons from all five Departments of Brittany). This would have added to the sentence “The language of the Republic is French” the phrase “in respecting the regional languages which are part of its patrimony.” This is not a very strong statement, but enough to frighten those who fear that any respect given to a language other than French will mean the collapse of France. 39 votes went for the amendment and 50 against – just 89 Deputies of 577 present to bother to vote.

The French Council of State Says No (Again) to Breton

On November 29 the Council of State annulled all provisions related to the integration of Diwan into the public education system, with the conclusion that these schools run counter to the Constitution ... yes, that old Article 2: The language of the Republic is French. While Diwan is considered illegal as part of the public education system, it can continue as an “associative” school – a private school system where some teachers get support by the state, but where public monies are very hard to secure and are limited. Following the French State’s rejection of Diwan as a legal part of the public school system, the municipality of Saint-Nazaire decided that it could no longer offer the Diwan school in that city the building space it had given it.

A Crack in the Door?

As reported in a newspaper article ([Le Telegramme](#), February 11, 2003), the Minister of Education Luc Ferry has broached the subject of future integration of the Diwan schools into the public education system. He suggested that Diwan make “a small adaptation to the laws of the Republic” in having one-fourth of the classes in the Diwan schools taught through the medium of French. “It seems normal to me that the scheduling could be arranged so that a fourth of the classes are in French.” One has to wonder why it is necessary to make such a compromise when the Diwan system already guarantees that its students emerge with a mastery of the French language (and all other subjects in the French curriculum) equal to, if not better than, any other schools.

Diwan Moves On

As reported in the November 2002 issue of Bro Nevez, a change in leadership for Diwan came out of the General Assembly specially called on November 24. With the resignation of Andrew Lincoln and the Administrative Council, Michel Le Tallec, a chief critic, took on the presidency. He resigned after two weeks for personal reasons and a new President is now in place: Anne Le Corre. The administrative team for Diwan is now composed of: Anne Le Corre, Patrig Herve, Fañch Langoet, Joël Le Baron (Treasurer), Annie Le Forestier, and François-Gaël Rios.

The primary job for the new leadership is to raise funding to meet the current year's needs. Given the internal division that has plagued Diwan and shaken the confidence of its supporters, another major task is to rebuild both internal and external communication. The administrative team also feels it is important to continue to look at integration into the public school system as a long-term goal and there are plans to take the case of Diwan and immersion language schools to the European Courts to counter the decision of the French Council of State.

Work is underway by the administrative team to meet with all the Diwan schools and reestablish open communication. In building support and public confidence in Diwan, its leaders will also be meeting with Senators and Deputies of Brittany and community leaders where Diwan schools are found, as well as with the President of the Regional Council of Brittany, and business and cultural leaders of Brittany.

Diwan remains divided and there is concern that the administrative council does not currently represent all perspectives. But, Diwan is working to build internal communication so that the leadership can respond to all concerns and so that Diwan will have a structure in place that guarantees representation in leadership roles of people who have different views. The crisis of confidence within the Diwan organization is not yet over, but work is underway to heal divisions and move forward.

You Can Help Diwan

MONEY! It is easy to be a bit unhappy about Diwan's internal leadership issues, BUT don't ignore the fact that the Diwan schools WORK in giving children and young people a solid education and mastery of the Breton language as a living everyday language for learning and play. And Diwan children achieve a mastery of the French language equal to any other child in France. The Diwan schools are

important for the future of the Breton language. By contributing to Diwan you are supporting the kids who are learning Breton. I urge U.S. ICDBL members and Bro Nevez subscribers to be generous in making a contribution. THANK YOU to those who already have. For those who want to help at this critical time, you can send a check made out to the "U.S. ICDBL" with a note that it is for Diwan to:

Lois Kuter, Secretary/Treasurer
U.S. ICDBL
169 Greenwood Avenue, Apt. B-4
Jenkintown, PA 19046

Or, for the electronically-minded you can use the U.S. ICDBL website and make a payment via PayPal: www.breizh.net/icdbl.htm

Diwan's Collaboration with other Regional Language Schools in France

Diwan is working once again with a federation of schools in France founded in 1997 (called "Escolim") which all use the immersion method to teach languages of their region. This includes "Seaska" for Basque, "Calandretas" for Occitan, "La Bressola" for Catalan, and "ABCM" for Alsatian. The representatives from these school systems met in Saint-Nazaire on January 18-19, 2003, to discuss concerns and prepare joint projects.

The federation has focused on teacher training and has held an annual conference to exchange scholarship on immersion education and share ideas based on the long practical experience gained in operating their schools. The federation hopes to meet more frequently and will also work jointly to meet with government officials to try to gain a secure legal status for immersion teaching of regional languages.

French, the Only Language for France? – A Demonstration to Say NO!

A demonstration in the streets of Rennes in front of the Regional Council of Brittany has been called for March 22, 2003. The demonstration has as its main "themes" the implementation of action:

- So that the Constitution recognizes and protects minority languages in conformity with international law and UN recommendations
- So that each individual can learn the language of his/her choice and freely use it in everyday life.

- So that the Regional Council of Brittany takes measures to guarantee the social future of the Breton language and the culture it inspires.
- So that the immersion pedagogy [used by Diwan] is officially recognized.

The four main organizers of the demonstration are Divyezh (the association of parents of children in bilingual programs in the public school system), Dihun (parents of children in bilingual programs in the Catholic schools), Diwan (immersion bilingual schools), and Unvaniezh ar Gelennerien Brezhoneg (Union of Breton Teachers, incorporating 200 teachers from all types of bilingual school programs)

The Cultural Council of Brittany Urges Bretons to Hit the Street

The Cultural Council of Brittany (Kuzul Sevenadurel Breizh) is also a strong backer of the March 22 demonstration, and hopes it will serve as an important show of massive support for the Breton language and culture at a time when the French government seems intent on blocking all roads forward. The Cultural Council is a federation of over 50 cultural federations and associations in all five Breton departments, representing some 40,000 participants.

Congratulations from the U.S. ICDBL to **Patrick Malrieu**, former President and a founding member of Dastum, who is the newly elected President of the Cultural Council of Brittany. He takes over from Jean-Louis Latour (President of Kendalc'h, a major federation of Cercles Celtiques) who was President of the Council for nine years. Patrick Malrieu has a broad and deep knowledge of Breton culture. He is musician and a Breton speaker, and through his work with Dastum he has become very familiar with the wealth of traditions in all five departments of Brittany. He is fully behind the mobilization of the "troops" affiliated with the Cultural Council of Brittany, and has sized up the current need for urgent action quite well in noting that "On the linguistic level, France is behaving like a totalitarian country." (Quest France 20 janvier 2003).

A Letter to the French President

Patrick Malrieu has wasted no time in getting to work as the new President of the Cultural Council of Brittany, and the following letter is an eloquent statement concerning France's hypocrisy in proclaiming itself a defender of the world's cultural

diversity while at the same time it continues to work to eradicate languages and cultures within its own borders. *The translation from French is mine, and I apologize in advance for any misinterpretations of the original text. I would be pleased to supply the letter and appended information on European human rights agreements and France's failure to meet them (not included below) to anyone interested.* -- Lois Kuter

↓↓↓

Mr. Jacques Chirac
President of the Republic
Palais de l'Elysée
55, rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré
75008 Paris

Roazhon / Rennes, February 13, 2003

Mr. President,

At the International Meetings on Culture held in Paris, February 2, you were a proponent in favor of a "world agreement on cultural diversity" which would take in the values of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the pacts and treaties which have followed from it. You hoped that it would proclaim "equal dignity for all cultures" and that it would clarify "the rights and duties of States, in regards to the respect for linguistic pluralism and the mobilization to stop the disappearance of languages of the world."

We would like to congratulate you on taking this position in favor of values to which we are particularly attached in Brittany.

Moreover, in anticipation of such words, during the past 25 years Diwan has developed bilingual education through immersion, secular and open to the world in spirit, with very positive results confirmed by good results on baccalaureate exams and regular inspections. Likewise, the National and Catholic education systems have practiced bilingual education where Breton and French are taught equally which, like Diwan, have grown steadily.

It has been proven, in addition, that these intellectual gymnastics facilitate children's practice of other languages necessary for international exchanges.

In fact, successive surveys show—each time in an increased way—the desire of Bretons to be able to practice this linguistic pluralism. The most recent in date (TMO and Sofrès) reported that 92% of the population is in favor of the preservation of Breton.

Along the same lines, public and associative work—sometimes supported by public measures such as

the Cultural Charter of Brittany in 1978—have shown all the beneficial aspects which come from the positive practice of one's identity and culture. Breton music, appreciated throughout the world today—especially by youth—is a remarkable example.

Unfortunately, at this time, we are forced to suffer from a political agenda which is exactly opposed to your recent propositions, and from a refusal to ratify agreements which exist already to preserve cultural identity.

- In 1999 you consulted the Constitutional Council on the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages, then you refused to modify the Constitution, thus blocking the ratification of this Charter which is intended to protect the diversity of languages in Europe.
- In November and December 2002 your party, the UMP, in both the National Assembly and the Senate were equally opposed to all modifications of the constitution by an amendment that would have assured the respect and protection of the languages of France.
- France has always refused to ratify international provisions and agreements which recognize the right to cultural and linguistic diversity. You affirm that you are building on the Universal Declaration of Human rights, and pacts and treaties following from it, while at the same time France has not ratified Article 27 of the International Pact on Civil and Political Rights, nor Article 30 on the rights of children which would permit speakers of regional languages to be recognized and to use and protect their languages.

To justify itself, France declares that there are no minority groups in its territory, while the UNESCO Universal Declaration on cultural diversity of November 28, 2001—that you support—affirms in its Article 1 that “this diversity is incarnated in the originality and plurality of identities which characterize groups and societies making up humanity.” In denying up to this very day the existence of a reality that history and culture attest to, our institutions are clearly opposed to the cultural diversity that you extol.

The international instances have not failed to raise these contradictions and to demand that France put an end to them.

Thus, on this past January 15, the European Parliament voted an agreement by the States on the application of principles of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and

delineated the different serious shortcomings of France for the Article 22 concerning notably cultural and linguistic diversity. It recalled that France had been faulted by the UN supervising committee on pacts relative to economic, social and cultural rights which underlined the fact that “Equality in legal treatment isn't always sufficient to arrive at equality in the rights of minority groups, notably concerned with their socio-cultural rights.”

It also brought up the fact that France is today the only State of the European Union to have not signed nor ratified the framework agreement of the Council of Europe relative to “national minorities.” The European Parliament, like the followup committee of the UN, asked France to ratify this agreement as well as other international documents guaranteeing cultural diversity.

In total contradiction to these international principles, the Constitutional Council interprets the Constitution (in Articles 1 & 2) in an extraordinarily restrictive manner against the regional languages. The Council of State, in leaning on the Toubon Law to refuse the teaching through immersion practiced by Diwan, violates this law in authorizing itself to judge pedagogical methods (Article 11) and in deliberately forgetting the articles which protect regional languages (Article 21). It thus puts into question the very existence of the Diwan schools and other schools of this type – which are models of success in the development of the Breton language as well as regional languages, and also models for multilingualism, openness to the world, and respect for cultural diversity.

In prohibiting, in principle and in fact, the use of a language other than French in the operational life of a school, the State denies the other languages of France all social life, and attacks their very existence, perpetuating thus a political agenda of eradication dating back several centuries.

Here, instead of “correcting the disequilibrium in the spirit of justice and solidarity,” following your recommendations, the highest institutions of the State favor the dominant language over the dominated languages, thus putting law to the service of the strongest, and at the same time developing a political agenda that excludes citizens who are concerned about conserving social existence and their regional language.

You say that there are “borders which *mondialisation* (internationalization) does not have the right to abolish. They are those which allow us to travel from one culture to another.” Alas! In denying that within a State a plurality of languages and cultures exists,

aren't you in the process of imposing a unique culture in a closed space, with one single language? Aren't you quite simply in the process of asking that Human Rights stay at the border in order to complete the eradication of different languages and cultures in France?

You speak of "planetary democracy, united on the essentials but respectful of differences," of "respect of others and dialogue between peoples," but you have supported that which you say you denounce – that is, "the clash of civilizations," the "archaic collapsing-in of identities and nationalisms." You do not defend cultural and linguistic diversity in its totality, but a kind of division of the world between just several languages and cultures with a hegemonious calling in their respective zone – just as in colonial times.

How can you pretend to gain necessary and legitimate respect for the French language if France herself does not respect her own languages.

In refusing to believe in a move towards and discrimination between "good" and "bad languages," which would be totally in conflict with the humanist principles you put forward, we have to be convinced that this new perspective marks the beginning of a wholesome turn-around where "the respect of differences" will make possible the promotion of pedagogical and cultural projects allowing a living bilingualism in our country, and fostering multilingualism, intelligence, and the respect for others.

In total consistency with your proposals, we ask you to act so that France will ratify the international agreements on the diversity of languages and cultures, and put them into practice from now on, supporting those who defend this diversity instead of fighting them.

Please accept, Mr. President, my distinguished greetings.

Patrick Malrieu
President, Cultural Council of Brittany

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257,000 Breton Speakers in Brittany

(The information below is drawn from an article by Alain Le Bloas, Le Télégramme, 22 janvier, 2003).

A new survey by the INSEE made of 40,000 Bretons over 18 years old projects that there are 257,000 Breton speakers and 28,300 Gallo speakers in Brittany today. Based on survey statistics and estimated one adult in five (430,000 people) talk with friends/family in a language other than French (112,000 of these use English).

For the Breton language, the numbers are not a surprise and the study confirms the challenges facing Breton as a language practiced by a rural and aging population. One Breton speaker in two is over 65 years old and three out of four are over 50. The loss in family transmission of Breton is largely to explain this demographic divide where only 4% of the Breton population under 35 (and over 18) speak Breton or Gallo.

The survey also showed that the greatest concentration of Breton speakers is where one would expect – in Lower Brittany. 20% of the population of Finistère can speak Breton, 15% of Côtes d'Armor, 11% of Morbihan, less than 2% in Ile-et-Vilaine (and over 80% of these are from western Brittany), and .07% in Loire-Atlantique.

The rural implantation of Breton is also shown in looking at socio-professional categories. 32% of Breton farmers speak Breton, 15% of artisans, shop keepers and workers, and 8% to 11% for administrators/business people and professionals like teachers.

Breton Speakers in the U.S.A.??

From time to time figures for the number of Breton speakers in the U.S. are tossed out as if they are confirmed fact. Most recently a Ouest France newspaper article about champagne exportation from Brittany to Texas stated "according to the last census, numbers show that approximately 25,000 Americans speak Breton as their second language." Well, the latest census of 2000 and the one before that for 1990 show nothing about the Breton language in the U.S., nor do they give statistics for any other Celtic languages that I could find – although some numbers are yet to be published for 2000.

The 1970 census is perhaps to blame for some wild numbers tossed out for Breton speakers in the U.S. In the second issue of the U.S. ICDBL newsletter published in February 1982 we cited the numbers from "U.S. Census Data for 1970 – Mother Tongue of the Population by Nativity and Parentage." This statistical chart showed that 32,722 individuals cited Breton as their "mother tongue" (7,252 of these were third generation – born in the U.S. of parents born in the U.S.). The figures were derived from a sample of 15% of the U.S. population who answered a longer form of the census questionnaire. The totals are derived using a mathematical formula; they do not reflect an actual head count of Breton speakers. The Census Bureau clarifies that "The data on mother tongue may not reflect a person's current language skills since the vast majority of persons reporting a mother tongue other than English have learned to speak English during or after childhood."

The actual question about language in the 1970 census read as follows:

What language, other than English, was spoken in this person's home when he was a child? Fill one circle

- ☐ Spanish*
- ☐ French*
- ☐ German*
- ☐ Other – specify _____*
- ☐ none, English only*

So, it would be quite possible for people of Breton heritage in the U.S. in 1970 to say Breton was a "mother tongue" if they heard parents speak it, but never learned a word of it themselves.

For some reason, I did not investigate the 1980 census – or found nothing to report on Breton from statistics I researched.

Today, with a web site for the Census Bureau (www.census.gov) one can indulge in lots of research. I have looked for information from both the 1990 and 2000 census and have not yet located any information on Breton or the other Celtic languages on the web site. However, not everything is available yet from the 2000 census and only part of the 1990 census is posted on the site.

For both the 1990 and 2000 census, the following question was asked concerning language – and again this was for a 15% sample sent a longer form of the questionnaire.

11. a) *Does this person speak a language other than English at home?*

____ *yes*
____ *no*

b) *What is this language?*

(for example: Korean, Italian, Spanish, Vietnamese)

c) *How well does this person speak English?*

____ *very well*
____ *well*
____ *not well*
____ *not at all*

In response to inquiries I made to the Census Bureau as to whether there were statistics available for more than the major languages shown in the 2000 Census tables, I got a swift and helpful response. The language question was included only on the Census long form sent to one in six households (approximately 19 million addresses). Detailed information is still being tabulated, but if the percentage of people stating they speak Breton at home is too small (not "statistically significant") to use to estimate speakers in any given area of the U.S. or of the total population, then "Breton": may never show up in census charts.

I will keep looking, and those who want to pursue this are encouraged to do some research as well!



BRETON AND THE INTERNET

The following information comes from e-mails sent to me as well as a recent article in the magazine *Ar Men* (No. 31, Nov.-Dec. 2002)

DISCUSSION GROUPS FOR BRETON LEARNERS

Brezhoneg-L -
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/brezhoneg-l>

As described on the home page of this web site:
Brezhoneg-L is a discussion group for people interested in or wishing to learn Breton [Brezhoneg] through the medium of English. Breton, the Celtic language of Brittany [Breizh], is a language related to Cornish and Welsh. Discussions about the history of Brezhoneg, including Old and Middle Breton texts,

or personalities involved in its development, for example, are also on-topic and welcome. As of January 25th, 73 individuals had joined this discussion group which was started November 3, 2002.

For broader discussions about Breton culture, music, history, etc., there is a sister site called "gwenn ha du" ("white and black") at the following address:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/gwenn-ha-du/>

Two others:

Petra Nevez ("What's new") -
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/petra-nevez

Deskit-Brezhoneg ("learn Breton") -
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/deskit-brezhoneg

USING THE INTERNET TO LEARN BRETON

Kervarker - www.kervarker.org

Operating since 1995, this is the best known site to take lessons, and operates through 5 languages: Breton, French, German, Spanish and English. Nineteen lessons from Mark Kerrain's Ni a gomz brezhoneg are offered with sound so you can hear pronunciation and the opportunity to get feedback on the lessons. The site also has a wealth of information on the history of the Breton language, grammatical points, proverbs and short texts in Breton.

Martial Menard - www.france-ouest.com/cours-de-breton

These are short lessons on various topics prepared by Martial Menard for the Sunday edition of the newspaper Ouest-France.

Skol Ober - <http://pers.wanadoo.fr/skol-ober>

Skol Ober has been a correspondence course that has operated in Brittany since 1932, helping students to learn to read and write Breton long before any school programs were available. These courses remain important to adults and to young people not able to enroll in classes. With the advent of e-mail, the communication between teacher and student is definitely more direct and unlike other internet classes, this is not a do-it-yourself method of learning, but you work closely with a teacher. Check out the web site to see how to enroll.

TO FIND CLASSES IN BRITTANY

The best way to learn Breton is to spend time in Brittany in an intensive immersion class (week-long sessions) or in regular weekly sessions. Nothing beats using the language in a face-to-face encounter with people! Here are just two internet sites that can be used to help locate classes:

www.gwalarn.org/deskin
<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/skol.an.emsav>

There are a number of federations of cultural organizations which can put you in contact with groups offering language classes or other classes (bombarde or traditional dance workshops...). I would be happy to help readers with addresses, web sites or other contact information if you plan to travel to Brittany.



2ND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF INSULTS AND DISPUTES

On Saturday February 22 the 2nd World Championship of Insults and Disputes in the Breton Language will be held (was probably already held by the time you read this) in Guerlesquin. This is organized by the Dastum branch in Bro-Dreger, and has two different parts, both judged by a jury of university professors, linguists and other "competent personalities".

The first part of the championship is for "disputes" where duos debate on specific themes: for example, the merits of good vs. bad weather, fishermen versus farmer, etc. Some fifteen duos are lined up for "disputes" that will be delivered via song, spoken discourse, or in musical form (and if you can't quite imagine that, I can assure you that the paired playing of biniou and bombarde lends itself nicely to this form of exchange).

The second part of the contest is for insults and is played out in teams of four people: One from the north of the National Route 12 (the highway from Rennes to Brest) and the other from the south.

This is an event where the richness of the Breton language is celebrated, and where those skilled in improvising with rich imagery and poetry emerge as champions. The 2002 Championship attracted some 800 people and a great deal of media attention.

READING ABOUT AND IN THE BRETON LANGUAGE

Coming Soon: A New Book On The Six Celtic Languages: "Rebuilding The Celtic Languages; Reversing Language Shift In The Celtic Countries".

To Be Published and Released Spring 2003
Edited by: Diarmuid Ó Néill, ICDBL Canada
Preface by: Joshua Fishman, Stanford University
For details, contact: jdhoneill@sympatico.ca

This book is based on the sociolinguistic theories of Joshua Fishman. Treated by eleven authors it explores how these theories may be applied to the six Celtic languages not only in Europe but also in Nova Scotia (Scottish-Gaelic) and Argentina (Welsh). The book looks at the historical background and present day circumstances of the Celtic languages. Each case study looks at the 8 stage Fishman GIDS scale (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale) and how it may be applied to the Celtic language situation in question. Joshua Fishman puts heavy emphasis on the importance of building up -family -home -neighborhood -community use of threatened languages. The book also includes up to date information from the new census results of 2001 in the UK regarding the number of speakers of Welsh, Scottish-Gaelic, Manx-Gaelic and Irish speakers in Northern Ireland. Also included are recently published estimates of the number of Breton speakers by Ofis ar Brezhoneg and other estimates regarding the actual number of Cornish speakers, Welsh speakers in Argentina, Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia and estimates of the actual number of Irish speakers in the Irish Republic.

The Celtic League Gives a Sneak Peek

A 16-page sample of what this book will entail is featured in a special 60-page issue of Carn, the magazine of the Celtic League (No. 118-120 / Winter 2002-2003). This magazine is recommended to anyone who wants to keep abreast of a wide range of issues in the Celtic countries – political and economic as well as cultural. For more information contact the Celtic League Secretary in the U.S.:

Margaret Sexton
c/o P.O. Box 20153
Dag Hammarshjold Postal Centre
New York, NY 10017.

AL LIAMM – A Literary Journal for Breton

During the 57 years of existence, this magazine has published the work of some 1,000 authors and 4,500 poems, short stories, and essays in the Breton language. Each 130 page issue includes a large content of poems and short stories, but also studies about literature, history, or a particular Breton region, and travel accounts and memoirs. Most issues also include short notes on events related to the Breton language, book reviews and a description of the content of a dozen or more magazines in Brittany (including a presentation of Bro Nevez when timely). The editorial team is made up of Ronan Huon, Tudual Huon, Herve Huon, Pêr ar Bihan, Erwan Tranvouez and Herve Latimier. There are six issues per year and the subscription is 35 Euros (for those living outside of Brittany and France). To subscribe send a check made out to Al Liamm (in Euros) to:

Al Liamm
2 rue du Muguet / 2 straed Louzaouenn an Hañv
22300 Lannuon (Lannion)

To get more information about Al Liamm (in Breton) you can also consult its web site: www.alliamm.com

This site includes a history of Al Liamm, an introduction to the editorial team and a great search feature to locate authors published in all 335 issues of Al Liamm to come out so far. The search feature allows to you find the name of an author with a list of each issue number where their work is found, the page it's found on, and the type of work it is (study, short story, poem, etc.). You can also use the search feature to find the contents of all 335 issues of Al Liamm.

MEURIAD – A New Magazine for Teens

After launching two magazines for children – Rouzig and Louarnig – Keit Vimp Beo has started a new magazine for teens and adult Breton learners who want to practice their Breton reading skills in a fun way. In 32 colorful pages you get lots of "comic strips" – better described as the more sophisticated 'bande dessinée' than the 3-panel American newspaper comics – as well as short articles, games and puzzles.

Subscription for a year is 50 Euros (for 4? Issues). For more information or to subscribe contact:

Keit Vimp Beo
22 Grand Rue
29520 Laz
keit-vimp-beo@wanadoo.fr

MEMOIRS BY A BRETON IN AMERICA

Reun ar C'halan. War hentoù an tremened.

Al Liamm 333, Eost 2002. 144 pp.

Reun ar C'halan was born in 1923 in C'hastell Nevez (Châteauneuf-du-Faou) in central western Brittany. He moved to the U.S. with his family when he was young but returned to Brittany to complete his studies, including work at the University of Rennes (Licences ès Lettres, 1944). During World War II he served in the French Resistance and in the French Army. After the war he returned to the U.S. and received a PhD in 1952 from Yale University. From 1951 to 1993 when he retired, Reun ar C'halan was a Professor of French at Wellesley College in Massachusetts.

Reun ar C'halan was one of the founding members and encouraged the early growth of the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language, serving on our Board of Directors from 1981 to 1993 when he requested a leave due to health concerns and the desire to devote more time to his writing. During a decade he contributed over two dozen articles in Breton to Bro Nevez on a wide variety of topics. He has written a large number of articles and books on French and Breton literature (in English, French and Breton), and he is well known in Brittany as a poet in the Breton language. Reun ar C'halan began to devote more time to his Breton language writing in the 1970s, and in 1979 his collection of poetry, Levr ar blanedenn won the Xavier de Langlais Prize. Today he continues to write articles on French and Breton literature and literary figures and to create poetry – in Breton. He is a frequent contributor to Al Liamm.

War hentoù an tremened takes up a full issue of Al Liamm (No. 333, August 2002). This is an autobiographical work that focuses on Reun ar C'halan's youth, World War II, and his arrival in the early 1950s back in the U.S.A. to become a French professor. The book is about the war years in Brittany and is also very much about Reun ar C'halan's development as a writer and poet and the literary influences upon his work.

SOME NEW BOOKS IN THE BRETON LANGUAGE

Information for these short notes was gathered from: Al Liamm 334 & 335 (Here & Kerzu 2002) and Ar Men 130 (Sept/Oct. 2002).

Fañch an Uhel. Yezh ar vuhez.

Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 128 pp.

This book includes gwerzioù (ballads) written by François-Marie Luzel, modeled after those he had collected in the 19th century.

Yves-Pascal Castel. An Elez en on ilzou.

Minihi Levenez. 96 pp.

This is a work on angels that adorn Brittany's churches, chapels and calvaries. It is translated from French by Anna-Vari Arzur and Job an Irien.

Yann-Fañch Jacq. Evel ma tro an heol.

Keit Vimp Beo. 192 pp.

This is a police novel set in Romania where the action unrolls in 73 short chapters.

Yann-Ber Kemener. Brezhoneg prim ha dillo.

Skol Vreizh. 2002

This is a text aimed at getting Breton learners off the ground quickly with words and phrases one would need in everyday life. It includes a short history of the Breton language, guide to pronunciation and orthography, a short two-page presentation of 28 characteristics of Breton grammar, and then 24 sketches and conversations on everyday life situations. Exercises help put words and phrases into practice, and a CD Rom can be used to master pronunciation.

Pierrette Kermaol. Un ene tan.

Embannadurioù Preder. 239 pp.

This is a study of novels and short stories written by Roparz Hemon.

Alexandre Ledan. Gwerzioù ha rimou brezoneg (levrenn genta).

Emgleo Breiz. 200 pp.

This is the first volume of ballads and sayings collected by Alexandre Ledan (1777-1855).

Jack London. Ar vosenn skarlek.

Embannadurioù Al Lanv. 120 pp.

This is a translation into Breton by Daniel Kernallegenn of London's 1914 novel called The Scarlet Plague – a futuristic work set in 2073.

Mikael Madeg. Dornskrid Sant Jakez.

Ar Skol Vrezhoneg. 118 pp.

This novel, rich in ethnographic detail, is about a Breton priest from Landivisiau who travels to Haiti for missionary work.

Mikael Madeg. Poent 'zo bet e Bro-Leon.

Brud Nevez/Emgleo Breiz. 220 pp.

This book contains 40 legends collected during years spent researching Breton place names and oral traditions in Bro-Leon – northwestern Brittany.

Arnaud Maisonneuve and Sylvain Kerno. La Bretagne se marre, biskoazh kement-all.

Des dessins et des mots. 128 pp.

This is a bilingual collection of humorous stories of Breton life, illustrated by Gégé.

Jean Marot. Geriadur ar Matematikou / Dictionnaire multilingue des mathématiques.

Skol Vreizh. 357 pp.

This book includes new and old mathematical words and expressions in the Breton language, prepared by a math

professor who knows how to make this topic interesting and approachable.

Fañh Morvannou and Yves-Pascal Castel. Michel Le Nobletz/Mikêl an Nobletz. Minihi Levenez. 135 pp.

This book is on the life of the Breton missionary who worked to keep Bretons on the straight and narrow path in the 16th century. It is a translation by Anna-Vari Arzur and Job an Irien from the original French work.

Naig Rozmor. Johnniged an Hilda. Brud Nevez. 112 pp.

This is a theater piece about the wreck of the ship An Hilda in 1905. This work focuses on the lives of "Onion Johnnies" – Breton farmers who crossed the channel seasonally to sell onions in the British Isles. Many were lost in this shipwreck.

Skol an Emsav. Deiziataer 2003.

Besides organizing classes in Breton throughout Brittany and producing the monthly magazine Bremañ, the organization called Skol an Emsav produces an annual pocket calendar entirely in Breton. This is not just a handy calendar that will help you learn the names of the days and months in Breton, but a little booklet filled with useful information. It includes for example a directory of various cultural and language groups in Brittany, folk sayings and expressions, a guide to mutations in Breton, and a list of cities and towns in Brittany in both their French and Breton version. You can purchase this from any of the bookstores in Brittany (Coop Breizh, Ar Bed Keltiek, etc.) or get it directly from Skol an Emsav, 8 straed Hoche, 35000 Roazhon/Rennes. 11.5 Euros.



A T.V. DOCUMENTARY ABOUT THE BRETON LANGUAGE

Patrick Guinard. Un siècle de breton. France 3 Ouest & 13 Production.

This is a series of documentary films (on 3 DVDs) on the history of the Breton language which aired on television in 2002. Careful to present ideas as just one perspective on the Breton language, these films look at the loss of the language and its potential for a future. [I know that for videos there is an issue of compatibility between formats in Europe and the U.S., but I am not sure if this is also the case for DVDs.]



RECOGNITION OF CREATIVITY IN THE BRETON LANGUAGE

Each year over 1,200 books are published in Brittany. There seem to be dozens of literary prizes awarded annually in Brittany, and a number of these include a prize for the best Breton-language work. The following information has been gleaned from flyers and e-mails I

have received as well as news clippings in Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg (Niv., 49, Du 2002).

International Poetical Gathering of Brittany

In October 2002 the Prix Imram for poetry in the Breton language was awarded to Tugdual Kalvez for the totality of his work. Readers of Bro Nevez have seen his name before in noting his work with Flemish poet Jan DeLoof to produce a number of translations of Breton poetry. Tugdual Kalvez was born in 1937 in Ploemeur (Morbihan) and has taught Breton for a number of years. He has served as a president for the Union of Breton Teachers (Unvaniezh ar Gelennerien Brezhoneg) which held its 20th annual meeting this past December. He was also a member of a groundbreaking band called Namnediz formed in the mid 1960s which was one of the first (if not the first) to combine electric guitar with acoustic instruments in interpreting Breton music and song. He has published several collections of poems and is a deserving recipient of the Imram prize for his lifetime of creativity. This prize was awarded along with two others in Saint-Malo during a weekend of workshops and performances called "Rencontres Poétiques Internationales de Bretagne" which featured a discussion on translation. The recipient for The Guillevic/City of Saint Malo International Grand Prize for Poetry was Édouard Maunick and The George Perros Prize was given jointly to Jean-Marie Barnaud and Hervé Carn.

Festival of Books in Brittany

Carhaix welcomed some 10,000 visitors in October to the 13th Festival of Books in Brittany. During this weekend several literary prizes were awarded, including the Langleiz Prize for a work in Breton which went to Ronan an Henaff for the whole of his work and specifically the works Telo Poullig ar stered and Burzhud koad an dug. Another prize for Breton language literature, The Diwan High School Students Prize, was awarded to Kristian Brisson for his work Al lenn. The City of Carhaix Prize for a Novel went to Soazig Aaron for Le Non de Klara.

Association of Breton Writers

Also in October, the Association des Écrivains Bretons (Association of Breton Writers) voted on seven different prizes for Breton writers, writers living in Brittany, or writers writing about Brittany. The Grand Prize was given for the first time to a work in the Breton language: Yann-Ber Piriou's collection of poetry, Kestell traezh evit kezeg ar mor (Sand castles for sea horses). A new prize this year was for a book on art and went to Renée Mabin, René le Bihan and Martica Swain for their work on Yves Tanguy. The Pierre Mocaër R prize was awarded to Michel Thersiquel and Daniel Yonnet for La Bretagne aimée des peintres, the Camille Le Mercier d'Erme Prize went to François de Beaulieu and Hervé Ronné for Les jeux des

Bretons, the Bretons of Paris Prize went to Alain l'Affeter for Albindios, and the Prize of the Espace Paul-Ricard went to Marie-Josée Christien for Un monde de pierres.

Priziu 2002 / Prizes for Creation in the Breton Language

The television channel France 3 Bretagne offers prizes each year to artists in a number of different media for work in the Breton language. This year the prizes were given out in December in Quimper and the ceremony was televised on the Breton language program called "Red an Amzer" several days later. From 21 contestants in 7 categories the following were chosen.

Prize for the Best Book for Children: Corinne Ar Mero, for the book Ar Bleizi, a study on wolves published by TES.

Prize for the Best Internet Site: Académie de Rennes for its site devoted to teaching Breton – www.ac-rennes.fr.

Prize for the Best Murder Mystery in Breton: Yann Bijer for his novel Teñzor dindan vor ar Priñs Frederik, published by Brud Nevez.

Prize for the Best Book of Poetry in Breton: Yann-Ber Piriou, for Kestell traezh evid kezeg ar mor, published by Skol Vreizh.

Prize for the Best Compact Disc: the group Spontus with the Kanerion Pleuigner, produced by An Naer Produktion.

Prize for the Best Film: a portrait of the poetess "Anjela Duval" produced by Mari Kermareg and co-produced by Kalanna and France 3 Ouest.

Prize for the Breton Speaker of the Year: This "grand prize" went to the radio station France Bleu Breiz (formerly known as Radio Bretagne Ouest) for its 20 years of work for the Breton language. This radio station has some 120,000 listeners and broadcasts 18 hours of Breton each week. [It should be noted that the smaller and more recently established "non-profit" radios Radio Kerne and Arvorig FM broadcast some 50 hours a week in Breton, but are limited to a smaller broadcast range in central Finistère and southern Côtes d'Armor. In a previous year Radio Kerne was given this prize]



Poellgor An Tarv

The "Academy of the Bull" is a bilingual group for Breton painters, sculptors, poets, writers and musicians which gathers various artists for shows which invite new collaborations. From June 20 to July 16 they will hold a "Salon" for artists and poets from all over Brittany in Guerlesquin. For more information about this group and its

upcoming salon consult the following web sites:
<http://mapage.noos.fr/wanepoun/poellgorantav/articles/index.htm> or <http://www.allevrig.com/poellgor.htm>.



STORYTELLERS OF BRITTANY

In conjunction with a colloquium on storytelling and storytellers in Brittany held November 23, 2002, in Loudéac, the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Breizh) has published a directory of storytellers: L'Annuaire des conteurs de Bretagne / Marvailherien Breizh (Editions Institut Culturel de Bretagne. 164 pages. 7 Euros).

This directory – the first of its kind – was prepared by the Oral Literature Section of the Cultural Institute and includes some 150 names and contact information for professional and amateur storytellers who work in French, Breton and Gallo. While the directory is particularly useful for those in Brittany who organize festivals and cultural events, certainly also demonstrates the importance of the art of storytelling in Brittany.

As reported in the January/February issue of Musique Bretonne (No. 176), the November 2002 colloquium organized by the Cultural Institute of Brittany looked at the new growth of interest in storytelling in Brittany and gathered storytellers themselves to exchange ideas about their profession. Over 100 people participated in the colloquium which featured four lively roundtables.

The subject of the first roundtable was "The job of a storyteller today and its complexity", including discussion of how you break into this profession and earn a living, and how you actually learn the art of storytelling. The second roundtable looked at "Legal issues related to storytelling" – sticky issues like copyrights and crediting the source of a tale, fees, amateurs vs. professionals. The third topic, "The story as a means to transmit music and language." Focused on the fine art of storytelling as a means to show off the musicality and poetic nature of languages. And the fourth roundtable, "Boosting the practice of storytelling – the *veillée*." looked at the *veillée*, a small evening gathering, as a social context for storytelling.

The evening offered the chance to hear some of Brittany's finest storytellers at work. During the week preceding the colloquium, storytellers work with some 250 school children in special projects and also based some programs in local cultural centers and retirement communities.



MUSIC FROM BRITTANY

A New CD to Honor A Bombarde Player - Reviewed
by Lois Kuter

Yves Berthou and Patrick Molard. War Roudoù Leon Braz. Dastum - Tradition vivante de Bretagne 17. DAS 144. 56' 23. 2002.

This is a CD in celebration of a famous bombarde player of Brittany, Leon Braz ("Big Leon"), whose less used name was Guillaume Léon (1870-1950). Who best to do honor to this renowned "sonneur" than two masters of today: Yves Berthou (bombarde) in pair with Patrick Molard (biniou). There are no sound recordings of Leon Braz, so the interpretation of music and songs from his vast repertoire is based on collections made by Maurice Duhamel in 1913 and Polig Monjarret in 1948—written transcriptions of song and tunes. Discussion with Polig Monjarret and research of written texts which describe Leon Braz were important in giving Berthou and Molard a personal sense of this legendary bombarde player allowing them to interpret more than just notes on a page.

The performance by these two on this CD is impeccable, as smooth as it gets for the paired playing of the impossibly loud bombarde and the highest-pitched bagpipe in the world. This is a "must-have" CD for who are addicted to the sound of bombarde and biniou. But this CD is much more than 56 minutes of bombarde/biniou. Of the thirteen selections on the CD, five include a mix of voice and instruments to add a great deal of variety to the overall sound. Featured is the voice of Sylvie-Azeline Rivoalen on four ballads and Yves Berthou's daughter, Riwanon, joins in on one of those also. It is the lovely voice of Sylvie-Azeline Rivoalen that opens the CD with "Boked Eured," a wedding song, quickly taken up by the bombarde/biniou pair to set the theme of the CD on the wedding - with marches, melodies and dances that Leon Braz would have played during the over 5,000 weddings he played at during the period of 1880 to the 1930s.

Sylvie-Azeline Rivoalen also performs three other *gwerz* (Breton language ballads) with accompaniment of a variety of instrumental mixes, including cello, Scottish small pipes, guitar, bass, and other strings performed by Ronan Pellen and Jacky Molard as well as Berthou and Molard. These are all ballads collected in 1913 by Maurice Duhamel from Leon Braz who was a singer and story teller as well as bombarde player. Sylvie-Azelin Rivoalen has a beautiful and distinctive voice, but I felt it lacked some of the power and depth found in the voices of other young traditional women singers like Annie Ebrel or Marthe Vassallo. Nevertheless, the texts of the ballads were certainly full of drama - including "Ann diou c'hoar", the horrific tale of a poor mother of four children who, on the advice of her sister, is prepared to kill and cook up one of the children in order to keep the other three from starving. Fortunately the Virgin Mary intercedes in time, as she does in the case of the subject of the ballad "Iannig Ar Gall" where a young man is wrongly accused of stealing sacred objects and is condemned to be hung and burned to death.

The selections on the CD where bombarde and biniou salute the career and repertoire of Leon Braz include a number of marches that would have been used in moving wedding participants through events spanning several days, an air to conduct the bride and groom to the wedding dinner, and an air used by bombarde/biniou pairs at weddings to encourage people to put their donations into a hat. And because weddings were an occasion for dancing there are also two gavotte suites (7 to 8 minutes each). Perhaps one of the more unusual selections on the CD is a lullaby performed by the sonneurs. One might not imagine a baby falling asleep to such a sound, but the bombarde/biniou pair is quite well adapted to the performance of slow melodic airs like lullabies. And to close the CD you have an unusual pairing of Scottish lowland bagpipes played by Yves Berthou with uilleann pipes played by Patrick Molard. I liked the pairing of the low round sound of the lowland pipes with a higher and warmer sound of uilleann pipes.

While all of the performers on this CD are masters of their art, part of the success of this CD must be credited to Jacky Molard who skillfully took care of the balance of sound. There can be nothing more difficult to record than bombardes or binious, but the sound quality on this CD is such that one hears everything these two instruments have to offer (including a nice drone) without any distortion or imbalance of instruments. Not an easy thing to achieve. The balance of voice with a variety of instruments is also perfect.

As is always the case for CDs produced by Dastum, the notes are full of interesting information, including an introduction by Yves Berthou to describe how the CD was conceived and researched, and to introduce the performers. Photos of all the performers enliven the 20-page booklet. There's a very good biography of Leon Braz and four photos of him, several in pair with his partner Yves Menguy. The full text of all four songs are included in Breton with a French translation, and there is a short but quite adequate description for each of the thirteen selections.

From the impeccable performances and the exceptionally high quality of the sound recording to the excellent notes, this is a great CD. And it is another fine example of CDs produced by Dastum which fulfill its mission (stated on the CD jacket) "to gather, preserve and impart the oral and musical heritage of Brittany."

HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD

Notes on the following new CDs are based on reviews in Musique Breonnne 176 (Jan./Feb. 2003) and information from the Coop Breizh catalog (diskar amzer 2002)

Apprenez les danses bretonnes.

This is a series of CDs that we've noted in past issues of Bro Nevez, aimed at helping people learn dances by providing music (from a variety of musicians) as well as descriptive information. Each CD focuses on a particular region and a variety of dances within it. For example, the latest CD on Penthievre has a half-dozen different versions of the dance "avant-deux." Even if you don't want to learn to dance, these CDs will certainly demonstrate the richness of traditional dance in

Brittany. From the newest (2003) to the earliest, here are the regions presented on each CD:

- Vol. 6 - Penthievre
- Vol. 5 - Pays rennais
- Vol. 4 - Vannetais gallo
- Vol. 3 - Terroir nantais.
- Vol. 2 - Bas vannetais
- Vol. 1 - Léon-Trégor

BHQ/Brou-Hamon-Quimbert. Garçons sans-souci. Coop Breizh CD 940.

This is the second CD by this trio of great Gallo singers: Roland Brou, Mathieu Hamon and Charles Quimbert. They show off the rich *a capella* song tradition of Upper Brittany (often singing in unison as a trio, in a response style typical of eastern as well as western Brittany, and solo). The CD includes five dances as well as ballads and lighter songs.

Laurent Jouin & Soig Sibériel. Tan Dehi. Coop Breizh CD 931.

Laurent Jouin, a fine traditional singer and storyteller, pairs up with guitarist Soig Sibériel for a CD of new compositions as well as rearrangements of traditional songs.

Karma. Liesliw. Amzer Noz AN-K-03.

Karma is one of the hottest fest-noz bands in Brittany today. This CD is given a strong "yes" by its reviewer as one where they succeed in presenting music that takes them beyond being just a great dance band.

Frères Molard. Bal Tribal en public. Ton All Produktions. TA 001.

This is a recording of a live performance at the Tombées de Nuit 2001 festival by the three Molard brothers: Patrick on various bagpipes, Jacky on fiddle (and other strings?) and Dominique on a wide variety of percussion. The performances by Bulgarian singer Kalinka Vulcheva and Breton guitarist Jacques Pellen are also strong points on this CD.

Soazig Kermabon & Fred Samzun. An Arvor hag ar reter. Self-produced ICD KS 001.

This is a duo of harp (Kerambon) and fiddle (Samzun) with arrangements of traditional airs and dances from Brittany (especially the Morbihan), with a few trips to Israel and Klezmer styles as well as Romania. Yann Kerambon, Christian Faucher, Franck Le Bloas and Yves Ribis add some instrumental support.

PSG / Patrice Marzin, Soig Siberil, Jean Charles Guichen. Marzin, Siberil, Guichen. Coop Breizh CD 937.

This CD features new arrangements of traditional Breton music including gavottes, ridées, an dro, and Scottishes, but three virtuoso acoustic guitar players of Brittany.

Roland Conq Trio. Roland Conq Trio. Coop Breizh CD 939.

Here is a successful combo of two acoustic guitars (Roland Conq and Erwan Bérenguer) with a bass fiddle (Vincent Guérin). The CD includes Breton melodies and dances, but also some selections from Ireland, Bulgaria and Greece.



A NOT-SO-NEW BOOK ABOUT CELTIC MUSICS

Emmanuelle Debaussart. Les musiques celtiques. Libro Musique. No. 294, 1999. 93 pages. ISSN 1255-0337.

Here's a little book that a friend found in the outskirts of Paris in the equivalent of our drugstore or dollar store. This is a very cheaply produced paperback which has a colorful cover but no illustrations within to attract readers. One would guess on first glance that it was produced to capitalize on the popularity of "Celtic music" which usually means music from just Ireland or Scotland of a less traditional style. At least that's what one comes to expect from books with such titles here in the U.S.

But this book is not just a cheap opportunistic attempt to make a buck off of the popularity of music from the Celtic countries. In under 100 pages the author does a remarkably good job of presenting the diversity of music in all of the Celtic countries (with an emphasis on Brittany). And the title of the books is "The Celtic musics" - plural. In the first chapter the author clarifies that the adjective "Celtic" generally refers to the countries where the six Celtic languages are spoken: Brittany, Wales, Cornwall, Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of Man. She notes that there are commonalities in these countries due to linguistic kinship as well as human interaction

through history, and she notes that the differences between the cultures and the diversify within each country are just as important. There's also an interesting discussion of the influence of Irish music on the other countries' musics.

The book works chronologically, so Chapter 2 briefly presents the early period of Celtic culture with bards and their preference for oral traditions, the influence of the introduction of Christianity on culture, as well as influences brought by outside invaders. Chapter 3 focuses on the 19th century and the romanticism that brought glory to the Celtic traditions, including discussion of the Barzaz Breiz in Brittany, the development of the Eisteddfod in Wales, and collectors such as Edward Bunting in Ireland. In Chapter 4 we reach the 20th century and discussion of the challenges to traditional music with the arrival of accordions and jazz, and pressures to become "modern" and dispose of languages like Breton. The author also discusses the post-war development of the bagad and reinvention of the fest-noz and re-emergence of traditional singers. While there is a focus on Brittany, there is also discussion of Ireland and the work of Seán O Riada to reinvent music and the growth in popularity of "pub music" in the style of the Clancy brothers. And in Scotland the influence of Ewan McColl and other "folk singers" is also noted.

Chapter 5 notes the folk renaissance in the USA and France in the 60s and the beginnings of a parallel movement in Brittany with Alan Stivell and Glenmor. Not ignoring the political climate of the times, it is noted that this was the period when the Breton flag ("gwenn ha du") was finding a public presence, and in the early 70s you had the beginnings of the Diwan schools. The author also explores a parallel development of new musical styles in Wales, Scotland and Ireland with the popularity of influential groups such as Dafydd Iwan, Battlefield Band, Planxty (to name just a few cited) and the beginnings of a marriage of electric sounds to the arrangement of traditional tunes.

Chapter 6 looks at the 1980s as a period when the popularity of Celtic music waned a bit with the

emergence of punk rock. It is pointed out that these were not great years for musicians in terms of making money, but these were years when interesting things were happening with the Pogues and Clannad at work in Ireland and a number of great bands coming to the fore in Brittany: Gwerz, Barzaz, Carre Manchot, Skolvan, Storvan and Pennou Skoulm, among others. In Chapter 7, the 1990s are characterized as a period of global mix where you had some important inter-Celtic developments as well, such as Dan ar Braz' "Heritage des Celtes." The 90s show an increased sophistication in the music of bands and the bagads of Brittany. Bretons were comfortable with their identity and the Irish were expressing confidence with an economic boom, perhaps shadowed in the emergence of "Riverdance".

In just 53 pages and seven chapters, the author does a nice job of linking changes in music to the spirit of the times, without being overly simplistic. In a short Epilogue the author includes a long quote by Dan ar Braz on the diversity of music within Brittany, and this is certainly a characteristic in the musical direction of all the Celtic countries for the beginning of the 21st century.

Appendices make up some 36 pages and include a lot of good information for those who may be just discovering Celtic music - and the book is clearly directed to such new fans. There is a chronology of history with a few musical, cultural and political events. Also included is a lexical guide to twelve key words with explanations ranging from a phrase to a paragraph: bagad, fest-noz, gwerz, kan ha diskan, kanaouen, oran mor, piobaireachd, puiert a beul, reel, sean-nós, sone, and strathspey. There is also a short description of instruments found in the Celtic traditions: accordion, bodhrán, bombarde, bouzouki, bagpipes (of all varieties), crwth, harps, fiddle, flutes, treujenn gaol. One finds also a short bibliography and list of web sites.

It is the discography that I liked best of all the appendices. This included a selection of artists and a recent CD—both traditional and pop/rock—with a good description of style, and often a short biography of the artist. 33 Breton CDs were

included. 22 from Ireland, 9 from Scotland, 3 each from Wales, Cornwall, Isle of Man and Galicia/Asturias, and 4 from the Celtic "diaspora" and of a world fusion style. While just a small sampling, I found that the selection offered a very good cross-section for Brittany and Ireland especially. It was fun to also find a list of "indispensable" CDs chosen by Alan Stivell, Dan ar Braz, Roland Becker, John Falstaff, and Jean-Luc Thomas (of Hastañ).

All in all, this is a nice little introduction which does not claim to be a complete guide to Celtic music. For those who fall in love with any of today's Celtic artists or groups, and who know nothing of their roots (or the existence of a wider Celtic world), this is an excellent presentation to put it all into a wider cultural and historical context. There is no introduction of the author and I have no idea who Emmanuelle Debaussart is, but she clearly has a good grasp of the big picture and has succeeded well in introducing the Celtic musical traditions and newer expressions in a very few pages.



SAVE THE DATES

Celtic Heritage Festival in Central Virginia, May 17-18

This festival, like most other U.S. "Celtic festivals" is weighted towards the Irish and Scottish, but it has tried to include the Welsh, Bretons, Manx, Cornish and Galicians (not easy in the U.S.). This year's featured country is Wales, and the group Ffynnon will be there from Wales. Other headliners include the Jimi McRae band and Iona. Don't miss Moch Pryderi, a band including U.S. ICDBL member Bill Reese who isn't afraid to get out the bombarde for some Breton dancing. The U.S. ICDBL will have an information stand to insure the Breton flag flies. For more details about the festival consult www.celticheritagefestival.com or call 804 427-5866 or 877 895-1795

Potomac Celtic Festival - June 13 & 14

As always the U.S. ICDBL will be among the performers at this festival and we will have a great information stand. I'll give you more information the May issue of Bro Nevez. In the meantime contact: www.potomaccelticfest.org

THE ELUSIVE BRETON COSTUME

Natalie Novik

Unlike most other members of the ICDBL, I find myself required to wear a Breton outfit on a regular basis, either to represent Brittany in one festival or another, or to perform dances and music. You would think that, in my case, with family in Brittany and what's more, costume collectors in my family, it would be easy. Actually, it has been one of the most challenging aspects of my life over the years.

When we speak of costumes ("giziou" in Breton) in Brittany, we are dealing with a tradition that was born after the French Revolution (1789) when the laws forbidding commoners to wear precious fabrics were abolished. Before that time, Breton peasants were dressed for the most part like peasants all over Western Europe (look at paintings by Brughel in the 15th century, by LeNain in the 17th to get an idea), and well-to-do Bretons were more or less mimicking court fashions. In the Quimper region, men distinguished themselves by wearing "bragou braz", i.e. large pleated knee-high pants, and all over Brittany, men were always sporting long hair. The female outfits were very plain and featured some kind of bonnet, since it was not well regarded to go outside the house with your head uncovered.

All this changed tremendously by the late 18th century when the Bretons started adding lace, ribbons, embroidery and beads to the fabrics they could now purchase, such as velvet, silk, satin, organdie and crepe. Naturally, there were differences in wealth, and a poor woman could not afford enough velvet to make a whole dress, so the amount of velvet on your skirt was an indication of your status in society. By the late 19th century and especially the early part of the 20th century, most Bretons could afford one outfit (the one they generally got married in) that they kept all their life. And as ornamentation became the name of the game, every region, every village developed its own style, its own colors, and its own shapes. Just before WWI, it was possible to tell somebody's village, clan, age, wealth and marital status, just by looking at the various elements in his or her costume. As one can see from the works of Lalaisse in the 19th century and J.Y. Creston in the 20th century, the costumes were also very much influenced by the fashions of the time, and therefore an early 1830 outfit from Pont-Aven is very different from the 1940 version from the same village. Outside influences are found everywhere, like in Leon (Northern Brittany) where sailors used to bring back silk shawls from India, which became the most visible part of an otherwise very sober black outfit.

After WWI and even more after WWII, men coming back from the army stopped wearing their traditional outfits, or rather developed a new style very reminiscent of what country folks wear in Scotland and Ireland: tweed jackets, tweed berets, sturdy pants and rubber boots. The women, however, kept the costumes alive for a very long time, and you can still see some elements of these outfits in the villages on a daily basis. But this also means that the style of these costumes stopped evolving by the mid-20th century, and that they are worn today only for festive occasions.

They are worn mostly by the participants in Cercles Celtiques (Celtic circles) when they participate in festivals, dance contests, traditional gatherings, and also by the elderly when they

attend a pardon (pilgrimage) or Sunday church. The elderly got their costumes when they got married, and the younger participants of those Cercles Celtiques learn from the elders how to make their own. In other words, you cannot walk into a store and buy a "giz Kemper" or a "giz Leon", or order them on the Internet, like you would for a Scottish outfit. In all my trips to Brittany, I have found only one store so far, in Quimper, selling mostly men's linen long shirts and a few hats. The seamstress in the store makes exclusively Quimper-style outfits for Celtic circles, so that they are not on sale in the store. You can always contact a Celtic circle when you are visiting Brittany and see if someone will be willing to make an outfit for you, but there might be some obstacles: any outfit will take a long time to make and it might also be very expensive.

So what are you to do if you want a Breton outfit?

First of all, you might be part of the lucky few who have inherited a costume. But do you know what village it is from? Do you know when it was made? And do you believe you have all the parts? Very frequently, such an inheritance can be a curse: velvet and lace older than 15-20 years tend to be in bad shape, embroideries can be discolored and losing threads, and there might be some essential element like an apron missing in the outfit you inherited. The best solution is to replicate the outfit and avoid wearing the original.

To check what you have, you can contact the bookstores (Ar Bed Keltiek at www.arbedkeltiek.com or Coop Breizh at www.coop-breizh.com) to get some literature. However, they will both refer you to the bible of Breton costumes, written by Creston about 50 years ago, which costs \$ 500 (without freight, and it is a very heavy book). I found a smaller book, entitled "Costumes de Bretagne" by Joseph Jigourel and Yanna Fournier, to be of great help because it features the costumes by region, but also by time period. It is a richly illustrated book, with very little text, and makes for a very handy guide even if you don't know French (it can be ordered either from the above bookstores or from the publisher at www.Bretagne.com for about \$ 40). An even cheaper option are the series of booklets published by Jos LeDoare with such titles as "Breton costumes", "Breton dances", "Breton coiffes (headdresses)", which are not very exhaustive but give you a few examples of Breton costumes with long narrations. Some of them have been translated into English, and they cost about \$ 12 a piece.

Secondly, you might not have anything and yet you would like to show off that "Breton look" when you are in a festival or a Breton-oriented event. My advice is to avoid trying to reproduce a particular costume. For one thing, finding authentic fabric will not be possible in the U.S. Also, consider that the characteristic element of your outfit, if you are a woman, is the coiffe or headdress, and making one would require a blue print of all its parts, something not readily available. Authenticity would be possible only if you knew somebody in Brittany who could make it for you.

So left to your own device, keep in mind that there are elements that are common to most Breton costumes: the use of velvet, the predominance of black, white, gold and pastels, and the elegance of most styles. Here are some tips, besides the information you might find in the above mentioned literature:

- for the gentlemen: white shirt with a small or no collar, black velvet vest and jacket (double buttoning with metal buttons is preferable), long black pants (any fabric will do), large brimmed hat (velvet or straw) with black ribbons hanging in the back, and wooden clogs or even better, leather buckle shoes. And you know what? If you have been in the Navy, most of your U.S. uniform looks like the French navy's, except the collar should be white. Since 80% of the French navy is made of Bretons, that's an easy one to figure!

- for the ladies: ankle or mid-calf straight long black velvet skirt, black velvet top with long sleeves and with a round cut around the neck. Add to this a little lace collar hanging in the back and an assorted very small lace bonnet (pretty much like an Amish-style bonnet, but less covering). If you don't have long hair to tie your hair in a bun (indispensable to fasten the bonnet), try making yourself a bonnet with long sides hanging down to the shoulders. And then, if you have the wherewithal to do it, you can add either gold or pastel color ribbons around the edge of the sleeves and the edge of the skirt (do not use gold and pastel, it does not work), and maybe a silk apron (usually a short one, either white or pastel, in silk or satin). Wear marie-jeannes or simple black pumps, with light colored pantyhose. The only jewelry might be a simple gold cross.

- and the children, you ask? That's tricky, because Breton children usually did not have a costume of their own, it would have been too expensive to redo an entire outfit every year. The mothers were patching something together with bits and pieces, often dressing the younger ones in the pants an older brother might have grown out of. So, unless you have a definite need to dress a child exactly like a miniature version of an adult, it might be simpler to find a large brimmed hat for a boy and some lace for a girl and leave them dressed in their usual Sunday best.

But, you may have seen photos of those extraordinary towering Bigouden "coiffes" or the intricate "Giz Fouesnant", and that's what you would like to make for yourself. You need to understand that both these outfits work because they are complimented by the rest of the outfit like the Bigouden embroideries or the Fouesnant curled up lace collar, which are extremely difficult to make and to match. These "coiffes" both require very long hair tied in a bun and 20 to 30 minutes of work to fasten their various parts on the bun. They are not adapted to the American lifestyle, and even in Brittany, the poor Bigouden get into trouble when they want to sit in a car or go to the movies!

So keep it simple, and remember when making your own outfit that Bretons have always used what was available to them and that included lace from Belgium, ribbons from Provence, gold trim from Italy, silk from Lyon... These regions still produce the same lace, ribbons and gold trim, so shop around, and chances are your fabric store imports exactly what the Bretons are using for trimmings!

Editor's Note: There is a reedition of René-Yves Creston's, Le Costume breton (Champion-Coop Breizh, 2000) which I purchased from the Coop Breizh which cost around \$50 (not including postage). This is not the "bible" Natalie refers to, but this 426-page book is full of drawings and photos that would be useful to anyone wanting to incorporate traditional design into a reinvention of a costume.

A Breton Wedding in 1899

The following article describes a Breton wedding as it would have occurred at the end of the 19th century. The article includes 13 photos to illustrate the events described in the texts. I have reproduced just two, but these are of a very poor quality since my original photocopy of this magazine article was of poor quality. Anyone who would like a copy of the article would be welcome to contact me. Interestingly enough the photographer for the article was from Rennes. His address is given, but this will not help track down the photographs some 100 years later! - Lois Kuter

A Breton Wedding, By Emma Pugh The World Wide Magazine, Vol. II, no. 11, March 1899

A complete description of all the queer and quaint ceremonies, illustrated by a remarkably successful series of snap-shot photographs by M. Charles Géniaux, 9, rue Cochardière, Rennes, France.

A wedding always creates a certain amount of commotion and pleasurable excitement in the family of the bride for weeks before the happy event, and many are the quaint customs in various lands connected with this the most important time in a woman's life. Within a stone's throw of England, figuratively speaking, is Brittany, a country which has ever clung tenaciously to its old customs and observances, and has absolutely refused to march with the times, or to abandon any of its cherished traditions.

The Breton is the most superstitious of mortals; he lives in a world of spirits, saints, fairies, sprites, and demons. No familiar object in his simple home; no bird, beast, or flower of the field, no stream or fountain, but has its legend or superstition, repeated during the long winter evenings round the blazing fire. Every unforeseen event is an omen. It is considered unlucky to be married in May or August; and as to the day of the week, there are so many objections to them in different parts of Brittany, that it seems hard to find a lucky day for a wedding. So one might reasonably expect the marriage customs in such a land to be curious. We will therefore eagerly accept an invitation to witness a Breton wedding, and squatting on our wishing carpet, with our feet well tucked under, we soon find ourselves in an ideal spot, peaceful and far removed from the hum and din of a great city.

A homestead surrounded by meadows and babbling brooks, and with a walled garden in the rear, stands at the foot of the hill, which shelters it from the north wind. The meadows are divided by miniature valleys – (who could call such ideal spots ditches?) – covered, according to the caprice of the season, with changing carpets of the sweet blue violet, the yellow primrose, the grey-blue hyacinth, and the pink dog-rose, all of which scent the air and charm the eye.

On this lovely June morning all was activity in this human hive. Doors and windows stood hospitably open. Many of the neighbors had come to assist in the great preparations for the wedding feast on the morrow, to which two or three hundred guests, according to custom, had been

personally bidden by the betrothed couple a week before. In some parts of Brittany the girl, accompanied by her godmother, and the man by his godfather, go their separate ways carrying invitations by word of mouth. In the meadow nearest the homestead three women were busy unpacking a cart-load of pewter plates lent by the friends for the feast. The first woman extricated them from the straw, the second dipped them into a tub of water, and a third rubbed and polished them till they shone like silver.

But what a hammering! We looked up and saw several stalwart young Bretons in shirt-sleeves fixing long, roughly-made ladders lengthways on the grass. Shouldering a heavy wooden mallet, one of them whirled it round his head and brought it down with tremendous force on a wooden stave, driving it home at one blow, to make a support for the extended ladder.

In a short time a long, low, ladder-fence extended the whole length of the wall, under the shade of the orchard trees; but still they brought more ladders, and a second fence was soon erected facing the first, and leaving a pace of about two yards down the middle. These ladders formed the seats for the wedding guests. Hard and uncomfortable they looked to us, and we shuddered at the idea of sitting on such a barbarous makeshift for two or three hours at the feast next day.

Lads then appeared balancing long, slender planks on their shoulders; these were laid on the grass down the centre of the ladder-alley. No, they were not meant to keep the women's feet from the damp grass; no one would dream of such a luxury here. The planks placed on the grass between the ladders were to form the table for the wedding feast. "What! That narrow deal board?" you may say. Yes, and it does not require much laying up, either. Yards and yards of snow-white damask will *not* be brought out to cover it. The boards are simply scrubbed clean; that is enough.

In another part of the meadow, under the long trees, the butcher was at work with his long knife and chopper preparing and cutting up the meat at an impromptu table, composed of planks, resting on trunks of trees. Later on, a rustic Leonidas of eleven was left at this post of honour to repel by his single arm the attacks of myriads of winged enemies, slaughtering them or scaring them away with his broad-brimmed hat, which he wielded with all the deftness and importance of a practiced swordsman. Thanks to his exertions, the supply of meat for the next day did not run short. But it was a great temptation for the flies. By the stream, three or four women were engaged in preparing

the vegetables; peeling tub after tub full of potatoes, carrots, turnips, and cabbages. It was not hard for us to guess the occupation of the weeping damsel; hers was the tearful task of peeling the odoriferous and tasty onion.

Inside the house, everything was spick and span; but there was no sign of wedding trousseau or presents exhibited to admiring eyes. The large oaken chest in which the young girl kept the piles of sheets, and the good, strong linen made from flax spun during the long, merry winter evenings, had been taken days ago, with her spinning-wheel and other goods and chattels, to her future home. As the bed was duly placed on the cart with one of its feet pointing to its destination, fate was appeased, and many household jars were thereby averted. In spite of this good omen, however, the bride's face looked serious and sad, for she began to realize that the happy days of courtship – generally long drawn out in Brittany – were at an end, and the hard, uncertain life of toil, with its load of care which ages the Breton matron so quickly, was about to begin.

Towards evening the work being finished, supper was served, and the day ended with a dance in front of the cottage, on the beaten clay threshing floor. The dance was the famous *rond*, or round dance, and as there was no *sonneur* or musician present, the men whistled the dance tune, to which all kept perfect time. The future bride stood to the left as the camera recorded the picture, in large white cap with flapping wings; she was merry enough just then, exchanging jokes with the best man. Over against the house was the large round copper stew-pan, in which the wedding dinner was afterwards cooked; and the last rays of the setting sun made it flash and shine like dull red gold. The dance did not last very long, for all were tired with the day's work, and wished to reserve their strength for the next day. The sunset was brilliant red, a good sign which promised a fine day for the morrow. A wet wedding day, although exceedingly inconvenient when so many guests have to be accommodated, is yet looked upon with equanimity by the bride, for it signifies that all her tears are now being shed, and that her married life will be a happy one in consequence.

Early the next morning, when the bridesmaid wanted to dress the bride, she was nowhere to be found, and the guests who arrived early sought for her everywhere. She was discovered at last in the cellar mending a pair of socks; for it is not considered becoming to appear too anxious to be married. The bride pretended she did not know what they all wanted, and she innocently offered them tankards of cider from the barrel at her side.

This gave an opportunity for one of those long, flowery speeches so characteristic of the Breton. Then, being at last convinced by this flow of eloquence, the bride allowed herself to be led away to be dressed. At the last minute no shoes could be found; her parents had hidden them, to signify their unwillingness to part with their child. Again a search was instituted, and the shoes were found at last in the most unlikely place imaginable – up on one of the

rafters in a bread-basket, surrounded by garlands of sausages, hams, sides of bacon, and strings of onions.

In the meantime the bridegroom and his friends, with the best man and the poet or bard chosen for the occasion at their head, might have been seen racing along to fetch the bride, the streamers of their curious hats floating away in the breeze. The one woman of the party, like Lot's wife, could not resist the temptation to turn round to gaze at the camera as she was being hurried along, consequently her feminine curiosity – or was it vanity? – has been thus handed down to posterity by the relentless, recording snap-shot camera. Very different the bride's house looked when this merry party reached it. Every door and window was closely shut, and the place looked for all the world like the abode of the seven sleepers.

The best man and the poet thundered at the door – but there was no answering stir within. Again they knocked, and at last the old grandfather opened the little wicket and asked what they wanted. In poetical prose, the bard lavished compliments on the whole household, and invoked Heaven's choicest, rosier blessings on all and everybody concerned.

The old man replied in similar style, and added that, unfortunately, the angel he was seeking was not there. She had made up her mind to a life of celibacy. The bard replied by a clever simile, comparing the bridegroom to a hound who has caught a scent, and who never abandons the hunt until he has tracked and caught his quarry.

This provoked a flowery eulogy of the bride and a regretful invitation to seek what he wanted elsewhere. But the bard was not to be thus put off, and he only pressed his suit the harder. The old man closed the wicket, and re-appeared presently with Grannie, *offering her as a substitute*. A ridiculous business, but transacted with real solemnity and seriousness.

Now the skill and tact of the bard were put to the test in refusing the proffered old lady gracefully. A widow and a child of eight were next brought to the wicket in turn, only to be declined with a polite but firm persistence which, at last, won the day, and the door was unbarred.

The boisterous party then rushed in, and a fresh game of hide-and-seek began; the bridegroom's perseverance being at last rewarded by his finding the hidden bride. With the musicians in front, the procession re-formed and started for the church, but on the way there was a sudden outcry: --

"The bride has escaped!" As she was intrusted to the care of the best man, he had to run after her, and after an exciting chase, he brought her back, amid the applause and laughter of the party, the bride assuming a crestfallen appearance. This capture is called a *happerie*, and occurred two or three times before the church was safely reached. Truly, a Breton wedding yields plenty of sport!

While the young couple knelt at the altar, the guests eagerly watched the two candles burning on the high altar. Should they burn slowly and with apparent reluctance, and then flicker and sputter, it would be a bad omen. In the particular case we are considering however, it was noticed that both candles burned brightly, and as the bride's candle flared up higher than the bridegroom's – at least, so the best man affirmed – it was assumed that she would be master in the household. This, however, is a most unusual occurrence in Brittany, and it gave rise to countless jokes at the bridegroom's expense.

As if that were not proof enough, the ring when put on the bride's finger did not slip right down, but remained near the knuckle-joint, showing clearly that her will was to be law thereafter. So the flame of the candle evidently knew what it was about when it jumped up so high.

After the ceremony, the wedding party adjourned to some table just outside the church porch, where, on white damask cloths, were numbers of flat cakes. Each guest took one of these, and gave in exchange a little coin for the poor.

A discharge of musketry and shouts of joy announced the return of the bridal procession from church. First came the *sonneurs*, with the two ancient instruments, relics of past centuries: the *biniou*, a sort of bagpipe, and the *bombard*, a sort of short oboe, or shawm. Behind the *sonneurs* walked the bride and bridegroom, the mother, and the best man. The bride, a rosy-cheeked, healthy girl, with brown hair and blue eyes, looked charming in her simple violet woolen dress, her scarlet bodice, and shot-silk apron, with two large pockets. A long sash of blue silk, embroidered with gold thread, on which were sewn at intervals bunches of orange blossom, hung at her side. There was no possibility of escape for the bride at this time, for her arms were securely passed through those of her bridegroom and the best man. She was a prisoner for life.

On arriving at the house, the young couple stood in the orchard under the shade of the blossoming trees and received the congratulations of all the guests. Bread and meat, and the flat cakes called *galettes*, were then brought to them as an omen of prosperity, and the bride broke off a piece of one of the latter and gave some to her husband, eating the rest herself. The remainder of the cakes she distributed to the young people who crowded eagerly round. To eat a piece of the bride's cake, or to secure a pin from her head-dress at night when she is undressed, is a sure means of bringing about your own wedding within a year.

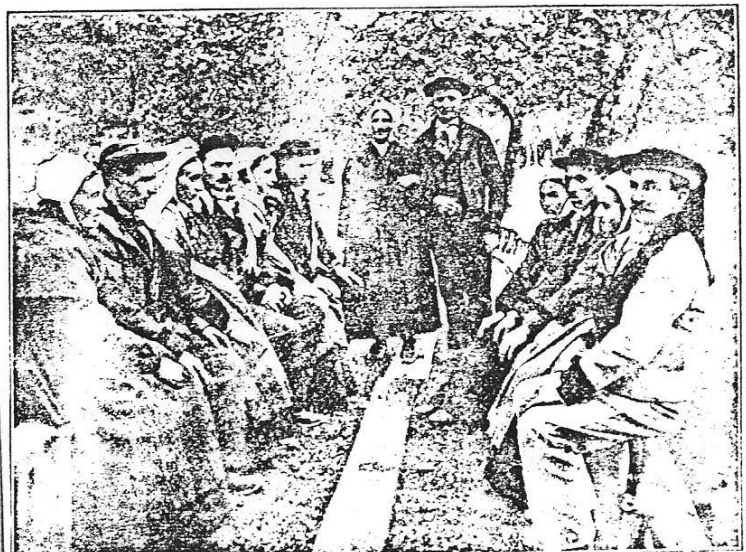
There they stood, the bride and bridegroom being on the right; she is looking up shyly from under her coif, whilst he is whittling a little stick. The bridegroom's tanned and weather-beaten face under the quaint, broad-brimmed hat was typical of the Breton peasant – impenetrable, unemotional, and rugged; but a wealth

of feeling and affection hidden deep down in his honest heart.

He wore a bunch of blossoms in his button-hole, and a long white scarf hanging from it. One of the friends handed a loaf, another a bowl of meat, while a man behind carried two more loaves in his apron. In Brittany the feast often takes place at the new home. The bridegroom's mother awaits the return of the couple from the church at the door. Then taking her daughter-in-law by the hand and embracing her, she leads her first of all to the hearth, where she invests her with the rights of the mistress, by putting into her hand the long-handled spoon for stirring and ladling out the *bouillie*, a sort of coarse porridge made with flour, water, salt, and butter. Next the bride is led to her cupboard or chest, and a spindle and broom are successively handed to her, to show her that she is expected to be industrious.

Formerly, it used to be the pretty and charming custom in most parts of Brittany to go round after dinner to all the guests with a large purse or a plate, into which each dropped a wedding offering in return for a kiss. At the wedding under consideration, however, the presents consisted of household utensils, and were presented after the offering of bread and cakes we have already mentioned. Elsewhere, the bridegroom does not sit down to table, but is one of the servers, the best man taking his place at the side of the bride, and making much of her.

A glance at the next snap-shot will show that this was not how things were done at our Breton wedding [see below], for we at once espy the bride and bridegroom seated farthest on the ladder to the left. The bride is smiling and happy, and has laid her hand confidently on the bridegroom's shoulder. At her side is the privileged best man. The old woman and the lad who are going to their places are walking without much ado on the table. Now, no uninitiated being, accidentally passing by, would imagine these people were sitting down to a wedding feast, with a bare board [on the ground] for a table. ...



[From a]

THE GUESTS TAKING THEIR PLACES FOR THE FEAST.

[Photo.]

Next was revealed the most characteristic feature of Breton family-life, and we had a glimpse of woman's true position in the community. All the women rose at a given signal, and each taking up a pewter plate, went to the improvised kitchen in the meadow, where the monster stew-pans resting on tripods over a fire gave out such an appetizing smell. Each demure-looking woman with her bright-hued shawl crossed over her breast, and her shot-silk or damask apron with housewifely pockets, handed her plate in turn to the server, who filled it with the huge wooden spoon from the pan. She then carried the steaming stew to her husband, father, or brother, and returned to fetch her own. In the meantime glasses and jugs of cider and wine had been placed on the "table." In the photograph we get an idea of the extent of this curious table and of the numbers of guests, for they reach as far as we can see along the wall.

This snap-shot shows us part of the table before all are seated or served; on it stand the wine and bread. In other parts of Brittany great trenches are dug two yards apart, and just deep enough for a man's feet to touch the ground when he is seated on the edge. The "highlands" between the trenches form the tables on which the feast is served.

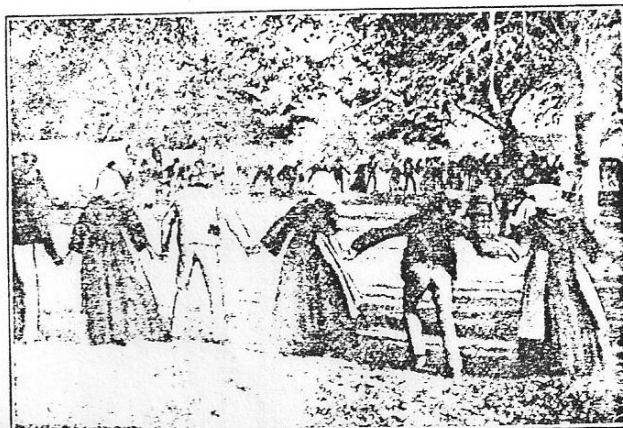
After the feast at our wedding the old grandfather rose and, reverently removing his hat, returned thanks for the whole assembly. Under the trees to the left in the accompanying photograph are the bride and bridegroom and the ever-faithful best man. Women are coming to collect the remains of the feast in their big baskets for the beggars, who are never forgotten in Brittany, where they are accepted as an institution – it is the will of God that they should be so – and the brotherhood of mendicants flourishes exceedingly, because people dare not refuse to give alms to them when they beg, for fear of the evil eye.

In the snap-shot here taken of the beggars as they sat waiting for their share of the feast, they look harmless enough, trying to amuse the little ones, who are getting hungry, and are clamouring for the food which the bride afterwards carried to them with her own hands.

Next, the servers had their dinner, standing round the trestle table of the out-door kitchen and eating soup out of bowls with wooden spoons. Large stone jars of cider and wine stood at hand to quench their thirst. The servers were not *servants*, but members of the family, or friends who good-naturedly volunteered to undertake the task. They dispatched their own meal quickly, so as to join the merry party all the sooner, and they were among the lustiest and merriest of the dancers.

A grand ball concluded the festivities, and the party did not break up till midnight. The guests to the number of over one hundred first joined hands, forming a large circle, and then they swung their arms violently up and down and in and out, as they sidled in a sort of hop-skip-and-a-jump

step, singing in a monotonous voice an accompaniment to the tune played by the minstrels (seated on chairs in the centre) on their *biniou* and *bombard*, whose harsh, penetrating tones render them peculiarly suitable for such open air functions.



From a] THE ROUND DANCE, WHICH LASTED TILL MIDNIGHT. [Photo.

Well pleased with our novel experience, but tired with our two days in the open air, and with the monotonous music and never-ceasing "round," we took leave of the joyful scenes without awaiting the final ceremonies, and then, sitting on our magic carpet once more, we wished ourselves back again in dear, noisy, busy London.



EDITOR'S NOTE

There is no mention in the article as to where this wedding took place. This is probably a site in western Brittany where *bombarde* and *biniou* pairs were commonly used at weddings at the end of the 19th century. Those who have a good eye for costume might be able to take a guess. And it would also be interesting to identify the particular dance being done in the image above. From the stance of the gentleman on the right of the photo, the dance almost looks like the very fast paced "running gavottes" one finds at *festoù-nnoz* today! While the images are pretty poor, I would love to hear from anyone who might have a good idea of where this wedding took place based on the clues in the texts and pictures.

Queen Mary II

1862-2002 from John Scott to the “Queen Mary 2” – A long history of links between the British Isles and Saint-Nazaire

Jean Cévaër

The Chantiers de l'Atlantique in Saint-Nazaire are true heir to the famous “Celtic line” of shipbuilding and they will pursue its promotion through the construction of the “Queen Mary 2” which started mid-July 2002.

The “Celtic line” defines the essence of a naval architecture born from the long tradition and competence of the shipbuilders in the Celtic world. We all know that the shipyards of Glasgow and Greenock truly belong to history; now the yard in Saint-Nazaire has started assembly work on the “Queen Mary II” and is about to write a new chapter in the saga of the “Celtic” liners.

A brief history: 8 superliners were built in the world in the 20th century – 3 in Scotland, 3 in Saint-Nazaire, 1 in Finland, 1 in the USA. However it is the Belfast yard which started the trend towards superliners in 1911 with the “Olympic” and in 1912 with the “Titanic.” Since 1864 and the launching of the “Impératrice Eugénie” the Saint-Nazaire yard is indeed a member of a select club, the “Big League” of shipbuilding.

The building of the “Queen Mary II” in the Loire estuary is indeed a salute to the Scottish ship-building tradition which actually initiated packet-boat construction in Penhoët with John Scott and his crew of Scottish shipbuilders. When they did so in 1862, few at the time could believe that one hundred years later this yard would have become one of the largest in the world and the number one with respect to large passenger vessels.

At this point it is good to remember that in those years the Cunard Line and its “Cunarders” were already in the forefront of naval technology and the beneficiaries of the technical advances of the yards at the Clyde Mouth, which more often than not they initiated. Since 1862 the Saint-Nazaire shipbuilders have followed in the footsteps of their Scottish brothers and have also become a reference in the world of shipbuilding. In this respect it must be underlined that several times in the past engineers from Clydebank came to Saint-Nazaire to rationalize construction techniques – the case, for instance, in 1909-1910. As Pamela Conover, the current CEO of Cunard, reminded the guests at the ceremony marking the flame-cutting of the first base plate of the vessel on January 16th of this year, the majority of the Cunarders were built in the Scottish yards. She would

stress that “since the yards on the River Clyde could no more build a ship the size of the new “Queen Mary 2” it was logical that she be born in Saint-Nazaire.” It must be remembered, at that point, the profound impact of the launching of the “Normandie” on both sides of the Channel and, after World War II, of these masterworks of Scottish and Breton shipbuilding: the “Queen Elizabeth 2” and the “France.”

If for the Cunard executives the Saint-Nazaire shipyard is the most competitive in terms of price and delay, it must be assumed that a little feeling of “brotherhood” must have found its way during the commercial exchanges, inspired by cultural and geographical links and also by a shared history. In view of this, it is by no means surprising that a Breton yard would be in the best position to understand and translate the naval aesthetic which is a tradition at Cunard, and apply it to this new vessel, the “Queen Mary 2”. This is a key point for our British friends who still revere maritime tradition, because the world of the sea and of the sailors is still part and parcel of their identity which, incidentally, is also the case of the Bretons and indeed of all the Celtic world.

It is interesting to note that *ship* in English, *bag* in Breton, and *long* in Gaelic are feminine nouns which stresses the closeness of the relation of these seafaring people with their ships and the sea.

When the “Queen Mary 2” will leave Saint-Nazaire in December 2003 as projected, work will start on another gigantic undertaking – the assembly in the local Airbus Industrie plant of a large part of the Airbus A 380. It is interesting to point out that aircraft building was born in the Breton city of the will of shipbuilders who saw in seaplanes an opening to the future which culminated in the ‘launching’ of the largest seaplane ever to enter commercial service, the Latécoère 631 after World War II.

Liners, tankers, seaplanes, airplanes – some of them the world’s largest – this underlines the opening to the world and the competitive spirit which are the keys to the Breton mind. It is then easy to understand why, more than one hundred years ago, Saint-Nazaire was called “Brittany’s small California.”

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