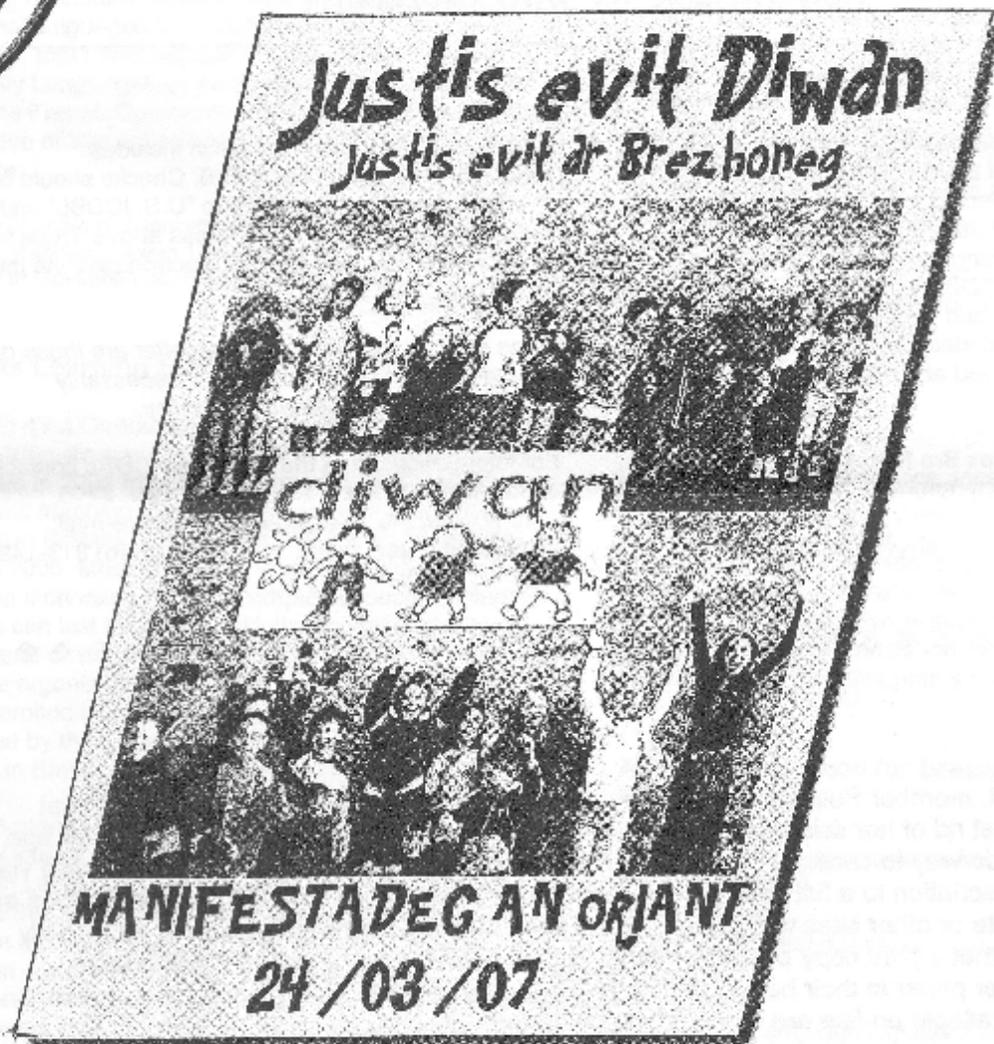


# BRO NEVEZ

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



KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 102

May 2007



# News from Brittany – Short Notes

## Justis Evit ar Brezhoneg – Justice for Breton

On March 31, 2007, some 5,000 people gathered in Lorient to show support for the Breton language. The demonstrators called for official recognition of the Diwan Breton—language immersion schools as public schools – long overdue after 30 years of effective operation as schools open to the public for free. Other themes of the rally were the demand that decision-making on cultural development and the teaching of regional languages be transferred from Paris to Brittany, that the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages be finally ratified by France, and that the French Constitution be amended to recognize and give official sanction to regional languages of France.

(information from: Agencebretagnepress.com 3/27/07 & 4/1/07; Kannadig Diwan 183, Genver 2007; Keleier Skolaj Diwan ar Mor-Bihan 20, Ebrel 2007)

## Adults Learning Breton

Deskiñ d'An Oadourien is a federation of groups organizing classes for adult learners of Breton. It was created in 2001 to help teachers perfect their skills and find teaching resources. An estimated 3,000 adults in Brittany were enrolled in Breton classes the fall of 2006. Most are taking weekly evening classes and an increasing number completing such training which can last four years. Adults also take intensive weekend or week long classes such as those offered by the organization called Mervent. Over 100 adults are enrolled in intensive 6-month training programs offered by the organizations Stumdi, Roudour and Skol an Emsav.

The 6-month courses organized by Stumdi ([www.stumdi.com](http://www.stumdi.com)) attracted 60 students and were held in Landerneau and Ploermel (the next classes begin September 2007 and run to March 2008). These are designed to prepare beginners to use Breton – oral and written – in jobs or to enter university studies in Breton – often to prepare to become a Breton teacher. Stumdi will also help employers find qualified candidates for jobs where fluency in Breton is needed.

For more information about classes for adults of various lengths and styles contact:

Deskiñ d'An Oadourien  
c.o Ti ar Vro  
6 plasenn Gwirioù mab-den  
29270 Karaez (Carhaix)  
[www.dao-bzh.org](http://www.dao-bzh.org)

(information from “Breton, des outils pour apprendre” by Erwan Chartier, Ar Men 156, Janvier-fevrier 2007, p. 54; and “Stumdi, les formations au bilinguisme” Armor 445, fevrier 2007, p. 26)

## Breton in the Workplace

Ofis ar Brezhoneg (Office for the Breton Language) conducted a study during 2006 of the use of Breton in the workplace to estimate that today some 1,000 people work in jobs where use of the Breton language is required. By 2010 there should be some 1,250 to 1,650 jobs for Breton speakers. While 73% of jobs for Breton speakers are in teaching, there is also a need for Breton speakers in the media (publishing, radio, television), public administration, health sciences, arts and cultural management.

(information from Armor 446, mars 2007; Keleier Ofis ar Brezhoneg 71, Meurzh 2007)

## Skype in Breton

Skype is a telephone service accessed via computer internet which allows low-cost or free long distance calls world-wide for those signed up on it. Skype is now available in the Breton language thanks to Fulup Jakez of the Ofis ar Brezhoneg. Here's how to get it: download skype <http://www.skype.com/download> and then get the Breton translation <http://forum.skype/index.php?showtopic=67043>

## A Strong Presence for Breton on the Computer

The following press release is from Agence Bretagne Presse 4/25/07

Microsoft is helping Breton, among other Celtic languages.

The Breton Language Agency [Ofis ar Brezhoneg], Brittany's Regional Council, and Microsoft signed a three-party agreement today [4/25/07]. The aim of this agreement is to offer Microsoft's users a version of its products in Breton.

A few weeks ago Microsoft signed a similar contract with The Agency for the Development of Gaelic in Scotland. Similar contracts were previously signed for Irish Gaelic and Welsh. Microsoft products have therefore versions available in these two languages.

This way Microsoft has joined other American computer companies such as Google and Mozilla (Firefox) that have already developed interfaces in Breton, thereby making Breton an official computer language in its own right. The free online cooperative encyclopedia wikipedia, open to 187 languages, has also already 13,000 articles in Breton.

Google in Breton: <http://www.google.com/int/fr/>

Wikipedia in Breton:  
<http://br.wikipedia.org/wiki/Degemer>

Firefox 2.0 in Breton from An Drouzig  
<http://www.drouzig.org/Galleg/Logiciels/divers-Mozilla.html>

### Resources for English Speakers in Brittany

In the November 2006 issue of Bro Nevez we introduced the Central Brittany Journal, an English language publication designed to help people moving to Brittany from the British Isles learn about their new home. A similar mission is fulfilled by an organization called The Association Intégration Kreizh Breizh (also introduced in that issue of Bro Nevez). Indeed on its website [www.aikb.fr](http://www.aikb.fr) it is stated that the AIKB has “the aim of helping ‘newcomers’ to the area to settle into their new life in Brittany.”

The AIKB is a non-profit association which helps new residents (from many countries) learn not only how to deal with basic things like French laws and taxes, but also to help people learn French. And there are lessons also for those who want to learn English. The organization holds fund-raising events and offers a variety of activities to help people discover and become a part of their new environment.

In collaboration with the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro), the AIKB offers a very impressive and interesting series of lectures. The slate for 2007 is very varied:

March 29 – “Wind Farms and Renewable Energy” presented by Erwan Leroux of Avel Pen Ar Bed.

May 3 – “Flash Back on Breton History” presented by Jean-Pierre Le Mat who has recently published one of the few English language books available on the broad sweep of Breton history.

June 7 – “EU Minority Language and Cultures” presented by Yann Rivallain to present European Union policies on the many languages of Europe.

September 20 – an archaeology field outing with Michael Batt to the Camp d’Artus, a deserted medieval settlement in Berrien.

October 18 – to be set.

November 15 – an introduction to Ar Men magazine by its chief editor Yann Rivallain.  
For more information about the work of AIKB visit their webstie [www.AIKB.fr](http://www.AIKB.fr) or contact them:

AIKB  
3 rue de Sénéchal  
22570 GOUAREC

02 96 24 87 90  
[aikb@wanadoo.fr](mailto:aikb@wanadoo.fr)

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## News from Other Parts of the World – More Short Notes

### Annual Conference of The North American Association for Celtic Language Teachers

Royal Military College Of Canada  
Kingston, Ontario  
13 – 16 June 2007

Some of the highlights of this year’s conference include:

- Conference papers (Thursday and Saturday) on a variety of topics dealing with teaching or learning the Celtic languages or Celtic linguistics;
- Celtic Languages Day (June 13), with beginner’s lessons in Manx, Cornish, Breton, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and conversation sessions in Welsh and Scottish Gaelic.
- On Friday, excursion: the Celtic Crosses of Kingston; a visit to Tyendinaga to learn about Mohawk language revitalization; the grand opening of the North American Gaeltacht, in Erinville, Ontario; and a banquet.

Invited speakers at this year’s conference include:

Sine McKenna, University of Ottawa:  
Scots Gaelic in Ontario

Gloria Thomas, Six Nations, Brantford, Ontario:  
Cayuga Immersion Programs and Language Revitalization

PJ Mac Gabhann, Ollscoil na hÉireann, Má Nuad:  
European Languages Certificate in Irish: Syllabus and Testing

For additional information, visit: [www.naaclt.org](http://www.naaclt.org).

**Conference on Language and Nationhood  
Organized by the School of Language Studies  
and Linguistics of Kuala Lumpur**  
May 2007

U.S. ICDBL Member Pamela Serota has been invited to this conference to present a paper called "Saving a Language: An Exploration of Breton Language and Identity Through a Critical Hermeneutic Lens." Pamela is Assistant director of the LLM and International Programs at UC Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco studying the hermeneutic philosophies of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer. She is particularly interested in the question of language and identity and her conference paper is based on research she conducted in Brittany in the Fall of 2006. As a French major at Oberlin College she spent time in 1988-89 studying in Rennes and then lived in Vannes 1990-912 on a Fullbright Teaching Fellowship where she taught English in three middle schools. We hope that Pamela will share her thoughts about this conference in a future issue of Bro Nevez.

**The U.S. ICDBL Out and About**

**29<sup>th</sup> Annual Southern Maryland Celtic Festival  
& Highland Gathering**

April 28, 2007  
St. Leonard, Maryland

While this festival focuses on Scotland with piping competitions and Highland athletic completions, it has long welcomed the presence of other Celts. The U.S. ICDBL had an information stand and Susan Baker did a Breton dance workshop. Thanks to Susan, Philippe Berthier and Ben and Dottie Pecson, as well as other U.S. ICDBL members like Cheryl Mitchell who was present representing Wales, Brittany and the Breton language and culture are introduced to lots of Americans whose exploration of "Celtic" culture rarely gets beyond Ireland or Scotland. We'll no doubt be at this festival again next year so keep an eye on the website: [www.cssm.org](http://www.cssm.org),

**Coming up**

**2007 Potomac Celtic Festival**

Saturday, June 9, 2007  
Historic Morven Park, Leesburg, VA

One of the most truly inter-Celtic festivals of any in the U.S. this all-volunteer run festival is trimmed down this year to just one day. The U.S. ICDBL has been a participant since the inception of this festival which has always featured great music, dance, storytelling, crafts, and information booths. We will once again

have a table and tent with lots of information about Brittany and the Breton language and culture. For more information about the festival check out the website: [www.pcfest.org](http://www.pcfest.org).

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**Breton lesson 8  
Kentel 8**

By Natalie Novik

**Vocabulary / Geriadurig**

Al loened (animals)

Kaz                    cat (need to be called by using "bisig" or "bis", they don't answer to "puss, puss, puss")

Ki  
like                    dog (beware, the plural is "chas", the French word chasse, hunt)

Marc'h                horse

Kazeg                mare

Dañvad               sheep

Oan                    lamb

Taro                    bull

Buoc'h                cow

Yar                    hen

Kilhog                rooster

Note that you will find regional differences for most of these animal words, closely linked to farm life and therefore to particular regions of Brittany. Taro can be spelled tarv, buoc'h becomes bioc'h in places, yar become yer, kilhog becomes kog. But unless you are planning to go live in a particularly remote farm, it is best to learn the forms that are used more commonly throughout Brittany.

# Jan Deloof receives the Roparz Hemon Prize

Lauran Toorians, March 2007

Translation from French by Lois Kuter

The Priz Roparz Hemon is a cultural prize created by Kuzul ar Brezhoneg and the publishing house Coop-Breizh. The fact that two such distinguished organizations, so important for the Breton language, took this initiative, and the name that they gave to the prize, clearly shows that this is an important distinction. For 2007 the prize has been awarded to the Flemish man Jan Deloof. The letter he received about this noted that he received the prize for *ho labourioù kenkoulz hag ho strivioù da lakaat ar brezhoneg ha sevenadur Breizh da vezañ anavezet en tu-hont d'hon harzioù* (your actions and efforts to make the Breton language and culture known beyond our borders).

Jan Deloof was born on May 7, 1930 in Zwevegem (western Flanders, 5 kilometers from Courtrai and 25 kilometers north of Lille). Besides his job at the multinational company Bekaert de Zwevegem, he was for many years the editor of the cultural journals *Ons Erfdeel* and *Septentrion - Arts, lettres et culture de Flandre et des Pays-Bas*. His interest in his own cultural environment and the linguistic struggle in Belgium led him to take an interest in minority or oppressed languages and literatures. He is also one of the rare Dutch speakers to closely follow literature in Afrikaans during the boycott of apartheid, without compromising his integrity. That gave birth to a superb anthology: *Skryf asseblief terug* (I ask you to respond to me - *Kruispunt* 95, Bruges 1985), gathering the best of young Afrikaner poets of the time. The origins of the anthology comes from the sometimes very humorous correspondence of Deloof with André Letoit (better known now as the song writer Koos Kombuis), letters which have been also reprinted.

But it is in Brittany that Jean Deloof found his second half. He learned Breton and started to translate poems and later stories, making contact with a good number of Breton writers.

Out of this would appear in 1969 the modest anthology *Maar nog zingt Bretagne* (But Brittany still sings - *Lier: De Bladen voor de Poëzie*). A second collection was even richer: *Bretagne is weer poëzie* (Brittany is new with poetry - *De Bladen voor de Poëzie* - 29/1. Beveren 1981). But Deloof continued his incessant work of translating and this was crowned by a bilingual anthology *N'em eus lec'h all evbet* (*Ik heb geen ander land*), *Bretonse poëzie van de twintigste eeuw*, published in 1998 as number 174 of the quarterly journal *Kruispunt* (Bruges). In nearly 380 pages the book offers the reader an excellent view of more than a century of poetry in the Breton language, with clear introduction and short biographies of all the poets. Additionally, the book was accompanied by a CD *Mouezhioù bev* (Living Voices) with a selection of poems read in Breton and Dutch (with a Flemish accent). What makes this CD even more important and interesting is that ten Breton poems are read by the poetess Naig Rozmor (born in 1923). For those who do not know this female poet, her poetry is in itself enough of a reason to learn to read Breton poetry.

In the interval an anthology of prose had also been published, again a special issue of *Kruispunt* (No. 117): *Verhalen van het eind van de wereld* (Stories from the end of the earth). This issue also spanned more than a century, from Anatole Le Braz to our day, and these stories were almost all translated in their entirety. The diversity is simply breathtaking. Other translations were published here and there, and often in *Kruispunt*.

Even though Deloof made contacts with many of the writers whose texts he translated, his travel companion in Brittany was always Tugdual Kalvez (born 1937), likewise an active and universal man, who was a professor of philosophy (in France a subject in middle schools), who was above all a poet and militant

fighting on all fronts for the emancipation of the Breton language. Tugdual Kalvez was also a groundbreaker in the group An Namnediz, which opened the way in modern pop music for Alan Stivell and other Breton musicians.

It was sometime in the middle of the 1980s that I met Jan Deloof. It started in a bookstore, in Quimper I think, where I had said that the Breton language and literature interested me. Thus, since I was Dutch, I must surely know the Flemish man Jan Deloof? This wasn't the case, but once home again, I searched for his address (this was long before the era of the internet ...) and with a modest first letter, I lay the basis for a long and sometimes weighty correspondence and a warm friendship. We had many interests in common and we both liked to write letters. Obviously it did not take long to become familiar with Deloof's activities as a translator and editor. It was thus that I came to know the journal *Ons Erfdeel*, and that I became a contributor and then editor of *Kruispunt* (which sadly no longer exists).

John Heuzel, untiring and imperturbable editor and chief of the journal *Kruispunt*, put it together practically by himself, with a legion of authors who always furnished him with many more manuscripts than he could print in his journal. This resulted in special issues already noted on Breton literature, a bilingual anthology of Welshman Dafydd ap Gwilym, and anthology of poetry in modern Greek, the two languages of Cyprus, and languages of India and so on. Without *Kruispunt* these books and those of Jan Deloof would no doubt have had the slimmest chance of being published. It is thus just that Deloof, in his first edition after the award of the Priz Roparz Hemon, warmly and sincerely gave thanks to his friend John Heuzel.

It remains to say something on the subject of Roparz Hemon (1900-1978), the man whose name is given to the prize. Born in Brest, he studied in Leeds and at the Sorbonne, and was a professor of English in Brest from 1925 to 1939. During the war he remained active in the promotion and defense of the Breton culture, which at this period was viewed as synonymous with collaboration with the German occupant. However, Hemon kept his 'hands clean' and

was acquitted in 1946. Nevertheless, he felt forced to leave Brittany and emigrate to Dublin. At the same time, he continued to write poetry. He was very important additionally as a pioneer for the journal *Gwalarn*, which played a key role in the life of Breton culture. Celtic scholars know Roparz Hemon as the author of grammars and dictionaries, but he did much more than that and is consequently much more important for Breton speaking Brittany.

It is appropriate that the cultural prize bears his name and that this prize is attributed to Jan Deloof.

## A GIFT OF POETRY

An additional note by Lois Kuter

Jan Deloof is an ICDBL representative for Flanders and as the above states he has made a significant contribution to the Breton language in making translations available to readers outside of Brittany.

You can find reviews of two of Deloof's collections of Breton poetry in *Bro Nevez* 28 (November 1988) and 67 (August 1998).

On the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday, Jan Deloof published a little collection of poems (primarily in Dutch with Breton translations). And, he kindly sent me a copy of these and provided some English translations so we could print a few in the pages of *Bro Nevez*.

Poems from this collection, *In de Achteruitkijkspiegel / Er C'hilvelezour*, were printed in four issues of *Bro Nevez* (no.s 78, 79, 80 and 81 from May 2001 to February 2002). The poem on the following page - "Flanders Field American Cemetary" - was previously published in *Bro Nevez* 78 (May 2001), but it seemed timely to print it again.

## FLANDERS FIELD AMERICAN CEMETERY

*Om te worden voorgelezen op  
Memorial Day*

Hun namen dartelen van  
kristenkruis tot jodenster.  
Een kruis voor Freddy Annandale, Ohio.  
Een ster voor Norman Stein, New York.  
Een kruis voor David Lee, North Carolina.  
In de berken roepen goedgemutste mezen:  
een ster voor Morris Liebmann, Jacob Leder...

Ze vielen kort voor het voorlopig eindsignaal,  
de helden die niemand nog kent,  
Giuseppe Spano, Julius Plaskawicky, *known  
but to ...* Een geel-en-zwarte vlinder  
klapt zijn vleugels op de laatste letters open.

Ze wisten nergens van.  
Ze trokken zwijgend op.  
Wat hadden ze verwacht?  
De tijd ontviel hun  
voor ze hadden nagedacht.

*Greet them ever with grateful hearts.*  
Zij waren dwaas  
om onze dwaasheid te bestrijden.  
Later, pas veel later  
zullen we con brio zingen  
van de zwaluwstaarten.  
Van de pimpelmezen.  
Van de goede tijden.

## MEMORIAL DAY

Gweladenn d'ar Flanders Field  
American Cemetery (Waregem)

Da Roger Laouenan

*O anvioù a fring a steredenn da groaz.  
Ur groaz 'vit Freddy Annandale, Ohio.  
Ur steredenn 'vit Norman Stein, New York.  
Ur groaz 'vit David Lee, North Carolina.  
Pennduiged laouen zo oc'h andellat  
er faou: ur steredenn  
'vit Morris Liebmann, Jacob Leder...*

*Kouezhet int un nebeut amzer  
a-raok arouez fall ar fin,  
an harozed gant den ebet kounaet,  
Giuseppe Spano, Julius Plaskawicky, known  
but to G... Ur valafenn melen ha du a zigor  
he divaskell dirak al lizherennoù d hag o.*

*Kerzhout a rejont hep gouzout ar perag.  
Petra o doa goanaget? An amzer zo  
difloupet diouzh o daouarn  
a-raok m'o defe soñj.*

*Greet them ever with grateful hearts. Foll  
e oant evit stoliañ hor follentez-ni.  
Kanañ a raimp diwezhatoc'h.  
Kalz diwezhatoc'h hepken e kanimp  
con brio  
diwar-benn ar pennduiged koant  
hag ar balafenned laouen  
hag an amzer drant.*

Their names gambol from star to cross.  
A cross for Freddy Annandale, Ohio.  
A star for Norman Stein, New York.  
A cross for David Lee, North Carolina.  
Good-humored blue-tits twitter  
in the birches:  
a star for Morris Liebmann, Jacob Leder ...

They fell shortly before  
the provisional end-signal,  
the heroes who nobody remembers,  
Giuseppe Spano, Julius Plaskawicky, *known  
but to G...* A black-and-yellow butterfly  
opens its pinions above the letters d and o.

They marched without knowing why.  
What had they hoped? Time has fled  
from their hands  
before they could think it over.

*Greet them ever with faithful hearts.*  
They were foolish in order to fight our  
foolishness.  
Only much later will we sing  
con brio  
about the lovely blue-tits  
and the happy butterflies  
and the good times.

# BRETON LANGUAGE LITERATURE - A BOOK REVIEW

**Jef Gedez. *Huñvreoù Pêr Mortolod: Peder danevell*.** Lannuon: An Alarc'h Embannadurioù, . 2005. 171 pp. ISBN 2-9520238-5-9.

Reviewed by Kevin Rottet

This collection consists of four short stories: *Huñvreoù Pêr Mortolod* (“The Dreams of Peter the Sailor”); *An hent treuz* (“The path through the fields”), *Ar Sparfell* (“The sparrowhawk”) and *Me ’garfe bout ul labous-mor* (“I wish I were a seabird”). Although there is no overlap between plots or characters, in each of the stories one of the main characters is a retired gentleman—like Gedez himself—exploring memories of his childhood. Three of the four stories also deal, directly or indirectly, with the sea.

In the first story we are introduced to Pêr Mortolod, a retired sailor who often dreams of mysterious women that beckon him to follow them. Sometimes the young woman turns into a witch, and only by awakening from sleep is Pêr rescued from her power. One day a real young woman comes into his life in a mysterious way. Pêr has returned to his boyhood region but finds that everything has changed, the old faces he remembers are long gone, and the place is overrun with tourists—and among them, thieves who plunder ancient stone or wood statues of saints from churchyards and chapels and who disappear among seas of tourists and foreigners on big buses. One day Pêr sees in a local paper an advertisement about the forming of a society for the protection of the local cultural heritage. Pêr finds himself immediately drawn to this group. In some of the same places from which old statues of saints had disappeared, a woman had been spotted taking pictures. The society contrives to secretly follow her each time she comes into the area. Finally they learn who she is and why she is visiting the area, and the explanation is quite different from what they expected.

*An hent treuz* is told from the point of view of a teenage girl who, one day while taking a shortcut through the countryside, rescues Dan, a middle-aged man whose ladder had fallen while he was cutting branches in a tree. The story of their secret friendship unfolds as at first he helps with her math homework, but gradually he recounts his life stories. We learn that after a boyhood fascination with old telecommunications equipment on a German battleship, he had gone on to pursue a career in engineering building self-guided missiles. The narrator, increasingly infatuated with him, keeps their visits completely secret from her mother and her friends, even after she has fallen in love. One day she informs him that she has seen two men taking pictures of the house. The next time she comes

to visit, Dan is gone, and the house has been ransacked. Several days go by before she remembers that he had once shown her a cubbyhole in the stone wall surrounding the property, mysteriously saying that it might come in handy one day. The story ends with the discovery she makes when she goes to check this space.

In the story *Ar Sparfell*, the retired narrator is struck when he hears an announcement on the radio that L.D., who had been his teacher in middle school, has won a literary prize. Eager to learn more about this man’s success, the narrator buys all of his novels, but is dismayed to find that none of them involve the culture or history of Brittany. More curious than ever to learn L.D.’s views on issues of regional concern, he decides to adopt the methods of a spy described in one of the novels. He finally goes so far as to enter L.D.’s house after everyone has been seen leaving, and there he finds a handwritten letter to the editor of a regional publication, *Mouezh ar Vro* (“The Voice of the Land”), signed with the pseudonym Ar Sparfell (“The Sparrowhawk”). The narrator is an avid reader of this publication, and this discovery tells him everything he wanted to know about the person of his former literature teacher.

The last story, *Me ’garfe bout ul labous-mor*, tells of a newly retired man who takes up an interest in sailing and heads back to Brest (Brittany), his childhood home. Though his wife will not come with him, she puts him in touch with Mela, a cousin living there who is pursuing graduate studies on the wildlife of the seacoast. His arrival in Brest and stroll around the old port is accompanied by memories of his childhood, and in a local tavern he meets a retired teacher who explains the many ways in which Brest has changed, such as an influx of young people coming in search of work. One such man is Manu, known locally as *paotr e gasketenn* (“the guy with the sailor hat”), who has been living in Brest while trying to find a position on a ship headed to Panama. In fact, though, no one has seen Manu in about a month, and since he has no permanent lodging he isn’t easy to relocate; the police are looking for him in connection with some possible cocaine deals. The narrator discovers that Manu is staying in the apartment next door to Mela, but he somehow disappears from the third floor unit when the police come calling, though not without entrusting a blue notebook to Mela filled with poetic ramblings in which he discusses his descent from Polynesian ancestors (and we learn that Manu is a Polynesian word for “seabird”). The narrator pores over this document and even takes it to several specialists, in an attempt to understand who this man really is.

# VISIT TO THE ISLE OF MAN

By Natalie Novik

The locals will tell you: the Isle of Man is protected by the powerful god Mannanan Mac Lir from invaders. When Mannanan wants to keep his island safe, he wraps it in mist and it disappears from view. That's what was obviously happening the day I was to land in Douglas, Isle of Man. The small plane circled several times around the island, but the fog was so thick, it had to turn back. It went again to the island towards the evening, the pilot announcing that the fog had lifted. But as it came for the approach, the mists spread again. Undaunted, the pilot broke through the thick layers, and landed the plane safely, to the applause of the delighted passengers.

The Isle of Man is named after Mannanan, a small green dot between Ireland and Scotland, 50 miles long, 30 wide. It has been inhabited since times immemorial, much before the Celts brought the protection of the god onto its land. Ancient forts dot the craggy shoreline, making the island look like a giant fortress. But the story of this old kingdom is not only that of invasions and warfare, it also has a gentle, civilized side that I was about to discover. As I drove in a cab to Douglas, the capital, the lady driver suddenly slowed down and said: "We are coming to the Fairy Bridge. You need to say hello to them, so they won't be angry at you." And she waived her hand and say hello, and I did the same, the last thing I wanted in the fog being falling prey to the wee ones.

I had contacted the Center for Manx studies a few months earlier, as I needed to find out about the Manx language and how it was surviving. Breesha Madrell, one of the mainstays of the language, had replied to me and invited me to come and see for myself how the language was being preserved. She had also expressed an interest in the status of the Breton language, and had planned visits and meetings so we could exchange information.

She showed up at my B&B not one hour after I had settled in, and took me into the fog and the rain to a pub in St. John's, a little village

half-way to the other coast. It was pouring, but the pub was chock full with people, ready to enjoy themselves. The plan was for me to show slides about Brittany, talk about the country and the language, and then we would have a seisun. I had gathered about 100 slides from various corners of Brittany, and found out pretty soon that many in the audience had visited Brittany and knew the people and places I was showing. The Q & A that followed took some time, there was so much to tell about the situation of Breton, Diwan, the other schools, the hopes we had and the struggle we were in. People were shaking their heads in disbelief, looked very sad at the thought of another Celtic language having to fight such odds, and then a jar started going around. By the end of the evening, they had gathered \$ 80 that they gave me for Diwan to support the schools.

But as I was concluding my presentation, the musicians started gathering. And what musicians! It was really a treat: Breesha is part of an excellent group called Skeel, which performs mostly Manx, but also Irish and Scottish music. Breesha is an accomplished flutist, I would have listened to her all night if I could. I started also talking to the other musicians and found out that most of them were also familiar with Breton music, in particular Bob Carswell, who had an entire repertoire of Stivell up his arm and into his flute... Somebody had brought a small harp and I was asked to play some Breton tunes. But the best part of the evening was listening to genuine Manx music, which is of course, very similar to Irish and Scottish music, but has some very distinctive characteristics of its own: the musical sentences often rise, as in Brittany when the diskaner takes over from the kaner, while in Gaelic music, the tune tends to go down. Also, some of the music reminded me of Norwegian fiddle music, not so surprising if you think how long the Vikings lived on the Isle. There are numerous other music groups on Man, like Mychuracan, Paitchyn Vannin, The Mollag Band, and several choirs, a folk dance society, and very gifted individual musicians,

including Charles Guard, whom I did not know was from Man.

32 miles long, 13 miles wide, with a total population of about 75,000, the Isle of Man owes its present prosperity to its offshore status, which has attracted numerous banks and financial institutions. As a result, young people are less inclined now to leave the island, since jobs are easy to find and the island is a very pleasant place to live, with an even maritime climate. It was not always the case, and in the past, the island had been famous for its smugglers, who used the island as a secret base in the West Indies trade.

The Manx language is part of the Goidelic family, together with Irish and Scots Gaelic. It has a very simple spelling system, much like Breton, and therefore is easily readable by non-Gaelic speakers. Over the past few years, an unprecedented effort has been made by the local government to support Manx, as it is viewed as one of the markers of the island's identity and therefore its status as an offshore territory. I visited the only immersion school on the island, the Bunscoil Ghailgagh in St. John's, which takes in 47 children through elementary grades. The teaching is done in Manx, with very little allowance for English, since it is understood the children will, in most cases, speak English at home. However, there are many young families that keep the language alive and therefore in more cases than one would think, the children have a chance to grow up in Manx. At this point, monolingual materials are being developed, including computer programs to teach the language using interactive methods.



The language is also used on street and road signs, also a little bit for commercial purposes, and has a strong following among artists. In a sense, it's quite similar to the situation in Brittany, with the difference that there is strong government support... The teachers are therefore in secure jobs, and do not fear being transferred to non-immersion schools or even schools outside the island. I met five teachers there, one of whom also knows Welsh. I also visited a class of Manx language in a regular school, where the teacher was giving a test in the language to a young girl, who also knew Welsh. The proximity of Wales might play a role, and it is obvious that for anybody already familiar with the complexities of any Celtic grammar, that the grammar of the other Celtic languages is not particularly difficult to learn.

When it comes to the vocabulary and the spelling, here are a few examples:

Coo = hound (oh, yes, right there, Cuchulain)

Cree = heart (easier to read than in Gaelic, isn't it?)

Doo = black (no hesitation on how to pronounce it either)

Ellan Vannin = the Isle of Man (do you recognize the mutation, expressed as in Breton with an v instead of a mh?)

Kayt = cat (the famous Manx cats...)

Marroo: dead (maro in Breton)

Mwyllin: mill (milin in Breton)

Towl: hole (toul in Breton).

And then the Celtic countries;

Y Chorn = Cornwall

Nerin = Ireland

Y Vretin = Wales

Y Vritaan = Brittany.

I also met with Brian Stowell, who is holding the position of Commissioner for the Manx language on the Island. He is an ebullient elder, always eager to find out more about other Celtic languages, about the relations between them, about the history and the culture of the other countries, his curiosity is insatiable and his knowledge encyclopedic. It was such a pleasure to spend an evening with him, and revisit again the next day. He is supposed to organize adult classes in the summer, and I will share with our readers information about these when I get it. Since

the island is the perfect place for a vacation, somebody might be interested in going there to learn Manx during the summer. There is a pan-Celtic Festival every summer at the end of July, called Yn Chruinnaght.

The perfect place for a vacation is not an understatement: there are numerous picturesque villages featuring hotels and B&B's, remarkable linkages by vintage steam train, tram or bus between them, and lots of interesting places to visit, not to mention nature walks and the beaches. During the summer, the Isle of Man is also linked to Ireland and Great Britain by ferry (between May and October). Two unusual places to visit (apart from prehistoric forts, medieval churches and castles, standing stones and passage graves) are the Manx Cat Sanctuary and the Old Horse Retirement House. I thought it showed a real spirit of compassion on the part of the islanders. And yes, some of the cats are authentic Manx cats without tails, but they have competition from imported varieties with tails.

The other memory I will keep from the Isle is its independence. It is not part of the United Kingdom or the European Union, it stands by itself, with its own government. The Queen is tacitly recognized as "Lord of the Isle", but it is purely a decorative title. Every year, early July, the government gathers on a little hill in St. John's, called Tynwald Hill, and reads to the assembled people the latest laws that have been adopted during the previous year. And the reading is done first in Manx, second in English. With its original flag, featuring a triskell of armed legs, the Isle of Man has probably one of the oldest continuous governments in Europe. Its motto, dictated by the flag, is that no matter how I fall, I always land on my legs, could well apply to the cats, but represents very vividly how the island and its heritage has managed to survive through the centuries.



## America and Celtic Language Nicknames (mostly Breton ones)

By Mikael Madeg

Since about 1975, I have been collecting individual nicknames directly from oral traditions. Most of these I've collected would have just disappeared otherwise. So far, I've published 23 collections of these nicknames. I've collected about 30,000 nicknames and I wonder if such an editorial venture has been tried anywhere else. Perhaps, but I'm pretty sure it never has been in French.

Every book presents a selection, usually a few hundred, on a geographical basis. The most thorough of these studies are about the Leon province of Brittany (10 books) and some parts of the Cornouaille – so far the northwestern part. Of course, all these books are different.

They are either in Breton or in French. Most of them are about Brittany, but recently, I've published two collections from other Celtic countries. One is on Welsh nicknames ("Surnoms Gallois"). The other is Gaelic, mostly Scottish ("Surnoms Gaéliques")

Anyone interested would have to write to me to know more, and I must say that the books I publish myself are in limited editions (a few hundred copies only). My address is: Kêredol, 29800 St. Thonan.

For Bro Nevez readers who might now know what nicknames are (I wonder!), this is meant to introduce you to the topic. The collections are organized in a different, dictionary-like, way.

I suppose it will surprise no one on the western side of the Atlantic Ocean to know that quite a few people found on this side of the Atlantic are simply nicknamed "The American." Of course they aren't really American, since this wouldn't be a nickname, would it?

These are Bretons. At Lampaul-Plouarzel (Leon) there were actually two “Americans.” One was called simply “An Amerikan.” He never was in America. What happened is that, one day, he had gotten pretty drunk, and in drunken logic, had decided to go to the other side of the Atlantic. Now, his pals tried to convince him not to go by saying that he might get lost. Oh, no, I won’t, says he. You see, at Lampaul-Plouarzel, at that time, was one end of a telephone cable that went into the sea. Where else would it end than in America? So, there he went and started to climb, or more to creep, along that telephone cable. He was retrieved before he got to the point of drowning.

The other one was called “An Amerikan Du” (the black American) and this is quite another story. Quite tragic too. In 1917 American soldiers began arriving here on their way to the “Western” front, and Brest was the usual destination. Of course, many local Bretons got a job for themselves as dock workers or in other jobs. Two of these befriended an American soldier, or pretended they did. Whatever the reality of this friendship, the result was the murder of the American, and the disposal of his body. Money was the motive. One of these two men was from Lampaul. Of course, everyone there noticed that he had become rich all of a sudden. Somehow people pieced the story together. He wasn’t turned in but got the nickname “An Amerikan Du.” The American sailor was not black, so the adjective referred to the blackness of the deed.

At Pleubian (Tregor) a retired sailor was “An Amerikan Koz” (the old American). Like many of that generation, he had sailed all over the world, often changing ships. He was quite proud of a period he had worked on an American ship.

At Quimerc’h (Cornouaille), one can still see “Ti an Amerikan” (the American’s house). This house is of a very different style compared to others in the neighborhood. The man thus nicknamed had crossed the sea to look for employment. He found some in Pittsburgh where he stayed for quite a few years, and when he returned home in 1932 he had saved quite a bit ... but not quite enough. This quaint house was built according to his

wishes and was intended to look like those he had seen in America. Unfortunately it was never finished since he ran out of funds, and to this day, the walls still stand useless.

Another “An Amerikan” lived at Crozon. This was a woman who always stayed at home, taking care of her aging parents and her severely handicapped brother. The brother had a pension which, in the local circumstances, made the family appear well off. She was the one who did all the shopping and would spend quite freely. This caused some to remark that she “must be an American because she made quite a bit of money without working.” A bit of an overstatement, but the name caught.

At Telgruc when the second world war ended there were quite a few pieces of equipment for sale after the U.S. Army left – or even before. “An Amerikan” took a fancy to declassified army clothing, of which he bought quite a lot, and for years he wore these as everyday clothes.

Finally at Carnhuel there was another “an Amerikan” who had lived in New York for quite some time before returning to Brittany.

Some nicknames refer to the place in itself. For example, at Coray there lived at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century one “Louiz an Amerik.” Louiz had tried her luck in Argentina but just didn’t make it. As the legend goes, she even had to have her return transport by sea paid for by the French government.

Which fits nicely with the example of a Welshman, a quarryman from Bethesda there, who had tried his luck and found it all rather disappointing in America. Whatever the reason, he, too, sailed back home, and ever after was called “Now ‘Merica” (Owen America).

Nicknames can refer more precisely to the place someone went to. I actually collected very few of these because many immigrants just never returned home, and were soon forgotten. Related to the U.S.A., I heard about two Bretons who were called “Kaliforni.” One had been a sailor who naturally returned. But the precise reason for his nickname has been

forgotten. The other “Kaliforni”’s fate is far better known. Anyone who has visited central Finistère cannot have escaped visiting the “Domaine de Menez Meur” which is a bit of a tourist attraction. Menez Meur is a Breton name, and the official one as well (“Big Mountain”), but all Breton-speakers locally call it Kaliforni! - from its founder’s nickname. The man is still remembered as having taken part in one of the gold rushes and he got rich from that adventure. Back home he bought quite a bit of land and had it planned as he saw fit (nothing too extravagant in reality).

Another gold rusher was a Pleubian man and from his insistence on recounting his adventures when he returned home he soon came to be known as plain “Sacramento.”

Bretons who went to America tried their luck in many parts of the continent. Quite a few of them were sailors who spent full years away from home sailing. Before the Panama Canal was built, sailing from the east coast to the west coast of America meant going round Cape Horn. A dangerous place at any time, its name was to become synonymous with hardy sailors. This is the reason why at least three Bretons were just called “Kaporn.” Two actually went there several times. One was a Carantec man who was the godfather of another man who never sailed excepted locally, but who was nicknamed after his godfather. Another “Kaporn” was a Vannetais man, from Gâvres - a great place for sea-faring people at that time.

When the Panama Canal was built, sailors who used it could hardly do less than talk about it. This is what happened to another man from Lampaul-Plouarzel who came to be known as plain “Panama.” There’s actually more to the story. As many old timers did, he would become impatient of young men bragging too loudly in taverns. So to try to talk them into curbing their attitude, he was wont to ask them, in Breton, “Have you seen Panama, young man? Well, if you haven’t, stop bragging!” Strong words, of course.

At Porspoder, close by, a local fisherman was called “Sant Domeñg.” Like most seaside youngsters, he had to serve in the navy for a time. While there the great adventure in his life was a trip to Santo Domingo, about which

he talked endlessly. A Cleder man had gone to Brazil and was nicknamed “Santos” for some geographical reason. So tired did they get of his ranting about his voyage that no one ever cared to check to find the geographical location of this other port.

On the other coast of South America all deep-sea sailors had been to Valparaiso. But, surprisingly it’s Peru that most impressed a young Henvic man, so he was called “Yann Berou” (John Peru). All these men were from the Leon region of Brittany.

Another domain where American influences were felt in Breton speaking society was music. One must remember that Brest was one of the first European towns to hear jazz music to a substantial degree. In the 1920s, in Brittany at least, a jazz orchestra, or a locally made copy of it, was just called “a jazz” and quite a few people who organized such groups got, literally speaking, a name for it. I can tell you of three I specifically heard of. One was at Perros-Guirec (Trégor): “Tangi Jazbant,” the leader of one of these bands, as well as Chopig Jaz (Hanvec) and Job Jaz (Guéméné), both Joseph. My informants just couldn’t tell me whether their music sounded at all like the real thing, since in Breton “jaz” in around 1930 came to just mean a band.

Alongside music came dances. When Breton was still the dominant language here, at least two dances found their way into Breton names. “Fox trot” was a St. Pol-de-Léon man who had nothing to do with the dance; he was just very lame and somehow his walking looked like a vague approximation. Everyone knows that nicknames are rarely meant to be kind, are they?

The same comparison was made about a Catholic priest at Sibiril, close by, who again was slightly handicapped. During those years, they called him “Charleston.” Oh boy!

In contrast, “Frañswa Charleston” in Canihuel (Cornouaille) was just an enthusiastic dancer and preferred modernity to tradition.

I’ve already mentioned cheap surplus and left-overs after the U.S. armies started leaving. Twice there were quite a bit of cheap

goods to be had of all kinds, especially those which just weren't worth shipping back. Not only clothing, but cars and like merchandise could be found. At St. Pol-de-Léon a young man made quite a bargain when he bought stocks of army tires. This created quite a brisk business and he was called in town "Fañch an Neuiou" (Frank the Tires) after his specialty, since he was not a mechanic otherwise.

At Pleyben (Cornouaille) a farm wife surprised everybody when she, after the second world war, not only bought an American jeep – surprising vehicles in themselves – but she used it for all purposes and even went to the fields with it. Thus, she became "Margrid ar Jip" (Margret the Jeep).

I didn't take into account as much another category of nicknames of American origin which were very common: those of stars, either of the music world, or cinema, who are more or less known world wide. They are extremely common. And as an easy example I'll mention one fisherman from the Batz island. He was called "Ar Cherif" (The Sheriff), a figure that had become highly popular through westerns. He was never anything like a policeman keeping law and order. One should know that a commonly used piece of fishing equipment used here are pots (for lobsters, etc.). These are very difficult to keep an eye on, and some people are prone to empty the pots of others for their own benefit. Occasionally one can witness such thefts and even recognize the thief. To discourage such thefts, this fisherman took to having a gun in his fishing boat.

I'll finish with four nicknames which have a precise connection with the U.S.A. They are all from Central Cornouaille, a region that saw quite a few of its inhabitants migrate there, usually to work as industrial workers to start. Sometimes, as many immigrants do, they would try to keep in touch and stick together. At the time when most of them went to the U.S.A., having very little French, Breton was the language of these transient groupings. They were never in the thousands, and made no permanent impact on American life, as other Celts did.

Roudouallec is a small community from which a high proportion went, and quite a few came back. Quite a few houses in this community definitely "look American." Those who returned had gotten a good grasp of English. Thus there is nothing extraordinary about English nicknames being given to people in Roudouallec. One example is "Speedy," a very nervous returnee.

At Gouezec another local man returned from Canada with a nickname "Frank" which had no relation with his actual name.

At St. Goazec, or from there, around 1930, quite a few young men went to New York to live at a place called "loti" (or so it sounds). They socialized together quite a lot. One of them returned home with a Breton nickname which had been given to him in America: "Kroez ar Maill Houarn." Kroez is just the spoken local version of his Christian name, Ambrose. A "Maill Houarn" is an iron hammer. He was an extremely active (and efficient) womanizer.

Lastly, a Guisriff man got himself a Breton nickname in the U.S.A. as well – in the precise circumstances I recorded as follows. As many of these young migrants did, a small group of Guisriff men stuck together, sharing the same lodging in this case. And as fishing crews do, they would take turns to do the cooking and what little tidying up was done. On one occasion one of them prepared the meal, some stew or soup for which there was both meat and vegetables, and he completely forgot to include the meat. This resulted in quite some leg-pulling to the effect that the others called him "Paotr Fin" (wise guy). This happened in Milltown and the nickname was widely used among these exiles. And when they returned to Guisriff they just went on using it, and everyone else followed suit.

Finally I can add that in my books about Welsh and Gaelic nicknames there is a selection of such names, some of which have close connections with America. Welsh nicknames were given in the Gwladfa, the Welsh language colony of a few thousand individuals in Patagonia which was fairly successful for more than a century. One nickname that was given in the Gwladfa was

“Philips Brasil,” a Welshman who, before going to Patagonia spent some time in Brazil. And, of course, tens of more ordinary-looking Welsh names were invented over there. Two of these Gwladfa Welsh, at least, returned to live in Wales. One, who became a writer, was called “Bryn Patagonia,” and another was “Dic Patagonia.”

Gaelic was much stronger and lasted longer in parts of Canada, from where Acadians had been evicted. One of the strongholds of Gaelic there for more than two centuries was Cape Breton (surprise, surprise) Island, and more generally whole districts of Nova Scotia. There are scores of Gaelic nicknames which were given there, in my books – the more complete one being in Breton “Leor lesanoiou gouezeleg Bro Skos.” Not all of them referred to former Highlanders turned farmers, or Gaels forcefully evicted from Scotland. This was definitely not the case of “Aonghas a ‘Bhanca” (Angus the Bank) who was none other than a bank manager in Sydney.

Quite a few of these nicknames have long stories attached to them, and crossed the sea either way. Some given in Nova Scotia arrived back in Scotland, as well as the other way round.

I’ll just mention one which has a strong humorous touch to it. This is a man from the Loch Ness area during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a time when immigration from Scotland was still strong to America. He was not exactly a young man and was thinking of going there himself, or so he said. When everything was ready, he left for Glasgow, having said farewell to all he knew. But, later, he returned and announced that he had “missed the boat” at Glasgow, whatever that meant (there were plenty of boats going to America from Glasgow). The year after, he went again, and again had to walk back home for the same reason. Apparently, or so goes the legend, he left about half a dozen times, always returned, and never went to America. Nevertheless, in his home district, he was always called “Bodach Ameriga” (the old man from America).



## DEEP INSIDE A BRETON SKULL: 14 – Paolig an Diaoul

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Have you heard about Paolig an Diaoul ?

If this name does not ring a bell in your brain, let us say that Paolig is a devil, an infernal creature. He has been charged by Satan with leading Bretons on the way to perdition.

However, don’t think that the forces of Evil have a clear strategy of conquest for our little country. Like all the powers which nurture a universal ambition, they are not much interested in Brittany. Lucifer or Astaroth, full of themselves, do not want to mix personally with the affairs of this rocky peninsula, covered with gorse, broom and heather. They have devoted this ungrateful task to subordinates.

This very Paolig, nevertheless, is a really frightening guy, and don’t expect anything else. He brought more than one Breton into eternal damnation. He inspired tens of criminals, hundreds of gangsters, thousands of good-for-nothings.

OK, he lacks a little bit of a high fiendish calibre... Among the villains he manipulated, there are few true monsters, whose memory has been transmitted with a shivering terror through generations. He succeeded poorly in organizing depopulation, famine, mass massacres, or hideous profanations here in Brittany. To tell the truth, and without slandering him, he tailored himself to our mild and weird country, so that he could stay here incognito. This ability has always been his force. But it also marks his limits.

Paolig is not such a tough devil as to provoke thunder or put fire to a whole region. But he is a cunning guy. He knows how to compromise the purest hearts. There are in

the country hundreds of stories telling how Paolig gave gold to poor people, or a child to a sterile couple. And after that he catches their souls and throws them into the flames of Hell. Sometimes he takes on the appearance of a black cat in order to enter a house. He can take on the appearance of any animal, snake, frog, cock. He can take on the appearance of a woman or a man, a prince or a princess, a CEO or a hillbilly, as he wishes. He is really a dangerous character.

The mimicry of Paolig an Diaoul in Brittany, like a chameleon on heather, could not provoke divine fury. It caused however a real concern. So, to counter his malefic embezzling, the Savior sent saints and holy people here tailored to fight the pernicious influence of Paolig. He chose those which were best suited to the character and the uses of the Bretons.

Edern, between two sermons, found pleasure in riding a stag. Saint Telo did the same. Ronan was a generous character but rather coleric. His fights with Keben the witch are well known here. Herve was a blind hermit led by a wolf. There were hundreds of the same type, who were sent here to show us the paths to Heaven.



The Bretons have only a vague idea of what Paolig looks like, when he is not disguised. Sometimes he is named Paul Gornek, which means Horned-Paol. Sometimes he is named Paul Lostek, which means Paol-with-a-tail. The priests are more abstract in their descriptions: they name Paolig *An Enebour*, the Enemy, or *An Droukspered*, the Evil Spirit.

In our churches, the devil is represented on the old statues as *An Aerouant*, the dragon. He is always green coloured, nobody knows why. But this dragon is not a huge one, and he has been often overpowered, and usually drowned, by our good saints. Saint Pol, Saint Efflam, or Saint Tudual, each of them with God's help, defeated a dragon.



When I was young, I went with my parents every year to the pardon of Saint Idy, not far from Morlaix. In the little chapel, there was a statue of the saint, and under his feet there was a horned creature grasping a wooden clog in its claw. My mother told me that, long ago, a man of the neighborhood sold his soul to the Devil, but made a true repentance after that. Before the end of the pact he had signed with Paolig an Diaoul, he asked Saint Idy what he could do to avoid the disastrous consequences of the deal. Saint Idy advised him to go to the meeting, wearing clogs too big for his feet, and to escape when Paolig would appear. That would leave the saint the

time to intervene. So the poor man did this. Paolig came up from under the ground, and tried to seize our sinner. But he could only catch the clog and the man ran away without his wooden shoes. This fraction of time was sufficient for Saint Idy to rush into the place and send Paolig back to the infernal world.

When you got such an education, with such examples of morality, you cannot be completely frightened by the Devil. There are other stories like this one, in other places, where the Great Deceiver has been deceived by ordinary people, shivering in front of supernatural forces, but well advised by priests or saints.

And what about Hell? Like all the Christians, Bretons believe in a place where the sinners are burning together for ever. But, according to old traditions, Hell is not burning. It exists as *an Ifern Yen*, the Cold Hell. True, iced loneliness forever can be a more unbearable punishment than collective burning. According to Dante, in the *Divine Comedy*, eternal tortures in an icy world is the fate of the traitors and the supreme sinners, in the ninth circle of Inferno. Satan is himself prisoner of this ninth circle, a monster impotent and ignorant. Maybe Dante had a knowledge of Breton traditions.

The Bretons have strange reminiscences. The statues representing the Devil look like older statues representing Celtic gods. They share a particular attribute, the horns, named *Korn* in Breton.

In Carnac, land of old megalithic people and perhaps also of horned divinities, the church is dedicated to Saint Corneli, master of the cattle and the horned animals.

A lot of Breton saints are linked with the horned animals. Some of them are patron and protector of cattle. During the annual pardons dedicated to them, the priests bless the cows in the name of the saint. Others ride on stags or other horned beasts.

Sometimes, the corpse of the saint is put on a cart pulled by oxen. When the oxen decide to stop, it is there that the saint has to be buried. That link between the horned animal, the saint, and the sacred place of burial can

be found in the legends of Saint Ronan and of saint Nonn.

For the Bretons, the most frightening of the supernatural beings are not the devils, which torture you because of your faults and your sins. Logically, you cannot be surprised at your poor fate. There are more formidable creatures, which can kill you for nothing. Such are the Washerwomen of the Night, who can crush all your bones with their shroud, only because you are passing by. Better also to avoid *an C'hwitellour Noz*, the Strand Whistler. Near the sea shore, he whistles gently. If you happen to whistle in answer, he will come near you, whistling again. But you will not see him. The *C'hwitellour Noz* is invisible. If you answer again, he will jump on your back, and he can kill you if he wants.

Deep inside our skull, we don't consider Paolig, our horned devil, as a frightening monster from a far away world. He is a kind of neighboring outsider, coming from our own ancient world of death and chaos. The old Celtic warriors, our ancestors, with horns on their helmets, probably had this strong feeling of being outsiders, bringing death and chaos with them. Today, contemplating the crescent moon, we try to imagine the mysterious creature behind these golden horns.



Celtic god and Breton devil

## New Music from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

**Gwennyn. *En tu all.*** Coop Breizh CD 988. 2006 41'22. [www.gwennyn.com](http://www.gwennyn.com)

With this CD we welcome another new young voice composing and singing in the Breton language. And Gwennyn has a lovely voice, reminiscent at times of the sweet high voices one hears from Irish and Scottish singers, but lacking the sometimes annoying "ethereal" quality. This a voice with body.

Six of the song texts are composed by Gwennyn and three by Youenn Gervalon, with one jointly by the two. Gwennyn's texts speak of love and relations – passionate, difficult, and tender. The texts by Gervalon have a more political edge – the plight of Serbs and Muslims of Sarajevo, the treatment of minority peoples, and children of Belfast growing up with violence and hatred. Two texts are by well known Breton poets: "Marv an enved" by Maodez Glanndour and "An Alc'hwez aour" by Angela Duval. I can't help but to think that if she were alive today, Anjela Duval would probably be pleased and perhaps surprised to see her poem about using a golden key to unlock the castle where a madman has locked the Breton language and its treasures sung in a modern jazzy setting by a beautiful young Breton woman.

The musical settings for the songs is decidedly "pop" with a rockier edge on occasion. When I first heard the CD it reminded me immediately of the group Glaz. Ant that's no accident since Yann Honoré of that former group is cited as the one responsible for arrangements and artistic direction for the CD. He is also the composer of the music of six of the eleven selections (two in conjunction with Gwennyn). And he is one of the musicians with electric bass, tin whistles, and electronic programming. Other musicians are Patrick Boileau with percussion, Philippe Turbin with piano and keyboard, and Erwan Volant with electric and acoustic guitar. A number of other guest musicians also bring accordion, harp, violin, guitars and percussion to various selections on the CD. The accompaniment is varied and interesting, and supports the songs very well.

While Gwennyn's singing allows you to hear words very clearly, the shift in rhythm for singing can make it hard to understand songs for those who do not have a strong mastery of Breton. Having the song texts in the CD notes is very welcome and allows one to easily follow along. Besides all the texts in Breton, there are short summaries in French and English. Regrettably

there is no introduction in the CD notes to Gwennyn herself. A trip to her website tells of her philosophy about her music and past performances, but does not tell one much more about who she is – just that Gwennyn (Louarn) was born in Crozon, now lives in Douarnenez, and Breton is her maternal language. But, what more do you need. Just enjoy this lovely voice and look forward to more from this creative singer.

**Gerard Delahaye. *Quelle drôle de terre!***  
Dylie Productions DY 266. 2006 53'22.  
[www.gerarddelahaye.com](http://www.gerarddelahaye.com)

The subtitle to this CD ("what a crazy earth!") is "Mes héros autour de la planète" (my heroes around the world). And Gerard Delahaye takes us around the world to introduce us in song to over a dozen well known and less known people who have inspired him. There are some who are heroes to millions – Gandhi, Martin Luther King and John Lennon are the subject of the title cut "Quell drôle de terre" were Delahaye points out that all three of these non-violent pacifists were assassinated by gunmen. Nelson Mandela is another name sure to be recognized. And certainly the name of soccer star Zinedine Zidane will be well known outside of France.

Delahaye also presents Rigoberta Menchu, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1992 who fought for the rights of Guatemalan Indian peoples, and Soviet Youri Gagarine, the first astronaut to circle the earth in 1961. Another "first" is Gérard D'Aboville, a Breton, who was the first to circumnavigate the world by rowing. Also celebrated is Solomon Linda, a South African Zulu who composed the well known song "Wimoweh" ("the lion sleeps tonight"). If you don't recognize it by those words, you'd surely recognize the music that Delahaye uses for this verses about this singer who first recorded the song in 1939 but who never profited from it since Americans signed for the authors' rights.

In "Les Plages de Normandie" Delahaye evokes the American soldier who died in World War II "knowing of France only a little sand on the beaches of Normandy." Other heroes: Manuel Patarroyo of Columbia who invented a vaccine for Malaria and Théodore Monod who walked across the Sahara desert to map it and who spoke out against war and nuclear weapons. Other heroines: Gilabi Sapera of India who grew up to become a famous dancer against all possible odds, and Lucie, a peasant women of the Arrée mountains of Brittany who simply lived her life.

Delahaye is known as a composer of music for children and this CD is directed to children so that they learn the names and lessons of exemplary people – not kings or business tycoons, but people of courage who often came from very humble beginnings. In “Enfant noir, enfant blanc” Delahaye does not cite particular heroes but gives lessons in race relations, urging tolerance and respect of people of all colors.

Just as the people visited in the songs come from around the world, the music composed by Delahaye evokes various traditional and world rhythms. And besides Delahaye’s great guitar work, there is a host of musicians involved in the music for this CD, including the voices of children. As is always the case for Delahaye’s music, the melodies are highly enjoyable and one is tempted to sing along – indeed, one is encouraged to learn them, and the CD jacket notes include guitar chords and advice for guitar players.

While attractive to children, the music and texts are sophisticated enough to be also very appealing for adults. And certainly we can all be inspired by the heroes and heroines Delahaye presents to us.

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## Heard of, but not heard

The following notes on new music recordings from Brittany were gleaned from information in CD reviews in the following: *Armor Magazine* 445 (Feb. 2007), 446 (March 2007) & 447 (April 2007) / *Ar Men* 156 (Jan-Feb. 2007) & 157 (March-April 2007) / *Musique Bretonne* 200 (Jan-Feb. 2007) & 201 (March-April 2007)

**A Bouez-Penn. *A veg de veg*.** Vols. 4, 5 & 6 – Paysage sonore en pays vannetais. A Bouez-Penn. This is the second three-CD set of “A veg de veg” and includes 67 selections of traditional song, music (accordion, binious/bombarde) and storytelling collection in the Vannetais region. If this is anything like the first CD set, it is a wonderful selection of great voices and instrument players of varied ages. A 70-page booklet provides an introduction to the singers and their repertoires and gives song texts (in Vannetais Breton).

**Baragouineurs. *Villa binious*.** Abacab Productions BV 0601.

This is a little 3-title CD to celebrate the 5th anniversary of this electro-traditional fest noz band which is known for its taste for a bit of farce.

**Bill Ebet Band. *Klmedenn er blei*.** Yber Production. YB BEB 001.

Led by singer and soprano sax player Gildas Le Buhé, this quintet includes also Jean-François Le Gouarin

(bombarde), Pierrick Tardivel (bass fiddle), Glenn Le Merdy (percussion) and Erwan Volant (guitar). This group is a jazz ensemble feeding on the quality of improvisation found in the Breton tradition which they know well.

**Célestin. *Musiques d’un Breton*.** CM 01 / [Dist.mevel.philippe@wanadoo.fr](mailto:Dist.mevel.philippe@wanadoo.fr)

Célestin (Philippe Mevel) is a guitarist and flute player for the group FMB who goes “solo” here using some twenty musical instruments for music that ranges from a traditional sound to rock.

**Roland Conq Trio. *An Altalier*.** Coop Breizh CD 995. The trio includes Roland Conq on acoustic guitar, Vincent Guérin on bass fiddle, and Erwan Béranger on electric and acoustic guitars. They are joined for some selections by Roland Pinc on fiddle and Patrick Vaillant on mandolin for a rich mix of strings. Selections include Celtic and Mediterranean themes in the music, with a variety of rhythms.

**Christophe Copalle. *Le Secret du vieux coquillage blanc*.** Marzelle DB 10.

A modern story written and set to music by Christophe Copalle, a music teacher in Lamballe. Vocal and instrumental interpreters for this tale include Patrick Ewen, Yvon Etienne, Nolwenn Le Roy, Marianig Larc’hantec, Katé-Me, and Tri Yann.

**Groove Boys. *Groove Noz 3*.** (Groove Boys, rue du Pont l’Abbé, Quimper)

This CD features exuberant music for dancing (and leaping) including bagpipes, bombardes, trumpet, sax and other instruments played by this group from Quimper.

**Youenn Guillanton. *Goulou war ar mor*.** Magyar Brezoneg Production MB 200601.

This CD features 13 songs in Breton by Youenn Guillanton, founder of the group Meuriad. Fantasy and harsh reality are found in his poetic texts.

**Sylvie Jourdan. *Carbel*.** Pudding CAR1.

A solo CD by singer and accordion player Sylvie Jourdan who previously paired with Soazig Le Lay in the group Les Oisives. These are new compositions of text and music.

**Kanerien Sant Karenteg. *Musique et chants en pays celtes*.** CDKSK 009.

A top level Breton language choir of Brittany performs poems by Fañch Danno, Anjela Duval, and Glenmor, with music by Soazog Noblet and choir director Thierry Bara.

**Kanevedenn. *Héritage*.** CD K0701.

A combination of traditional and composed melodies from Ireland, Brittany, Scotland and Galicia. Kanevedenn uses Breton language texts by Job an Irien, Roger Abjean, Yann Biger and its own singer Christiane Malez.

**Karma. *Mouvements*.** Coop Breizh CD 991.

This CD features compositions and arrangements of traditional tunes with a touch of jazz to give this group its unique sound. They have ten years of experience and experiments.

**Kroazhent. *Avance rapide – de Bretagne et d'ailleurs*.** Coop Breizh.

2nd CD by this fest-noz band.

**Marie-Aline Lagadic and Klervi Rivière. *Le Chant des sardinières*.** Keltia Musique KMCD 181. 2006.

14 songs tell the history and pay tribute to women of the Bigoudenn region of southwestern Brittany who worked in the sardine canneries of the 19th and 20th centuries. Songs were sung by these women not only to pass dreary work hours but to satirize bosses and protest poor working condition. Singers Marie-Aline Lagadic and her daughter Klervi Rivière have researched and inherited this repertoire through their family.

***La Musique Bretonne – Les Groupes à danser – L'Anthologie, Vol. 2.*** Coop Breizh 978.

This is a two-CD set of 29 music groups with a focus on Breton dance music active in the 1980s and 1990s. Included are Arvest, Arkan, Bivoac, Brug ar Menez, Dalc'h Sonj, Deusta, Forz Penaos, Guichen, Ihnze, and Katé-me ... to name just the first of the alphabet.

**Sophie Le Hunsec. *Lomener*.** 2006.

1st solo CD by this Breton language singer who draws on the rich traditional repertoire of the Vannetais region. She can be heard on a number of collective recordings as well as with the group Loeroù Ruz. She has worked with Yves Ribis on two lovely CDs of lullabies (Kalon ur vamm).

**Soazig Le Lay. *The Milk*.** Pudding/Avel Ouest.

Formerly paired with Sylvie Jourdan (see above) in Les Oisives, Le Lay also launches a solo CD of songs with both a slow swing and a rock beat.

**Jean Le Meut. *Voix de Bretagne II – Chants du Pays Vannetais*.** Coop Breizh CD 993.

Traditional song master Jean Le Meut and his three sons Joseph, Michel and André perform 23 Breton language songs and cantiques from the Vannetais tradition.

**Violaine Mayor and Joël Herrou. *Chant celtique sacré*.** Hent Telenn Breizh. CC501.

This CD features simple and sober interpretations of early Celtic music from the 7th to 13th century including a pibroch interpreted vocally and on harp – an interesting and unusual take on early music.

**Jacky Molard. *Acoustic Quartet*.** Innacor INNA 70761

Fiddler Jacky Molard forms a quartet with Yannick Jory (saxophones), Hélène Labarrière (bass fiddle), and Jannick Martin (accordion). An interesting and highly talented group interpreting traditional tunes or new compositions by Molard.

**Maxime Piolet. *Un signe en passant*.** Ariel Musique CD AIR 05.

A singer songwriter long on the scene who adds a wealth of musical support from Carlos Solo, Maria and Christian Desbordes, and the Ensemble Choral du Bout du Monde, with fiddles, guitars, bagpipes, uilleann pipes, piano and other instruments.

**Loïg Pujol and Jean-Luc Thomas. *Histoire d'eau, d'arbre et de Pierre*.** An Aouravalenn. Aour 001.

This CD includes stories, sayings and tall tales in both Breton and French with texts nicely set to music.

**Gilles Servat. *Je vous emporte dans mon coeur*.**

Label Productions/Coop Breizh CD 989.

This is a two-CD set of live recordings with 35 songs chosen by Servat's fans from 35 years of performance. The full range of sentiments in Servat's texts are here, from the militant to the tender.

**Alan Simon. *Excalibur II*.** EMI 0946-3856332-7. CD & DVD.

This is described as a sort of oratorio with 17 arias composed by Alan Simon on the theme of the Arthurian tales. Music ranges from traditional melodies and rhythms of the Celtic lands to rock and classical styles of interpretation. A large cast of singers and musicians includes John Wetton, Jon Anderson, Karen Casey, Merzhin, Carlos Nuñez, Dan ar Braz, Didier Squiban, and the bagad de St. Nazaire among others. A DVD examines the conception and preparation of the recording.

**Skirienn. *Esprit de fête*.** Self-produced.

A Cd to celebrate the 10th anniversary of this fest-noz band.

**Soldat Louis. *Intinéraires 1988-2006*.** Créon Music-Artec. CM2161

This is a two-CD anthology of this popular Breton rock group, including new recordings of past hits as well as a selection from earlier CDs of their best-loved songs.

**Yudal Combo. *Yudal Combo*. YC FAGMYO 01.**  
This new group arranging traditional tunes includes Ariana Guguen (vocals), Mathieu Sérot (bombarde), Fañch Loric (accordion), Yohann Le Ferrand, and Olivier Filangi.

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## Musique bretonne – 200 issues!

In January 2007 Dastum celebrated the publication of the 200th issue of the excellent magazine *Musique bretonne*. While focused on traditional music, this magazine is the single best source of information on all music in Brittany and its continuing evolution.

This 200th issue includes some 40 pages of history of this magazine and all those who had a part in its creation and evolution. And of course, the celebration could not be complete without music. A special 200-minute live radio broadcast from Monterfil was done on January 27 in which numerous musicians, singers and journalists spoke and performed (you can find it on [www.AnTourTan.org/actualite/2007-01](http://www.AnTourTan.org/actualite/2007-01)). And music was present at the banquet which followed. The fest noz to cap off the celebration includes a 'who's who' of great singers, sonneurs and instrument players.

## A Travel Account of Brittany – A Wedding in 1869

This unnamed traveler describes a wedding in "the very heart of Brittany" - Le Vertou. Now almost a suburb of Nantes, across the river just to the southeast of Reze, Vertou was a quaint little village in 1869.

**"A Peasant Wedding in Brittany" All the Year Round** No. 7 n.s., January 16, 1869, pp. 150-153.

On the crest of a high hill in the very heart of Brittany – far from railroads, and where stage coaches are rare visitors, welcomed at long intervals – stands a quaint old village, nestling between copse and vineyard. A single jagged street staggers eccentrically from brow to brow; a line of tottering huts, moss-grown, mud-plastered, straw-thatched, stretches on either side; a curious little one-sided church, with square and toppling tower, rusted iron cross, shapeless windows, and

obstinately crooked roof, stands in the centre; before which lies, worn by much use, the village lawn.

I was making the tour of Brittany with my own horse and chaise, and climbed the long road which ascended to La Vertou, late in the afternoon of an autumn day, when the fruit of the ripe vineyards yielded a thick and delicious perfume to the air. On driving into the village street, and while directing my whole attention to the search for a possible village inn – for it was by no means certain that I should find such an institution – I was struck by a certain activity among the primitive folk, in contrast to the sleepy air of the other villages through which I had passed. The huts seemed to have emptied their whole population – old, middle aged, youthful, and infantile – into the road; there was fast talking and laughter. The good peasant people, too, were unusually well dressed; the men's hats were not quite so dirty and sun-tanned, their blue blouse not quite so crumpled, their shoes not quite so rough as I had been wont to see; the same was observable of the women's coifs, shawls and chains. On the lawn, certain rustic games were going forward; at the doors of the shops, the gossips were gathered in high glee. I observed one group, larger than the rest, which seemed to attract particular attention. A middle-aged peasant, with a hardy-looking woman by his side, closely followed by a younger couple, and behind them by a merry shoal of village lads and maidens, was passing from shop to shop, stopping a while at each. As the peasant approached the village merchant would advance, with great ceremony doff his hat and salute him and usher him and his troupe within; while the gossips would separate and allow the company to pass, and then crowd eager round the door. I was sorely perplexed to guess what this was all about.

There was the village inn at last, right under the little church, with a big elm in front, and seats around its trunk; an odd gable jutting out streetwards; and a smiling fat landlord and his buxom dame bowing and smirking in the doorway, happy to have a stranger guest. Horse and chaise were stowed away – where, I knew not, and know not to this day – my small quantity of luggage was deposited in the best room but one, and in a quarter of an hour I was seated at a simple, clean and tempting table, with a bottle of capital wine at my elbow, and a plump roast fowl before me. As I was thirsting for company quite as much as for wine, I bade mine host sit at table with me and partake. I asked him (the calls of hunger partially satisfied) what saint's festival it was? Mine host laughed a slight respectful laugh, and with the French genius for repartee replied "What saint Monsieur? Why, Saint Matrimony, parbleu!"

He then proceeded to inform me that Nannine, the daughter of Picquet, the village sabot maker, was to be

wedded on the morrow to Jacques Blot, a thriving young farmer of the neighbourhood.

"You see, Monsieur, when a youngster among us falls in love with a lass, the first thing he does is to run to the village tailor. Monsieur, the village tailor is our notary, and keeps our family secrets, and makes our marriages. And Monsieur Poppeau, our village tailor is one of your model hommes d'affaires. Dame! He is the hardest headed, most silent, profoundest, most persuasive man in France. Well 'tis he to whom the young Jacques resorted, to promote his suit with the pretty little Nannine. Monsieur Poppeau forthwith shoulders his broom."

"His broom?"

"Monsieur, the symbol of his errand. When one sees the broom coming, one knows that one's daughter is sought for, and is to be swept out of one's house. Monsieur Poppeau, broom on shoulder, repairs to Monsieur Picquet. The marriage contract is drawn by Monsieur Poppeau, who has, as perquisites, presents of blouses and a franc piece, a pair of stockings of different colors – worked by Nannine's fingers – and a place of honour at all the marriage ceremonies. Then comes the civil marriage, which you doubtless know about. But they are not tied yet, not by a good deal. For a fortnight, each goes back to his and her own house, works as usual, seldom sees the other beloved, and waits in patience – parbleu, how hard it is! – for the proper time to expire. This rather uncomfortable fortnight Jacques and Nannine have just completed; it was over to-day; and to-morrow they will be fairly tied by the ceremony of the church."

"But what was being done to-day?"

"Ah, to-day! Yes, they were buying the wedding presents. The two middle-aged folk you saw at the head of the procession were the father of Jacques and the mother of Nannine; each of the young couple having but one parent living. Just behind them, doubtless, was the young couple, bashfully following. The parents were going about, buying the presents; here a silk dress, there a fine lace coif, yonder some article of ménage, or jewelry, or farmers' tools or stock. 'Tis a holiday for all the young people of the village. Some of them have been having a dance, with music, on the lawn; others, the more well-to-do, have been escorting Jacques and Nannine to the patissière and cabaret, where the happy couple have been treated to wines, fruits and cakes; others have been following the parents from shop to shop, and bearing home the presents as they are purchased.

Mine host and I, our repast over, repaired to the little bench under the gable of the inn, and lighted our pipes. We had not sat there long, when the peasant whom I had noticed leading the procession – the father of Jacques – came up, followed by a merry troop of young villagers.

"He's coming to invite me to the wedding," whispered the landlord. Which he did. Then, turning to me with a profound salutation, Jacques's father remarked that he perceived I was a stranger, and hoped I would likewise honour him with my presence, not only to the ceremony, but to the succeeding festivities. I at once accepted the invitation.

"I beg Monsieur's pardon," said mine host, as I was about to ascend, candle in hand, to my chamber, "but if Monsieur would wish to see the marriage, he must rise very early. The curé will be at the altar by seven. I pray Monsieur to forgive my not giving him the best room. But it is a custom that the bridegroom should hire the best room of the inn the night before the wedding for the musicians, who come from the city, twenty leagues away."

At six on the fresh October morning, I was dressed and at my simple breakfast of bread, fruit, and wine; and at ten minutes before seven I repaired with mine host and hostess to the village church. The slate-coloured dawn was just mellowing into day as we issued into the zig-zag street, and the little population were already astir, hastening in chattering groups towards the scene of the ceremony. They were crowding in at the door of the oddest little, one-sided, worn, and musty church you ever looked on; with ancient frescoes half obliterated, faded altar cloths, and feeble-looking candlesticks; at the upper end were two dim flickering tapers, their rays intercepted by the squat thick-set form (clothed in sacred attire) of the village curé; just below him was the village beadle, with enormous gaudy chapeau, shivering with cold; the curé holding in his sleek fat hands a well-worn book; the beadle, clutching his staff with authority.

Jacques and Nannie, clad in the newest and best apparel the village could afford, reverently approach the altar and kneel; their parents come after, and stand demurely behind. The rustic population is very quiet and attentive, and evidently impressed by the holy place. Then follows the stately Romish marriage ceremony, needless to describe. No sooner have the last intonation and the blessing passed the priest's lips than the auditory begin to chatter and laugh, to hurry up to bride and bridegroom and to shower honest and hearty kisses on them – in which the curé by the way, is not slow to join. This over, the married pair and their especial friends follow the good pastor into the sacristy

behind the altar. As a stranger, I am politely bidden to come too. Here are spread some cold meat, bread, and wine, of which all, Nannine included, partake with lusty zest, and there is many a joke and there is much rallying, in which the priest is merriest of all.

The village folk have meanwhile been busy on the lawn outside. The grass has been rolled flat, and tables have been placed, and tents erected; the musicians have arrived, well mellowed with wine, and scratching on their fiddles in their impatience to begin. The wedding party, on emerging from the church is greeted by a queer shrill yell, not unlike an Indian whoop – the Breton cheer; forthwith the musicians mount the table, take their places on round stools and strike up. The bride and bridegroom proceed to mount a horse; she seated behind him, and clinging to his waist as prettily as possible; and they gallop around the green, to the great amusement and applause of the spectators, some half-and-dozen times. This traditional custom complied with, the marriage dances begin. Jacques and Nannine are at the head of the first set, opposite the parents; at the sides are the best friends. It is by no means easy to describe this rustic wedding dance. They leap and bound, entering into the sport as vigorously as they do into their daily work. They swing their arms about in ecstatic fury; the hair escapes from beneath hats and coifs, perspiration covers their foreheads, and their heavy wooden shoes thump and thump on the flattened grass. It was a very ancient dance, mine host told me, handed down from none knew how remote. 'Tis said that this, as well as the other rustic Breton dances, had a religious origin, far back in Druidic ages. The wedding dance is called the "gavotte"; its noticeable feature is that the most expert dancer leads the rest off into numberless turnings and counterturnings, then abruptly stops and sets them all a-jigging, then rushes off with a sort of "walk round," then resumes his spiral course with a hop and a skip, the rest imitating his every movement with surprising quickness; the whole apparently, not really, performed at the leader's caprice. The dance is made yet more striking by a continual shouting and laughing, an enraptured throwing up of hands, and individual eccentricities and diversions. It is so exhausting that after a little, even the sturdy sons and daughters of the soil are fain to give up; and for a while they leave the dancing ring to refresh themselves and rest.

Long rude tables have been set along the boundaries of the green, and now fairly groan with a bounteous provision of good things eatable and drinkable; monsieur the curé is already seated at the wedding table, with chairs the bride and bridegroom on either side of him. The exhausted but still noisy dancers flock eagerly about the board; it is amazing to see what wonderful morning appetites they have, and how soon

the mass of good things disappears. Monsieur le Curé, under the influence of the punch and wine, grows astonishingly funny, is extremely gallant and attentive to the bride, and pledges everybody, even me the stranger guest. Then comes a loud noisy song, under the inspiration of which the dancers resume their places on the sward. This time it is another, and very different dance; you would think that, after the wine, it would be a wilder one than the first; no, it is a sedate movement, the faces of the dancers according with it. They separate into couples, and dance in a sort of procession, one behind the other; it is not unlike the fine old minute in Don Giovanni, only it has a rustic spice to it wanting in the stately aristocratic dance of our grandfathers. All day long alternate dancing, feasting, and singing is kept up, and still the marriage ceremonies are hardly begun.

The company separated a little before sundown, to unite again in front of the church soon after the grey light of twilight had thickened to darkness. The tents which had been erected were illuminated by a hundred waxen candles – and waxen candles, even in the chateaux of noblemen, are aristocratic in Britany. Within the tents were long tables bounteously laden; without, large fires had been made, and there was every variety of cooking pot, and pitcher, and grill, and saucepan. The tent was, of course, that of the bridal party; and here, among others, were the curé, the doctor, the apothecary, the tailor, the postmaster, and myself. At the upper end of the tent was a little rudely constructed dais, where the beaming Nannine sat; around her were gathered the favoured few, her intimates. Opposite, was the good fat curé, supported on either hand by a buxom rustic dame. When we had all taken our places at the festive board, I looked about for the bridegroom, Jacques, but could see him nowhere; presently, however, the reason was apparent. It is, on the occasion of "La Table de la Mariée," or "Bridal Feast," the custom that certain of the young men should act as butlers and cooks; these offices are assumed by the relatives and near friends of the bridegroom, and are posts of honour. The bridegroom himself performs the double function of chief cook and head butler; he himself is forbidden, by the law of tradition, to take a drop or morsel that night; it is his business to superintend the dishes intended for the bride, and to serve them up before her. So presently in he came with a huge platter, on which lay, in bounteous sauce, a portly turbot; this he deposited before the bride, who rose and bowed with smiling solemnity. Whereupon Monsieur le Curé sprang to his feet, and raising high his glass of brandy punch, called out, "To the bride!" A summons which no one refused, and which was responded to by a tumultuous jangling of glasses, tossing off of punch, and clapping of feet. It was an improvement on our Anglo-Saxon civilization,

that no speeches were made. But what an orgy succeeded! How shall I describe the noise, and the dancing, and the tipsy songs, and the rude lusty games; not to speak of the promiscuous hugging and kissing and chasing and fondling which that never-to-be-forgotten scene presented? Of all the gallant company, dawn found the bridegroom, and him alone, sober. The demure and solemn tailor, though an unusually modest man, was painfully boastful of his share in bringing about the present occasion; Monsieur le Curé was now too somber and dignified by half; and as for Jacques's steady papa and his familiars, the doctor, the apothecary, and even mine host, they had, long before dawn, disappeared beneath the table, and were being slowly sobered, as morning came, by a bath of dew. The womankind had retired in high spirits; all except the bride, whom custom doomed to sit there on her dais, bolt upright amid the revel until the first rays of the rising sun should slant into the tent. Jacques had most certainly the worst of the fun. It was his task to carry the jaded roysterers home; and this he did with admirable patience and perseverance. But his reward, the taking home of his pretty spouse, was not even yet earned. The bride must, by inexorable Breton tradition, go home to her mother on the succeeding day; and the orgies must be resumed a second, and yet a third, evening. The second evening was like the first; all boisterous, singing, shouting, kissing, and final collapsing under the table. The third resembled the two previous evenings, only in slang parlance, "more so;" for on the last winding up orgies, the shouting and dancing were noisier, the kissing more vigorous, and the drunkenness more general, than ever. Jacques now permitted to indulge with the rest in deep potations, made up for lost time, and was the very first to slide under the table, where he remained until morning.

There was a curious sight on the morning following the final evening, which was at once a traditional custom, and a scene characteristic of rural Brittany. This was the "Beggar's Dance." The remains of the feast, wine and meat, were neatly set on tables in the middle of the green; and all the beggars of the neighbourhood were invited to partake. The villagers gathered in a ring around the space, leaving an opening toward the street. Presently there issues from a little lane a most grotesque procession. There were the halt, the blind, and the lame – the one-legged, the one-eyed, and the one-armed; the patriarchs and the children of mendicancy, ragged and shoeless, with hats crownless, and coats tailless, and gowns threadless; hobbling and plunging, and limping along, with cracked songs, and yells, and the queerest imaginable movements. Arrived on the green they took position in couples, and performed a singular burlesque on the wedding dance. This over, they fell to on the feast, with a will, being waited on by the chief dames of the village.

Finally, on the wedding-night – which is the fourth night after the wedding – all the friends of the bridal pair visit them as they lie in the nuptial couch. Each visitor brings a bowl of milk soup; and pour Jacques and Nannine must, *bongré malgré*, receive from every one a spoonful of that beverage. The young girls who thus visit the bridal chamber, secure the pins which have been used in the fastening of Nannine's shawl and gown, as a charm to bring them husbands.

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## The influence of the the Barzaz Breiz on 19th century travel writing

Lois Kuter wonders ....

In examining English language travel literature of the late 1800s published in the popular journals of the day, one sees ideas and even descriptions that seem to be borrowed from earlier writers – particularly from the very popular work by Hersart de la Villemarqué, the *Barzaz Breiz*. This was first published in 1839 but reedited and revised for editions in 1845 and 1867. It would take a great deal of research to know if Villemarqué's description of wedding ceremonies were used to enhance a traveler's own eye-witness account, but it seems improbable that some travelers just passing through would have been able to see or research all the pieces of the wedding arrangements that they describe. However, the work of La Villemarqué was available in popular journals of the day to be mined by writers who wanted to add a bit of color to a travel account.

H. Corbes cites two English language translations: Frederick Gard Fleay's *The Masterpieces of the British Ballads* (F.King, Printer, Exchange Buildings, Northgate, 1870) and Henry Carrington's *Breton Ballads – Translated from the Barzaz-Breizh of the Vicomte de la Villemarqué* (Privately printed by Turnbull and Spears, 1886). ("Les traductions en langues étrangères du Barzaz Breiz" *Lochlan VI*, Oslo 1974)

Prior to these two collections Tom Taylor published *Ballads and Songs of Brittany* in 1865. I have found three other magazine articles where authors translate (or borrow from other translators?) songs and other texts from the Barzaz Breizh. The earliest of these is W.C. Taylor's "The bards of Brittany" printed in *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1847 (is this Tom Taylor?). An unnamed author published "The popular poetry of Brittany" in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* in 1853. Also unnamed is the author of a four-part series of articles, "Brittany: its people and its poems," published from 1868 to 1873 in *The Catholic World*. There were perhaps others that I have not discovered.

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