

# BRO NEVEZ

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



**DEOMP DE'I  
EVIT AR  
BREZHONEG!**

Nos langves,  
nos cultures,  
un droit,  
vne loi!

Galloudoù evit  
ar vretoned

Manif : 14 eur  
Sonadeg

Ahi!

Folosaer Baiona Kemper Perpinya Atadiv Strassburg

**Kemper - Sadorn 31 a viz Meurzh  
Samedi 31 mars 2012**

<http://www.languesregionales.org> - [kevre.breizh@orange.fr](mailto:kevre.breizh@orange.fr) - 02 98 73 20 58

Bretons to gather in Quimper to demonstrate for  
Breton and the languages of France.

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

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# BRO NEVEZ 121

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

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## From the Editor

As you know we are well into March with this issue of Bro Nevez, but I hope the wait was worth it for you. While this winter has been unusually mild without the usual snow and ice, there have been other challenges to getting this issue out in a timely manner! - Lois

## France and the Defense of Regional Languages

Those who have been following the long efforts to urge France to ratify (and not just stop at signing) the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages will not be surprised at the following statement made by French President Nicolas Sarkozy in a speech in Marseille this February:

*Quand on aime la France, on ne propose pas de ratifier la charte des langues régionales et minoritaires qui n'a pas pour but de faire vivre les langues régionales mais de reconnaître des droits linguistiques à toutes les minorités et de les placer sous le contrôle d'une Cour européenne qui jugera sans tenir compte de notre histoire nationale et de notre tradition républicaine.*

*C'est le communautarisme qui est au bout du chemin et pas la défense d'un magnifique patrimoine de langues et de cultures qui font la richesse de notre pays.*

*Je veux défendre ce patrimoine. Je veux m'opposer à toute dérive communautariste parce que cette dérive ruinerait des siècles d'efforts et de sacrifices pour nous construire un État, une Nation, une République dont nous pouvons être fiers et dont nous tirons notre force et notre intelligence collective*

My translation:

*When one loves France, one does not propose the ratification of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages which does not have as its goal to give life to our regional languages but to recognize the linguistic rights of all minorities and to place them under the control of the European Court which will judge them without taking into account our national history and our republican tradition.*

*It's communalism\* that is at the end of the road and not the defense of a magnificent patrimony of languages and cultures which make up the richness of our country.*

*I want to defend this patrimony. I want to oppose any turn to communalism because this detour would ruin the centuries of efforts and sacrifices we have made to construct a State, a Nation, a Republic, of which we can be proud and which gives us our force and collective understanding.*

\* *Communitarisme* is a difficult word to translate exactly into English since it has been highly charged in meaning by French politicians to imply that there are ethnic/religious communities in France who place their loyalties with their own group and thus undermine the unity of France. Following this logic, Bretons active in promoting the Breton language have been castigated as unpatriotic *communitaristes* as have been those defending Islamic culture. It is a convenient way to label those effectively promoting non-French languages and cultures as dangerous fanatics even if such action in no way threatens or is intended to threaten the French language or France.

## Call to Demonstrate

Once again Bretons will hit the streets – this time in Quimper – to demonstrate for the Breton language. For this demonstration the theme is on making Breton an officially recognized language: *brezhoneg yezh ofisiel*. But the demonstration is for all the regional languages of France whose existence is tolerated but certainly not well supported by the state which denies the existence of minority peoples. Demonstrations will also take place in cities of the Basque land of France, Corsica, Occitania, Catalonia and Alsace.... And in New York City (see the note later in this issue on BZH-NY). The common theme for all is: “Nos langues, nos cultures, un droit, une loi!” “Our languages, our cultures, a right, a law!”



## Prizioù 2012 Prizes for Breton Language Expression

Prizioù are annual awards for individuals and groups who promote the Breton language in creative ways. The prize is a collaborative project of the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg and the France 3 Bretagne television station. The Prizioù 2012 were awarded January 27 in Rennes in a ceremony akin to the American Academy Awards hosted by Goulwena an Henaff and Yann-Herle Gourves. Besides a more informal tone to the ceremony, these were very unlike the Hollywood version in that they were conducted in entirely in Breton and featured live musical interludes by Breton performers. There are seven categories of prizes to

note the good work of individuals and organizations in support of Breton as a language expressing all areas of contemporary life. You can watch the ceremony on [www.bedbrezhoneg.free.fr](http://www.bedbrezhoneg.free.fr).

The first prize winners of each category received a check for 1,500 euros and runners-up received 500 euros. All of those receiving prizes were given a sculpture created by Jean-Loup Le Cuff.

The winners this year were as follows :

### **Breton speaker of the Year :**

1st prize: Gwenaél Oïllo for his internet site *ar bed e brezhoneg*.

Oïllo was schooled in the Diwan system and during his years at the Carhaix Diwan high school he learned to use audiovisuals to create a dynamic and entertaining website featuring short films.

([www.bedbrezhoneg.free.fr](http://www.bedbrezhoneg.free.fr))

2<sup>nd</sup> prize : André Le Meut for his work for Breton at the Archives Départementales du Morbihan.

A well known bombard player of Brittany, André Le Meut learned Breton as an adult through Stumdi. He has taught and promoted traditional music of the Vannetais and worked in the Morbihan Departmental Archives on a project to document earlier generations of musicians and the music and song texts collected 100 years ago by Le Diberder.

3<sup>e</sup> prix : LLeuwen Stefan: a young Welsh woman who sings in both Welsh and Breton.

Lleuwen learned Breton through the Roudour intensive classes. She was already known in Wales for her Welsh language song, and has added Breton to her repertoire. ([www.lleuwen.com](http://www.lleuwen.com))

### **Businesses:**

1st prize: Askorn Medical, specializing in medical systems.

Denez Pichon, the director of this medical supply business located in Cesson-Sévigné, is a Breton speaker and has made the business bilingual – from business cards, to telephone voice mail, sales literature and the website ([www.askorn-medical.com](http://www.askorn-medical.com)).

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: EduBreizh: innovator in e-learning for Breton. Based in Lannilis this company has created an e-learning system for those wishing to learn the Breton language using their computer. It uses the Oulpan method (you navigate via French). For thousands of adult learners this can be a very handy resource: [www.edubreizh.com](http://www.edubreizh.com)

3<sup>e</sup> prix : Les Amis du Bois who have created a letter game for Breton.

This company based in the Ile-de-France has designed a Breton language word game, *C'hoari gerioù*, that can be enjoyed by adults and families.

#### **Public organizations:**

1st prize: the town of Carhaix which incorporated questions about Breton language use in its census. Carhaix is well known for its efforts to make the Breton language publicly visible and was the first community in Brittany to get to the Level 4 in the *Ya d'ar Brezhoneg* campaign. When the Tour de France bicycle race went through Carhaix this past summer signs and announcements were bilingual. It was the first to successfully include a survey on Breton language use as part of its census.

2e prix : the Communauté de communes du Pays de Quimperlé for its promotion of bilingual schooling and bilingualism.

Over 330 students are able to take advantage of bilingual schooling in the Quimperlé area and this has been accompanied by exceptional efforts to make the Breton language visible in the public domain.

3e prix : the town of Bruz for its actions in favor of the Breton language

Just to the north of Rennes this town of 15,000 people has put into place a commission to promote Breton through the *Ya d'ar Brezhoneg* campaign. Nearly 10% of pre-schoolers are found in bilingual programs established in 2003.

#### **Associations:**

1st prize: Babigoù Breizh which established a Breton language micro-nursery in Vannes.

The organization Babigoù Breizh has pioneered an immersive day care for the youngest Bretons of Vannes to learn Breton.

2e prix : The Eco-museum of Plougerneau for its activities in the Breton language  
Museum visitors can learn about history and the maritime heritage of this northwestern area of Brittany not only with bilingual materials, but also with guides who speak Breton.

3e prix : Symphonie de Breizh for its promotion of Breton composers of the 18th century.  
Breton is used by this organization in all its publications about music of the Baroque period.

#### **Documentary films**

1st prize: *Din-me da c'hoari* by Maï Lincoln and Erwan Kermarrec

This film co-produced by Kalanna and France 3 Bretagne is a portrait of a young handicapped man as he becomes more and more independent.

2e prix: *Ar Sica* by Jean-Pierre Lyvinec  
Produced by France 3 Bretagne, this film narrates the battles of the vegetable farmers of the Leon region to improve production and sales of their products,

3e prix : *Allah's kanañ* by Mikael Baudu  
Produced by Gwengolo Filmoù and France 3 Bretagne, this film follows a choir of young Breton speakers as they tour in Ireland.

#### **Music CDs**

1st prize: *Tân* by Lleuwen Stefan  
Breton and Welsh language texts composed by this talented singer from Wales.

2nd prize: *Ehan* by Gweltaz Adeux  
Adeux became first known as part of the rock band EV and here he takes his career solo.

3rd prize: *Noz an nedeleg* by Yann Raoul  
Raoul composes and arranges songs for Christmas.

#### **Books**

1st prize: *Torr e benn* by Yann Bijer  
A historical novel based on the uprising of the Bonnets Rouge (published by Al Liamm).

2nd prize: *Andon ar gasoni* by Mich Beyer  
A police detective novel at its best (published by An Alarc'h).

3rd prize: *Ar Saouzanenn* by Bernez Tangi  
A new collection of poetry (published by Skrid).

### **And the Oscar goes to .... A Breton in Hollywood**

Did you know that a Breton was among the Oscar winners you may have watched on TV at the Academy Awards in Hollywood this year? Ludovic Bource, originally from Loudéac, studied music at the conservatory in Saint-Brieuc. He won the Oscar for best music for the film "The Artist." The Oscar was one of a number of awards noting the excellence of his music composed for this film. Others included the European Film Award, The Washington DC Area Film Critics Association Award, the Golden Globe, and the Étoile d'Or of the Presse du Cinéma France (César),

### **The Diwan School of Landerneau / Skol Diwan Landerne 14<sup>th</sup> Organic Foods Fair – March 10 & 11, 2012**

The parents of children in Diwan schools have long found creative ways to raise funds to support important

parts of school operations that do not always get the finances needed. In the case of the Diwan school of Landerneau an annual fair for organic foods and products has helped to cover salaries for non-teaching staff as well as activities for the children. During the two days of this year's fair there will be some 100 stands presenting products, four conferences and three workshops to help people learn about cooking and gardening.

The fair will focus on the importance of organic foods for one's health and the need to support local producers – food to enhance one's health and food to support the economic health of local farmers.



Poster designed by Franck Routier

## Losses for the Breton Language

**Yann Desbordes**  
1929-2011

Yann Desbordes was born in Guiclan (Finistère). As a teacher he would travel to Pont-Aven in 1949 where he would marry Tereza in 1952 and set up house in Plouescat. While moving about for teaching posts in the early years, Yann and Tereza were settled in Lesneven where I met first them in 1975.

Yann did not learn Breton as a child but “discovered” Brittany when in his mid 20s and both he and Tereza learned Breton through the correspondence course Skol Ober with Marc’harid Gourlaouen. Yann enrolled in university studies and would get a degree in Celtic Studies in 1971 and an advanced degree in 1973.

Yann served as Secretary and Treasurer for the publication *Ar Vro*, directed by Per Denez, from 1959-1968. Starting in 1968 he would be secretary for the linguistic journal *Hor Yezh*. Tereza would take on responsibility for the publishing house Mouladurioù Hor Yezh in 1980 when it was created. Work to publish Breton language grammars and literature certainly brought little glory and no income during the 1970s and 80s and continues to be a labor of love today.

Yann had a passion for music and the power of the Breton language to be found in religious worship. After the Vatican II Council he worked on renewing a Catholic liturgy in Breton and promoted masses in the Breton language.

I first met Yann at the summer “Crash Course” at the University of Rennes in 1975. And I have good memories of a visit to his home in Lesneven during that summer where he helped me discover the uniqueness of the Leon countryside and the work going on to promote the Breton language. Both he and Tereza opened their home to me each time I traveled to Brittany and was able to visit them.

Yann was a modest man who did a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes to promote the Breton language and to transmit his love for this language and his country to others. He encouraged me as a struggling Breton learner and as I worked to establish a branch of the ICDBL in the U.S.A. in the early 1980s.

He left a legacy of hard work to assist others to learn the Breton language and to read and write it. While not complete, below are a few works.

- ❖ *Notennoù yezhadur*, Cahier Hor Yezh, No. 111, 1976
- ❖ *Liderezh e brezhoneg*, Cahier Hor Yezh no. 121, 1978
- ❖ Revised version of Armel Le Calvez’s manuals for learning Breton, *Herve ha Nora*, Hor Yezh, 1978.
- ❖ *Petite grammaire du Breton moderne*. Hor Yezh, 1983, 1990
- ❖ Yann Desbordes, Iwan Kadored, Divi Kervella, *Geriadur bihan brezhoneg-galleg, galleg-brezhoneg* (breton-français-breton). Leneven: Hor Yezh, 1994 (1984), 445p.

## Annaig Renault

1946-2012

Annaig Renault passed away after a long illness this January in Rennes. Born in Paris, she moved to Brittany in 1967 when she was 20. But while in Paris she was very much part of the Breton community there and was a part of the Telenn Bleimor harp players – a group within the Bleimor scouts. She studied Breton in Paris at the Ker-Vreizh cultural center and continued study at the University of Rennes where she completed a doctoral thesis on the writer Maodez Glanndour. During the 1980s Annaig Renault worked at the Centre de la Briantais in Saint-Malo where she organized gatherings of writers, artists and scholars of all fields. She was General Secretary for the Cultural Institute of Brittany from 1991 to 2000 and was active in organizing a number of colloquia and literary gatherings.

She herself was an award winning author who wrote in both Breton and French – poems, short stories, and the first novel in Breton by a woman, *Dec'h e zo re bell dija* in 1996. For her work to promote the Breton language and literature she was inducted into the Order of the Ermine in 2010.

For a more complete biography see the presentation in Bro Nevez 115, August 2010.

The following are some of her works:

- ❖ *Barzhonegoù*, 1985 (poetry)
- ❖ *Planedennoù*, 1980 (short stories)
- ❖ *De'ch 'zo re bell dija* (Skrid / Mouldadurioù Hor Yezh), 1996 (novel)
- ❖ *Prof Nedeleg Lommig* (An Here), 1999 (children's story)
- ❖ *Carnet de voyage* (Coop Breizh), 2004
- ❖ *Le dieu vagabond* (Diabase Editions), 2010



## New Books from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

**Daniel Giraudon. *Traditions Populaire de Bretagne – Le folklore des insectes et autres petites bestioles*.** Yoran Embanner. 2011. 351 pages. ISBN 978-916579-16-0.

Daniel Giraudon is a professor of Breton studies at the Université de Bretagne Occidentale and a researcher with the Centre de Recherches Bretonne et Celtique in Brest. This is the latest of a series of books he has written which focus on the folklore of the natural world

in Brittany – plants and trees, farm animals, birds, and the sun and stars. Here Giraudon focuses on the most numerous and smallest inhabitants of our planet – insects and other small creatures (like spiders and snails) that are sometimes mistakenly thrown into the same pot as “bugs.”

Giraudon devotes chapters of the book to several dozen types of insects and “petites bestioles” organized alphabetically by their French common name. These include flies, bees and wasps, lady bugs, a variety of beetles, caterpillars, moths, butterflies, spiders, ants, snails and slugs, crickets, grasshoppers, dragon flies, mites, lice, fleas, mosquitoes and midges, ticks, worms, earwigs ... and others. For each category he explores their names in Breton and Gallo, and provides poems, stories, sayings, and beliefs about the magical or medicinal properties of the critters.

This is not a book one would use to identify backyard nature and there are few scientific names provided since we are dealing with wider varieties of insects rather than specific species. If you are not familiar with French names of bugs, a dictionary might help, but you are best served by the excellent photographs provided.

Photographs are also plentiful for the people Giraudon has brought into this account – writers, poets, and everyday people who have passed down lore and stories about nature through the generations. You meet these people in the pages of this book to learn of their encounters with insects and the colorful way insects enter into language and thinking. Besides people and insects you will also find photos of birds – who consume insects – and of other beasts (especially foxes) who may also eat insects but are also eaten by insects like fleas!

The important role insects and other small creatures play in human life is reinforced in the way they color language and literature and this is very nicely presented in this book. Through images and words, you meet both the creatures who are featured as well as the people of Brittany who have interacted with them – writers and storytellers and observers of the natural world around them who have a rich collection of lore and learning to share with future generations of Bretons.

**Ronan Larvor. *Bretons des Kerguelen*.** Yoran Embanner. 2011. 303 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-19-1.

Today France retains a number of overseas territories – best know being the Antilles islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, Saint Martin and Saint Barthélemy and the south Pacific islands of French Polynesia and New Caledonia. There is also French Guiana in South

America, Saint-Pierre and Miquelon just off of eastern Canada, and Réunion to the east of Madagascar and Africa. All of these (and a few other) inhabited territories add up to some 2,600,000 people and 120,000 square kilometers. France also claims possession of a number of uninhabited lands off of Madagascar and in the Indian Ocean, as well as a station in Antarctica. These are administered as Les Terres australes et antarctiques françaises (TAAF) – French Southern and Antarctic Lands.

Three of these island groups are the subject of this new book: *Bretons des Kerguelen*: The Kerguelen Islands, Saint-Paul and New Amsterdam Islands, and the Crozet Islands. If you look at a map to locate these specks of land you will find them in an arc pretty much midway between Madagascar, Antarctica and Australia. The Kerguelen Islands were named by and for the Breton navigator Yves-Joseph de Kerguelen in 1772. The Crozet Islands were discovered in 1772 by another Breton Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne who named them for his second-in-command Jules Crozet (also a Breton). The Amsterdam and Saint Paul Islands were discovered earlier (1559) by Portuguese sailors, but France would claim them.

Despite the isolation of these barren islands there was considerable traffic by ships of various European origins to hunt whales and sea lions or to stop to replenish fresh water. The English explorer James Cook would visit the Kerguelen Islands briefly in 1776 and named them Desolation Islands. Both in their discovery and effort to settle these islands Bretons have a unique relationship which is recounted in Ronan Larvor's very interesting book. You meet the early explorers who were, in fact, seeking an Australian el dorado. And you will meet the hunters who helped to nearly decimate the elephant and fur seal populations in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. You will also meet fishermen and entrepreneurs trying to establish lobster industries in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. And you will meet today's scientists studying climate, astronomy, and the unique environment of the islands and the impact of introduced species and humans.

The isolation of the islands and of those that sheltered there for many months if shipwrecked or left to mind a fishing enterprise until the return of a ship is striking in these days where we have nearly instant access to every part of the world electronically. This is not a land where you could easily live off the land or cultivate food, although the native Kerguelen cabbage was literally a life-saver for sailors in danger of succumbing to scurvy. Even in more recent centuries contact by telephone or electronics is limited – and perhaps part of the allure for those who travel to this still wild and starkly beautiful part of the earth.



**News from BZH-New York**  
[www.bzh-ny.org](http://www.bzh-ny.org)

Since 2006 this community of Bretons and friends of Brittany based in New York City has organized a number of social and cultural events.

And their support has extended to support of the Breton language through a number of actions.

This February 23, 2012, an evening was organized with Fabienne Geoffroy, Director of the Diwan school in Paris, who gave a general presentation of the Breton language as well as a class for learners of all levels. For pictures showing this successful gathering go to <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tybidan/sets/72157629087689400/show/>

On March 31, BZH NY will join with colleagues in New York City as a show of solidarity with regional language speakers mobilizing in France to bring attention to the state of these languages. Demonstrations will be held in Quimper (Brittany), Ajaccio (Corsica), Strasbourg (Alsace), Toulouse (Occitanie), Perpignan (Catalonia), and Bayonne (Basque country).

In late April BZH NY will host Breton author Herve Lossec, who will be presenting his "Les Bretonnismes" series. This very popular series of books explain the influence Breton has had on how people in Brittany speak French.

On the music front!!!

BZH NY has organized some events to take advantage of a visit to New York City from the Bagad and Cercle of Plougastel for the St. Patrick's Day parade. Besides a fest noz and outdoor performance, the Bagad and circle of dancers will be on stage at Carnegie Hall with the Chieftans as they perform for their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This will not be the first time that a Breton bagad has shared the stage with the Chieftans and this is definitely not the first bagad to hit the streets of New York for the massive St. Patrick's Day parade, but these are big occasions to show off the vitality of Breton music and dance.

For more information keep an eye on the BZH NY website. Here's some preliminary information for St Patrick's week 2012:

March 14<sup>th</sup>, FEST NOZ with the Bagad Plougastel at Connolly's Times Square (121 W 45<sup>th</sup> Street) 3<sup>rd</sup> floor from 7pm - 2am (\$15 cover)

An event not to be missed in New York City with 54 musicians and dancers from Brittany who will share a

wealth of music, dance, and culture. Proceeds of the fest noz will go to finance the bagad and cercle Plougastel week in New York.

March 17th, Bagad Plougastel and Cercle Celtique Bleuniou Sivi will be participating in the 251st St Patrick's Day Parade on 5th avenue at 12pm followed by participation in the Chieftan's 50th anniversary concert at Carnegie Hall at 8pm.

March 19th, Concert in Tompkins Square Park (7th street between Avenue A and B) in the heart of the East Village with Bagad Plougastel and Cercle Celtique Bleuniou Sivi at 1pm

Keep an eye on the BZH NY website for events in May for Sant Erwan.

### **An Anniversary of Note: Alan Stivell at the Olympia in Paris**

40 years since his ground-breaking appearance at the Olympia hall in Paris, Alan Stivell is back, demonstrating that Breton music is still alive and well and as exciting as ever. In 1972 his stop in Paris showed the world that Brittany was not some back-water area of quaint peasants but a country where people were proud of their heritage and creatively exploring their roots to produce new music. – a pop-Celtic music. For this anniversary concert some of the old favorites were performed (*Tri Martolod, Son ar chistr, Pop-plinn*) and the *Bro Gozh Ma Zadou* was also to be heard, sung in Breton by pop star (and Bretonne) Nolwenn Leroy who joined Stivell for this concert. A number of other guests were also on stage including two early Stivell band members, René Werneer and Dan ar Braz (who has long had a stellar career as a world renowned guitarist). Also on stage was the Bagad Quic-en-Grogne from Saint-Malo. Certainly an evening to remind one that Breton music is alive and well and that 40 years has not dulled any of Alan Stivell's creativity, musical talent, or ardor for Brittany.



### **Heard of, but not heard – Notes on 17 New Recordings from Brittany**

Information has been drawn from: *Ar Men* 185 (Nov.-Dec 2011), *Musique Bretonne* 229 (Nov-Dec. 2011) and 230 (Feb-Mar 2012), and the websites of Dastum ([www.dastum.net](http://www.dastum.net)) and the Coop-Breizh ([www.coop-breizh.fr](http://www.coop-breizh.fr)).

**Gaëlle Branthomme & Charles Quimbert. *J'entends la seraine*.** Legba Production, Coop Breizh DB12. ([www.branthomme-quimbert.fr](http://www.branthomme-quimbert.fr))

Charles Quimbert brings his excellent voice to this CD with Gaëlle Branthomme on cello for 11 songs from the Gallo tradition of eastern Brittany – ballads, songs for dancing, and marches which have the swing of dance.

**Breizh Amazir. *La caravane des rencontres*.** Coop Breizh.

This CD links Celtic and Berber cultures in a celebration of song and instrumental arrangements drawn from each tradition. Loïc Taillebrest and Patrick Veres have gathered a variety of talented musicians of both traditions for this varied offering of music.

**Centre du Patrimoine oral de Cornouaille / Dastum Bro Gerne. *Bro/Pays Kernevodez – etre ar Faou ha Landerne nemoc'h nag e Léon – Chants et musique du pays de Hanvec-Rumengol-Saint-Eloy*.**

This CD features the area of Kernevodez and traditional music recordings collected from the 1950s to the present by Gilles Le Goff, Jean Le Menn and Malik Le Roux. Included are melodies, dances, and marches from the area around the towns of Hanvec, Rumengol and Saint-Eloy. And the CD also includes some reinterpretations of material by Gilles Le Goff, Pierre-Yves Pétilion and sonneurs Irvoas-Moign. A 36-page booklet includes lots of photographs and documentation about the song texts and music transcriptions for the 31 selections on the CD. And the booklet also introduces this unique area and its costumes, occasions for music-making, and the work of collectors to encourage performance and transmit traditional melodies and tunes to the next generations.

**Daonet. *Donemat*.** Coop Breizh.

Daonet is a trio from Nantes who sing in Breton to an electric and percussive rock beat. An intriguing sample of the 12 texts on their CD include: "Mont da Naoned," "Marv Pontkaleg," "Kan Bale Sant Albin," "Tribann tribal," "O surfin," and the "Bro Gozh ma Zadou"

**Dastum 44. *Anthologie du patrimoine orale de Loire-Atlantique*.**

This is a 2-CD set with 59 selections and a booklet of documentation on traditional songs of southeastern Brittany. The anthology shows the diversity of styles in this area including slow airs, dance tunes for a dozen different dances, marches, and songs for various occasions. Fitting the range of musical styles of the region is a range of performers with older recordings as well as newer interpretations.

**École de Musique de Baud Communauté. *Tro-ar-dro da Wened*.**

This CD features performances by students from the music school of Baud (17 to 20 year olds) who have worked with local masters of traditional music in an interesting inter-generational project. Léo Neveu, Kilian Jarno, Aude and Aëla Guillerme thus met with masters

such as André Drumel, Jo Le Sergent, Marcel Jaffré, Guigner Le Hénanff and André Le Meut to collect dance tunes which they arranged with the help of teachers Anne-Marie Nicol, Clotilde Trouillaud, Youenn Paranthoën and Samuel Le Hénanff for eight selections played in fiddle-accordion and bombarde-accordion duets.

**École de Musique Traditionnelle des Pays de Vilaine. *De par chez nous.*** Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine. GC 072.

Students in the music school of the Pays de Vilaine have worked with recordings of traditional song and dance from their area to produce two CDs of their interpretations of 29 songs. Students from 6 to 16 have formed 13 ensembles which are heard on the second CD. On the first CD are 16 songs from the collections with which they worked – melodies, marches and dances collected from traditional singers and musicians by Mathieu Hamon, Gilbert Hervieux and Albert Poulain. The project links a younger generations with these three singers and their work in collecting and learning from traditional performers of this area. In addition students learned to work in an ensemble to interpret music in new ways.

**Les Gás de l'Almanach – Chants de l'Almanach.** ([www.marinbreton.com](http://www.marinbreton.com))

This CD includes a variety of styles in 15 songs (in French) from Breton fishermen and sailors on all topics concerning maritime Brittany.

**Frères Guichen. *Guichen Brozhers.*** Coop Breizh ([www.freresguichen.com](http://www.freresguichen.com))

Fred and Jean-Charles Guichen (accordion and guitars) came to public light and acclaim in the 1990s with the fest-noz band Ar Re Yaouank. They have continued for twenty years now with successful solo careers and in a variety of collaborations. They pair up for this CD of Breton and Celtic tunes and airs.

**Krismenn. *Cinq titres.*** Self-produced.

A member of the group Darhaou and singer of traditional kan ha diskan, Krismenn takes on rap with five songs in a 5-title CD (a prelude to a longer CD to come out in 2012). He uses rap to give poetry in the Breton language a decisive beat. This is a certainly a different kind of beat from the traditional dance of Brittany he knows well, but a similar way of matching a text to rhythm.

**Pascal Lamour. *Le Chant de la mandragore.*** BNC Productions.

This CD is a theatrical performance in 23 acts mixing song, instrumental music, storytelling and electronic sounds to tell the story of druidess Arthmuëlla, Ananxis the druid, the Ankou (The Breton personification of death), Morgan, fairies and a magical bird. The story

focuses on the search for the mandrake (mandragora), a plant to be found in the forest of Broceliande. This “sword and sorcery” tale is not only set to music, but the CD comes with a beautifully illustrated booklet of Pascal Lamour’s texts and Brucero’s drawings. A variety of singers and instrumentalists are engaged in this production – including Gilles Servat, Fran May, Louis Ebrel, Dédé Le Meut, Loic Bléjean, and the Bagad Locoal Mendon ... to name just a few – with song, bagpipes and bombardes, fiddle, percussion, saxophones and more.

**Pemp Biz. *Pemp Biz.*** Production Storlok Stok ha Stok.

During the 1970s the group Storlok rocked Brittany with its Breton language songs – sharp social commentary set to a rock/blues beat. While band members dispersed to perform in other groups or solo, this CD brings the core of the band back together with a less edgy repertoire of songs for children. Pemp Biz is made up of Bernez Tangi, Philippe Abalain (Abalip), Gildas Beauvir, Bertrand Floc’h and Yvon Gouez. Songs are composed by Gouez, Tangi, Abalip and Mich Beyer. You still have a bluesy sound but the music includes the swing of the gavotte and the lull of a lullaby for a variety of music and texts interesting to both children and their parents.

**Albert Poulain. *Carnets de route.*** L'Épille and Dastum. PUR, Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine.

Albert Poulain is a pioneer in the collection of traditional songs and lore of Gallo Brittany – one among a handful of collectors who started years ago to create a rich archives of work to be enjoyed and passed down to future generations. This “carnets de route” or “note books of travel” presents the remarkable work of Poulain himself but also the master singers he has encountered during his decades of collection work. The 496 page book includes 295 songs collected starting in 1959 in the area of his home town of Pipriac. For scholars of traditional music, annotations are plentiful and references insure that one can consult recordings and texts found in the Dastum archives. A fine singer and storyteller himself, Poulain has stimulated a new interest in traditional Gallo culture through his collection work. This book and the CD of 31 recordings made between 1959 and the late 1990s add to a number of other publications and CDs Poulain has produced.

**Loeiz Ropars. *Paotr ar festoù-noz. Le rénovateur du fest-noz.*** Éditions Emgleo Breiz.

Loeiz Ropars was one of the pioneers in the reintroduction of the fest-noz as a new occasion for old masters to sing and empower traditional dances of central western Brittany. He was also a teacher of the Breton language and defender of the rural

environment. Ropars was himself an excellent singer and bombard player. This 182 page book is both a biography and collection of observations from those who knew him or were influenced by him. The CD includes a selection of traditional melodies and dances (kan ha diskan) as well as Ropars as a *sonneur de couple*.

**Lleuwen Stefan. *Tân*.** Gwymon Prouduction. CD 1044. As the name might tell you, Lleuwen Stefan is from Wales. A folk singer who has studied music in the US, she is described by one reviewer as a jazzy Joni Mitchell. This is her third CD where she adds Breton compositions to her Welsh texts. Bass player Vincent Guérin provides accompaniment and contributed to the arrangements of the songs. For her mastery of the Breton language, Stefan was a prize winner in the Prizioù 2012 for Breton of the Year (see article earlier in this issue of Bro Nevez) and this CD was the first place winner in the CD category.

**Jean-Claude Talec. *Marvailhoù*.** Association du Printemps du Châteauneuf. This is a double CD featuring samples from 30 years of collection work by traditional singer Jean-Claude Talec. The first CD (60 minutes) includes a variety of singers from whom he has collected and in the second CD (73 minutes) he reinterprets songs he has collected and engages a younger generation of singers and instrument players. The 32 page booklet includes song texts in Breton with a French translation as well as summaries in French and English of notes. To launch the CD Talec has organized a series of informal evening *veillées* where those present can share songs and stories.

**Clotilde Trouillaud. *Solo*.** Self-produced. This is the first solo CD by a harpist who has played with the harp group Fileuses de Nuit. Except for a traditional song and dance suite, all of the selections on this CD are Trouillaud's compositions. The styles is described by one reviewer as "light but not airy, energetic but not frenetic." Besides performing at concerts and at festivals Clotilde Trouillaud teaches harp at several Breton music schools.

### And from the American Shore ...



**Iona. *Silver*.**  
(BP2011CD).  
[www.ionamusic.com](http://www.ionamusic.com)

Iona celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a CD called Silver to celebrate all the years this band based in the Washington D.C. area

has championed the music of all the Celtic countries (including Asturias and Galicia). This is not your usual "Celtic" band found here in the U.S. which normally restricts its Celticness to Ireland and Scotland. And in addition to a nicely rounded repertoire of tunes and melodies from the European side of the Atlantic, Iona weaves in American musics – some with Celtic roots and others simply of the Americas. For example, on this CD they include the suite "Pach pi, Dans les prisons de Nantes, Johnny's Gone to France" which intertwines Breton, French Canadian and Irish music. In the selection "Volviendo al Valle, Chouteira, Get You A Cooper Kettle" a Galician dance is combined with a Bolivian tune and some Bluegrass.

Iona was founded by lead singer Barbara Ryan (who also plays bouzouki, guitar and bodhran) and wind player Bernard Argent (flutes, whistles, and a few other instruments). They include today Jim Queen (banjo and vocals), Chuch Lawhorn (bass guitar), and Kathleen Larick (a dancer who also joins in on vocals and percussion). Iona can be applauded not only for their interesting and high quality performances, but also for the many years they have supported and promoted Celtic musics and musicians.

### Deep inside a Breton skull - 33 Is There A Breton Architecture?

Jean-Pierre Le Mat

Let us leaf through tourist guides. They sing the praises of the Breton architecture: nice parochial enclosures, slender bell-towers, manors hidden in the greenery. Even the humble granite house, with its slate roof, is viewed as a picturesque building, worthy of interest.

Sure, there is a typical and popular Breton house. In our villages, the new ones are, most of them, named "traditional-renovated house." Like the old ones, their roof is strongly tilted on the two sides, and covered with slate. The chimneys are placed at the gables, in the alignment of the ridge sheathing. This popular architecture, although with particular features, is above all functional. Our houses fit with our needs, the materials available and with our rainy weather. Of course, from place to place, there are curiosities pointed out by specialists. In the farm of my grandfather, there was a bulge in the front wall, where the family table was, with benches against three walls. This nook was called kuzh-taol and the learned people call that a "house with apoteiz."



The Breton manors and castles do not present a strong architectural originality. According to the periods of construction, they adopted the fashions followed everywhere else in Western Europe. The Breton castles were fortified during the Middle Ages. During the 16th century, they embraced the Renaissance style, copying the French and Italian models. Later, our castles have been built in the baroque style or, worse, a mixture of all the past fashions.

When I was a scout, at about the age of 12, we used to organize our ceremonies in an old half ruined fortified castle, not far from Lannion, the Tonquedec Castle. That was very impressive for young people. During the whole day, our troop of about twenty scamps had to mass-produce torches. A first group, armed with their pocket knives, had to get strong and long sticks, straight enough, out of the hazel or chestnut trees in the forest nearby. Another group, armed with paper and a box of matches, had to pick dry wood and make a little fire. Around this stones were put in order to install a big pan on top of the fire. A third group cut large ribbons out of the big Hessian bags, used at this time in all the farms to store potatoes.

In the big pan, you put cubes of paraffin, which liquefy with heat. When the product is liquefied enough, but not too hot, you have to put the ribbons in the pan to impregnate them with the wax. Then, you manage to roll up the ribbons on top of the stick without burning anybody around. You consolidate your job with ironwire.

At night, when all the torches were lit, and we were singing songs together, ancient images awakened deep in my skull. Images and sounds of past times, locked in the castle walls and freed by the heat of our torches.

Another pleasure of the young people at this time, besides picking blackbird and thrush eggs or, more difficult, magpie eggs, was to explore the underground passages that we found not far from nearby manors or ruined castles. I and my fellows were particularly pleased with two of them. One was near the castle of Lesquiffiou. You entered it through a hole near the road, which looked like a pipe for rain water. It was a long one, with crossroads and a slight possibility to get

lost. But the most exciting passage was in the ruins of the castle of Plouegat-Guerrand. My mother told me dreadful stories about the Marquis of Guerrand. But, when you are 12, you know that the cruel Marquis was dead long ago, and that you can find in the underground passages the bones of his victims or maybe a treasure, because evil people are usually very rich. In the old Breton legends they are.

We did not find bones or treasure, but it did not matter a lot. We were proud to whisper to our classmates that we were scolded hard by our mothers for exploring the underground passages of the frightening castle of Guerand.



Chapel of Kerfons

Well, let us return to Breton architecture. When you are grown up, you can see that, here, the religious monuments are more interesting than manors and castles. Breton spirituality inspired a particular way to build. The calvaries, bell-towers, parochial enclosures make up architectural groups which can be described as typically Breton.



Parochial enclosure of Guimiliau

The Breton religious architecture is determined first by the materials available: wood and granite. The granite, by its hardness and its texture, cannot be carved in a sophisticated manner. Only the Kersanton granite, that is found near Plougastel-Daoulas, in the Brest area, has a grain so thin that it is possible to carve out of it real stone laces. In our churches, the builders mixed the usual granite and the darker kersantite, carved boldly, when it is necessary to break the impression of heaviness. The tuffeau, a micaceous chalk of the Loire

Valley, has sometimes been used for buildings in Nantes, Rennes, or coastal towns. These white monuments, made with tuffeau, did not really inspire the Breton builders. Besides, they are more easily eroded, and they blacken through urban pollution.

Here, most of the churches are in Gothic style. Everybody knows that this style is not of Breton origin. It spread all over Europe during the Middle Ages. It appeared here in the second half of 12th century. It reached its peak during the 13th century. The Breton monuments of this period were strongly influenced by the Anglo-Norman fashions. This is related to the political conditions of this time in the peninsula.

During the 15th century, the Breton churches were under the artistic influences of the court of Nantes, where the dukes Jean V and François II had gathered, as did the dukes of Burgundy, clever and educated people coming from all parts of Europe.

In France, the Gothic style lasted until the 15th century. It lingered in Brittany whereas our neighbors were already building in the Renaissance style, with colonnades and Greek capitals. What is more surprising, Gothic monuments have been built in Brittany until the 19th century, whereas this style had been abandoned long ago, everywhere else in Europe.



Parochial enclosure of Lanloup, between St. Brieuc and Paimpol

Sometimes the new European styles, imported into Brittany, transformed the external elements, porches or bell-towers. But the sacred atmosphere in the churches remained the same one. When you visit the different churches of Brittany, you can feel that the Breton religious architecture and the popular approach of the spirituality have little varied in the peninsula between the 15th and the 20th centuries. Of course, in the poor places churches were not built as high, adorned and showy as in the rich cities. But the architectural inspiration, linked here with the feelings and means of the people, did not seek ways of renewal.

What is typical of the Breton Gothic architecture? It is melted in a nice manner within the organization of the villages, the plans of the cities, the holes of greenery. It emerges out of it without shocking the eye. Architectural art is not used here to build an exception out of banality. It is intended to build the residence of a familiar god. This residence is generally surrounded with a cemetery. The dead people, also, are familiar beings.



Parochial enclosure of Pencran

Don't look here for isolated jewels. The Breton religious architecture is not defined by a masterpiece. It is a monumental composition immersed in a natural case. The stone lines are integrated in the lines drawn by the trunks of the large trees, the curves of the hills, the waves of dunes or cliffs. Here, you are not a spectator facing an aesthetic tableau. You are inside the tableau. You enter the holy enclosure through a monumental porch. You can also enter stepping across a stone of the wall, which allows you to pass, but prevents the livestock straying onto the holy ground. Inside, there is a gothic church, a calvary, a cemetery, sometimes an ossuary or a sacred fountain. When you feel the charm of the place, you cannot say if you admire a piece of architecture, the ironical mystery of the fountain, the majesty of the yew trees, the flowers on the wall of the ossuary. On the calvary, you pay attention to the scene of birth, turned towards the rising sun, and the scene of crucifixion, turned towards the west. You feel that the artist who built this place has tens of brains and hundreds of hands. Your thoughts are not dominated by a strong artistic spirit, but you feel that a merry community of craftsmen, probably buried somewhere under your feet, is offering you the pleasure of exploring the enchanted world they created.

## Travels in Brittany in 1869

*Brittany & Its Byways – Some Account of Its Inhabitants and Its Antiquities; during a residence in that country.* by Mrs. Bury Palliser (London: John Murray, 1869), pages 91 to

Editor's Note: The following account touches upon a few of the Breton places that might be deep inside the skull of Jean-Pierre Le Mat, described by an English woman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As is typical of many travel writers, this account has odd bits of history, mixed into descriptions of towns, buildings, and countryside. Also typical of 19<sup>th</sup> century travel writing is the abundant inclusion of stereotypes about the character of the Breton people – in this case, rarely positive in tone.

... We continued our carriage to Lannion, our driver not very clear of his way, and in Brittany the road is very difficult to be discerned; for on each side are high earthen banks, sometimes eight or ten feet high, and on the top of these are planted timber-trees, such as oak, elm, and ash, which often meet at the top, entirely intercepting the view, making these narrow lanes a perfect slough and most intricate to thread. Sometimes they are cut in irregular steps in the solid rock, and serve for the bed of a stream. Each field is also surrounded by these hedgerow trees, with are cut every four or five years.

We drove to Perros Guirec, a lovely little watering-place built on a small promontory with a safe harbour, whence wheat, hemp, and cattle are exported to England; it is six miles from Lannion. A dangerous rock, called Roche Bernard, is at its entrance. The view is lovely. From Perros we scrambled over a hilly cart-road to Ploumanac'h, about three miles distant – a wonderful spot, huge round erratic blocks of pink granite flung over land and sea in the wildest confusion. The whole coast is one sea of boulders, a chaos of rocks of all sizes cover the soil in every direction, and in many places there is no soil at all, and the loose masses rest on a bare bed of rock, stretching, in unbroken extent, to a great distance. "A wanderer," says Mr. Trollope, "amid this strange and silent scene might fancy himself the only living thing in the midst of a world turned to stone. In every possible variety of uncouth form and capricious, strange positions, the endless masses were around us."

One rock, surrounded at high water by the tide, is a square block of red granite of thirty to forty feet high, placed on the top of a still higher mass, on which it rests upon a very small base. It is called the "Roche Pendue," and serves as a landmark for the fishermen. We took a small boat full of fish resembling codlings or small cod, called "lieu," and were rowed by the fishermen through a sea of granite boulders to the

opposite side of the Trégastel estuary, to see the "pierre pendue," or rocking-stone (Breton, *rouler*), the largest in Brittany. These stones are so nicely poised that they can be moved with the slightest impulse by any one knowing the exact point at which to touch them. They were used in early times as proving-stones, and called "Pierres de verité."

*"Firm as it seems,  
Such is its strange and virtuous property,  
It moves obsequious to the gentlest touch  
Of him whose breast is pure; but to a traitor,  
Though e'en a giant's prowess nerved his arm,  
It stands as fixed as Snowdon."* – Mason

Or, as Sir Walter Scott alludes to them, -

*"Some, chance-poised and balanced, lay  
So that a stripling arm might sway  
A mass no host could raise,  
In nature's rage at random thrown,  
Yet trembling like the Druid's Stone,  
On its precarious base."* – Lord of the Isles

The council of Nantes, in the seventh century, ordered the bishops to have the rocking-stones destroyed. The coarse rose-coloured granite of this coast resembles the Egyptian.

We rowed back to the little inn at Ploumanac'h, and had some eggs and a hot langouste or rock-lobster. This kind is more plentiful on the coast of Brittany than the common, but these rocky shores abound in both sorts. The village of Ploumanac'h is built nearly into the sea, in the midst of rocks overhanging the harbour. It is almost exclusively frequented by fishermen; in the front is a group of rocks or islands called Les Sept Iles; the Ile aux Moines, the most important among them, is strongly fortified, and is directly opposite Ploumanac'h. At the inn we found a German artist employed in making sketches in oil of this strange coast.

It was late when we reached Lannion, a town prettily situated in the valley of Leguer; it contains no remarkable buildings except a few houses of the period of Henry IV, and Louis XIII in the market-place. The mackerel and other fisheries are carried on from here, the grande and petite pêche, the "lieu" is taken in shoals and salted. The seaweed or wrack (*Fucus vesiculosus*), called goëmon, is extensively collected along the coasts of Brittany for fertilizing the lands and also for fuel, which last is so scarce that even cow-dung is collected and dried against the walls for the same use.

The gathering of goëmon takes place in March and September, and employs the whole population of the district. Souvestre says, that on the appointed day for gathering the crop, horses, oxen, cows, dogs, every animal, and every machine, is put into requisition.

Women and children are all assembled in the bays, sometimes to the number of 10,000 persons; but, to allow the poor to have the full advantage, the custom is, on the first day, to admit only the necessitous of the parish. These borrow their neighbours' vehicles, and collect a good crop. It is called "the day of the poor." The *goëmon* grows on rocks at a distance from the shore, and the peasants not having sufficient boats to collect it tie the heaps together with cords on to branches of trees and form a raft, on which the whole family is launched; a barrel is attached at the end, and the unsteady craft often rolls over and its cargo is precipitated into the water. The fine sands of the sea shore are also carted and laid on the heavy lands to divide the soil.

Ascending the valley of the Leguer, about eight miles from Lannion, on the opposite side of the river, we turned down a muddy lane, and getting out into a field saw in front of us the imposing castle of Tonquédec, perhaps the finest remains in Brittany of military architecture, dating from the fourteenth century. It crowns the summit of a hill, wooded down to the river's edge, with water-mills and a little village at the foot, the bright sparkling, river running through the deep wild valley; nothing can exceed the picturesque effect of these ruins when seen from the opposite bank.

Tonquédec has belonged from time immemorial to the Viscomtes de Coëtmen, who held the first rank among the nobles of Brittany, but one of them espousing the cause of the Constable Clisson against Duke John IV, saw his fortress demolished. It was restored under Henry IV, and again dismantled by order of Cardinal Richelieu, who hated castles and their nobility. The castle is an irregular four-sided figure. It had an outer enclosure, and was entered by a drawbridge, and furnished with every imaginable fortification. Three sides were surrounded by dwellings, among these a fine roofed *sale d'armes* remains. A flying bridge led to the keep, which was of four stories, but the entrance on the first story, so that in case of siege the garrison might retire to the keep, and hold out till want of provisions or ammunition compelled them to surrender. The towers and walls remain, the latter are ten feet thick.

On our way to Plouaret we drove up to the *château* of Kergrist, a square edifice with pepperbox towers at each angle, in good preservation, occupied by a lady of the name of Douglas. Our driver could not find the way to the "Chapelle des Sept Saints," built over a dolmen, which lay near the station at Plouaret, whence we proceeded by rail, and, entering the department of Finistère, shortly after reached Morlaix over its magnificent granite viaduct, the most important among the many which occur between Rennes and Brest. The railway runs parallel to the coast, and traverses, not far

from their mouths, the stream which abound in this "pays accidenté," This gigantic work is one-sixth of a mile (292 yards) long, and consists of two tiers of arches, fourteen in the upper line and nine below.

Morlaix is picturesquely built on the sides of three ravines, so steep that the saying goes, "De la mansarde au jardin, comme on dit à Morlaix." It is situated on a tidal river, about eight miles from the sea, ascended by small vessels, which give the place a lively appearance. Few towns have so many beautiful timbered houses of the fifteen and sixteenth centuries remaining. One of the most curious is that belonging to a miller, No. 18, in the Rue des Nobles, a street where the houses are built one story projecting over the other, so that the top stories of the opposite houses nearly touch each other and exclude the light. The fronts, gable-shaped, have their enormous beams richly carved, and supported by brackets and statues of St. Yves or other favourite saints; some are overlaid with lozenge-shaped slates, and finished at the point with a leaden "épi," or ornamental terminal. All have a kind of hall, paneled and sculptured to the roof, the staircases richly sculptured and supported by a pillar carved from top to bottom with statues of saints or grotesque figures superposed one over the other. Among the statuettes in the house, No. 19, are the figures of St. Roch and his dog; St. Christopher carrying the infant Jesus, St. Michael, and various others. On another staircase, in better preservation, but not so richly carved (at the *Veuve Perron's* No. 14, Grande Rue), are female saints, - the Virgin, St. Catherine, and St. Barbara.

Morlaix gave a grand reception to the Queen-Duchess Anne, when on her pilgrimage through Brittany in 1505. The town presented her with a little ship of gold, bearing the arms of the city, and enriched with precious stones, and a tame ermine with a diamond collar round its neck. Anne received the ermine, and caressed the little animal, who returned her endearments, and, at length, suddenly concealed itself in her bosom, which unexpected proceeding startled the Queen, when the *Seigneur de Rohan*, who was by her side, exclaimed, "What do you fear, madam; is not the ermine your cognizance?"

No less enthusiastic was the reception given by the citizens of Morlaix forty years later (1548) to Mary Stuart, then only five years old, on her landing in France. She was lodged in the convent of the Jacobins, and assisted at the *Te Deum* in the church of Notre Dame-du-Mur. When passing through one of the gates on her way back, the drawbridge, overloaded with spectators, gave way, and several persons were thrown into the water. Mary's Scottish attendants cried out "Treason!" but the *Seigneur de Rohan*, who was on horseback by the side of the royal litter, indignantly

exclaimed, "Jamais Breton ne fit trahison." The loyalty and good faith of the Bretons is proverbial. "En tout chemin, loyauté," is a Breton motto, and it is one of the virtues attributed to them by a Breton writer, who assigns to them for virtues and three vices. Their virtues consist in a love of their country and their home, resignation to the will of the Almighty, loyalty to each other, and hospitality. Their vices are avarice, contempt for women, and drunkenness. Their love of country and home is carried to an extent, rivaling if not exceeding, that of the Swiss. The Breton not only loves the village where he was born, but he loves the field of his fathers, the hearth and the clock of his home, even the bed on which he was born, and on which he hopes to close his eyes. The conscript and sailor are often known to die of grief when away from their native land. Brittany possesses for its children an inconceivable attraction, and there is no country in the world where man is more attached to his native soil.

*"O landes, ô forêts! Pierres sombres et hautes,  
Bois qui couvrez nos champs, mers qui battez nos côtes,  
Villages où les morts errent avec les vents,  
Bretagne, d'où vient l'amour de tes enfants ? » - Brizeux*

The Bretons are brave soldiers and good sailors; their disposition is hasty and violent, and even ferocious in anger. When the people of Nantes rose up in rebellion against Duke Francis, his brother-in-law, the Comte du Foix, sent to pacify them, said to him on his return from his mission, "J'aimerais mieux être prince d'un million de sangliers que de tel peuple que sont vos Bretons" – Brittany has always been the theatre of great virtues and great crimes.

On Sunday we went to the Welsh Baptist Chapel, to hear Mr. Jenkins preach in the Breton language. He has been there thirty years zealously labouring among the peasants, to convert whom he was sent by the Welsh Baptist Missionary Society. From his thorough knowledge of the French and Breton languages, he is eminently fitted for the task. He travels about the surrounding country preaching, and establishing schools, and has revised the Breton translations [by Légonedec] of the New Testament for the Society, and circulated, by means of colporteurs, from eight to nine thousand Bibles, besides about 100,000 tracts. The task of acquiring the Breton language is less difficult for a Welshman, for the similarity between them is so great that the two people are able to make themselves understood to each other. The labours of Mr. Jenkins have lately awakened the attention of the Breton Roman Catholic clergy, who have publicly denounced him from their altars, but without causing him to slacken in the good work he has undertaken. Persecuted by a tyrannical priesthood, who hold dominion over a peasantry bigoted in proportion to their ignorance, his position is one of difficulty and danger; but he goes on with undrooping energy,

convinced that, though the progress is slow, the good seed has not been sown in vain, and will, in due time, bear fruit, though those who first sowed it may have passed away. There were about a dozen Bretons at the evening service; they seemed to be constantly going in and out, as if unable to keep up their attention to so long a service. There are also English Protestant chapels at Morlaix and Quimper, and French at Brest and Lorient.

We saw a christening in the cathedral, of a child about eighteen months old; the mother wore a wonderful conical cap of lace.

A few houses from our hotel a ball was going on, given every week for the workpeople of the town. The clatter of their iron-pointed wooden shoes seemed quite to drown the music.

... Emile Souvestre, author of 'Le Foyer Breton,' and 'Les Derniers Bretons,' the ablest portrayer of Breton manners, customs, and superstitions, was a native of Morlaix; he died in the Protestant Communion, in 1854.

We were recommended to sail down the Morlaix River to its mouth, as the scenery is very picturesque, but we had not time to effect it. The great beauty of Brittany generally consists in its river scenery, the Rance, to Dinan; the rivers of Quimper and Quimperlé; the Aven, Elorn, and Blavet, are all highly picturesque and worth visiting. Our next drive was to St. Pol de Léon, partly along the bank of the river, passing under the church of Notre Dame-de-la-Salazette and the convent below of St. François. The tall steeples of St. Pol are seen at a great distance, and looking behind is the best view of the Mené-Bré, and insulated conical mountain, one of the Mené-Arré chain, situated near the station of Belle-Isle-Bégard. A chain of mountains runs through the Côtes-du-Nord, and, at the western end of the department, forks off into two branches which traverse the whole of Finistère, - the Mené-Arré, or northern chain, and the Montagnes Noires, or southern.

St. Pol looks like a town of the Middle Ages. "The holy city," as it is called by the Léonnais, one of the four bishoprics (St. Pol de Léon, Cornouaille, Vannes et Tréguier) into which Brittany was divided, comprising the modern districts of Morlaix and Brest. The Pays de Léon is remarkable for the number of its religious monuments, its fine churches, its bone-houses, calvarys, way-side crosses, and shrines. Crosses are set up in every direction, and of every description, from the plain unpretending simple cross of wood or stone, to the huge crosses flaunting in green paint, with tears of gold – specimens of the taste of the maire or priest of the district. No Breton passes the sacred symbol without kneeling to salute it, and making the sign of the

cross – evidence that the piety of those who first raised them has not degenerated in their posterity.

The country is rich and varied. The Léonnais is tallest of all the Breton race; his dress is generally black or blue, with a coloured scarf round his waist, his hair is worn very long, and his broad-brimmed hat has a silver buckle. He is grave, of a calm confiding faith, which nothing can shake or alter, and of intense religious feeling. The church is the place of meeting, where all his business is transacted, all his aspirations centered. Throughout Brittany the priesthood are low and ignorant. Like the Irish, the Breton farmer's great ambition is to make his son a priest. In no part of France are there more uneducated than in Brittany.

St. Pol is still and melancholy, the grass grows in the streets, the city looks as if it had not awakened since its palmy days of the fourteenth century. Its churches, calvaries, cemeteries, all silent as death. Its lively neighbour, Morlaix, offers a strange contrast; its inhabitants may well say they are three hundred years in advance of St. Pol.



### Val de Loire : UNESCO World Heritage flouted

**Editor's Note:** *The following is a press release from the organization Bretagne Réunie which underlines the continuing difficulty in combating labels which create a*

*public perception that the Loire-Atlantique Department (administratively cut off from the Region of Brittany during the Vichy government in 1941) is not Breton. See Bro Nevez 108 (November 2008) and No. 118 (May 2011) for more on this ongoing issue.*

Since 2000, the Val De Loire (France) is a "World Heritage", in respect of live cultural journeys (Internet: <http://whc.unesco.org/fr/list/933>).

The "Val de Loire" is a geographical, human and historical entity, strictly identified. There are 42 castles ("Châteaux de la Loire"), belonging to the royal estate, built and remodeled during the Renaissance, when the French royal power was located on the banks of the river Loire and its tributaries.

The designated site is located between Chalonnes-sur-Loire, downstream from Angers and Sully-sur-Loire upstream of Orléans. It goes through 280 km of the departments of Loiret, Loir-et-Cher, Indre-et-Loire, Maine-et-loire, totaling 800 km<sup>2</sup>, which makes the "Val

de Loire", the largest French site at the UNESCO'S World Heritage.

Since 2008, the two administrative regions of Pays de la Loire and Centre have organized a true diversion of the registration as "UNESCO World Heritage", by deciding unilaterally to promote a territory, much larger than the one registered ! Outer sites and monuments are fraudulently labeled "UNESCO World Heritage" on many leaflets, tourist brochures, and websites !

On June 6th 2009, the citizen society Bretagne Réunie and other Breton societies had reported these diversions by sending a letter to Mr Francesco Bandarin, focusing on the occurring contradiction as regards the World Heritage Convention.

On July 24th 2009, Mr Mechtild Rössler, Head of Europe's and North America's office at the UNESCO, sent back a letter, confirming that the Castle of the Dukes of Brittany and Nantes vineyards are not in the VAL DE LOIRE area. The Dukes of Brittany's castle was part of the Breton castles network aimed at defending the Breton territory from the military French assaults. It was therefore by no means a castle of the Kings of France's Loire valley. In March 2011, Bretagne Réunie has again alerted Mrs Irina Bokova, Head of UNESCO, on the unilateral extension, orchestrated by the two administrative regions, annexing the Loire-Atlantique Breton Department, that is no part of the VAL DE LOIRE, and has never been !

On April 21th 2011, Mrs Petya Totchavora, head of Unit Europe and North America at the World Heritage Center, confirmed that no request for extending of the perimeter of VAL DE LOIRE, had been requested for. She saw that the UNESCO's logo had been wrongly used to promote castles which location is out the specified VAL DE LOIRE site. So, she sent a letter to the "Délégation permanente de la France" by the UNESCO, requiring to fix this wrongdoing.

Asked by the newspaper "La Gazette.fr", dated May 20<sup>th</sup> 2011, a cabinet member of the regional Council of Pays de la Loire said: "it is a mistake and we're going to restore it right, we must respect the charter we signed". Unfortunately, since then, the diversions went on and nothing changed. Booklets, leaflets, tourist information, internet sites, are always fraudulently stamped with UNESCO World Heritage logos.

The two administrative regions of Pays de la Loire and Centre don't really seem worried by the permanent delegation of France to UNESCO and don't respect the agreement "Patrimoine Mondial de l'UNESCO", signed by France: they go on counterfeiting, on an industrial scale Thus, on January 16th 2012, in Tours, the French State and the two administrative regions "Pays de la Loire" and "Centre" signed a convention so as to

create and develop a label "Val de Loire", in the aim of attracting more tourists, especially foreigners towards this worldwide known region, famous for its castles.

That "VAL DE LOIRE" label will refer to an area going from the "Loiret" department to the Atlantic Ocean ! The name "VAL DE LOIRE" is a deliberate violation of the scope of UNESCO and unrelated to a geographical definition and human history of the Loire Valley, because it intentionally and forcibly annexed the Loire-Atlantique, which is a Breton department.

Only totalitarian regimes are so able to manipulate the history and geography and to change the definition lumps (cf. "1984" by George Orwell) to remodel in a completely arbitrary and artificial territorial and cultural identities of its inhabitants.

This operation is running smooth: no one will be killed nor imprisoned. But it is well-identity, culture, people and landmarks of their collective memory being murdered by inches, with the considerable resources of government (education, justice, land use planning, organization of local councils).

As the 40th anniversary of the creation of the World Heritage Convention, recognizing the financial difficulties of the organization but equally aware of the values it defends, BRETAGNE RÉUNIE, asks UNESCO to denounce and have these unprecedented diversions ended, committed in the aim of reshaping territories and ancient identities, seriously prejudicial to the Breton national minority.

Bretagne Réunion, Member of the Agency of Fundamental Rights of the European Union  
[www.bretagne-reunie.org](http://www.bretagne-reunie.org) Contact : [contact@bretagne-reunie.org](mailto:contact@bretagne-reunie.org) ou 06 82 67 19 46



## What is the U.S. ICDBL?

The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 240,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the school, media, and public life.

## Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

Some U.S. ICDBL members are of Breton heritage, but the U.S. ICDBL is intended to be a group of "anyone and everyone" showing support for the Breton language rather than an organization for Breton-Americans like so many other "ethnic" organizations in the U.S. Most of our members speak neither Breton nor French and most have never been to Brittany. But we all have some reason to help fight for the survival of the Breton language.

## What does the U.S. ICDBL do?

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed across the U.S. – from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between – we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language). It's not slick and glossy, but includes current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history.

Through our website we assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. We have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language at various Celtic festivals and events and have shared our knowledge whenever possible with friends and acquaintances.

The U.S. ICDBL has also supported Diwan – Breton language immersion schools – for many years with a small annual contribution from our Members. We have maintained a personal link with the children of one particular Diwan school – Skol Diwan Landerne – since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school's "godmother."

## Membership in the U.S. ICDBL shows that the Breton language is important to people throughout the world.

A yearly membership (including subscription to our newsletter) is just \$20. Make out a check to "U.S. ICDBL" and mail it to the address below.

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