

BRO NEVEZ

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



The Morvan Brothers now members of
the Order of the Ermine –page 8

Photo Jean-Georges Seban, from Le
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From the Editor

Once again I am keeping to a pattern by sending out Bro Nevez so that it will reach you in the month following the one on its cover. I could give you a dozen good excuses but will apologize instead for this tardiness in mailing. For even the simplest of articles and notes, a great deal of research is sometimes needed and it can be difficult to gather all the information desired. The summer is always a busy time in Brittany with a wealth of action and activities particularly in the area of music. There are dozens of large and small festivals throughout the summer to celebrate Breton music and dance, and to foster Brittany's engagement with its Celtic cousins and creative collaboration with an international community. In this issue you will read about the continued efforts to gain recognition for Breton, Gallo and other languages of France. You will meet some of the Bretons of the past and present who have devoted much of their lives to Brittany and the defense and advancement of the Breton language and culture.

Lois Kuter



Finally, A Law to Advance the Languages of France

The following is my translation of a "press release" from Kevre Breizh posted on the website of Skol Uhel are Vro (the Cultural Institute of Brittany): www.culture-bretagne.org

Kevre Breizh, a coordination of Breton organizations, participated in the 4th Forum of Languages of France held in Langon (Gironde) and published a final statement which was adopted by the Cultural Institute of Brittany.

The living immaterial patrimony which comprises the Breton and Gallo languages and the cultural universes associated with them merits a full recognition from public institutions.

The participants in the 4th Forum of Languages of France of Langon (Gironde) which was held July 23, 2012, - parliament members, elected officials, association leaders, and representatives from civic society – made note of the willingness of the President of the Republic, in conformity with his campaign promises, to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

In this choice they acknowledge the desire affirmed by the President of the Republic to recognize the importance of the languages of France and the necessity of taking strong actions for their use and

development in education, in the media, and in social and cultural life.

Beyond this engagement the participants expect in a short time to see a vote on a legal framework which would allow concrete legislative content for a modification of the French Constitution of July 2008. While the question of languages goes beyond the right-left divide, they know that the President of the Republic can count on his majority in the National Assembly and the Senate to secure a true recognition of the languages of France.

The participants in the 4th Forum of Languages of Langon thus expect with much impatience the ratification of the European Charter and the vote on a legal framework allowing for true linguistic policies.

The 4th edition of the Forum of Languages of France took place yesterday in a new political context. In fact, one of the 60 proposals of candidate François Hollande, was to “ratify the European Charter of Regional or Minority Languages.” A major promise which allows defenders of the regional languages to hope for real advances. “For the first time since 1958 we have a Socialist president of the Republic, with a majority of the left in the Senate and Assembly. This situation opens for us new perspectives for the promotion and development of regional languages,” the PS Deputy of Gironde, Martine Faure, said with satisfaction.

In 1999 the government of Lionel Jospin launched a process of ratification of the Charter. The Constitutional Council called upon by the President of the Republic Jacques Chirac, judged that the Charter contained unconstitutional clauses, incompatible in particular with its Article 2 (“the language of the Republic is French.”). In 2008, a revision of the Constitution established in Article 75-1 that “the regional languages are part of the patrimony of France.”

The legal framework is already written.

In view of the bearing of the current political force, the European Charter should be ratified. “The question is how? In revising the Constitution or by simple decree? Revising the Constitution would be a much more powerful gesture,” assured David Grosclaude, Regional Councilor from the Aquitaine, and delegate for linguistic policies.

“This European Charter calls up principles. It is based on willingness,” added Véronique Bertile, Lecturer on public law at the Université Bordeaux IV. “Revising the Constitution would allow us to go beyond the recognition of patrimony by setting down principles for the promotion and development of regional languages. Principles indispensable to the promulgation of a law,” affirmed Mme Bertile. “The legal framework is ready.

Only the vote on it remains,” confirmed Martine Faure, co-author of the text.

A letter to Jean-Pierre Bel

“One can vote on a law... the Constitutional Council will slam the door on it so it doesn’t harm the indivisibility of the Republic and French as its official language,” lamented Mme Faure. “The Constitution must therefore be revised for legislation,” For that it will be necessary to enlist a majority of 3/5ths of the Assembly and Senate. “The majority will need to call upon a party loyalty and support of the right,” assured M. Grosclaude. The President of the Senate, Jean-Pierre Bel, is a defender of regional languages. David Grosclaude knows this and proclaimed his hope that a letter from the Forum be addressed to him to ask for his support and to alert the Senators.

A Case of Bilingualism Under Attack The *Livrets de famille* in Carhaix

One particular case where the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages might bring some relief concerns the “illegitimacy” of Family Documents (“*Livrets de famille*”) issued by the town of Carhaix. Since 2006 Carhaix has printed these documents in French and Breton. These documents record the birth of children to a family and afford official state recognition, tax credits and other benefits. Some 1,500 families of Carhaix have been issued a bilingual document which has caused no problem until a case came up recently for a separated couple whose mother was born in Germany and the children were born in Carhaix. They were notified that this bilingual document was not legal since all public acts must be uniquely printed in French.

The fact that the entire document is in French with a Breton translation does not seem to matter in voiding the legitimacy of this document.

Bilingual Schools – Some good News!

This coming school year fourteen new sites for Breton language schooling will open in Brittany. This is the highest number of openings for a school year in a dozen years.

Seven bilingual schools are in the public education system, four in the private Catholic school system, and three are Diwan Breton language immersion schools. Seven are in the Finistère: public schools in Brest, St. Thégonnec, Pluguffan, Moëlan-sur-Mer; Catholic schools in Concarneau, Locmaria-Plouzané, and a Diwan school in Landivisiau. For Morbihan there will be two public schools in Langonnet and Pluneret and a Catholic school in Auray. For Loire-Atlantique there will be two new Diwan schools in Pornic and Nantes. The

Côtes d'Armor has one new public school in Callac, and Ille-et-Vilaine will have a new Catholic school in Châteaubourg.

This means some 600 to 800 new students will be added to over 14,000 students currently in bilingual public and Catholic classes and in Immersive Breton Diwan schools.

Besides the hard work of teachers, school administrators and parents to push for more class openings, some of the success in increasing this year's schooling is due to work of the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg (Office Public de la Langue Bretonne) to promote this option.

For more information on school openings and classes available for adults learning Breton check out the website www.ofis-bzh.org



Skol Diwan Louanec Some bad news ...

The town of Louanec (located on the northern coast of Brittany just to the east of Perros-Guirrec in the Côtes d'Armor)

voted to evict the Diwan school from unused school classroom space in the town this year, offering an alternative where the rent is nearly four times higher. Although perfectly legal, the ouster of the school from affordable classroom space sends a clear signal from the mayor that Diwan is not welcome. The 33 children of the Diwan school represent 13% of the school children of the community.

The following is a petition signed by over 1,800 people from all over Brittany (my translation):

To the attention of the Mayor of Louanec, Jean Nicolas:

33 students are enrolled in the Diwan school for the opening of 2012. They make up 13% of the children of the community enrolled in school. But there is the matter of chasing them from the site that the Diwan Louanec association has rented as of August 31.

Where will the children go?
What place does the community reserve for its young people and its culture?

We support the Diwan school of Louanec:

- Because there is a place for everyone in Louanec,

- Because the happy opening of a new position in the community primary school should not become a pretext to evict the Diwan bilingual school,
- Because Diwan is an association of Louanec,
- Because Diwan contributes a great deal to local social activity,
- Because Diwan Louanec pays a monthly rent of 500 euros to the community,
- Because Diwan Louanec cannot take on a monthly rental fee to the community of 1,800 euros for the Saint Yves house,
- Because the community must fairly support all its associations,
Because Diwan schools are secular, free and open to all,
- Because the Diwan network is known for its benefit to the public,
- Because Diwan promotes the operation of its schools as public democratic and innovative teaching services,
- Because, thanks to a unique pedagogy and the voluntary engagement of dozens of families and friends of the school, children become bilingual in French and Breton,
- Because the children carry within themselves the richness of our country,
- Because they incarnate cultural diversity,
- It makes more sense to keep the Diwan school in Louanec in the school quarters, in the center of town.

To sign this petition use the following website :

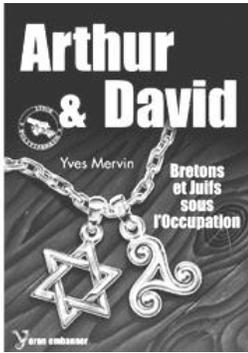
<http://www.mesopinions.com/petition/droits-homme/soutenons-ecole-diwan-louanec/9100>



Workshop for Theater and Song in Breton Gouelioù e goueloù 2012

There are many ways to promote the Breton language and they are often ones which also promote creativity. Breton language theater has a long history in Brittany and is thriving today with a number of troupes who perform regularly. And certainly there is no shortage of singers who use the Breton language for traditional ballads and songs for dancing, as well as for new compositions set to a world beat. But there's always room for more!

This August Kalon Plouha organized five half-days of workshops for those who want to perfect their performance skills. This included a theater workshop by Bob Simon as well as conference sessions, walks, and evening *veillées* to informally share talents. For more information check out the website: kalon.plouha.voila.net



The Importance of Examining a Complex and Difficult Era in Breton History

Book Review:
Yves Mervin. *Arthur et David – Bretons et Juifs sous l'Occupation*. Yorán Embanner, 2001. 521 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-38-2.

This July an exhibit opened in Paris commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Vel d'Hiv roundup of 13,152 Jewish men, women and children who were sent to the Vélodrome d'Hiver for deportation to Auschwitz. Only 100 would survive. This exhibit is newsworthy (New York Times and the Philadelphia Inquirer among other papers in major cities) because of the honest and long overdue recognition of France's widespread role in deporting Jews. The first official recognition on the part of the French government of wide French culpability came only in 1995 when President Jacques Chirac spoke out. This new exhibit is noteworthy also in presenting rare and haunting documents about France's laws and ordinances regarding Jews that survived a purge of records ordered in 1946.

In 1939 France's population included some 300,000 Jewish people (nearly 200,000 living in Paris). This would increase to some 340,000 in 1940 with the exodus of Jews from Holland, Belgium and the Alsace. With the complicity of the Vichy government some 76,000 Jews would be deported to death camps of which an estimated 2,600 would survive. An additional 3,000 Jews would die in internment camps in France. While 3/4ths of France's Jewish population would survive the war, French were directly engaged in assisting with the death of some 80,000.

Anti-Semitism was widespread in France in the pre-war period. Jews were felt to have taken over the economy and it was assumed that they were not "good citizens" – Jewish first and French only second... especially the newer immigrants who were disrupting French unity. Indeed Jews were regarded not as Frenchmen with a specific religious practice, but as a race apart. A series of laws starting in July 1940 would define Jews as a race and one's identity was based on having three grand parents who were Jewish ... no matter what religion you might practice. These regulations would be used to exclude Jews from a wide range of occupations, to "Aryanize" Jewish businesses, to confiscate property, and to identify and ultimately round up Jewish families for the "Final Solution." In June 1942 a law was enacted in Brittany forcing Jews to wear a yellow star when in public. How how much French and Breton people knew about the death

camps is not clear. None the less, the Vichy government did not need a lot of arm-twisting from Germany to put measures into place that would make it easy to identify and ultimately round up the Jewish population.

While Brittany had a very small population of Jewish people – no more than 2,000 in all * – anti-Semitism was as active there as anywhere else in France. In Brittany round-ups by French police started July 15, 1942 in Nantes, Rennes and Saint-Malo, one day before the Vel' d'Hiv in Paris.

This new book by Yves Mervin is not a history of Jewish people in Brittany during World War II but an exploration of relations between Jewish people and Breton Nationalists in light of recent efforts to present Breton nationalists as Nazis and anti-Semites – especially the linguist Roparz Hemon (1900-1978). Efforts to link Breton language activists with Nazi collaboration have been so successful that in 2000 Roparz Hemon's name was removed from the Diwan middle school in Relecq-Kerhuon (Brest) and the municipal council of Guingamp voted to remove it from the cultural center in that town. Mervin wondered if Hemon was, in fact, such a monster that honoring his linguistic work for the Breton language should be moved to the shadows.

One can only conclude after reading this book that the depiction of Hemon as an agent of the Gestapo and Nazi collaborator responsible for sending Breton Jews to concentration camps is based on some flimsy scholarship, and a skilled ability to take things out of their historic context. There seems no proof that the majority of Breton nationalists during the German occupation of World War II and those active today were and are Nazis and racists, as some would like us to believe.

Sorting through the density of information presented in this book which documents the complex relationship of Breton nationalists with Jewish acquaintances and friends takes not only a good knowledge of World War II, but also of Breton history. The pre-war years as well as the period of World War II were an extremely complex period in Breton history where Bretons concerned for the future of their language and culture gave up any hope for the slightest support from the French government. Some looked to Ireland's fight for independence as a model that might be followed to achieve the independence that seemed needed to insure the future of Breton culture in Brittany. Nazism was not the model Breton nationalists of this period espoused.

During the German occupation of Brittany opportunities would open for the Breton language that would never have been granted by France in those times despite repeated demands – radio programming, Breton

classes in schools, and a cultural institute that would bring scholars (of all political leanings) together. This did not mean that Bretons welcomed Nazi domination. Were those active in promoting the Breton language and culture during this period anti-Semites? Yes, a few were anti-Semitic, but dreams for Breton cultural (and political) freedom did not include any “final solutions” for Jewish people. Did Hemon hate Jews? There seems to be no evidence in his writing that he was a monster. Indeed he acted on two occasions to try to keep Bretons who were marked as Jewish from being deported.

This is book that requires one to examine a much bigger picture and conflicting (if not totally diametric) presentations of Breton history. There is no one book that will give you the full picture, and it is important to read as many as possible of all the books written about Breton nationalism of this period – memoirs of those directly involved as well as others who have done extensive research of archived documents from the period. But Mervin’s book gives one good reason to suspect the academic integrity of some writers who repeat each other’s clichés and half-truths which stigmatize Breton language activists – of the past and by extension of the present – as Nazi sympathizers with responsibility for the Shoah in Brittany.** While Mervin’s book can be confusing in its organization of topics and juxtaposition of quotations and biographical details, it is a powerful statement about how history can be interpreted and only partially revealed to present a simplistic and extremely negative depiction of those who have worked to insure a future for the Breton language and culture.

* I could not find precise numbers for the number of Jewish people in Brittany during this period. This is just one estimation I found.

** Books which are particularly damning of Breton nationalists (and Roparz Hemon in particular) are: Henri Fréville’s *Archives secretes de Bretagne 1940-1944* reprinted in 2004, Françoise Morvan’s *Le monde comme si – Nationalisme et dérive identitaire en Bretagne*, 2002, and Claude Toczé’s *Les Juifs en Bretagne*, 2006, which seems to pull unquestioningly from Fréville and Morvan’s work.



Deep Inside a Breton Skull 35 Breizh, utopia or adventure?

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Breizh... Thirty years ago, Breizh meant for me the draft of a new republic, in the Far West of Europe. A republic with its own language, its own borders, its own currency. Together with other young Bretons, I

dreamed of a Breton State, a state like the French one or the German one.

My father and my grand-father took part in two successive world wars. They could have lost their lives for France but, by chance, they did not. At school, during the courses of civic education, I learned that it is glorious to die violently for France, when you are French. The other types of war, tribal or religious wars, were becoming discredited by the teacher, and considered as out-of-date. We did not know how to deal with these obligations towards France.

The teacher taught us several French national anthems.

*The republic is calling us,
Let us live or die,
A Frenchman must live for it
For it, a Frenchman must die.*

I don’t know who taught us another version :

*The republic is calling us,
Let us live or die,
A Frenchman must live for it
For it, a Breton must die.*

I remember that when we, nasty kids, were singing these words at the top of our voice, marching proudly out of school, our parents stayed silent.

During the course of history or geography, I learned that only the Nation-states had a significant interest. Brittany, like all the defeated peoples, did not have a lot of archives left. They had been burned or stolen. So Brittany is of little interest for the historians. The geographers don’t know how to manage our country. It is a mess; our linguistic, administrative and historic borders are different.

So, in a world where the existence of a people passed through unity and institutional recognition, the claim of a united Breton republic looked logical to me.

It was thirty years ago. I did not notice yet that, since the end of the Second World War, Brittany changed a lot. A capital of knowledge and means of production had been accumulated in Breton agriculture and agro-food industry. A fantastic revival of Breton culture, music, dance, language occurred. We are now part of the world culture.

This new situation required Bretons to be strategists, and not only protesters.

Now, the Breton identity is present everywhere. It radiates. On more than one million cars, there is now the sticker of the hilarious girl in



Breton costume "A l'aise Breizh". I can feel the vague irritation of those who go to a football match, a rock concert or a political meeting, sometimes on the other side of the world, when they see one unlikely guy brandishing a gwen-ha-du flag over the crowd.



Something else happened, concerning France and Europe, which makes me think that the nature of the Breton *struggle for life* is changing. Since the 16th century, the power of

the public institutions had risen irresistibly. This evolution towards *Big Brother* represented modernity and progress. Imperfect solidarities were replaced, one after another, by rational mechanisms controlled by a public authority. These institutions culminated during the 20th century in Europe, with the Nazi and Communist systems.

European people expected happiness from their States. We, Bretons, were a little bit reluctant. The Breton State disappeared in 1532 and our experience with the French one was bad enough. During the Middle-Ages, like other European people, we were expecting happiness from God. After that and until now, we could not expect something really good from the machinery of State. That is why, in politics, the Bretons are considered as *moderate* people. Actually, we moderately trust the power of institutions, and we moderately believe in the utopias linked with "good" governments.

Our reluctance concerning the political utopias has been strengthened by the technological revolution. The new means of communication allow us to get in touch with everybody, make business, exchange ideas, without the filter of any official protocol, as good and efficient it could be.

I know the value of the public institutions. They allow the people to live in peace, in an ecosystem of general mistrust. Is this mistrusting society now too hard for ordinary people, or too costly for the machinery of State? The Breton people, like other European people, feel that a period of *de-institutionalization* is now beginning. The dream of the welfare State and the nightmare of the totalitarian State, which are the two sides of a same historical reality in Europe, are fading away with the financial crisis and the decline of the public means.

Yet, social utopias shaped European history for several centuries. Thomas More, Rabelais, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Fourier and tens of others had drawn the drafts of "good" institutions. From utopias

sprang systems of thought, liberalism, socialism, communism, mutualism and other "isms".

Breizh, Brittany, has been a utopia. In the new world of the 21st century; can it stay like that, unchanged, deep in our skulls? I am not sure. We have to move away from the unnecessary aspiration of a small country frozen in its well-being. We had the dream of a secure, stable Brittany within its borders, strong in its language and its culture. This is a 20th century dream.

Brittany is now immersed in a globalized world. Of course, we are bound to France. We are still experiencing the arrogance of those who believe that France is the country of human rights, while it is only the country of the French. We have to defend our language, with the support of our American friends. But now, the French State has trouble everywhere to impose his authority and its legitimacy. Paris, the "Grand Paris", moves away from France to become a global city, a kind of *New York-sur-Seine*.

Europe has been a good thing for us. It worked for the recognition of national minorities and we have to favor it. The Euro replaced the Franc as our currency. More than 80% of our laws come from European directives.

Thirty years ago, Breizh was the utopia of a State, which would bring us the end of poverty, the end of humiliation, the end of uncertainty. Today, Breizh has become an exciting uncertainty. In the twilight and chaotic atmosphere of old Europe, it is difficult to believe in social or political stability. Our young people keep Breizh deep inside their skulls. More than the past generation, probably. For them, the Breton language has a new value. Not only a cultural, but a tribal meaning.

For them, Breizh is not the name of a social utopia, but the name of a collective adventure.



Four (actually 6) new Members of Brittany's Order of the Ermine.

On August 19, 2012, in the city of Guingamp, Bretons gathered to honor the work of six fellow countrymen who have made significant contributions to Brittany. The following short introductions are my translation of information sent by e-mail to me from the Skol Uhel ar Vro (Cultural Institute of Brittany). To get a sense of the importance and emotional power of this award to those who are chosen to receive it, check out the videos of the acceptance speeches on the website www.agencebretagnepress.com and click on culture on the top menu list. In Breton and/or French the passion these Bretons have for their culture and country is made clear.

The Order of the Ermine was first created by Duke Jean IV in 1381 and is one of the oldest chivalric orders of Europe. It stood out in its day in its inclusion of women and commoners. It was revived in 1972 by CELIB (Comité d'Étude et de Liaison des Intérêts Bretons). In 1988 it was made truly active by the Cultural Institute of Brittany which has added new inductees annually.

Each year four, and sometimes five, individuals are recognized for their life-long support of Brittany. This can be support for Breton culture and language, or social justice or economic development. In all cases it represents a continued responsibility for service to Brittany rather than the culmination of a lifetime of work.



Albert Boché

Born at Kergwigno in Ploerdut in 1927, Albert has been exposed to languages since early childhood. Breton surrounded him except at school where French was imposed. But he had learned to read even before going to school. This curiosity about languages has not left him, reinforced by this taste for world travel.

A follower of Ar Falz classes, he took every opportunity in his teaching work to introduce Breton (songs, Breton lessons, explanations of place names ...) and created with Tugdual Kalvez the Association of Lay Breton Teachers (Association des instituteurs laïcs Bretons – IPLB) to improve the level of Breton competence of teachers.

And one cannot overlook the creation of Breton vocabulary to respond to contemporary needs. He did not hesitate to use modern means such as his broadcasts for Radio-Vannes in the 1970s with Robert Duplessis where his mastery of the Breton language and his sense of pedagogy allowed him to be understood perfectly by native Breton speakers as well as new learners. And beginning in 2006 he has continued to give classes for beginning Breton learners

on Radio Bro-Gwened. At the same time he has continued to enrich Breton vocabulary through work with the Language and Literature Section of the Cultural Institute of Brittany (publishing a dictionary of Roparz Hemon). He has done conference sessions, and his pleasure in speaking Breton brought him to the Kan ar Bobl festival for a prize in oratory arts. He is a modest man with a life oriented towards to the Breton language.

Yves Laine

For Yves, as for many others, emigration and the discovery of Morvan Lebesque (*Comment peut-on être breton?*, 1970) led to the Breton question ... through questions on economy especially as commercial director for the port of Saint-Nazaire. He joined CELIB in 1971, wrote a book *Europe, rends nous la mer*, and worked on the Montoir-Vigo [Galicia, Spain] link which foreshadowed further use of the sea's highway.

Then with Yann Poupinot there was the launch and presidency of B5, the ancestor of CUAB and Bretagne Réunion, with the argument for reunification backed up with a statistical demonstration of economic benefits for Brittany. Yves would also enter the adventure of Brittany Ferries and the multiplication of its lines from 1976 for 21 more years.

He always worked with the concern for the reunification of the five departments of Brittany, including the idea of elongating the Tro Breizh with a non-historical route through Nantes and the publication of a book *L'Ambition de Bretagne d'un Nantais* (2002).

After writings on geopolitics it would be several novels based on family history. But always with the same activism, Yves became the president of the Association des Ecrivains Bretons while continuing his work with the Laws and Institutions Section of the Cultural Institute of Brittany. The projects would continue: create a Jules Verne harbor in Nantes, relaunch a transporter harbor, and, in all cases, call on the values of solidarity, innovation and impertinence of Bretons (even if he did not always find them impertinent enough for his taste).

And in looking back “the impression to have been permanently in a stronghold under siege where one needed to move from battlement to battlement to give a hand.”

Ivonig Le Merdy

Ivonig fell into the Breton cooking pot in childhood (“Breizh hor bro” and the Celtic Circle of Plouyé, where she caught the virus of taking responsibilities very young) and had a short passage through emigration to Paris (the heart has its reasons...)

Upon returning to Brittany the gears meshed; Comité Skioazell Diwan an Oriant, president of the Lorient Diwan School for 10 years, Diwan Breizh administration.

And Ivonig embarked on the adventure of the Coop Breizh book store in Lorient which had the same demands as any store, but also served as a crossroads for information, meetings, ideas, and initiatives for Breton culture. One needed to know the books and recordings well, but also how to give a welcome in the Breton language.

There was also the presidency (for 20 years) of Emglev bro an Oriant, another crossroads, with the synergy between Breton organizations and the Lorient pays, with an unending stream of cultural activity in the Lorient area highlighted by events like the *deizioù* (two months of programming in every community of the area). This also involved the organization of conferences year round with the Université populaire bretonne and a complete week of events during the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient. The Emglev also acted for the development of the Breton language with a perpetual need for attention to assure a visible bilingualism, and there was work to introduce Breton dance in the schools. Such activity made Emglev bro an Oriant a model for other communities.

She equally participated in work to unify the world of non-profit organizations and local institutions (Cap Lorient, Comité de développement du Pays de Lorient, the commission to put bilingual signage in place ...). Ivonig mastered the delicate alchemy to encourage good contacts with all, without exclusion, and to be on all fronts at the same time.

The Morvan brothers (François, Henri, Yvon)

Note: Sadly François Morvan (1923-2012) passed away this May. See Bro Nevez 122, May 2012, for more about him and his brothers who were so influential in the transmission of traditional Breton song.

“It was necessary to find about 200 volunteers for the festival celebrating 40 years of song by the Morvan brothers. 80% of the volunteers would come from the Diwan schools, 20% for the repairs to the chapel of Burthulet. Several dozen musicians came to honor these three brothers, symbols of a very much alive Breton music.”

That was at the beginning of 1998 ... and, that little tract tells us everything – almost!

The life of the Morvan brothers was devoted, after the farm work was done, to the pleasure of singing and animating activity, with the will to transmit faithfully and without concessions the repertoire and style of their

elders, of “the mother’... A pleasure? Certainly, but what did it matter to the farm animals if the brothers came home at 2, 3, or 4 in the morning. At daybreak, they would be their alarm clock.

It was a spirit of giving that animated them. They refused to be considered stars.

The social importance of these times of sharing and conviviality underpinned their singing. This is totally in contrast to a culture of spangles and swagger, totally in contrast to a culture of being “hors-soi,” full of oneself. And don’t forget, especially since their retirement, the multiple performances in retirement homes for the greatest pleasure of people of their own age.

There was a spontaneous and amicable recognition by several generations of pipers/bombard players, singers, and dancers who joyfully participated in their festival celebration.

Everyone knows the importance the fest-noz would have in the cultural life of Brittany, in its evolution throughout the second half of the 20th century. And everyone knows the contribution brought by the Morvan brothers.



Today there are 65 active members of the Order of the Ermine (listed alphabetically)

René Abjean, Job An Irien, Gweltaz Ar Fur, Andrea Ar Gouilh, Yannig Baron, Dan ar Braz, Albert Boché, Yvonne Breilly-Le Calvez, Jean-Christophe Cassard, Yann Choucq, Denise Delouche, Tereza Desbordes, Yann Goasdoué, Viviane Hélias, Jean-Jacques Hénaff, Rhisiart Hincks, Angèle Jacq, Dodik Jégou, Michael Jones, Tugdual Kalvez, Yann-Fañch Kemener, Jean Kerhervé, Marie Kermarec, Goul’han Kervella, Riwanon Kervella, Lois Kuter, Yves Laine, Catherine Latour, Jean-Louis Latour, Donatien Laurent, André Lavanant, Joseph Le Bihan, Raymond Lebossé, Joseph Lec’hvien, Xavier Leclercq, Henri Lecuyer, Jean-Guy Le Floc’h, Pierre Lemoine, Yvonig Le Merdy, Pierre Le Padelec, Pierre Le Rhun, Pierre Loquet, Lena Louarn, Patrick Malrieu, Claudine Mazéas, Rozenn Milin, Pierre-Yves Moign, Rita Morgan Williams, Henri and Yvon Morvan, Jean Ollivro, Mona Ozouf, Gabriele Pescatore, Yann Poilvet, André Pochon, Albert Poulain, Jordi Pujol, Naig Rozmor, Gilles Servat, Claude Sterckx, Alan Stivell-Cochevelou, Pierre Toulhoat, René Vautier, Jean-Bernard Vighetti, Jean-Pierre Vincent, Ewa Waliszewska

Since 1972, an 43 additional Members of the Order of the Ermine have died after their induction:

Roger Abjean (2009), Ivetig An Dred-Kervella (2009), Chanig ar Gall (April 2012), Charlez ar Gall (2010),

Soeur Anna Vari Arzur (2009), Jacques Briard (June 2002), Herri Caouissin (February 2003), André Chéddeville (2010), Vefa de Bellaing (April 1998), Per Denez (2011), Bernard de Parades (March 2000), Jean Fréour (2010), Yvonig Gicquel (2008), Pierre-Roland Giot (January 2002), Glenmor (June 1996), Pierre-Jakez Hélias (August 1995), Ronan Huon (2003), Yvonne Jean-Haffen, (November 1993), Pierre Laurent (November 2002), Robert Le Grand (2008), François Le Quéméner (2009), Pierre Le Treut (February 2004), Jean L'Helgouach (February 2000), Louis Lichou (March 2006), Georges Lombard (2010), Henri Maho (June 2008), Ivona Martin (February 2005), Joseph Martray (2009), Jean Mévellec (1985), Polig Monjarret (December 2003), François Morvan (May 2012), Roparz Omnes (2010), Martial Pézenec (2010), Michel Phlipponneau (2008), René Pleven (January 1993), Henri Queffélec (January 1992), Maryvonne Quéméré-Jaouen (December 2001), Annaig Renault (January 2012), Yves Rocher (2009), Loeiz Ropars (November 2007), Frère Marc Simon (2011?), Albert Trévidic (July 2012), Jean Tricoire (March 1994).



Cultural Institute of Brittany

Besides the annual ceremony to honor new members of the Order of the Ermine, the Cultural Institute of Brittany organizes events year round. During the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient it supported the Université Populaire bretonne, a conference organized by Emglev Bro an Oriant. This session, held at the Morbihan Chamber of Commerce, was called "L'Acadie du Nouveau-Brunswick d'hier et d'aujourd'hui et ses liens avec la Bretagne et les pays celtiques" (Acadia of New Brunswick of yesterday and today, and its links with Brittany and the Celtic countries).

Acadians from Canada were the featured guests at the Lorient festival. With their own flag, some 500,000 French-speaking Acadians are found in Prince Edward Island, Labrador, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

This coming September the Sea and Its People Section of the Cultural Institute of Brittany will organize another study-day to explore the international reach of Bretons: "Le cabotage breton et l'Europe: 1816-1940" (Breton coastal trade and Europe: 1816-1940). For more information about the Cultural Institute and its activities visit the website: www.culture-bretagne.org.



In Memory – Albert Trévidic (1921-2012)

This July Brittany lost a modest but very effective supporter of Breton language and culture. Albert Trévidic remained rooted in the Carhaix area of central western Brittany his entire life. A Breton speaker until the age of seven when plunged into French-only schooling, he loved his native language and the particular ways it was spoken in the Poher (and other areas of Brittany). When in school he was punished, like many other children, when caught speaking Breton. His punishment was to memorize 20 lines of French history – which inspired him to learn as much as possible about Breton history and culture.

As a teacher he introduced students to Breton culture and as a volunteer taught Breton in the high school of Carhaix and the middle school of St. Trémeur, being certain to note all the specific traits of the Poher Breton. A life-long learner, he obtained a Diploma of Celtic Studies at the age of 52. He worked in many ways to promote Breton all his life.

He was passionate about gouren, the unique Breton style of wrestling which he practiced and then promoted for many years as General Secretary of FALSAB (Fédération des Amis des Luttes et Sports Athlétiques Bretons).

His work in the area of traditional music and dance also had a strong influence. He collected traditional songs and stories for many years starting in the 1950s – passing his collection of recordings and transcriptions to the Dastum archives. He was at the origin in 1946 of the Kelc'h Keltieg Ahes, the Celtic Circle of Carhaix, which he directed for over 20 years, and also helped found the bagad called the Cheminots de Carhaix in 1948. In 1963 he became president of the Amicale des festoù-noz des Montagnes which would be an important organization in fostering the renaissance of the fest-noz in Brittany. (See below for more about this). In recognition of all of this work for Brittany, Albert Trévidic was inducted into the Order of the Ermine in 1990.

I had the good fortune to meet Albert during a year-long stay in Brittany 1978-79 to do research for my doctoral thesis on Breton identity and music. At that time I was not well aware of the wealth of information I could have gleaned from Albert and his wife Maï (if I had just known more!), but I did have the opportunity to meet with them and sit in on some Breton conversations he would have with a friend of mine who was working to perfect his speaking abilities. While way above my pitiful level of Breton, those conversations gave me an appreciation of the rich variations within the Breton language. Living just outside of Carhaix for a period of time, I also had the opportunity to have a few cups of coffee with Albert on

the occasion of borrowing and returning a shovel to work on a little garden.

I would maintain a correspondence with Albert and Mai long after my departure in 1979. Parkinson's disease robbed Albert of his ability to write but since 2004 I kept up an exchange of notes via his daughter Gwénola who always passed along a note of appreciation from Albert for the copies of Bro Nevez I sent to him. These were passed along to his grandson Mikäel who was studying English at the University of Nottingham in England. Several months after celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in 2004, Mai would pass away (see Bro Nevez 91, August 2004 for a note about her work for Breton culture).

When I had returned to Indiana University after my year of research, I sent Albert (and many others) a detailed outline of my plans for a dissertation on Breton identity and its expression in music and language use. He examined this carefully and sent me a dozen pages of notes, commenting on pretty much every area I proposed to cover, from politics to the economy and, of course, music and language. Clearly he had an in-depth knowledge of all areas of Breton life as well as culture. His opening comment on definitions was as follows:

The centralizing French Jacobins and even the everyday Frenchman, knowingly or not, confuses the words State and Nation. France is a State, but not a Nation. And with other peoples of the Hexagone, we have a French Citizenship by the force of things, but not [French] nationality....

Because of his important role in the renaissance of the fest-noz, it seems appropriate to include a translation of some of his comments from 1979 – not new revelations, but interesting comments from the perspective of a pioneer in the work to encourage a rebirth of Breton music and dance.

Loeiz Ropars was at the origin of the renaissance of the festoù-noz, and very soon L'Amicale des Festoù-noz des Montagnes and Les Amicales laïques des écoles rurales des Côtes du Nord undertook the organization of festoù-noz using microphones, which by chance did not please Loeiz Ropars. During some 10 years (1957 to 1967) the fest noz for the most part remained limited to the Haute Cornouaille. In the beginning they were associated with contests for songs and stories where tobacco for men and handkerchiefs for women were distributed as prizes. And for contests of Baz-you'd [a traditional Breton game] a cock or tobacco (sometimes a ram) were prizes.

The festoù-noz of the first period (1957-1962) were organized mostly by Celtic Circles and had no goal of making money (except for Les Amicales Laïques des Côtes-du-Nord who sought some profit). Then after the

"creux de vague" in about 1966-67 thanks to Alan Stivell, they became very fashionable, and the most diverse organizations – some even anti-Breton – saw in them the means to fill their coffers and make a big event.

The fest noz should be limited to dances of the territory where it takes place so that older people can participate in as many dances as they want. The bal breton includes a variety of dances from all of Breton folklore, or at least the best known ones. Certain organizing committees do a workshop to teach Breton dance for tourists so they can participate in a bal breton which is often incorrectly called a fest-noz.

Albert Trevidic was a learned man, who took an interest in all aspects of Breton culture. He was also a generous man who freely shared his knowledge and encouraged young people to become engaged and passionate about the beauty of the Breton language and culture.

Brittany Loses Three Voices

Jean Le Meut (1925-2012)

Born in Ploemel (7 kilometers from both the towns of Auray and Carnac) Jean Le Meut was a farmer who was just 14 when World War II broke out. While opportunities were rarer during the war to make music he would learn songs from his family and from neighbors at weddings, family celebrations or agricultural gatherings like hog butchering. After the war a disdain for the Breton language and interest in French song and "new things" would put a damper on the performance of traditional song in the Breton language, but it would persist and make a come-back in the Vannetais region in the late sixties and early 70s, as it did throughout Brittany. In the 1970s Jean Le Meut would sing with the group Trouzerion – a capella song for dance, marches, and melodies performed in Breton by an inter-generational group of men of the Vannetais region. Later he would sing with Kanerion Pleuigner, another chorus of men with a repertoire of traditional song in Vannetais Breton. His large repertoire of traditional song and love for the Breton language would be passed down to his four sons.

He recorded two solo CDs: *Pe yuvankiz kuhet /La Jeunesse cachée* (Keltia Musique KM44, 1994) and *Voix de Bretagne – Chants du Pays Vannetais* (Coop Breizh CD 993, 2006) on which he is joined by three of his sons.

Michel Tonnerre (1949-2012)

Of a quite different style, Michel Tonnerre made his mark with a maritime repertoire. Following in the tradition of his family's link to the sea, he entered

school to enter a maritime career but failed exams. A musical pastime with friends became a vocation and in the 1970s the band Djiboudjep would tour festivals and perform concerts widely in Brittany. He worked other jobs on and off and after a business failure set off on the sea to explore the world. Back in Lorient in 1990, his travels would be incorporated into his repertoire as a singer-songwriter. His song texts would cover all aspects of maritime life at sea and in the ports. His distinctive voice, rock music accompaniment, and intelligent and edgy song texts, would make him stand out in the genre of "maritime music" where all too often easy-listening unimaginative arrangements of sea shanties prevail.

The three most recent of his nine albums are:

Quinze marins. Keltia Musique KMCD 185, 2007

C'est la mer. Arthur Music AM01, 2008

Ar mor. Coop Breish / Les arts en portée productions, 2012.

Tomaz Boucherifi-Kadiou

Tomaz Boucherifi-Kadiou was still a young man with years of music to compose. Breton by his mother and Algerian/Berber by his father who were both musical, Tomaz discovered the Breton language when he was seven and took pride in his Breton heritage. As a high school student he was most interested in heavy metal music and guitar but would be drawn to Celtic music – inspired by recordings of Alan Stivell. He taught himself both music and the Breton language and formed the group TornadoD in 1998. Based in Paris this group would perform frequently at Ty Jos and tour in Brittany and overseas. They would perform in Louisiana and at the Potomac Celtic Festival in Virginia in 2003 when the group included Cécile Korbel, Stephen Clark Swartz, Philippe Escrivant and John Lang. While they toned down the electric beat a bit for the more acoustic expectations of the Potomac Festival, they brought a unique sound and were well received. I remember well meeting them at this festival and enjoyed the enthusiasm they brought to this festival that has rarely had the opportunity to welcome Breton musicians. It was clear that Tomaz was proud of his Breton inheritance and pleased to be able to share that with new audiences.

The TornadoD recordings include a mix of arrangements of traditional Breton and Irish music, with a bit of Cajun, and compositions by Tomaz. Their first CD was *An Douar hagus an speir* recorded in 2004. This would be followed by *Orin* in 2005 and remastered in 2007, and *Ys*, a double album released in 2011.



The Bagad

The following presentation of the bagad is my translation of a note posted by Patrick Malrieu on the Cultural Institute of Brittany's website in the "Clés de la culture bretonne" ("Keys to Breton culture") section.

In the eyes of many, the bagpipes are without doubt the most emblematic instrument of Brittany. We speak here of the large Scottish bagpipes with three drones. Paradoxically, this is an instrument of recent introduction to Brittany.

The first bagpipe (cornemuse) was in fact that used by Jan Guillerm of Belle-Isle-en-Terre (end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century) which one can see on old post cards in the company of a clarinet and drum. Then starting in the 1920s the piping experience would draw nearer to our times with Marcel Lebouc, Marcel Boulig and especially at the end of the 1920s with Hervé Le Menn and Gildas Jaffrenou. But it was always played solo or in trio at maximum.

True innovation came from Hervé Le Menn who created the Kenvreuriez ar viniaouerien (KAV) in 1932 in Paris where bagpipes, bombardas and drums were put together in a pipe-band style ensemble. Participating at that time with this association was Dorig Le Voyer who would become a co-founder of the Bodadeg ar Sonerion (BAS) with Polig Monjarret.

It was in 1943 that this new association would take off – this time in Brittany. Starting at the end of the 1940s the bagads would multiply to become a real youth movement and to train thousands of musicians.

Very quickly the establishment of bagad contests would allow for a profitable rivalry to pull the technical level of these ensemble upwards. A new facet of Breton music was in the process of being born.

The bagad was limited in its first years to music for parades, but progressively, with technical skills strengthening, concert formats would be developed especially in the past twenty years. This could be for the bagad on its own or for the bagad in association with a variety of other means of expression: musical groups with various electrical instruments, orchestras, naval bands, singers, etc.

Also on the same musical level, the bagads have shown through the years a strong creativity, and along with a traditional or traditionally inspired repertoire, they would incorporate other musics and styles such as jazz, world musics, musics from the other Celtic countries, etc.

Today there are some 10,000 musicians found in the bagads which have for a long time enlivened the

Breton festivals and become appreciated – sometimes on an international level – for many concert performances. The creation of music schools and the production of recordings have also been a part of it all, as has the international recognition. Thus the Bigouden bagad, Cap Caval, won the world pipe band championship in 2008.

Accentuated by the showcase provided by the Lorient Inter-Celtic festival the success of this formation has extended to other countries. Thus you see now the equivalent in Galicia with bands of gaitas, and Lorient hosted the visit of a Palestinian bagad.

Today there are a number of competitions for bagads ranked in several levels held each year in Brittany. For the top level there are two competitions with the one held in August at the Lorient Inter-Celtic Festival as the culminating event. The year the rankings for level 1 champions were as follows:



- Bagad Kemper (Quimper)
- Bagad Cap Caval (Plomeur)
- Bagad Alre (Auray)
- Bagad Brieg (Briec)
- Bagad Meilhoù Glaz (Moulin Vert, Quimper)
- Bagad Roñsed Mor (Locoal Mendon)
- Kerlenn Pondi (Pontivy)
- Bagad Er Melinerion (Vannes)
- Bagad Penhars (Penhars, Quimper)
- Bagad Bro Kemperle (Quimperlé)
- Sonerien Bro Dreger (Perros-Guirec)
- Bagad Quic en Groigne (Saint Malo)
- Bagad Beuzec Ar C'hap (Beuzec Cap Sizun)
- Sonerien An Oriant (Lorient)

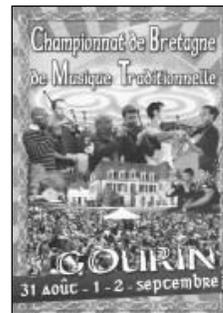


The Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient (www.festival-interceltique.com)

The following statistics were pulled from a press release on the Agence Bretagne presse website. (www.agencebretagnepresse.com). Keep an eye on this website for lots of news about what's going on in Brittany, including video clips of conferences and musical performances.

This year's 42nd Festival Interceltique de Lorient took place from August 3 to 14 and attracted an estimated 650,000 visitors. Acadia was the guest of honor and nearly 150 performers represented that tradition and received some 10,000 visitors in the special staging area set up for them.

As always this festival includes a spectacular line-up of Breton and Celtic performers, including several concerts presenting new productions. The honored country for 2013 will be Asturias who will bring their *bandas de gaitas*, dancers, unique foods and cider!



Championship of Sonneurs in Gourin

As this issue of Bro Nevez is being completed so too the annual championship for paired players of the biniou (koz and braz) and bombarde is winding up (August 31, September 1 & 2). Held since 1956 this contest is both a celebration and true test

for the hundreds of sonneurs of Brittany. Check out the website www.championnat.des.sonneurs-gourin.over-blog.com to get this year's results and learn about the history of this very important Breton musical event.



Breton Festivals Year-Round

To find out more about the many many festivals found throughout

Brittany all year round check out the website for Goueliou Breizh: gouelioubreizh.com



Heard of, but not heard – new CDs from Brittany

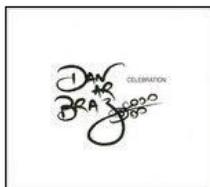
Notes for the following quick presentations were gleaned from various websites as well as Ar Men magazine (no. 188, May-June 2012, and no. 189, July-August 2012).



Ampouilh. *Keit ha ma Pado*.

This is the second CD by this group mostly based in central Brittany who are well known at festoù-noz throughout Brittany. With a mix of bombard, accordion,

sax and guitars, this new CD includes dance music for the gavotte, plinn, ronde de Saint-Vincent, and Rode do Loudéac, and a waltz and Circassien Circle.



Dan ar Braz. Celebration. L'Oz Production.
Dan ar Braz has been on the Breton music scene for many years and is a master of acoustic and electric guitar. This CD includes 13 new selections with song and instrumentals – his own compositions or others. He is accompanied by Patrick Léron on keyboard, Ronan Le Bars (flutes and bagpipes), the Bagad Kemper, and the voices of Clarisse Lavannant and Morwenn Le Normand.



Bagad de Lann-Bihoué. Degemer mat, bienvenue. EMI 509996023382-0.

Celebrating 60 years of performance this naval band has become the first and only “professional” bagad. The end of conscription which had introduced a constantly changing group of recruits to the bagad has meant that there is now a steady presence of musicians. This CD includes the typically innovative arrangements of traditional dances and melodies as well as some less typical renditions (such as Coldplay’s “Every teardrop is a waterfall”). The bagad is joined by a number of guest artists such as Galician piper Carlos Nuñez.



Bagad Men ha Tan & Giz'kalon. Swing Kalon evit dañs. Coop Breizh.

Pierrick Tanguy presents his composition “Swing Kalon” with its jazzy New Orleans sound and the musicians of the ensemble “Evit-dañs” take on a big-band sound set to a Breton beat. Brass are mixed with bombard and bluesy vocals, and the exuberant costumes as well as movement of the dancers of Giz'kalon bring a great deal of energy to this unusual combination of rhythms and instruments.



Jean Baron and Christian Anneix. Eñvor – Hommage Théo Le Maguet. Keltia Musique KMCD 542.

This CD pays tribute to Vannetais singer and bombard player Théo Le Maguet (1901-1980) who was active in the Breton music scene in Paris where Bretons have had a very active emigrant population. This CD focuses on his repertoire performed by two of Brittany’s best known sonneurs Baron and Anneix. They have recorded several other CDs focused on particular performers, and these are valuable for those with an interest in the history of piping in Brittany as

well as for those who love the paired biniou and bombard.



Sylvain Barou. Sylvain Barou. Kerne Productions AR01.
Wooden flute player Sylvain Barou has been part of a number of groups, but this is his first solo CD. He covers an international range with music from the

Balkans, Brittany and other Celtic lands. He is accompanied here by a number of top Breton musicians. The reviewer of this new CD places him in the ranks of Matt Molloy and Jean-Michel Veillon for his mastery of Irish music especially.



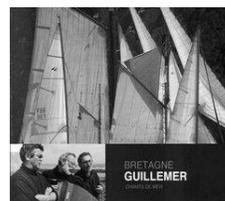
Dominig Bouchaud, Yann Honoré. L'Arbre Noir. Keltiqu Musique KMCD 541.

Dominig Bouchaud has been a champion of the Celtic harp for over 30 years as a teacher and performer. And Yann Honoré on fretless bass guitar is no stranger to the Breton music scene. This CD includes arrangements of Celtic musics (including from the Isle of Man) as well as compositions. They are joined by singers Anne Auffret and Brigitte Kloareg for Breton and Welsh texts.



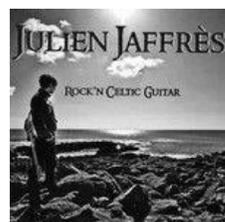
Choeurs d'Hommes de Pontivy. 3 Siècles de chants sacrés en Bretagne. Coop Breizh.

A CD and DVD featuring the men’s choir of Pontivy with 19 cantiques from the Vannes region. The DVD presents four churches: Pontivy, Kenascleden, Quelven (Guern), and Sainte Anne d’Auray.



Guillemer. Bretagne, Chants de Mer. Coop Breizh.

This CD collects songs (in French) of a maritime theme by Hervé Guillemer set to traditional Breton melodies as well as other styles of music.



Julien Jaffrès. Rock'n Celtic Guitar. Coop Breizh.

As the title tells you, this CD features a guitar rock style. Jaffrès presents 13 titles – songs in Breton, French, and English and dance tunes – most of them his own compositions. These are inspired by the traditions of Brittany and its Celtic neighbors.



Frères Mahévas. Frères Mahévas. Association Soutien à Joachim FRMAH 91. Christophe and Jean-Michel Mahévas pair on biniou braz (Scottish style bagpipes) and bombard in a live concert and

fest-noz performance held to raise funds for Joachim Mahévas who was left with severe disabilities after a car accident. While they are the featured artists on this CD they are joined by other musicians including singers André Tanguy and Louise Ebrel as well as biniou-bombard pairs.



Manécanterie Saint-Joseph, Na n'eus ket en Breizh – Hommage a Arthur Goasdoué. Coop Breizh Arthur Goasdoué was choral director of the Manécanterie of Saint-Joseph in Lannion from 1932 to 1963. This CD pays homage to his work as a

composer and arranger of traditional Breton cantiques and ballads – performed here by the choir he directed for so many years.



Violaine Mayor. Gens Cambrina, Kenvroiz. Coop Breizh Violaine Mayor is a master of metal strung harps and the very early method of playing these Celtic harps. She sings and plays a metal strung harp and is joined

on this CD by Joel Herrou on flute, fiddle, bodhran and vocals, and by children Mikaël and Jean Herou on harp and songs. Included are some traditional Breton songs as well as Mayor's own compositions, but featured are selections from the Ap Huw-Penllyn and Kentigern manuscripts to take you back to medieval times when this type of harp was much used.



Jacky Molard Quartet. Suites. Innacor Records. INNA 11213. This quartet includes Jacky Molard on fiddle, Yannick Jory on saxophones, Hélène Labarrière on bass fiddle and Janick Martin on button accordion. The six

themes explored in their music include Balkan dance, jazz, and melodies from the Scottish Hebrides. While the complex variation on a theme of the Scottish piboch is normally associated with Scottish Highland bagpipes, here the fiddle takes on this form.



Alain Pennec. Fabulations Sonores. Coop Breizh This CD includes a variety of arrangements and new compositions (especially) rooted in traditions of Brittany, Galicia,

Ireland ... and the creative mind of Alain Pennec. Master of button accordion and flute, Pennec brings to this recording a solid line-up with Soig Siberil (guitar), Laurent Hilairet (piano), Sylvain Fabre (percussions) and Rory Campbell (bodhran).



Plantec. Awen. Coop Breizh A well known and loved band on the fest-noz scene, this latest CD includes a variety of dances set to an electronic beat. The group includes Odran and Yannick Plantec (bombard and guitars) and Gabriel N'Dombi with “machines.”

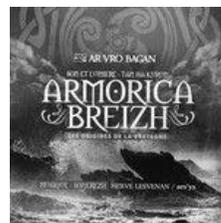


Jean-Luc Roudaut. De Kerangoff et d'ailleurs. Coop Breizh. Singer Jean-Luc Roudaut worked with peple from the Kerangoff section of Brest to put together a double-CD featuring the songs composed by people 3 to 93

describing the life of their neighborhood. Roudaut set these to music of various styles – rock, ballads, and Breton rhythms.



Sonerien Du. Seizh!! Coop Breizh. This famous Breton band known for its energetic dance and merger of acoustic and electric instruments just celebrated its 40th anniversary. Seizh = seven musicians now part of the group which has produced over 20 albums.



Strollad ar Vro Bagan. Armorica Breizh – Les origines de la Bretagne. Coop Breizh. This CD is the “sound track” for a theater production by the Breton language troupe Strollad ar Vro Bagan. This is not opera or a

broadway musical, but a unique and innovative use of Breton music to support theater – not the first big production by this theater troupe. Hervé Lesvenan directs choral and instrumental work. Besides solo and choral voices you find uilleann pipes, tine whistles, percussion, harp, a string quartet and a brass quintet. This would certainly be most powerful seen live, but the music alone tells a compelling story.



Michel Tonnerre. Ar mor. Les arts en porté. The latest, and sadly the last, CD from this master of maritime themes. With his distinctive gravelly voice and range of themes, Tonnerre explores world

voyages and life in the port. His strong texts are accompanied by with rock, blues, and slower melodies. He is supported by a strong band of musicians and the group Gabiers d'Artimon on choruses.



Wipidoup. *Kailh a gorrion.*
Bemol Productions. Bemo047.
This is the third CD by this trio composed of singer Gildas Le Buhé, accordion player Régis Huiban, and bass player Pierre Tardivel. They are joined here by

guitarist Philippe Goaguen. Central is the singing of Le Buhé for slow airs and dances of the Morbihan. He is at ease with the Breton of the Vannetais region and this group has an innovative sound well rooted in the rhythms of this area of Brittany.



Travels in Brittany – 65 Years Ago

While normally I try to choose a travel account that places us 100 or more years ago in Brittany, it seemed fitting to find something from the period around World War II to tie into the earlier book review. Accurate or not, the following are the impressions of Mollie Panter-Downes, for the New Yorker Magazine of 1947.

“Letter from Brittany,” by Mollie Panter-Downes. The New Yorker, Vol. 23, no. 35, October 18, 1947

September. Motoring through the Normandy countryside on the way to Brittany, the visitor is apt to get the feeling that in this part of France the war ended only yesterday. Like crude memoranda scribbled on the margins of a lovely landscape, rusting tanks and guns are still perched among the orchards and the pastures. The names on the signposts that point down the lanes between the peaceful fields of grain haunt one with their familiarity until one places them in the less peaceful context of battle communiqués. Here and there at the side of the road, unexploded American bombs have been fenced off with flimsy arrangements of sticks and white tape, to keep people from tripping over them in the dark. Picnic parties are frequently rattled by fading notices in English nailed to poplars and announcing “Ground free of mines up to trees.”

Visitors from England, where the bomb damage has been tidied up for so long that it seems to have lost all connection with violence and terror, are always shaken when they see for the first time a town that has been torn apart by the fighting and left so sprawled out that a sense of recent catastrophe continues to hang in the air. At Rouen, where foreigners who have landed at Le Havre with their cars usually call to collect their petrol

vouchers from the authorities (the French give a liberal allowance of gasoline to visitors, if not to their own people), the waterfront is a flat mass of dusty ruins and shell-pitted ground, across which a smart gendarme briskly waves the traffic on its jolting way. A beneficent result of the destruction is that it has cleared a magnificent view of the beautiful verdigris-green spire of the cathedral, which, though groggy, is still erect. Caen and, even more manifestly, St. Lô are ghost towns. Wrecked churches stand like scarecrows holding out their arms over the wilderness of rubble and tall grass, through which it is odd to see a stout matron with a shopping basket placidly picking her way.

The vigor of life in these melancholy surroundings is, indeed, the only heartening aspect of the scene. In the clusters of brown and yellow temporary wooden buildings that have sprung up in many ruined towns, shopkeepers have set up again, under newly painted signs – gallant little indications of civilized normality, such as “Pâtisserie” and “Modes” and “Coiffeur,” in the middle of the uncivilized mess. There is a sort of frontier-town atmosphere about these mushroom settlements, where the country folks’ horses and high, covered carts stand hitched to doorposts and where you can step into a shop from the potholed street and buy yourself incongruous refinements like bedside lamps and Houbigant Eau de Toilette.

To get from place to place in the seriously damaged area requires quite a bit of advance staff work. All too often, a telegram to engage rooms at a hotel you have known in the past is answered by the post office with the laconic word, “Détruit.” At other times, you are left to discover the sad answer yourself when you turn up late at night and there is no sleeping place within fifty kilometers.

In Finistère, the northwestern corner of Brittany, it is pleasant to find oneself again among towns that at least look as though nothing had happened. Other parts of Brittany, however – the ports of Brest and St. Malo, and many villages, among them the beautiful little walled town of Fougères – have been distressingly smashed up. The most evident signs of recent events in many places are the heavily fortified beaches where the Germans trained troops in invasion exercises, and later prepared to ward off Allied landings instead. Gun emplacements, bristling among the sand dunes and the pines, are frequently used by the local fishermen as convenient objects over which to drape their aquamarine and sapphire-blue nets to dry in the sun.

This summer, the numerous hotels at Beg-Meil, Concarneau, Pont-Aven (Gauguin painted a great deal here and some of his pictures were among the loot swiped by the Nazis from the neighborhood), and the rest of the little resorts had a record season, for both fine weather and visitors. Not only foreigners but the

French descended on them in larger numbers than ever before. The hotel proprietors were sorely oppressed in their efforts to cope with the rush because the Germans had invariably removed the linen and the contents of the wine cellars, and even, in some instances, had wrecked the premises, just for fun, before pulling out. They left one or two especially nasty souvenirs. In Beg-Meil, a tiny collection of summer villas and hotels across the bay from the sardine port of Concarneau, bathers walk down to the shore past a wall on which there is a plaque announcing that at this spot two Beg-Meil men “fell beneath the German bullets.” The village, prematurely rejoicing over the Liberation, had run up a French flag a few hours too soon and, as a consequence, got into a scrap with a German garrison. The German commandant picked out two men – the owner of the biggest house on the shore and the headwaiter at the principal hotel – and had them shot as a farewell gesture.

The wonderful coifs of the Breton women are back in their full splendor after their disappearance during the war, when the starch needed for laundering them was unobtainable. The restless younger generation do not wear them as much as their mothers and grandmothers do, because getting them up in their snowy crispness is such a long and finicky job. The marvelously fine pleating of the spreading collar traditional in one district, for instance, is achieved by patiently goffering each fold over a couple of straws. The girls who take the trouble to keep the old custom look enchanting. In Quimper, the coifs are comically shaped like tall chimney pots; when it rains, the more modern ladies fish small cellophane covers out of their pockets and pop them over their headgear. The controversy over longer skirts, incidentally, would not make talk here, where the local matrons bowl along on bicycles, haul buckets of water, or skip nimbly over the rocks by the sea clad in voluminous skirts that even Christian Dior might think a trifle excessive.

The best occasions to see all the various caps, which, to residents identify their wearers as coming from Pont-Aven or Carnac, or wherever, are the *pardons*, jolly turnouts combining a religious festival with a fair. The Germans discouraged *pardons* during the Occupation, as they did all other large gatherings, but this summer the festivals got going full blast again. While the devout are in church, sitting in creaking rows of starched linen and black velvet, the fair, outside the very doors, never lets up its tremendous din, apparently without upsetting the worshipers’ devotions. The major attractions are the blaring merry-go-rounds, whose steeds are often highly varnished pink pigs, and the many sideshows, including strength-testing apparatus that explodes a charge of gunpowder when the Breton lads, in their Sunday hats of velvet with silver buckles, swing the hammer hard enough.

The food situation in the western part of Brittany is, from all accounts, rather better than it is in other sections of France, because of the abundance of fish, which can be bought on the quays, where they hop out of the nets into one’s basket, fantastically spotted with silver, bronze, and bright gold. Recently, there has been plenty of meat, too, since the severe drought of the last months has forced farmers to kill off their beasts ahead of time. There is practically no milk and very little sugar, but the patisseries seem well stocked with curious sweetmeats, prettily wrapped in tinfoil and tasting of nothing much. Visitors who were not warned to bring their coffee with them suffer from the *café national*, a terrible beverage resembling the real thing only in color. Everyone suffers from the corn bread, which is apt to derange the stomach. The French, naturally, feel a trifle resentful over their lack of coffee, which is one of the things that the English, who don’t drink it much and can’t make it properly anyway, can buy at home unrationed. Another irritant is the absence of the beautiful local cheeses, which are reserved for export. English visitors, to whom “for export only” is a depressingly familiar phrase, are disappointed but resigned when they find that the only examples to be seen of the famous pottery made in Quimper are now in the Faïence Museum. Frequent reference is made by the French, in tones of no particular satisfaction, to the fact that quite a few of their coveted luxuries are going to their neighbor Belgium.

These shortages do not seem to bother the brown and sturdy town children who are now winding up their holidays in the *colonies de vacances* along the coast. Many of them seem to be embroiled in some sort of youth movement. Troops of little boys and girls are often seen in the villages waving flags and shrilly squeaking patriotic airs as they march along – mostly, one is relieved to notice, out of step.

Bretons like to remember their ties with their Celtic ancestors who remained across the Channel. A party of Cornish wrestlers not long ago visited the village of Plouay, overthrew all the local champions, and were fêted with wine and spanking kisses by their hospitable distant kinsmen. The traditional Breton dances are footed to the squeal of velvet bagpipes that look even odder than the Scottish instrument but sound similar. One midsummer evening, in the cobbled square of Locronan, a group of young people in Breton dress danced in the twilight to the pipes and the *bombarde* (a sort of trumpet) and then went into the tiny inn to drink an aperitif with some visitors from England who happened to be dining there. At the end of the party, one of the young men stood up, clasping his bagpipes, and proposed a toast to the strengthening bonds between *La Belle Bretagne* and *La Belle Écosse*. The visitors – an Irishwoman, an Australian, and two or three Londoners – drank the toast as enthusiastically as though their hearts had never left the Highlands.

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