

# BRO NEVEZ

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



Photo by Fañch Broudic

May 29 demonstration for Breton and regional languages in Guingamp

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 158

June 2021

# Bro Nevez 158

June 2021

ISSN 0895 3074

## EDITOR'S ADDRESS & E-MAIL

Lois Kuter, Editor  
Bro Nevez  
605 Montgomery Road  
Ambler, PA 19002 U.S.A.

215 886-6361  
loiskuter@verizon.net

U.S. ICDBL website: [www.icdbl.org](http://www.icdbl.org)

The U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL) was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. Bro Nevez ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly. Contributions, letters to the editor, corrections, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor.

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows us to mail print copies. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above.

**This newsletter can be sent as a PDF file attached to an e-mail instead of the print version. Just let the Editor know how you would like to receive it.** The e-mail version is much more colorful than the photocopied print copy!

Back issues of Bro Nevez can be found on the U.S. ICDBL website

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



## Editor's Note

Thanks to cost-cutting measures implemented in the past year, the U.S. Postal Service has become increasingly less reliable, and more expensive. Thus, an "express" package that would normally be delivered in two to three days can take ten or more days to reach its destination. First class letters may arrive within a few days, but sometimes are inexplicably delayed for weeks on end.

So, for those receiving *Bro Nevez* by "snail mail" I have noted on the Contents page the date it is mailed. It is sent by First Class mail. I would appreciate feedback if your issue arrives after weeks of travel to you. And if you are having difficulties in getting timely delivery of mail, consider switching to getting *Bro Nevez* as a PDF file by e-mail (where images are in color instead of black and white).

Lois Kuter – loiskuter@verizon.net



## There's good news and there's bad news for the Breton language

### The "Molac law" on the protection and promotion of regional languages

As reported in *Bro Nevez* 157 (March 2021) Breton Deputy Paul Molac with other Deputies of the French National Assembly drafted a law on the protection and promotion of the regional languages of France. The law was passed by the French Senate on December 10, 2020, and considered for a second time by the National Assembly on April 8, 2021. Referred to as the "Molac law" the text passed in the Assembly by a vote of 247 for, 76 against, and 19 abstentions. The next step would be to have the law officially enacted before the end of April.

This victory for regional languages was celebrated by Bretons who recognized the boost it could give to Breton language education especially. But on April 22 on the cusp of the law being enacted, the required 60 Deputies of the National Assembly appealed to the Constitutional Council of France to review the constitutionality of the law. The Council could thus block the law in its entirety or just some parts of it they felt to be in conflict with the French Constitution.

On May 21 the Constitutional Council rendered its decision. There were three "trouble" areas in the law. The first was the "school fee" payment to be made by

the community of residence of a student to the school in a different community which offered regional language teaching (bilingual or Diwan style immersion) that was not available in the students' home town. It was decided that this was not in conflict with the Constitution.

However, the introduction of immersive learning (teaching mainly through the medium of a regional language during a large part of the school day) in public schools was shot down as against the constitution. Public schools currently can create bilingual programs – half of the time in French and half in a regional language – but schools like Diwan will remain outside the public system and thus limited in resources. There is concern in other parts of France as well where immersive style teaching is being successfully done that their schools will be considered “illegal.”

The third “problem” area in the Molac law was the authorization of diacritical marks used in regional languages, but not in French, for civic acts of the state. This is the famous case of the tilde used in the name Fañch not being accepted for official documents for a child when parents registered him at this birth (Fañch is now four years old). And diacritical marks such as ò used in Creole and Occitan, or ì used in Corsican and Alsatian are also not officially acceptable for names.

Despite the fact that the French Constitution was revised in 2008 to include the text “the regional languages are part of the patrimony of France,” Article 2 of the Constitution which states “the language of the Republic is French” continues to be used to block advances for regional languages.

While advancing some good support for the expansion of regional languages in the schools and public life, the Constitutional Council's rejection of immersive teaching for the public school system and rejection of diacritical marks used in a number of the regional languages of France, but not in French, greatly weakens to impact of the Molac law. On May 23 the Molac Law was published in the *Journal Officiel* minus the two offending articles, ending any further discussion in the French Parliament to counter the decision of the Constitutional Council.

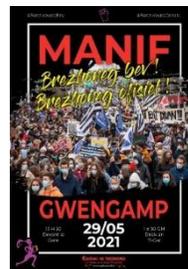
Next step? The only way forward for true advances may be modification (elimination) of Article 2 of the Constitution so it cannot be weaponized to sabotage the survival of regional languages.



Photo by Fañch Broudic

## Bretons hit the streets on March 13 in Support of the teaching of Breton and Gallo

Nearly 5,000 Bretons rallied in Quimper in March to call for advances in the teaching of Breton and Gallo, including the renewal of a State-Region contract on the teaching of regional languages which would enable this. The associations Ti ar Vro Kemper, Diwan, Div Yezh Breizh, Divaskell, Kelennomp and Kevre Breizh presented ten propositions for the contract which would provide more access to Breton classes and improve teacher training. Teachers of Gallo also put forth proposals to support that language. While the Regional Council of Brittany is ready to move forward on a new and more ambitious contract, the National Ministry of Education has blocked progress on this.

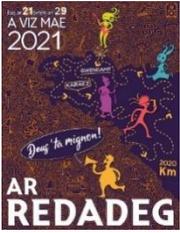


## Supporters of Regional Languages hit the Streets on May 29

On Saturday June 29 demonstrations were held throughout France in support of regional languages. The Breton gathering of 10,000 plus in Guingamp coincided with the arrival of the final stages of the Ar Redadeg relay run (see below) so the demonstration was both a celebration of the persistence of the Breton language and its place in Diwan, public and Catholic schools as well as an expression of anger and outrage at the decision of the Constitutional Council that immersion education was contradictory to the French Constitution.



Rallies were also held in other area where the Basque turn-out in Bayonne was also estimated to be 10,000. Alsacians converged on Comar, Catalans in Perpignan, Corsicans in Bastia and there were four different sites in Occitania. Besides a display of flags and posters, the demonstrations included song and dance for participants of all ages.



## Ar Redadeg Run for the Breton Language

The Ar Redadeg relay run was started in 2008 modeled on similar fund-raising runs by the Catalans, Basques, Galicians (Spain), Welsh, and Irish for their languages and cultures. In Brittany it takes place every two years, but 2020 was delayed to this year due to the Covid pandemic.

For 2021 the run covered 2,020 kilometers crossing through 325 communities (small towns as well as big cities) in all five departments of Brittany. The run started May 21 in Carhaix and arrived in Guingamp on May 29 after nine days of running by some 10,000 participants, assisted by some 600 volunteers. Purchase of kilometers raises funding for Diwan as well as other projects in support of the Breton language. As the runners pass through Brittany they are greeted with music and mini-festivals. A baton carrying a message in Breton is passed to different runners at each kilometer and the message was revealed at the final ceremony in Guingamp.

The 2020-21 Redadeg raised some 130,000 euros which were granted to the following organizations and projects:

Ti ar vro Landerne – Mets du breton dans les vacances – 3,000 euros  
Support for a vacation center in Breton for children 4 to 12.

Herborescene – De plante en plante – 3,000 euros  
A project to collect and teach about plant names and knowledge of plants in Breton.

RAOK – Breton et communication en Kreiz-Breizh – 4,000 euros  
Creation of a kit to present the Breton language in all aspects of use in Central Brittany.

Morzhol Prod – Films – 5,000 euros  
Team working to create audiovisual materials in Breton

Mignoned ar Brezhoneg – Stal.bzh, du site au réseau – 10,000 euros  
Support of internet site and projects to foster the use of Breton in commercial enterprises.

Radio Kreizh Breizh – Gerioù ar vuhez, les mots de la vie – 10,000 euros  
Support of a project to make 600 radio emissions on Breton words and expressions accessible online.

Bannoù-Heol – Ar Marc'h Dall / Le Cheval Aveugle – 10,000 euros  
Project to recreate the 1979 composition “Ar Marc'h Dall” with orchestra, choir and soloists for new performances.

Radio Kerne – Une radio 100% en breton à Nantes – 15,000 euros  
Support for a Breton language radio station established in Nantes

The Diwan Schools – 65,000 euros  
Diwan was the main focus for the Ar Redadeg since its beginning and receives half of the funds raised.

## Three Losses for the Breton Language

### Diarmuid Ó Néill (1962-2021)

Also using the name Jeffrey O'Neill, Diarmuid Ó Néill was born in Toronto to Irish immigrants and grew up in that city and nearby Pickering. He died this May 15 of cancer at the very young age of 59. With a degree in Business Administration he was employed with Air Canada, but his true passion was research of the Celtic languages and history.

Diarmuid published a number of articles on Celtic languages for a number of different journals. When I first started corresponding with him in 1993 he was focused on the Irish language and was writing letters of protest to Irish politicians and the media in Ireland. He recognized that Breton, like Irish, was threatened and he joined the U.S. ICDBL.

With the death of the head of the Canadian branch of the ICDBL, Yann Plunier, in 1997, Diarmuid began work on reviving that branch. He noted that he decided to use Jeffrey Dermot O'Neill for the ICDBL because it “sounds more North American.” The Canadian branch was relaunched in January 1998, and a newsletter called “Brittany” was published from 1998 to 2001. Ranging from 25 to sometimes over 50 pages, this spiral-bound publication included original contributions as well as reprints of articles about all the Celtic counties in the six Celtic languages.

In 1999 Diarmuid began a study of the six Celtic languages based on Joshua Fishman's Reversing Language Shift model. This involved research on the state of each of the languages as well as proposals for action to reverse the downward shift in speakers.

In 2002 ICDBL Canada published *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages – Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries* (co-authored by Diarmuid Ó Néill and Marcel Texier). This was republished in a revised version in 2005 by Y Lolfa Press of Wales, this time with Diarmuid as the editor. Like the 2002 version Diarmuid contributed

a large part of the articles – especially for the Goidelic branch of languages – with contributions from Brian Stowell and Philip Gawne (Manx), Colin Williams and Paul Birt (Welsh), Kenneth MacKinnon (Cornish) and Marcel Texier with Diarmuid (Breton). Joshua Fishman provided a preface for both editions and was supportive of the project.

Diarmuid was disappointed not to build a big membership in the Canadian ICDBL branch, but he was successful in the aim to bring attention to the need to support the Breton language. As reported in an introduction to the ICDBL printed in *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages*:

*The Canadian ICDBL, with a far more modest membership [than the U.S. branch] hovering around twenty, has nevertheless been successful in bringing the Breton case before the public. In 1998 it collaborated with the Montréal Gazette, the largest English language newspaper in eastern Canada, in producing an excellent article about Brittany by Jim Withers, who was dispatched by the Gazette to Brittany. More recently, in the spring of 2002, the Canadian ICDBL was successful in getting Canadian members of parliament to condemn France's refusal to grant public funds to the Diwan school system in Brittany. The Right Honourable Mr. Joe Clark, former Canadian Prime Minister, now an opposition leader in the Canadian parliament speaking for himself and others, dispatched a letter of complaint to the French Embassy in Ottawa reflecting the traditional Canadian sense of fair play. Also, enquiries by Canadians about learning Breton or other Breton cultural endeavors are answered.*

I maintained a long letter and e-mail correspondence with Diarmuid who was ever ready to expand his knowledge about the Celtic languages and to help others with resources. Up until his death he was working on new publications. His energy and determination will be missed.

### **Angèle Jacq (1937-2021)**

Angèle Jacq was born in Landudal (Finistère) in 1937 and before becoming an author she was a farmer, sales representative and bank employee, as well as union organizer and press correspondent. Not the least to her credit she raised seven children. Angèle Jacq published her first historical novel, *Les Braises de la Liberté*, in 1995, followed by a collection of Breton legends, *Légendes de Bretagne*, as well as *Le Voyage de Jabel, Ma langue au chat, Par la vertu de la noisette* (bilingual French/Breton), and most recently in 2018, *Pêcheur de Guinée*. She was a regular presence at the annual Festival du Livre en Bretagne held in Carhaix. While her books were primarily in French she drew on her attachment to Brittany and love of its culture.

Breton was her native language and she was an ardent defender of it, supporting Diwan schools and in 1999 participating in the launch of l'Appel de Carhaix calling for teaching of Breton in schools. In 2008 she created the petition "101 Écrivains pour les langues régionales" (101 writers for the regional languages). In 2003 Angèle Jacq was inducted into the Order of the Ermine for her literary work and lifetime action for the Breton language (see *Bro Nevez* 88, November 2003)/

### **Gwenn Huon (1951-2021)**

At the young age of 70 Gwenn Huon passed away this May. While not a highly visible personality in the world of Breton language support, he was a major force in supporting Breton learners as president of the Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerion (KEAV) for forty years. He was one of the many working tirelessly and humbly for the Breton language. Beginning in 1949 KEAV has been a summer workshop/camp conducted entirely in Breton providing an important experience for thousands of those improving and mastering the Breton language.



### **For a new push in favor of the Immaterial Cultural Patrimony of Brittany**

Press release from Bretagne Culture Diversité, Cinémathèque de Bretagne, and Dastum

*The following is a call to candidates in the June 2021 regional elections in Brittany to put new effort into the promotion of the cultural patrimony of Brittany. This is a joint effort by three organizations of Brittany who have expertise in the archiving and promotion of oral and musical traditions, photographic and cinematic material and historical and other unpublished documents. See the introductions which follow the press release and visit their websites. The following text is my translation. My apologies for any misinterpretation or errors in translation. A few notes in brackets [ ] have been added for the benefit of American readers. Lois Kuter*

Our three associations work, each in its own specific areas, around a common theme – the Breton immaterial cultural patrimony – all on the same scale of action – historical Brittany [all five departments including Loire-Atlantique]. We equally share a mission of collection, conservation, and making this patrimony accessible to

the wide public. We hope today to combine our energy, know-how and our expertise to support the need for an ambitious cultural and patrimonial project which meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Consequently, we gather to demand that the growing role of the Region [of Brittany] in the cultural domain during the last decade be pursued and enhanced.

Four necessary and complimentary focal points have been drawn up to structure an ambitious policy for immaterial cultural patrimony, for cultural matters of Brittany and for cultural diversity.

1. Democratic needs: To participate in the cultural life of one's choice. The general objective is to augment the presence of popular cultures and cultural matters of Brittan in public life so as to allow for and favor the exercise of the cultural rights of each individual.

2. Priority given to young generations: Education about immaterial cultural patrimony and the diversity of cultural expressions must be a strong axis in policies for youth, notably in the areas of artistic and cultural education.

3. The specificness of territories: Patrimony plays a large role in the uniqueness and dynamism of the Breton territories. The Region-EPCI contracts which will be put into place can be the opportunity to demand that particular attention be given to the inventory and transmission of the patrimonies and this cultural material.

4. Take on tomorrow's need in engaging the research world: Dialog needs to be permanent to help us understand the place cultural patrimony pays today in our societies, in drawing on European networks, notably those developed in the framework of the Faro Convention. \* Equally, it is necessary to better meet the challenges brought up by the development of digitization and develop partners with the research laboratories concerned.

*\* The Council of Europe signed the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention) in 2005. Member states of the Council agree by the Convention to follow suggested actions to protect cultural heritage and the rights of their citizens to have access to it and participate in it.*

Up to the present, our associations have outlined numerous needs to give this ambitious policy chances for success. It is a matter of augmenting our work capacities in different focus areas to mutualize the competencies, services and tools in order to complement the know-how of each association. We note the priority to strengthen and augment the professionalization of the documentary section of our three associations (in the framework of the Bretania project) associated with the establishment of quality

physical archives which respect the norms of conservation, and with research of sustainable solutions to put materials on line with support of digitized indexes.

We hope that the candidates in the regional election will engage in putting this patrimonial policy into practice and we ask that an independent study be put in place at the beginning of the next term. It is a matter of clearly identifying and quantifying the needs, to thus formulate appointments to support the best use of the competencies of the three signing structures who affirm by this letter our complementarity and our desire to work in partnership.

Philippe Ramel  
President of Bretagne Culture Diversité

Michel Guilloux  
President of the Cinémathèque de Bretagne

Ronan Guéblez  
President of Dastum

**Bretagne Culture Diversité** – [www.bcd.bzh](http://www.bcd.bzh)

Created in 2012, Bretagne Culture Diversité is an association to facilitate access for anyone and everyone to knowledge about Brittany and the diversity of its cultures. Its primary missions are the popularization and propagation of cultural materials and knowledge of Brittany; the realization of a permanent inventory of Breton immaterial cultural patrimony; promotion of cultural diversity; valorization of cultural and scientific contents relative to Brittany through the means of new information and communication technology.

BCD/Sevenadurel Breizh takes care so that this richness is accessible and adapted for all types of publics. To do that it has created multiple tools: internet sites, conferences, exhibits, podcasts, videos, mobile phone apps, webdocs, etc. At the heart of a network of cultural workers and associations, it favors time for exchanges during training sessions, study-days, colloquiums, interviews, onsite studies.

**Cinémathèque de Bretagne** – [www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh](http://www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh)

Created in 1986, the Cinémathèque de Bretagne is a non-profit (loi 1901) which collects, preserves, and valorizes the cinematographic and audiovisual patrimony of the five departments of historical Brittany. It is interested in collecting and conserving amateur and professional films made in Brittany or by a Breton. Since 2006 all the cinematographic and audiovisual projects supported by the Regional Council of Brittany have also been the object of a placement in the Cinémathèque de Bretagne. Its collections constitute a true filmed

commemoration of Brittany, as well as all the cultures and countries that have inspired Bretons since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This collection, put together thanks to over 1,800 depositors, contains over 1,700 mechanisms and 32,000 films and videos, of which 7,219 are from now on freely available on line on the Cinémathèque de Bretagne website.

**Dastum** – [www.dastum.bzh](http://www.dastum.bzh)

Founded in 1972, Dastum is a non-profit association (loi 1901) which works for the collection, safeguarding, and transmission of immaterial cultural patrimony – in particular oral and musical – of historical Brittany: songs, musics, stories, proverbs, narratives ... Dastumedia, the documentary base of Dastum, offers freely on line on its website over 120,000 unpublished sound documents (equivalent to 8,800 hours) and over 50,000 iconographic documents, among others. Dastum edits the journal *Musique Bretonne* (265 issues published thus far), written works (35 thus far), and reference recordings (94 up to now). It participates equally in Breton cultural life through conferences, colloquiums, exhibits. Over 4,000 individuals and some 40 associations are members of Dastum today. Dastum is recognized by UNESCO as an "Intérêt général" and NGO (Dastum brought the fest noz to UNESCO for inscription on its Immaterial Cultural Patrimony list).



## Prizioù Dazont ar Brezhoneg 2021

Each year France 3 Bretagne and Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg

award Prizes for the Future of the Breton Language in several different categories, and each year we try to report on this in *Bro Nevez* since the individuals and organizations/businesses nominated and awarded "prizioù" are reflective of the creative ways Bretons use and promote the Breton language.

While the March 26 ceremony to award prizes was not the big festive gathering it normally is, FR3 Bretagne recorded things virtually with interviews of nominees and other "celebrities" (available on YouTube). The information below on the 2021 winners was drawn from the FR3 Bretagne website.

### Associations

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Kentelioù an noz. An organization which teaches Breton to adults with language workshops and leisure time activities in Breton. They also established Modigell, an online site to assist learners to advance in their skills.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Raok. An organization to gather all those in central Brittany who want to promote the Breton language.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Ti ar vro Gwened. A center for organizations in the Vannetais Pays working for the Breton language and culture. Their offer of online classes for song for children and for the maintenance of language learning stand out.

### Fiction book

1<sup>st</sup> prize: *Anna Skolan* by Mich Beyer (An Alarc'h Embannadurioù). A mystery novel about a woman who discovers buried notebooks of a ten-year-old who declares she was murdered.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: *Gisti, Tout!* by Erwan Hupel (Al Liamm). A novel on generations of women whose hair is handled and mishandled by men/boys.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: *Kroashent-tro* by Kristian Braz (Al Liamm). A collection of short stories featuring everyday Bretons and contemporary issues written with humor, irony and sympathy.

### Businesses

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Ederm Perennou. A doctor who conducts office and home visits in Breton and provides bilingual information.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Carabreizh. A business preparing and marketing Breton cuisine – especially based on caramel – which has given visibility to the Breton language especially in signage at the entrance and exit of its businesses.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize – Finistère Assurance. Insurance company for non-commercial boats which has initiated bilingual research for vocabulary specific to this area and to legal issues related to it.

### Song with words in Breton

1<sup>st</sup> prize: Brieg Guerveno – *Vel ma vin*. Singer and musician who composes in Breton with a style evolving from metal to folk.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Madelyn Ann. She forms a trio with two guitarists, Olivier Le Hir and Gaëtan Fagot, and used the Covid crisis to work on new songs in Breton on contemporary issues which were put online.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Nava. *Ar peroked*. First album by this trio well anchored in the Breton song tradition but also influenced by rock and eastern musics.

## Audiovisual

1<sup>st</sup> prize: *Zero Lastez*. A series of seven 80-minute episodes by Perynn Bleunven and Justine Morvan, coproduced by France 3 Bretagne and Kalanna. These follow the efforts of these two women to live a zero-waste lifestyle.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: *Krogit*. A short fiction by a team from Finistère of professionals in the cinema and theater production about a man lost on a shooting platform.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: *13 munud e Breizh*. Part of a series produced by Brezhoweb, this one featuring reports from healthcare workers on the impact of the coronavirus.

## Breton speaker of the year

1<sup>st</sup> prize – Per Morvan. He designed computer program for the use of Breton in media and technology, including a text-correction feature for Breton texts.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: Sandrine Lefebvre-Hubert. She produced books in Breton for young children which she wrote and illustrated to enhance the reading offerings for children.

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: Stefan Carpentier. A professional sports trainer, he created a YouTube site for courses in gymnastics and muscle building - an opportunity for Bretons stuck at home during Covid confinements to get exercise and practice Breton.

## Some short notes on Breton language activities



### Gouel Broadel ar Brezhoneg

This is a 2-day festival held this year on July 2-3 in Langonned where everything is conducted in Breton. A joyful way to use Breton for music and dance as well as games, eating and drinking. See

Bgg.bzh/fr/edition-2021 for program information.

## Stumdi

Stumdi is working in partnership with Tio ar Vro Gwengamp and five Breton language radio stations to offer a new training course focused on the field of media and broadcasting. This Fall 2021 to Spring 2022 course is for those with proficiency in Breton and supplements other 6-month (and shorter) intensive training course for those wishing to bring their Breton to a professional level. See [stumdi.bzh](http://stumdi.bzh) for information about all the courses offered.



## KEAV – Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerion

KEAV has offered summer camp programs since 1949 and the two weeks this July will offer workshops/lessons in Breton to some 100 Breton speakers who also engage in a variety of activities – all in Breton – to improve their skills. See [keav.bzh](http://keav.bzh) for more information.



## Vakansoù ar Vugale

UBAPAR – Union bretonne pour l'animation des pays ruraux - is a federation of a number of local organizations which has operated since 1983 to offer activities to people in rural areas. They are offering summer camps for children and teens with a focus on kayaking, forests, seashores, town life and other topics conducted in Breton or Gallo. A fun way to learn and practice these languages. See [vakansou.ubapar.bzh](http://vakansou.ubapar.bzh) for more information.



## Skol an Emsav – Staj hañv

Skol an Emsav has regularly offered Breton classes throughout the year for a number of years. This summer they are offering Breton classes in Rennes for all levels of learners. “Lessons” are supplemented by a variety of fun activities to practice what one learns. See [skolanemsav.bzh](http://skolanemsav.bzh) for information.

## Interview with Remy Penneg of NHU

by Natalie Novik

1. *Ni-hon unan: what was the motivation behind its creation?*

For years I have been deploring (and I'm far from being alone) the fact that Brittany is too often presented in the mainstream media in a cartoonish way, negative and incomplete. They all go to AFP (Agence France Presse), which is pretty much the leading source, or as we say in French who dictates fair weather or rain. And for Brittany much too often rain☹

It seemed to me that it was time, rather urgently, to try and organize a Breton media offering Breton topics of our everyday life from a definitely Breton standpoint. I am a simple Breton citizen and this media should belong to other citizens of Brittany and the rest of the world if it has an interest in Brittany. Therefore it is genuinely a participation. Concretely anyone can

propose his contribution on all the topics of everyday life in Brittany. To sign your article there are two ways. First, your own identity: we create for the author an account and a signature with identity, photo, short bio and links to personal social networks. If the author wishes to remain anonymous the article is signed NHU Bretagne.

2. *How does the website differ from other sites dedicated to Brittany?*

it seems to me that it is the only Internet Breton media which is so inclusive and collaborative. As of today, about 200 people have already written in the NHU columns. it is very important for NHU Bretagne to lend a say to those who don't.

3. *How have you, yourself, decided to get involved in NHU, which certainly requires a lot of time and motivation?*

I have two personal maxims in my life. The first is in French : "endeavor or do nothing". I am always amazed by the number of people who say they'll do something, that something should be done, that all there is to do.... So I think that instead of waiting for the others, it's more useful to do it yourself. Or at least to try. So one day I decided to try rather than not do anything about Brittany. I was very lonely, sometimes extremely lonely in the beginning. But then I was joined by another person, then two, then three.... and now we count about 200. The other Maxim is in Breton "Me a yelo betek penn" or "I'll go to the end". it's worth noting that my family name "penneg" in Britain means hardheaded. That's understood. So yes, NHU Bretagne represents every day a personal commitment, I'd rather not count the hours "to act or not to act on anything" and then "me a yelo betek benn": the path is clear.

4. *The site is bilingual French English. You would expect to see articles in Breton and in Gallo. what are the plans to get there?*

It cannot really be said that the site is bilingual French-English. As of today, out of 1200 articles, only 15 are in English, with the first one posted last November. It is therefore a recent approach. The idea at the start comes from a simple observation. There is no English Breton media to tell the rest of the world what our Brittany is, its history, its economic assets, its aspirations, its culture, its heritage, etc... Of course, you find information here and there on the Internet, but not on a single collaborative platform. With other people, we imagined an Internet site totally anglophone, but it could not be done for some unfortunate reasons. The idea is to try via NHU Bretagne. Agence France Presse does that to a certain extent, Bro Nevez does that too, but is American. Always this maxim : "endeavor or not do anything". But judging from the success of NHU Brittany, why not go at

a later point with the idea of a completely anglophone site?

It is true that it would seem logical to read articles in Breton and Gallo in the columns of NHU Bretagne rather than in English.

But we need to be lucid and rational. Our goal is not to inform the Breton and Gallo-speaking Bretons of what is happening in Brittany, from our point of view. For them, we already do it in French, which everybody speaks. And for those who also speak brezhoneg and gallo, they are already aware of what we are publishing. So to be read by more people, we need to use the language common to the largest number of people, reaching those who are not aware. So we wish to inform the anglophones worldwide. It concerns of course our close Celtic neighbors and cousins in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, but also the Canadians, the Australians... It is naturally a lot harder, but so much more efficient if we reach our goal... even on a modest scale.

5. *Thanks to NHU, British people living in Brittany may discover aspects of the country that tourist guide don't deal with. Do you have any sense of the success of the site with them?*

NHU is not a tourist guide for foreigners longing for Brittany. Our ambition is to offer anglophone articles dealing with our everyday life, much beyond mere touristic topics. We don't want to limit our Brittany to those cliches all too present in the media which I mentioned earlier. The only difficulty is the following: what do we have in Brittany that could be of interest for a Californian or a Scotsman? These would be all the topics dealing with the environment, maritime activities (gliding sports, for instance), and also topics linked to agriculture and the agro industry (Brittany is the first agro-industrial region in Europe: what Breton-based media says so in English?), and seaweed (Brittany has the largest seaweed fields of Europe, and the tenth in the world: what Breton-based media mentions it in English?), and our gastronomy, etc... Just around these five themes, there is enough to tell the world that Brittany is a major country.

And this without mentioning more Celtic-oriented topics, like music, history...

We don't have today enough background to measure the success of our English-language articles. We only know through Google Analytics that the anglophone audience is constantly growing. So we are going to continue! Today, among our 200 or so Contributors, only seven write in English for NHU Bretagne. And as I write this, an eighth one has joined, who is Breton and lives in London.

6. *Since you have articles in English, it opens the site to a much larger public than just the British expats. Many Europeans in general are interested in Brittany as well as Canada, Japan etc. Do you foresee more international orientation in the articles?*

As I said above, our contents, if we want them to be read, must deal with topics common to Brittany and other countries worldwide and in particular English-speaking ones. You mention Japan, a great consumer of seaweed, as all of Southeast Asia. So Brittany has the largest seaweed fields in Europe and a genuine international expertise in this area. Seaweed is therefore a common topic, and we must write about it. You also mention Canada. Always the same question: what topics does this great country bordering the Atlantic West can have with Brittany, a small country on the other shore? The Gulf Stream, which is warming up and is starting already to disturb our biodiversities, for instance. We always need to find this commonality of interests, and it's not always easy.

7. *Among those most interested you find of course the European regions and in particular those who fight for recognition and even independence (Scotland, Catalonia and others). Do you think that NHU articles, as they are not sparing French centralization, could inspire them? And how do you ensure the site is known outside of Brittany?*

A media that uses only French is destined only to a francophone public. To let our ideas be known by Scotsmen, Catalans and others on the topics you are mentioning, there is only one solution: use the most common language, accessible to the largest numbers. If we need only one language, there it will obviously be English.

The maniacal centralism of France is what has been ripping it apart for long, and will destroy it as we know it today. The media subsidized by the central State cannot naturally criticize too much this decadent system. You don't bite the hand that feeds you. NHU, a very, very modest media, can do it and must do it. We are completely independent from outside powers. We have a lot to learn from European nations that are freeing themselves from their respective guardians. Like Catalonia vs. Madrid. Or Scotland and Wales vs. London. Brittany, like Corsica for instance, has to face Paris.

8. *Do you have a budget to publicize the site (NHU is not on Google's top page when I search for Brittany), to have a specialist in charge of promoting it in search engines, and to advertise it to a larger public during events, festivals, concerts and so on ?*

We are independent from outside powers, but it has its counterpart. We do not receive any subsidies, no publicity is done on the site, so that we have very few means. Our journalists are simple citizens, all of them volunteers. But it still represents close to 200 people! In order to be better placed on a Google Search of rather generic words like Brittany, you need to buy Google Adwords. We don't have the means and prefer natural references. And to be better placed on social networks, you need to buy advertising, like on Facebook for instance. So the same remark applies here too. We have opened an account with [Tipeee](#) where our faithful readers can contribute a few euros to support us. We rely more on the power of human relations than on money. Our Facebook pages has over 13,000 visitors and our Twitter account has close to 5,000 followers. It's not much, but it's also significant. All this without money, just through the interest that citizens find in our publications, in their publications. We are proud of it and take the opportunity of this interview to thank them.

9. *You introduce Brittany as a power region and it is true that unifying with five Departments would weigh even heavier in the balance, with all the economic motor of the Nantes region. Would the strength of such a power give Brittany a better chance to become independent?*

We are not talking first and foremost about independence, but simply about recognition. Arbitrary and forced territorial partitions don't last long in Europe. It's been now over 70 years that it's been the case for the partition of Brittany, which is 70 years too many. But nothing is final in the history of a country. Large artificial consolidations have crumbled in Europe since WWII, like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, freeing peoples who had been choked for decades.

Closer to our times, there was the end of the German partition. There will be more, like Ireland and Brittany. Paris does not want any shadow cast on its total power over "its" provinces. Paris does not want regions that would be too strong in this unmanageable hexagon, so it remains the only power on the stage. Particularly if the region has a strong personality and sometimes knows better than to obey. Brittany is the worse in their eyes. Corsica, another rebel, represents only 300,000 inhabitants and a GDP of 9 million Euros. Brittany has 4.8 million inhabitants, and a GDP of 120 billion Euros. From the population standpoint, it is the equivalent of New Zealand or the Republic of Ireland. And the GDP places Brittany close to Hungary, and double of Croatia or Luxemburg, for instance.

The central government understands, better than we do, the risk to be run if too much power is given to such a region, which is, as we said, the most important region of Europe for its agriculture and agro-industrial branches.

Ideally, a large status of autonomy would work as it does in all European countries. All, except two: France and Turkey. But Paris categorically refuses to give up any real power.

More and more people are therefore led to think that, if so little has been obtained, it would be worth thinking independence rather than autonomy.

10. *What role do you see for NHU in the frame of a reunification plan for Brittany?*

NHU is a media, not a party or a political movement. The 200 people who have already contributed to our columns come from diverse political horizons, but they have in common the same passion, the same love: their country, Brittany. NHU does not have any obvious role to play in the future reunification of Brittany. Or as much or no more than an Irish Internet media regarding the reunification of Ireland. In a vast majority, the editors who publish in NHU Bretagne are in favor of the end of this partition which we owe to the Nazi regime during some of the darkest hours of French political life, and over which no government has ever raised a question. However, NHU can serve as a promotion tool for this reunification.

Visit: [www.nhu.bzh](http://www.nhu.bzh)



## Reunification of Brittany – The call to bring Loire-Atlantique back continues

At the call of Bretagne Réunie, some 1,500 people demonstrated on June 5 in Redon to demand the reunification of Brittany.

Redon is particularly apt for a gathering site since this city sits on the borders of the departments of Morbihan, Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Atlantique. While social, economic and cultural activities do not stop at these borders, the administrative lines have long challenged its area, especially with the severing of Loire Atlantique from the Region of Brittany.

A high point of the demonstration was the opening of a large wall constructed of cardboard on the bridge separating Saint-Nicolas-de-Redon (Loire-Atlantique) from Redon (which is in the department of Ille-et-Vilaine).



## Deep inside a Breton skull N° 67 - On the same wavelength

Jean Pierre Le Mat

Countless truths have been written about the basic needs of human beings. The minimum agreement is about survival: to eat, to drink, to have a roof. I will not quarrel about these basic needs with prestigious thinkers. I will not establish universal truths on this subject. But what I see around me, and quite generally among Bretons, is a specific basic need: to be "on the same wavelength".

Let words. me explain. Communication is a basic need, and it is generally seen as a need for interactions. We must talk, we must exchange with other humans. What I notice among the Bretons is different. There is clearly a need to watch the sea, to connect with landscapes, to be in tune with family or friends. But there is not really a need to interfere. Bretons can be silent while being happy. They can communicate and they can even come into fellowship with someone or something without exchanging.



Sea-rescuers along the coasts of Brittany are incredibly popular among us. The reason is that they synchronize with the distress of shipwrecked persons they do not know. They go and save them at the risk of their own lives. Likewise, in all wars, the Bretons have had a kind of strange predisposition to sacrifice themselves for others. Awareness of our own interests is poorly developed among us; at least it is not despotic.

I know Bretons who synchronize with the places of their childhood; from the outside, it is mocked as incorrigible nostalgia. I know many of us who make loyalty a virtue; foreigners can consider that as a kind of submission. The Bretons make their festivals, their sports, their dances something different from pure arts; they make a communion out of these activities. Worshipping the dead parents on November 1st is not only a tradition; it's a way to silently contact the ancestors. Pilgrimages connect us to other pilgrims, from the present as well as from the past. Our rebellions send us back to our rebellious ancestors, the most symbolic of which are the Red Caps, who rebelled in 1675.

Don't try to give us a purely rational explanation for our behavior. This would appear to be false and, moreover, offensive to us.

The need for harmonization is one of the paths that lead us to the mysterious heart of our social cohesion and of our sense of belonging. Group cohesion is much more

powerful than collective interest. Our sense of belonging goes much deeper than just joining one another. I believe that our primary needs for perception, action or understanding are subordinate to our need for harmonization.

How can this need to be on the same wavelength be explained? Well, let's start by postulating the existence of waves. We are not the only ones to imagine that.

The electroencephalogram records waves produced by brain activity. Several types of frequencies have thus been classified to characterize states of consciousness. Focusing on a given object causes various areas of the brain to activate, which means that neurons somehow synchronize

Quantum mechanical experiments show that particles are synchronous when their "wave function" is unique.

Waves can be seen just in the sky above us, and above you, in America. The incredible synchronized ballets of birds can only be explained by "agitation waves" or by "maneuver waves".

It is not eccentric to consider that human group cohesion, as well as the feeling of belonging, are wave phenomena.

The idea that waves are associated with collective phenomena is part of the common language. It is said that so and so emits negative waves and that in such and such meeting the waves were positive. The phenomenon is common enough to everyone.



After the big music festivals in Brittany, interviews with the artists each year reveal their satisfaction at having found themselves "in tune" with the Breton public.

A related notion to that of wave is the notion of "field". Prestigious scientists told us that space is crossed by wave fields such as gravitational field and electromagnetic field. Some embryologists tell us about "morphogenetic fields" to explain the differentiation of embryonic cells into cells of the hand, heart or brain. Neurobiologists, and thinkers like Henri Bergson or Alfred North Whitehead, have studied memory and recollections. The memory imprints of the brain have never been located. Some of these people explain the phenomenon with "memory fields". Ethologists have shown that the learning of a caterpillar is passed on to the butterfly whereas the nervous system has been

completely altered. It could be that memories are retrieved by connection with memory fields, and not by material structures of the brain. According to other scientists like Rupert Sheldrake, there are also "motor fields" that explain the spider's web, the bird's nest and the eel's journey.

Deep inside my Breton skull, I don't know if these people are right or not. Perhaps, one day, social cohesion and sense of belonging will be explained by wave fields, memory fields, morphic fields, motor fields. Perhaps...

What I know surely is that Bretons like to be on the same wavelength with their friends, with their landscapes or with people of the past.

Maybe they are also on the same wavelength with people of the future...



## International Colloquium on Brittany/North America

The Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale – UBO (univ-brest.fr) organized an international colloquium on June 8 and 9 in Brest called "Brittany/North America:

Connections, Relations, Interactions." This follows on international colloquiums that have explored links between Brittany and Cornwall, Brittany and Ireland, and Brittany and Scotland.

There were seven sessions spanning the two days with an evening presentation on "Écrire entre Bretagne et Amérique du Nord" ("Writing between Brittany and North America") with Alexis Gloaguen and Paul Keineg with invited writers also participating in an exchange of ideas.

The program was kicked off with welcoming remarks from some "VIPS": Matthieu Gallou, President of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale; Mohammed Saki, provisional administrator of the Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines; Ronan Calvez, Director of the Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique; Alain Kerhervé, director of the HCTI lab; and Zélie Guével, on behalf of the organizing committee.

The very diverse range of topics presented deserve a brief summary, and certainly with just twenty minutes of presentation time, the speakers were challenged to cover a great deal of information.

Session 1 : "Ces Bretons qui se révélèrent au Canada" Moderated by Jean-Yves Le Disez, CRBC – Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, UBO

Alexandra Hillinger & Zélie Guérel (Université de Laval, Quebec)

“Le Tardif : Portrait d’un interprète breton en Nouvelle-France”

In exploration, settlement and trade established in New France in the 1600s, France sent young men to be interpreters/translators in working with Indigenous peoples. This presents one such interpreter from Brittany and the role he played.

Cécile Beaudouin (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)  
“‘Quelque chose de neuf et de bienvenu’ : Louis Hémon au Canada ou le goût de l’aventure”

Exploration of author Louis Hémon, born in Brest in 1880, and his famous novel *Maria Chapdelaine* (published in 1921) set in the Canadian wilderness. Also examined is his travel to Canada described in his *l’itinéraire*.

Sophie Gondolle (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)  
“Marie Le Franc, une Bretonne à la plume québécoise”

A look at novelist and poet Marie Le Franc who was born in Sarzeau in 1879. A woman of adventure who evoked the maritime world and forests of Quebec in her works.

Session 2 – “Armorica / America 1”  
Moderated by Anne Goarzin

Stéphanie Noirard (Université de Poitiers)  
“Quelques notes bleues dans un cantique : essai d’une lecture jazzy de Xavier Grall”

An analysis of the style of Breton writer Xavier Grall where poetry has a certain American musical ambiance.

Melanie Curran (independent musician and ethnographer, New York City)

“Songs Between America and Bretagne”

Presentation of speaker’s experimental hybrid Breton-American songs – compositions inspired by Breton melodies and rhythms based on her experience living in Brittany and lyrics of Youenn Gwernig who lived in the Bronx in the 1960s.

Virginie Podvin (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)  
“Alain Robbe-Grillet, un Brestois à New York”

Analysis of the writings of Robbe-Grillet considered to be the father of the “new novel.” From Finistère, Robbe-Grillet lived in and traveled in both the U.S. and Canada from the 1960s through the 80s, drawing on his Breton roots and attachment to North America.

Session 3 – “Américains à Brest (1917-1919)”  
Moderated by Gaëlle Le Corre

Alain Abarnou (Brest)

“La présence américaine à Brest en 1919 selon The Pontanezen Duckboard et la presse locale”

Thousands of American soldiers departed for America after World War I from the port of Brest. Housed in a village that could hold some 80,000 men, the camp of Pontanézen had its own newspaper. The presenter compares the depiction of the relations between soldiers and the local population in the Pontanezen Duckboard and local press.

Erwan Le Gall (Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, Bretagne-Culture Diversité)

“Les USA, la Grande Guerre et la Bretagne : bilan d’un centenaire et perspectives”

Presentation of events in St. Nazaire in 2017 to mark the centennial of World War I and its contrast with the depiction of Breton-American relations at a colloquium of historians held simultaneously and separately from the celebrations.

Benoît Quinquis (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)

“Les Américains à Brest en 1917: Comment les mythes nous racontent”

A look at the 2017 commemoration of the centennial of Americans arriving in Brest and an analysis of myths associated with Breton-American relations and the presence of soldiers in Brest.

Session 4 – “Armorica / America 2”  
Moderated by Elizabeth Mullen

Sébastien Carney (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)  
“De Wilson à Beyoncé : l’Amérique des nationalistes bretons”

Examination of changing images of America on the part of Breton nationalists who in the 1920s favored the federalism of the U.S. and Wilson’s favorable view of self-determination of nations with nationalists later shifting away from an idealized view of the U.S.

Marie-Clémentine Corvest (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)

“Le syndicat mixte de protection et de conservation du littoral nord-ouest de la Bretagne et le procès Amoco Cadiz (1980-1992)”

A look at the mobilization of local Breton political and labor representatives following the wreck of the Amoco Cadiz oil tanker in 1978 to take Standard Oil to court for damages – a unique political and judicial experience.

Eric Beaty (U.S. Consulate for Brittany, Normandy and Pays de la Loire)

“Interaction et relations économiques entre la Bretagne et les États-Unis d’Amérique : dynamisme et discrétion”

A look at American companies who have been attracted to set up businesses in Brittany and Breton companies who have been successful in the U.S. Presentation also of some organizations and institutions fostering exchanges.

Session 5 – “Être breton au Canada”  
Moderated by Zélie Guérel

Jean-Pierre Pichette (Université Sainte-Anne, University of Moncton, Canada)

“La sanction de l’ainé célibataire en Ontario français – Entre Shakespeare et l’Amérique : explorer la filière bretonne”

A look at the custom of sanctioning the oldest bachelor of a family (who dances without shoes) brought to Canada with early French colonization and lost in many areas, and whether

this was a Breton custom. Also presents Breton-French-Canadian collaboration in colloquiums and exchanges begun in 1991.

Gregory Moigne (Université de Bretagne Occidentale)  
"Bretons de Montréal : les nouveaux autochtones"  
Examination of how emigrants to Montreal have embraced Breton identity – and Breton language learning.

Linda Guidroux (Université de Laval, Quebec)  
"Pourquoi et comment se dire breton au Québec ? Les relations avec son territoire d'accueil en situation de migration"  
Based on interviews with a number of Bretons who chose to migrate to Quebec, a look at how they adapted to their new land and communities.

Session 6 – "Destins singuliers"  
Moderated by Elizabeth Mullen

Philippe Argouarch (webmedia Agence Bretagne Presse)  
"Joseph-Yves Limantour, le Breton qui fut propriétaire de sans Francisco"  
A look at the extraordinary life of Joseph-Yves Limantour who landed in the San Francisco area after a shipwreck in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. He survived wars, assassination attempts, and other adventures to own much of San Francisco and become one of the richest men in America, not without charges of criminal activity to get there.

Axel Kelin (Frankfort, Germany)  
"Brittany in the Life and Music of Swan Hennessy (1866-1929)"  
Presentation of the life and music of Swan Hennessy who studied music in Europe and was adopted by the Association des Compositeurs Breton in the spirit of inter-Celtism for his Irish style of music. And he was inspired by Breton legends and music as well in his compositions.

Last, but not least ...

Fañch Broudic (journalist and associated researcher with the Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique)  
"Bro Nevez, le titre breton d'une newsletter américaine"  
Account of the history of Bro Nevez since 1981, its content and aims in reaching an American and Breton public.

Editor's Note – I received many questions from Fañch Broudic about my role as editor, the U.S. ICDBL, as well as statistics on the distribution of *Bro Nevez*. And, I provided lots of details for an honest assessment of the "whys" and "whats" of our publication to fill much more than a 20-minute presentation. Fañch Broudic had access to all 157 issues of Bro Nevez on our website as well as my 185-page index of contents (1981-1919). Given the relatively short time between his first contact and the colloquium, I was not able to do a deep dive into records but I am now inspired to do more research (card files, correspondence, and other records that fill several

file cabinets) to write a bit of a history for the September Bro Nevez – which marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. Any reflections on the part of you, the readers would be most welcome.

## Two New Books from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter



**Olivier Le Dour. *Les Bretons en Belgique 1945-2020 – La Bretagne à Bruxelles*.** Rennes : Les Portes du Large (portesdularge.com), 2020. 399 pages. ISBN 978-2-914612-34-0.

This is the 29th book from the publisher Les Portes du Large which specializes in writings focused on Breton explorers, travelers, and emigrants who have had a presence in all parts of the world. We have reviewed a number of these in the pages of *Bro Nevez*, including two others by Olivier Le Dour in partnership with Grégoire Le Clech: *Les Bretons dans la Rouée vers l'or de Californie* (Bro Nevez 105, February 2009), and two volumes of *Les Huguenots Bretons en Amérique du Nord* (Bro Nevez 125, February/March 2013, and 128, November 2013).

While his expertise on Breton emigration spans a large world, Olivier Le Dour is particularly well positioned to author this new book on Bretons in Belgium. He served in Belgium for many years as a consultant with the European Commission and was active for several decades with the Union des Bretons de Belgique. This book covers the presence of Bretons in Belgium from 1945 to 2020 and will be followed by a second volume - *Les Bretons en Belgique des origines à 1945 – marins, marchands, migrants* – which takes Breton exploration and trade back many centuries.

As pointed out in the preface by Jean-Yves Le Drian, a Breton and now Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs for France, this book explores how Breton identity is very much also a European identity. Indeed, Bretons have played a strong role in the institutions of the European Union and the Bretons currently residing in Belgium live primarily in and around Brussels accordingly. But it has not just been "Eurocrats" as they call themselves who have been attracted to Belgium, but people of many trades and talents.

In 2018 the author estimated some 16,800 Bretons in Belgium. Identity is not an exact science and estimates were based on voting records, family names, and addresses of origin noted in consulate records. Some 7,500 of the 16,800 were born in Brittany, 8,000 were born elsewhere of Breton family, and 1,300 were Breton by adoption (for instance they register to vote in

Brittany). As the author points out, many of those with Breton connections probably do not self-identify as “Bretons.”

In looking at statistics, Le Dour shows that Bretons living in Belgium are far fewer than people from other parts of France and that the Breton population – which has been growing in recent years – is constantly changing as people come and go. The author draws from population records, but also a survey conducted in 2017-2018 and personal interviews. This allows a detailed breakdown of residents in Belgium by age, education level, and profession.

The internationalism of Bretons in Belgium is revealed in the statistic that 84% of them lived outside of Brittany before moving to Belgium, with 58% having lived outside of France before arriving in Belgium, and having family in different countries is by no means rare.

The use of personal stories allows one to understand why Bretons have been particularly attracted to Brussels and the long-standing role of Bretons in the European Commission as well as other European institutions. Statistics show that the percentage of Bretons engaged in European institutional work is more than twice that of people from other regions of France. The role of Bretons in the European Commission is documented along with the work of Bretons in the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions of France and other institutions and lobbying groups linking Brittany to European affairs.

While the important role of Bretons in European institutions is well documented, Belgium has also hosted an impressive array of artists, writers, and musicians who have gone there for university studies, for performances, conferences and exhibits, or to settle. The Breton community in Belgium has provided its own population of musicians and dances as well as cinematographers, painters, authors and masters of the *bande dessinée*.

The book also explores Bretons in the food and restaurant business as well as economic partnerships of Brittan with Belgium through tourism, twin cities, commercial trade and sports. And not insignificant have been the arrival of Breton clergy and nuns in Belgium.

By using the accounts of Bretons who have emigrated to Belgium or who have spent time there for studies, careers, or to be with spouses or family, the book gives nice insight into why Bretons have gone to Belgium and how they have maintained a sense of Breton identity, albeit often not as strong as a broader European identity.

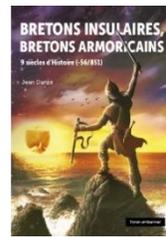
Appendices to the main text add more statistical details about the demographics of Bretons in Belgium – age, length of stay, residence location, size of family, and

where they were born or have family roots in Brittany, among other data.

The annex also provides brief biographies of Bretons who served as deputies in the European Parliament and a short travel account from 1953 of a group of musicians and dancers of the Pourlet Pays to Belgium.

An extensive bibliography includes a wealth of written documents as well as internet resources. Maps and statistical charts as well as photos of places, artwork, posters and people are abundant throughout the book and bring the information to life.

While this book will be of particular interest to Bretons who have lived in (or still live in) Belgium, it is also an eye-opening look at the very international identity of Bretons who continue to travel and value the experience of living in many different parts of the world.



**Jean Danzé. *Bretons insulaires, Breton armoricains – 9 siècles d'histoire (-55/851)*.** Fouesnant: Yoran Embanner (Yoran-Embanner.com), 2020. 479 pages. ISBN 978-2-36785-032-0.

This new history of Brittany not only spans nine centuries, but also incorporates the history of Ireland, the British Isles and ancient Gaul. And this helps enormously to understand the different peoples inhabiting these areas and traveling in and out of them over time. We start with Caesar and the Roman invasion and settlement in Europe, Brittany and the British Isles. The narrative of the centuries which follow is one of constant war and struggles to survive not only conquering armies, but also catastrophic climate changes, famine and disease. The good old days.

Jean Danzé draws from early documents which describe events – often many years after they occur – as well as information drawn from archeological finds. The amount of information that can be gleaned from archeological research is remarkable. For instance, coins allow one to date when populations were displaced or eliminated based on caches of coins left behind that are dated by images of Roman emperors, or pieces of pottery or glass of a certain style that tell of trade in a particular period of time. And the remnants of buildings, burial sites or crosses allow one to trace the influence of Roman occupation and the arrival of Christianity.

The book provides a vivid picture of life – economic, social and religious. Photos, drawings, and several dozen maps are very helpful in supporting the text and locating earlier place names and the movement of peoples. As someone not intimately familiar with names of current towns, cities, or rivers of Brittany or the British

Isles or Ireland, I would have especially welcomed a basic map showing names of rivers cited by the author, since these were crucial routes of travel and settlement. It is likely that this book will be read primarily by Bretons who will have no problem with geographical references, but it deserves an English translation since it provides an “inter-Celtic” view of European history.

A detailed history of ancient events and peoples is normally not my favorite reading, but this very dense account of nine centuries of turmoil and evolving populations was fascinating, especially in revealing how early texts and archeological finds allow one to put the pieces of the past together.

Footnotes! – I rarely interrupt my reading to check on footnotes, especially when they are buried at the back of a book. In this case the footnotes are easily found at the bottom of pages and serve as a reference to a source of information rather than a long detailed sidetrack which may be interesting but distracting to the main text. So it was not until I was well along in my reading that I noticed that there were numbers which led to no footnote – in fact 29 of 182 footnotes scattered throughout the book. And footnotes started to be renumbered seven times, every four to five chapters, although this resetting of foot notes to number 1 did not correspond to any “section” of the book. While this should be corrected in a re-edition of the book, the ample bibliography provided surely covers the sources the author researched for the book with over 200 authors cited and an additional 32 collections of articles.

The mysterious and somewhat random disappearance of foot notes is a small matter and in no way takes away from the wealth of knowledge to be enjoyed in this ambitious work.

### **Sonotek: A new treasure trove of recordings of bagadoù and sonneurs de couple**

<https://sonotek.sonerion.bzh>

During the past decade Bodadeg ar Sonerion – now just called Sonerion - partnered with the Department of Finistère to design and implement a project to gather, catalog and make available the many recordings of bagadoù and sonneurs de couple (biniou koz/bombarde and biniou braz/bombarde). At the end of April 2021 Sonotek Sonerion opened its website which includes recordings from 2000 through 2015 – with earlier and more recent recordings to be added. This gives access to over 4,000 performances. These include recordings from the annual championship contests for the bagad as well as for sonneurs de couple and other various ensembles and solo performances and radio interviews and programs.

It was in 1949 in Quimper that the first contest for sonneurs was organized by Bodadeg ar Sonerion and recorded by the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires of Paris. While not every contest performance was recorded since that time, many were, so one can expect thousands more hours of music to be added to this site, especially for more recent years when more systematic documentation was done.

If you are a fan of the bagad and sonneurs de couple check out this site which is very easy to navigate. You can search by performer, event, type (besides bagad and sonneurs de couple), place or year. In each category there is a “drop-down” box so you don’t have to remember the spelling of a piper or bagad name, or the name of an event. Making it even easier for a broad audience, the website has versions in French, Breton and English.

I sampled some recordings and found the sound quality to be excellent – even for the high-pitched biniou koz and strident bombarde.

### **Breizh Music: A not-so-new website to learn how to play Breton music**

Breizh-music.bzh

Created in March 2013, Breizh Music is a website for those who want to learn Breton music – from a distance. This allows flexibility in scheduling learning time and in one’s pace to advancement. And even if one lives in Brittany, finding a teacher nearby isn’t always easy.

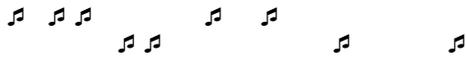
Training is provided for seven different instruments: bombarde, bagpipes (cornemuse), button accordion, guitar, clarinet, fiddle, and harp with a repertoire of melodies, marches and dances from Upper and Lower Brittany.

Teachers who provide the training – for both beginners and more advanced students – are not only some of Brittany’s best musicians, but also experienced at giving workshops and classes. Names include Alain Pennec, Soig Siberil, Roland Conq, Philippe Janvier, Jonathan Dour, Christian Lemaître, Clotilde Trouillaud, Hervé Le Floc’h, Yves Leblanc and Samuel Le Hénanff.

Videos offer students different viewing perspectives – for example, what the right hand and left hand are doing – and training includes basics like fingering, tuning, posture and breathing as appropriate for the instrument. While learning is done by ear – as is the case in traditional Breton music – scores are available. Because students sign up from all over the world, an English language version is accessible.

The first two lessons are free and after that one can sign up for a month at a time, six months or a year. The cost is a very reasonable 12 euros a month.

[information from a NHU Bretagne post of March 9, 2021 and the Breizh Music website]



## Heard of, but not heard - 12 new CDs from Brittany

Information for the following short summaries was drawn from *Ar Men* 241 (March-April 2021) and 242 (May-June 2021) as well as from the Coop Breizh website and a number of other websites with information about the performers.



### Hoëla Barbedette. *Roc'h an Burtul – Harpe solo.* Coop Breizh.

Harpist Hoëla Barbedette performs 12 original compositions and arrangements of traditional melodies and dances. She sings on three selections, plays Celtic harp, and includes field recordings in some arrangement to add a sense of place.



### Breizh Kan Kan. Coop Breizh

Created in 2012 in Lorient this is a trio composed of Mari-Elen Poupon-Tonnerre and Isabelle André with song, and Glen Dagorn with piano and percussions. This CD includes 10 selections with songs – compositions, melodies, and dances - primarily in Breton. The trio is rooted in traditional Breton song with influences of blues and reggae.



### Clan Nordag. *Triade.* Edwin Muzik.

Created in Paris in 2017 this group is composed of Hermine, Frank Nordag, and Irène de France. All three composed and perform selections on this album. They are influenced by Celtic-Nordic folk groups but have created their own sound which is described as “neo-Medieval electro-folk-rock.” The album is enhanced by the reproduction of original paintings which create a visual ambiance for the music.



### Denez. *Stur an Avel.* Coop Breizh CD 1172.

This is the latest album by Denez (formerly known as Denez Prigent), a master of traditional Breton language song who freely explores new styles to show that the Breton language is quite suitable for an electro sound. He is accompanied in various selections by Oxmo Puccino (a rapper), Yann Tiersen, Youn Kam, Jonathan Dour, Aziliz Marrow, Fred Guichen, Ronan Le Bars, and the Kevrenn Alre, among others.



### Duo Bouffort Pénard. *Mécanique Nocturne.*

This is a duo of Gwendal Bouffort and Tangi Pénard who have worked together for a number of years in the Rennes area. They pair accordion with bombarde, clarinet and guitar for 13

selections of dances including a Rond de St. Vincent, hanter dro, kost ar hoat, kas ha barh, scottish and others.



### Gwennyn. *Immram.*

This is the seventh album by singer Gwennyn with 11 selections (8 in Breton and 3 in French) inspired by the Breton coasts and winds.

Described as Celtic-electro-pop Gwennyn is accompanied by Patrice Marzin (arrangements and guitar), David Pasquet (bombarde), Kevin Camus (uilleann pipes and flute), Manu Leroy (bass), Yvon Molard (percussion) and Ronan Rouxel (fiddle and mandolin).



### Marquis. *Aurora.* CD LATDK14.

The famous rock band from Rennes, Marquis de Sade, has reinvented itself and on this album pays homage to the band member Philippe Pascal who committed suicide in 2019. The group includes Frank Darcel, Étienne Daho, Xavier Géronimi, Christian Dargelos, Daniel Paboeuf and newcomer Simon Mathieu among others. The CD is described as “elegant post-rock” in style.



### Benoit Menut, Emmanuelle Bertrand, Maya Villanueva, Ensemble Syntonia. *Les Îles.* Harmonia Mundi HMM 902667.

This is a CD with 24 compositions by Benoit Menut inspired by islands of Brittany and elsewhere. These are performed in a variety of combinations by soprano Maya Villanueva, cellist Emmanuelle Bertrand, and the Syntonia Trio



### Daniel Paboeuf. *Ashes ?* Il Monstro Productions.

Singer and baritone sax player with the Rennes rock band Marquis de Sade strikes out on his own with a solo album with 9 selections – post-rock in style with texts full of energy, if at times disquieting in tone.



### Pierrick Pédrón. *Fifty-fifty (1) New York Sessions.* Gazebo GAZ 198.

Breton saxophonist Pierrick Pédrón travels to Manhattan to record this latest CD working there with Sullivan Fordtner (piano), Larry Grenadier (bass fiddle), and Marcus Gilmore (drums). Inspired by the be-bop of Charlie Parker, Pédrón takes an energetic and free path with some slower melodies to break up the rhythmic drive.



### Antoine Péran. *Les Aubes nébuleuses.* Musiques Têtes.

This is the first album by flute player Antoine Péran. A “graduate” of the Kreiz Breizh Akademi, he moves away from traditional Breton melodies and rhythms for a highly innovative jazz sound. He is accompanied by Étienne Cabaret on bass clarinet, Jonathan Caserta on bass fiddle, and Faustine Audebert with vocals.



### 22 Long Riffs. *Contre Courant.* Staff 22.

Based in Saint-Brieuc, this punk rock group has traveled in France, Europe and Canada since 2007. This is their third album with nine selections.

<i>Contents</i>	<i>page</i>
There's good news and there's bad news for the Breton language The "Molac law" on the protection and promotion of regional languages	2 - 3
Bretons hit the streets on March 13 in Support of the teaching of Breton and Gallo	3
Supporters of Regional Languages hit the Streets on May 29	3
Ar Redadeg Run for the Breton Language	4
Three Losses for the Breton Language: Diarmuid Ó Néill, Angèle Jacq, Gwenn Huon	4 - 5
For a new push in favor of the Immaterial Cultural Patrimony of Brittany	5 - 7
Prizioù Dazont ar Brezhoneg 2021	7 - 8
Some short notes on Breton language activities: Gouel Broadel ar Brezhoneg, Stumdi, KEAV – Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerion, Vakansoù ar Vugale, Skol an Emsav – Staj hañv	8
Interview with Remy Penneg of NHU. by Natalie Novik	8 - 11
Deep inside a Breton skull N° 67 - On the same wavelength, by Jean Pierre Le Mat	11 - 12
International Colloquium on Brittany/North America	12 - 14
Two New Books from Brittany Olivier Le Dour. <i>Les Bretons en Belgique 1945-2020 – La Bretagne à Bruxelles.</i> Jean Danzé. <i>Bretons insulaires, Breton armoricains – 9 siècles d'histoire</i> (-55/851).	14-16
Sonotek: A new treasure trove of recordings of bagadoù and sonneurs de couple	16
Breizh Music: A not-so-new website to learn how to play Breton music	16-17