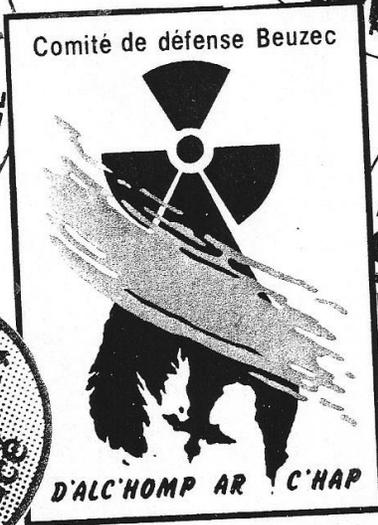


BRO NEVEZ

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



KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 99

August 2006

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

The U.S. ICDBL provides Bro Nevez on a complimentary basis to a number of language and cultural organizations in Brittany to show our support for their work. Your Membership/Subscription allows

us to do this. Membership (which includes subscription) for one year is \$20. Checks should be in U.S. dollars, made payable to "U.S. ICDBL" and mailed to Lois Kuter at the address above. Dues and contributions can also be sent electronically via the U.S. ICDBL web site.

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

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ON THE COVER ...

Reproduced on the cover are various stickers and posters from the 1970s related to the growing ecological movement of that time. You will read about this in a review of a book by Tudi Kernalegenn, *Luttés écologiques dans le Finistère – Les chemins Bretons de l'écologie (1967-1981)* on pages 7-9.

I hope you will find this and all the other book reviews in this issue of interest. I would like to invite U.S. ICDBL Members who have strong reading skills in French (or Breton) to contact me if you would like to serve as a book reviewer. I currently have a new book by J.J.E. Roy, *Le dernier des Stuart – Bonnie Prince Charlie*. I would love to find a reviewer with knowledge of Scottish history to do a review.



While the summer time can be a period when people slow down and relax, this is hardly the case in Brittany where tourists arrive by the thousands to enjoy hundreds of festivals or to relax on a beach. It is impossible to even list the festivals in Brittany since there are now so many (all year round) – from maritime and tall ship festivals, to book fairs and art festivals, garden and historic site festivals, film and theater festivals, and of course dozens of music festivals featuring traditional Breton music and dance but also rock music and jazz, and artists from all over the world. Some festivals are small and attract primarily a local audience, while others are huge and attract tens of thousands of visitors. There is no easy way to keep track of them all, but if you will be traveling to Brittany and want to plan around a festival, a good start is the website for Gouelioù Breizh, a federation of organizations who plan Breton festivals: www.gouelioubreizh.com

The Celebration of “other cultures” in France – The Musée du Quai Branly in Paris

Lois Kuter

On June 20, 2006, the Musée du Quai Branly was inaugurated in Paris. Dedicated to non-western art of Oceania, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, this museum has been a pet project of French President Jacques Chirac for the past ten years. Chirac’s love for “other” cultures and France’s championing of world diversity has been highlighted in the press surrounding the opening of this huge new museum in the heart of Paris. While applauding the place of dignity finally given to non-European artistic expression, Bretons have been quite conscious of the hypocrisy in these proclamations for the protection of cultural diversity. And some have no doubt dreamed what \$300 million dollars (the cost to build the museum) might do to support the diversity of living cultures within France.

There is a great deal of irony to the address given by Jacques Chirac at the June inauguration of the museum. Among the audience were Secretary General of the UN Kofi Annan, renowned French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Nobel Peace recipient Rigoberta Menchu, Secretary General of the International Organization for Francophonie Abodou Diouf, and Prime Minister of the Nunavut territory in Canada Paul Okalik. The following is excerpted from Chirac’s address at the inauguration (eliminating all the thank yous and homage paid to individuals present) from the official website of the President of the French Republic (www.elysee.fr) where it can be found in its entirety in English and well as French. This is long, but it gives a good idea of both the laudable spirit of the new museum, and the kind of statements about French support of cultural diversity that infuriate Bretons who have spent so much energy all their lives trying to squeeze the most meager support out of France for the Breton language and culture.

Address by Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic, at the opening of the Musée du Quai Branly.

Paris, Tuesday, 20 June 2006

.... A visit to this new institution dedicated to other cultures will be at once a breathtaking aesthetic experience and a vital lesson in humanity for our times.

As the world’s nations mix as never before in history, the need for an original venue was felt, a venue that would do justice to the infinite diversity of cultures and offer a different view of the genius of the peoples and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas.

Moved by the sense of respect and acknowledgement, in 1998 I decided to create this museum, in full agreement

with the prime minister, Lionel Jospin. France wished to pay a rightful homage to peoples to whom, throughout the ages, history has all too often done violence. Peoples injured and exterminated by the greed and brutality of conquerors. Peoples humiliated and scorned, denied even their own history. Peoples still now often marginalized, weakened, endangered by the inexorable advance of modernity. Peoples who nevertheless want their dignity restored and acknowledged.

... Central to our idea is the rejection of ethnocentrism and of the indefensible and unacceptable pretension of the West that it alone bears the destiny of humanity, and the rejection of false evolutionism, which purports that some peoples remain immutably at an earlier stage of human evolution, and that their cultures, termed “primitive”, only have value as objects of study for anthropologists or, at best, as sources of inspiration for Western artists.

Those are absurd and shocking prejudices, which must be combated. There is no hierarchy of the arts and cultures any more than there is a hierarchy of peoples. First and foremost, the Quai Branly Museum is founded on the belief in the equal dignity of the world’s cultures.

... Far removed from the stereotypes of the savage or primitive, the museum seeks to communicate the eminent value of these different cultures – some of which have been lost, many of which are endangered – these “fragile flowers of difference” in the words of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which must be protected at all costs.

Because “the first peoples” possess a wealth of knowledge, culture and history. They are the custodians of ancestral wisdom, of refined imagination, filled with wonderful myths, and of high artistic expression whose masterpieces rival the finest examples of Western art.

By showing that there are other ways of acting and thinking, other connections between beings, other ways of relating to the world, the Quai Branly Museum celebrates the luxuriant, fascinating and magnificent variety of human creativity. It proclaims that no one people, no one nation, no one civilization represents or sums up human genius. Each culture enriches humanity with its share of beauty and truth, and it is only through their continuously renewed expression that we can perceive the universal that brings us together.

That diversity is a treasure that we must preserve now more than ever. In globalization, humanity is glimpsing the possibility of unity, that age-old dream of the Utopians, which has become the promise of our destiny.

At the same time, however, standardization is gaining ground, with the worldwide expansion of the law of the market. But who can fail to understand that when globalization brings uniformisation it can only exacerbate tensions between different identities, at the risk of igniting murderous violence? Who does not feel a new ethical imperative, faced with the confusing questions thrown up by the rapid development of scientific knowledge and our technological achievements? As we search falteringly for a development model that would conserve our environment, who does not seek another way of looking at man and nature?

*That is also the idea behind the museum. To hold up the infinite diversity of peoples and arts against the bland, looming grip of uniformity. To offer imagination, inspiration and dreaming against the temptation of disenchantment. To show the interactions and collaboration between cultures, also described by Claude Lévi-Strauss, which never cease to intertwine the threads of the human adventure. To promote the importance of breaking down barriers, of openness and mutual understanding against the clash of identities and the mentality of closure and segregation. * To gather all people who, throughout the world, strive to promote dialogue between cultures and civilizations.*

France has made that ambition its own. France expresses it tirelessly in international forums and takes it to the heart of the world's major debates. France bears it with passion and conviction, because it accords with our calling as a nation that has long prized the universal but that, over the course of a tumultuous history, has learned the value of otherness.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than ever, the diversity of the world lies in the capacity of peoples to have an enlightened view of each other and share their differences and cultures, so that, in its infinite diversity, humanity can gather around the values that truly unite it.

May the visitors who pass through the doors of the Quai Branly Museum be filled with emotion and wonderment. May they come to realize that this knowledge is irreplaceable. May they in turn become bearers of the message of peace, tolerance and respect for others.

Most information I have seen about the Branly museum echoes Chirac's hope that the museum will open the eyes of visitors to different world perspectives. But the review in the New York Times newspaper on July 2, 2006, by Michael Kimmelman ("A Heart of Darkness in the City of Light") had a very different idea of what the museum would accomplish in its design.

If the Marx brothers designed a museum for dark people, they might have come up with the permanent collection galleries: devised as a spooky jungle, red and black and murky, the objects in it chosen and arranged with hardly any discernable logic, the place is briefly thrilling, as spectacle, but brow-slappingly wrongheaded. Colonialism of a bygone era is replaced by a whole new French brand of condescension. (p. 22)

Think of the museum as a kind of ghetto for the "other," a word Mr. Chirac has taken to using: an enormous, rambling, crepuscular cavern that tries to evoke a journey into the jungle, downriver, where suddenly scary masks or totem poles loom out of the darkness and everything is meant to be foreign and exotic. The Crayola-colored façade and its garden set the stage for this passage from civilization." (p. 23).

Mr. Kimmelman focused on design and architecture in his review and was especially peeved by a lack of labeling or effective explanation to put objects into some cultural context. It is to be seen how the "others" themselves feel about this museum's role to present and inspire respect for non-European peoples and their arts.

The museum includes much more than art galleries. A number of temporary exhibit halls supplement the permanent exhibit collection of over 3,500 objects that is the focus of Mr. Kimmelman's review. Perhaps most importantly, the Musée Quai Branly has been designed as a research and education center where students and scholars as well as visitors will learn. Spaces include lecture halls, a theater, classrooms and a media center. Live performances of theater, dance and music by artists will also make it a lively center for the exchange of ideas.

Collections that visitors do not see include 300,000 objects – 250,000 of which were transferred from the Musée de l'Homme – a move felt to provide an opportunity to better store and care for that collections, but also described by some as a move to destroy that museum. The internet site for the Branly museum gives you an idea of the wealth of the collections behind-the-scenes, and provides other educational information (www.quaibrantly.fr).

Now, if only Chirac and France would realize that the cultural diversity within its own borders "is a treasure that we must preserve now more than ever."

* It is ironic that when Bretons assert their "otherness," it is frequently viewed by French politicians in terms of a "clash of identities and the mentality of closure and segregation." Diwan has often been wrongly accused of being closed off and segregated, despite the fact that it has free tuition and has been welcoming to children of all racial, religious, socioeconomic and national backgrounds.

News From Brittany – Some Short Notes

Lois Kuter

The Diwan School of Paris in danger

As of July 5th the Diwan School in Paris found itself without a home, no longer able to use the site it had inhabited for its first year of existence. There is no problem in finding teachers and staff, or in funding the school, or in finding eager students, but finding a place for the school is a challenge that has often delayed the opening of Diwan schools in Brittany. As of this newsletter issue, I have not heard of a solution to this housing problem for Skol Diwan Pariz.

On a more positive note, the Paris Diwan School had a great first year, which included the visit of an American class of French students in February 2006. Teacher Bruce Mitchell has his students study the regions of France, so an interest in learning about the Breton language seemed natural to him. When he contacted me about his plans to be in Paris, and desire to set up a visit to a Diwan school, I was able to help him make contact with the Paris school. They were very happy to receive him and his 11 students during their short stay in Paris.

Ya! – The Weekly newspaper in Breton

The weekly paper called *Ya!* (Yes!) was created in 2005 with the idea that it might help adult Breton learners and speakers (who never had the chance to learn to read Breton in school) get into the habit of reading Breton. *Ya!* is written in an easy Breton with short articles and lots of illustration. By no means uninteresting to those with more advanced reading skills, this weekly is loaded with news. In just its first year it has already attracted 1,000 subscribers and hopes to keep growing.

Ya! Is produced by Keit Vimp Beo, a Breton language publishing house founded 20 years ago which is best known for its work to produce materials for children and youth – games in Breton as well as books. In 2000 it launched the children's magazine *Louarnig*, followed by

Rouzig in 2001 and *Meuriad* in 2003. These monthlies for different age groups have some 500 subscribers each.

For more information contact: Keit Vimp Beo, 26 Grande rue, 29520 LAZ / Telephone: 02 98 26 87 12.

TV Breizh

TV Breizh was created in 2000 by TF1 and Patrick Le Lay and began airing with quite a bit of fanfare and high hopes that this would be a channel to truly serve the Breton language and culture. But this cable channel shifted to more general programming (lots of French and American films) in order to keep its ratings up. And it has succeeded in that, being rated the third most watched of some 150 cable stations.

While many in Brittany have been disappointed that TV Breizh has not been what they dreamed it could be, it has retained some Breton and Breton-language programming. It has 8 minutes of Breton language news at 8:30 at night and a weekly program on maritime events in Brittany. And it has made a commitment to produce films that are dubbed in Breton. Now in the works is the film "Lancelot" made by Jerry Zucker in 1994, and starring Sean Connery as King Arthur and Richard Gere as Lancelot – both speaking Breton. TV Breizh has also aired telefilms about Brittany and/or dubbed in Breton: "Marion de Faouët" and "L'Affaire Seznec." It has presented 340 hours of cartoons in Breton which certainly fills a void for children. And it aired 26 episodes of Perry Mason in Breton and will be airing 17 episodes of Columbo this fall. Can you imagine Columbo speaking Breton?

While this is all fine, the very limited amount of Breton in the media - radio and especially television - continues to be a source of concern to Bretons who recognize the importance of these for the future growth of the Breton language.

Diwan Skol Landerne

Lois Kuter

This Spring the Landerneau Diwan School celebrated its 20th anniversary with an evening of celebration on May 21st including music, a magic show, and theater - in Breton, evel just. The U.S. ICDBL has had a special relationship with Skol Diwan Landerne since 1992 when I was asked to be the school's "godmother." Sadly, I was not able to travel to Brittany this May to participate in this celebration, but the U.S. ICDBL was able to send a donation from the funds we have collected for the Diwan schools.

In the thank-you note I received from the school's students (along with a towel and apron on which self-portraits for the school's 56 students were printed) students outlined some of the activities of the past year - a trip to a museum about wolves in the Monts d'Arrées, a garden for "plantes oubliées," theater, dance, kayaking and movies in Breton among others.



A CD ROM included photos of other activities: a trip to see how cider is made, participation in a children's festival, a Christmas celebration, and a trip to the Arvorig FM radio station ... among other events. On this page are a few of those snapshots for you to enjoy.



As the summer draws to an end we wish Skol Diwan Landerne great success in the coming new school year.



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New Books from Brittany

Jean-Pierre Le Mat. History of Brittany – The Breton Point of View. Yoran Embanner. 2006. 255 pages. ISBN 2-991 4855-24-9.

Review by Karl Halaj

Perched at the western edge of continental Europe, Brittany has been the setting for a wide range of individual, social, political, religious and linguistic intrigue. Did the playing out of these drama lead to the development of a distinctive, local national identity in Brittany, or has Breton been simply a regional variation of a larger French identity? For Jean-Pierre Le Mat there is a 'Breton', independent of the 'French', whose roots extend into the distant reaches of the past and who continues to grow and even flower today.

The History of Brittany, the Breton Point of View seems to be author Jean-Pierre Le Mat's argument demonstrating the historical basis for a 'Breton national identity'. This book takes the reader through roughly 14,000 years of Breton history at a dazzling pace. At times Le Mat moves so quickly through his narrative that it becomes something of a list or outline of who's who in the making of the 'Breton Nation'. Interjected here and there are brief chapters that sometimes elucidate a connection between the 'list' and an important idea or movement. Also, at the head of each chapter the author provides a short timeline that places the material to be discussed in the context of the larger Celtic community and the world. The book closes with a 'post script' entitled "The Insufficient Nations". This is an article defining the term 'nation' and describing Brittany's potential role as an 'insufficient nation' on the world stage.

Although Jean-Pierre Le Mat provides a rather extensive list of the many important people and moments in history that support the notion of a distinctive 'Breton identity', he does not offer the reader enough detail about those events. Such superficial treatment of the history of Brittany makes it difficult for the reader to ever feel engaged. At the end of the book, the reader may indeed agree that the 'Breton national identity' is founded in a long history, but one will not likely see why such a question even matters.

Many of those who choose to read Jean-Pierre Le Mat's History of Brittany, the Breton Point of View will likely already have a notion or two about Brittany and its history. Mr. Le Mat misses an opportunity to lead them to a deeper understanding of this very interesting subject. His

book is not at all bad, just superficial. But then again, a light read may be just the thing on a long transatlantic flight...

Another point of View on Le Mat's History of Brittany

Review by Bob Arnebeck

I read Jean-Pierre Le Mat's companionable history of Brittany while sitting on my dock on the St. Lawrence River which is not that far away. Less than 400 years ago men in canoes passed by singing of St. Malo and Nantes, just a blink in time in Breton history which Le Mat begins tracing circa 14,000 years ago. They say those Breton voyageurs kept up a grueling pace, up to 55 paddle strokes a minute. As histories go, Le Mat keeps up a pace that equals that.: 14,000 years in 255 short pages. Le Mat can pull that off because he is a confident and good writer, spare with adverbs and even matter-of-fact when discussing the legendary King Arthur. He is not one to get nostalgic while piercing the mists of time.

The more you read the more you appreciate the way he directs you through the intricacies of Breton history. He is a man giving directions, not a puffy tour guide, and he gets you through several invasions of settlers and soldiers with just the facts. The strength and vitality of the nation in the making comes across without Le Mat doing any bragging. Just pointing out that most of the Roman soldiers putting down the rebellious Breton Bagaudes were Bretons themselves makes that point. Rome falls, and Le Mat traces a broad arc to the east, the boundary of Brittany, and notes the "borders of historical Brittany were created by the Franks." Not that the Bretons had to be hemmed in. They had no yen for hierarchy and hegemony. Frankish, then French ambition, overcame an initial fear of Bretons, hence fencing them out, so to speak, but then, building on misunderstandings sown by the Treaty of 497, they have by terror and guile made the shores of Brittany the western border of France.

The next thousand years are mostly the pageantry of kings, dukes and priests. Hemmed in by French and English feudal pretensions who actually controlled Brittany could be complicated. Le Mat doesn't get bogged down, though he relishes a sensible pair like the monk Yann and Alain Twisted-beard. The monk found the warrior who drove out the Normans. It was he who called himself Duke of Brittany rather than King, a "leader" rather than a sovereign. Here a digression on the implications of that might have been in order, but Le

Mat's pace doesn't slacken. Even when addressing the perfidy of Anne of Brittany bartering away Breton birthrights, he simply lays out the facts accompanied with a brief anathema - "her submission [to the King of France], despite whatever advantages she could obtain for herself, represented a fall, a decay." Then Le Mat moves on leaving much unsaid about this Eve, her apple, her Satan and the hapless Adamic nation.

Anne married the King of France in 1491, and that's about the halfway point of the book. It's also about the time of the birth of the modern age, the rise of the bourgeoisie and capitalism. Throughout the book Le Mat steps away from his chronology and characterizes the state of Breton society. This is a bit perfunctory early on, but Le Mat is sure handed as he moves closer to today. The first half of the book rounds up a few dozen likely saviors, and shows them wanting. However, Le Mat distills from the intentions of these failed Breton leaders, a valid and inextinguishable claim to nationhood. The second half of the book, while not neglecting the fast paced narrative flow, shows how that claim was shaped by epic battles between nation states, social classes, and globalization. The innate conservatism of largely rural Breton society gave it few cards to play during the French Revolution, 1848, and the two World Wars. But that backwardness made Breton culture attractive first to antiquarians and then to rebels against modern society. They too failed to create a Breton nation. Le Mat is evenhanded in discussing their extremism that led some to seek alliance with Hitler and some with Ho Chi Minh.

Then there are those rebels who found a refuge in Ireland. While written in English this book is geared more toward the British and Irish readers than the American. Le Mat provides a brief timeline of events in other parts of the Celtic world. And he briefly speculates on why the Irish managed a political and culture separation from England. English laws were worse than French. His metaphor to rope in the American reader is a bit unsettling: Bretons are "the Texans of Europe" with their agro-industry the equivalent of Texas oil. Le Mat does have that American trait of optimism. He describes no Breton golden age and instead finds possibilities for the Breton economy, culture, and even a Breton nation as European unity and globalization create on-going crises for nation states like France.

The book ends with two contrasting kaleidoscopes. In one, to end his history, Le Mat shows maps with the shifting boundary of Brittany with France over the ages, showing that the black shape to the west has been and is a solid enough fact on the ground to accompany the facts Le Mat has pulled out of time. The other kaleidoscope is an essay

on "the insufficient nations" in which Le Mat examines the concept and reality of nationality through various historians' lenses including quotes from the likes of Robbespierre and Stalin. Le Mat suggests that places like Brittany, Kosovo, and Catalonia, despite their cultural heritage, can't stand alone. But times are changing: "After the excesses of the total state during the 20th century, the ebb tide is now on. The history of nations is no longer the history of political structures, but of collective identities and shared adventures." This is a nice tour de force. By lining up the notions of terrorists on the side of the behemoths, Le Mat makes "insufficiency" seem like the moral high ground. Through time the Bretons have ducked the waves of history in a unique fashion be they feudalism, nationalism, capitalism, fascism, socialism or consumerism, and Bretons still have a place to stand and perhaps space to rise.

Tudi Kernalegenn. Luttès écologiques dans le Finistère – Les chemins Bretons de l'écologie (1967-1981). Yoran Embanner. 1006. 317 pages. ISBN 2-9521446-6-4.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This book is focused on the growth of an ecological consciousness and subsequent action to protect the environment in Brittany especially during the 1970s in the Department of Finistère in western Brittany. Just 26 years old (a political science instructor at the Université de Rennes 2 Haute-Bretagne and member of the Centre de Recherche sur l'Action Politique en Europe) Kernalegenn did not experience first-hand the period he presents. His research was based on newspaper reports, publications and tracts by various environmental groups in Brittany, documentary films of the period, meeting minutes of environmental groups and town councils, and interviews with individuals involved in the creation of environmental groups or in defense of their communities during this period. All those sources allow the author to look at the growth of a political edge to the defense of the environment (l'écologie politique) during this period with the growth of various organizations to protest and defend Brittany from nuclear power plant development, coastal oil spills, and *remembrement*, the tearing down of field hedges.

Two events were especially key in raising consciousness and the organization of wide protests in Brittany. First, the wreck of the old tanker Amoco Cadiz in March 1978 which followed a number of others in this period - Torrey Canyon in 1967, Olympic Bravery in 1976, Le Böhlen in 1976 - and which preceded others - Gino in 1979, Tanio in 1980 and most recently the Prestige in 2002. The second

event was the seven-year fight (which peaked in 1978-81) by the town of Plogoff to keep France from building a nuclear power plant next door. Plogoff and the evolution of the anti-nuclear movement in Finistère are given a big place in this book but tied in to a much bigger picture.

In this book Kernalegenn explores ecological problems and the way in which individuals and organized groups addressed them. In doing this he shows the emergence of a consciousness about the environment and its identification as Brittany's natural patrimony which is intimately tied to Bretons' protection of their cultural patrimony.

In the first chapter he lays out the beginnings of an ecological consciousness. In the 1950s horses were replaced by tractors and farmers chose to plant crops that were more lucrative financially. There was a strong push to modernize in the 1960s – to the detriment of Breton culture which was considered a hindrance to advancement. Some changes in farming practices were to the detriment of the environment. In the late 60s there's an intellectual backlash to the quest for more and more goods and wealth which will be echoed in the development of environmental organizations.

It was the wreck of the Torrey Canyon off the coast of Cornwall and Devon in 1967 with its 170,000 tons of oil that sparked a first real feeling of the need to actively defend the environment – as the inaction on the part of the government meant that the oil would reach Brittany's coast as well. This event showed clearly that “progress” had its costs. Concern for the environment did not suddenly appear in Brittany at the end of the 60s. Kernalegenn notes the earlier work of organizations like the SEPNB (Société pour l'Étude et la Protection de la Nature en Bretagne) founded in 1958 which mobilized naturalists whose scientific knowledge was used to propose policies to protect the environment. What was to grow from the 1960s was a more militant role to protest and oppose government policies that harmed the environment.

A number of examples are cited such as the APPSB (*Association pour la protection et la production du saumon en Bretagne*) which grew from a group of fishermen interested in keeping salmon in the rivers to a membership who took up the cleaning of waterways and who developed a consciousness of the pollution of rivers and the need to stop it. Another organization, Terroir Breton, was created to fight *remembrement*, the destruction of hedges to create huge farm fields – a policy urged by the Ministry of Agriculture which led to flooding and the loss of a cultural landscape where old names of

fields became meaningless. Through these and other examples Kernalegenn shows the growth of a Breton awareness during the period of 1967 to 1973 that economic and technological growth at all costs is not wise, and that the French administrators promoting this must be challenged.

This consciousness would prepare the way for the organization of anti-nuclear groups to contest the idea that France and Brittany need nuclear power to fuel growing consumption of energy. With France's identification of a half-dozen sites in Brittany for power plants (which would move around), groups were formed in the early 1970s to mobilize resistance – first by gathering information to inform people at potential sites of the dangers of nuclear energy. Groups called CRIN (*Comité Régional d'Information Nucléaire*) and CLIN (*Comité Local d'Information Nucléaire*) were formed to argue against nuclear plants from a standpoint of human health issues and impact on the environment. Not everyone was convinced that nuclear energy was a bad thing, but few wanted a nuclear plant in their back yard. Large protests took on a festival atmosphere and Bretons examined alternative energies as well as the need to cut wasteful use of energy.

By 1978 people of Finistère, and Bretons more widely, had become sensitive to a number of ecological issues, but the wreck of the oil tanker Amoco Cadiz in March 1978 was to be a “last straw” which would harden a feeling that Brittany needs to defend its environment and can hope for little from France. The slogan “*mazoutés aujourd'hui, radioactifs demain*” (“covered with oil today, radioactive tomorrow”) found widely at demonstrations and on posters and flyers would show the growing link made between different environmental concerns. If the French government could not defend its people from oil slicks then how could it defend them from nuclear power plant disasters. Any doubts about the safety of nuclear power in 1978 were certainly strengthened by the Three-Miles Island accident near Harrisburg, PA, in 1979.

1978 was the year the tiny town of Plogoff at the furthest point west on the Cap Sizun of southwestern Brittany was definitively chosen as the site for a nuclear plant. The town immediately re-mobilized and had time to study the fate of other proposed nuclear sites – especially the way the required “inquiry into public utility” (*enquête d'utilité publique*) was conducted. At some sites in France the inquiry was railroaded through despite public opposition and in one case construction began before the inquiry was even completed. Plogoff residents knew that when their mayor refused to house the inquiry in his office, the

inquiry would arrive in vans guarded by police. In 1980 when the inquiry started, the population of Plogoff and the Cap Sizun were prepared to set up barricades and provide constant harassment. Barrages of stones thrown at the vans were met with tear gas and arrests. Plogoff citizens would be supported by numerous anti-nuclear and ecological groups in huge demonstrations (100,000 at a demonstration in the spring of 1980) and the town would become a symbol of Breton resistance to French imposition of an unwanted nuclear plant. The fight to keep the plant out of Plogoff also spurred ecologists to research alternative energies, to find ways to consume less energy, and implement recycling. In 1981 with the election of François Mitterand to the presidency, Plogoff would be dropped. But it would definitely not be forgotten.

Besides describing vividly the action and growth of opposition to government policies and actions that were perceived as a threat to the Breton environment, Kernalegenn shows the evolution in thinking as Bretons move from a focus on specific causes – protecting salmon, or cleaning oil slicks – to a awareness that society must make a transition from the desire to profit from fast technological change to a life style that is not wasteful of natural resources. A unity in consciousness did not lead to the creation of one large ecological action group or even a successful federation of local groups, but it did allow for the effective mobilization of protestors and information needed to argue effectively against decisions imposed from the outside.

I found Chapter 6 of this book – the meeting of ecological and cultural concerns – of particular interest because it confirmed my research of Breton identity in the late 1970s. I spent a year in Brittany – fall 1978 to fall 1979 – as a graduate student looking at Breton identity as expressed in issues surrounding the Breton language and the renaissance of Breton music. I had no intention of studying the ecological movement but it was impossible to ignore the impact of Amoco Cadiz and Plogoff as events which pitched Bretons against the centralized French government and its imposition of decisions which threatened the Breton environment. In my doctoral dissertation I included just seven pages in a chapter on “Internal Colonialism” to ecological issues – black tides and nuclear power plants. An additional thirteen pages of the appendix were devoted to Plogoff – the role of the fest noz there, a chronology of events from 1974 to 1980 (when my dissertation was completed) and song texts composed about Plogoff. Of 515 pages, this was certainly a small amount of space to devote to this topic and my research was primarily second hand via newspaper and magazine articles. But, it was clear to me from my

experience in Brittany in the late 1970s that a movement to defend ecological concerns was linked to the forging of Breton identity.

As Kernalegenn points out, work to defend and promote the Breton language and culture in the 1970s paralleled and supported work in defense of the environment. In both cases Bretons fought against a movement to “modernize” at all costs – on the one hand economic development that threatened the natural patrimony of Brittany, and on the other, the imposition of a standardized “French” way of life that branded the Breton language and cultural traditions as backward and in the way of “progress.” Kernalegenn points out correctly that the renaissance of Breton culture seemed to give Bretons a confidence in their identity that carried over into their fight for their environment. And in confronting decisions-makers in Paris, Bretons became well aware that they were not always welcomed as patriotic citizens. The example is cited of some 80 town officials from the northern coast of Brittany who traveled to Paris after the wreck of the Tanio oil tanker in 1980 to meet with President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing. They met instead with 1,500 riot police. Concluding that France could care less about protecting the coasts of Brittany, the officials noted “We were French when we left for Paris, but we came back as Bretons.” There’s nothing like the undemocratic imposition of unpopular decisions from Paris to heighten a Breton’s sense of “us-them.” Like the battles waged by Bretons to protect their environment, the fight to put the Breton language into the schools during the 1970s helped to forge a strong Breton identity (Diwan’s first preschool opened in 1977).

Kernalegenn’s focus on a particular period and place (Finistère) allows him to present a lot of detailed information while telling an interesting story – and telling it well. Sixty-one pages supplement the text, adding chronologies of events, tracts from various groups, political cartoons, newspaper clippings, photos, posters and stickers, maps. Glossaries to identify various associations, a Breton-French listing of places and rivers in Finistère, a listing of sources, and a bibliography.

The fight to protect the Breton environment is far from over – there will be more “black tides” and the pollution of rivers is a major problem to which Breton farmers contribute every day. And the development of nuclear energy is still perceived to be a solution to energy needs. But this book underlines the evolution of a will in Brittany not just to protest and be a NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) but to come up with creative solutions to environmental problems.

Marcel Fournier. Les Bretons en Amérique française 1504-2004. Editions Les Portes du Large. 2005. 511 pages. ISBN 2-914612-19-2.

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

This is a massive work – both in terms of the information included and the size and weight of this book which measures 8 ½ x 11 inches in width and height and 1 ¼ inches in thickness. This study which focuses on pioneer families from Brittany in North America is based on two previous works by Fournier: *Dictionnaire biographique des Bretons en Nouvelle-France 1600-1765* (1981) and *Bretons en Amérique du Nord des origins à 1770* (1987),

In the first 80 pages of the book the author gives a history of European and French exploration of North America. We learn from this that Bretons were the first from France to visit North American shores as fishermen from 1504 on traveled to the rich fishing banks. Exploration by Jacques Cartier (a Breton from St. Malo) of the Gaspé (1534) and Saint Lawrence River (1535) marked the real start to French claims on North American land. It was not until settlement of a colony on Ile Saint Croix in 1604 and the founding of Quebec in 1608 by Samuel de Champlain that any permanent settlement could be claimed as successful.

The introductory chapters are very helpful in getting a grip on the complex history from the early 17th century to the mid 19th century where France, England and Spain jockeyed for possession of the same lands. And it is evident that many more came to explore or exploit the land than stayed to become pioneer families.

The history of French settlement is presented for three major regions. First to be presented is Nouvelle-France, the region in Canada making up the river valley of the Saint Lawrence, extending from the Gaspé peninsula to the Great Lakes. The book is rich with interesting statistics, although the author explains that it is impossible to be precise. He estimates that of some 30,000 individuals coming to Nouvelle-France from France (1620-1675), some 27,000 arrived safely. Of these, 14,000 stayed to live, and of those 4,600 remained single. There are records of marriage for some 9,200 emigrants and 6,200 of these had known children. An estimated 4.6% of pioneers established by marriage came from Brittany.

The second region – Acadia – was a changing territory but roughly composed the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton Island. The “Grande dérangement” was the exiling of French Acadians as English took control of this area, sending

them to various locations, including Louisiana as a big destination. While some Acadian pioneers were from Brittany, 40% were from the Poitou region of France.

Louisiana and Illinois is the third region of French settlement examined, and this included the whole Mississippi river basin and the Ohio River valley extending to the Great Lakes – a vast territory only thinly populated, in large part with forts and soldiers to protect the fur trade. Trading was a big part of life and in 1717 control of the region was given to the Compagnie d’Occident. Before that Louisiana had just 111 inhabitants. The arrival of 7,600 immigrants between 1717 and 1724 included a mix of people from France: 1,699 officers and soldiers, 2,452 conscripts, 1,278 people released from prison in France, 302 specialized workers, 119 shop owners, 1,205 women (many of dubious respectability) and 50 children. Poor living conditions and diseases like Yellow Fever took a large toll on new immigrants. In 1742 Louisiana had just 4,000 colonists and 2,000 slaves. In 1731 France retook the administration of the territory and named a governor. From 1758 to 1785 over 2,700 Acadians exiled from Canada would arrive, and France would send more troops to defend this vast territory, but they were woefully outnumbered by neighboring English, Spanish and Indian tribes. A Breton, Louis Billouart de Kerlérec would be the last governor from France for Louisiana (1753-1763). At the end of the Seven Year’s War, Louisiana territory was ceded to the English and to the Spanish who returned it to France in 1802 who sold it to the United States in 1803.

Chapter 5 takes the reader back to Brittany for a very brief historical overview of its early settlement and geographical/demographic layout. Of particular interest for those doing genealogical searches are explanations of place names and family names. The chapters which follow focus more specifically on the role of Bretons in emigration to North America. The author notes that of some 47,000 French who visited North America between the establishment of Acadia in 1604 and the end of the colonization of Louisiana in 1770, some 5% came from Brittany – 2,380 people (2,201 men and 179 women). Because origins cited in written records might not reflect place of birth, but just place of departure, numbers could be higher and statistics do not always add up.

The author notes that various written records show that 33% of the Bretons coming to North America were from the Ille-et-Vilaine with the rest fairly evenly spread in all other departments. Of the 2,380 Bretons, 1,545 were single and 835 married – the single population reflecting fishermen or soldiers/sailors who would not necessarily

settle in North America. The author's research further clarifies the occupations of this group as well as their presence in Acadia (16.6%), Nouvelle-France (73.95) and Louisiana/Illinois (9.5%).

In the chapter which follows, the author reviews the work of historians, archivists and genealogists to determine the specific origins of settlers in Canada –often with conflicting conclusions. He focuses on Bretons who established their presence in Canada by marriage records, and breaks down arrivals by time periods: 1621-1699, 1700-1765 (the period with the most – 397 of 630), 1766-1825 and 1826-1865.

While much of this book presents early settlers, the more recent time period is not forgotten and Chapter 8 examines emigration from France and Brittany in the post 1867 period when emigration companies were formed to encourage and organize settlement in Canada – especially after 1885 for settlement in western provinces. Motivation for departure to Canada and the U.S. was primarily the search for work and a better life, but the closing of Catholic schools and religious orders in 1901 and the 1905 act of Separation of Church and State in France also influenced decisions to seek religious freedom in the new world.

Although statistics are not precise, the author notes that an estimated 60,000 Bretons emigrated to North America since 1880 – 10,000 of these to Montreal alone. Portraits of just a few Bretons arriving in the past 50 years show the various motivations to emigrate and destinies of those who came to Canada.

While this 80-page introductory section can seem to just skim the surface in presenting five centuries of French and Breton exploration and settlement in North America, it certainly lays a good foundation to further study the Breton presence on this continent – especially in Canada.

The bulk of the book – pages 81-493 – is composed of portraits of individuals and families who settled in North America since 1504. This is of particular interest to those who might share a family name with any one of the over 250 people presented just briefly or in more detailed biographies. 115 three to four page portraits are included, and embedded in these are a great number of shorter notes on emigrants coming from the same town or city, members of the extended family, or emigrants with the same family name from other places in Brittany. Over half of those presented in longer portraits were born in the 17th century or before, with just a few (11) born in the 19th century.

Each portrait begins with a quick resume of an individual: “A soldier of the regiment of Carignan-Salières born in Abbaretz who fought the Iroquois in Nouvelle-France.” This is followed by the name and dates: “Louis Truchon dit Léveillé (1645-1724)” A brief history of the emigrant's town or city of birth or departure gives includes a listing of resources such as church registries from which a family history can be constructed. A family history traces the life of the pioneer profiled and gives information about their parents and descendants. These are not only of great interest to people who might share a family name but also interesting snapshots of the history of Breton emigration. Generous use of photography shows both the places of origin in Brittany as well as places of destination in North America, if not a portrait of the pioneer and family members. One gets a good sense of the variety of Bretons who made their way to North America – many soldiers and sailors (who often became farmers), fishermen, merchants, teachers, writers, fur traders, ship builders, missionaries, priests, millers, lawyers, etc.

For each family portrait sources of information are cited which would help one delve more deeply into a family history. 42 books and documents are cited in a bibliography at the back of the book along with archival resources and websites for genealogical research. Those seeking a particular name will find an index of the over 250 individuals cited briefly or in more depth in the book. An index by place names of towns and cities in France, Brittany, and North America allows one to search for people by their point of departure, stay-over, or final destination.

While the focus of this book is on early explorers and settlers of the 17th and 18th century – and particularly for Canada – this is a fascinating collection of biographical information and a must-have book for those who are descendants of Breton pioneers who settled North America.

Four other new books on Breton Emigration and World Travel

I have not seen the books below but from short reviews I have seen, they all look well worth a read.

André Salles. Un Mandarin Breton au service du roi de Cochinchine. Les Portes du Large (9 rue Charles Duclos, 35000 Rennes). 224 pages.

This is a history of Jean-Baptiste Chaigneau, a naval officer who spent 30 years at the beginning of the 19th

century serving the Emperor Gia-Long of Annam (future Viet-Nam).

Daniel Raphalen. L'Odysée de Port-Breton. Les Portes du Large. 288 pages.

This book details a failed commercial enterprise launched in 1877 by Charles du Breil de Rays to colonize an island in the Pacific near New Guinea. Some 600 adventurers set off for Port-Breton – 150 of whom were killed by native peoples or tropical diseases. De Rays was accused of putting together a scam and the book details the controversy surrounding this enterprise in the context of French politics of the day.

Olivier Le Dour, Grégoire Le Clec'h. Les Bretons dans la ruée vers l'or de Californie. Les Portes du Large. 576 pages.

This book is about Bretons participating in the Gold Rush of California in the mid 1800s. Gold attracted many who hoped to strike it rich, and among them a number of Bretons who met with varied success and tragedy.

Josette Jouas, Christian Le Corre, Christiane Jamet. Ces Bretons d'Amérique du Nord. Collection Mémoires, Editions Ouest-France. 125 pages.

This is a richly illustrated history of Breton emigration to North America, focusing on individual stories related through memoirs and correspondence about their experiences.

A FEW NEW BOOKS ON GOUREN, CELTIC WRESTLING OF BRITTANY

Noted by Lois Kuter

Guy Jaouen. Les Luittes Celtiques de Bretagne et du Cornwall – du jeu au sport? Editions Confédération FALSAB * 224 pages. (FALSAB, Route Ste. Noyale, Salle Artus, 56920 Noyal Pontivy / falsab.noyal@wanadoo.fr)

This book is about the unique styles of Celtic wrestling in Brittany and Cornwall, set in a history of social situations in which competitions took place. Celtic wrestling is characterized as a style where the two competitors are standing and, through various holds, attempt to get the opponent to the ground. Earliest references to it in Brittany date back to the 14th century, but its affinity with wrestling dating back much earlier in the Celtic countries

means that it was most likely found in Brittany well before that time.

Jaouen, who has written a number of books on gouren and traditional sports of Brittany, goes back to the earliest sources of information about wrestling in Brittany – writings on rules and styles, instruction manuals and iconographic representations. The book includes a detailed look at wrestling in 19th century Cornwall and its parallel evolution in England and other countries. The practice of wrestling in Brittany in the 19th century is also examined with a look at its promotion in the context of the Breton Movement and promotion of traditional Breton culture. Gouren has been viewed as an important element of Breton identity, and a federation to support it and unique Breton sports was established in 1930, with the founding in 1985 of an international federation for Celtic wrestling.

* FALSAB = Fédération des Amis des Luittes et Sports Athlétiques Bretons

Lena Gourmelen, Jean-Daniel Bourdonnay, Photos by Eric Legret. Gouren, luittes et défis d'un sport Breton. Coop Breizh. 142 pages.

This is a richly illustrated history of gouren, looking at its depiction in literature and art. Included are reproductions of paintings and engravings by artists such as Gauguin, Lucien Simon, Olivier Perrin, and Mathurin Méhuet, as well as post cards from the early 1900s and more recent photography to capture the action and social context of this style of wrestling unique to Brittany.

Two Magazines of Note

Hekleo ar c'hoarioù. Confédération FALSAB.

This 50-60 page annual magazine features traditional games of Brittany (boules, throwing games, and feats of strength of many varieties) including articles on the history of such games, and their variation in other countries. Also included are contest results and the activities of organizations throughout Brittany promoting and practicing these games.

Gouren Infos. Fédération de Gourin (www.gouren.com)

This 20-page magazine comes out twice a year and is made up primarily of contest results, but also includes some more general articles about Breton wrestling and its history and continuing evolution. From the pages of this magazine it is evident that this unique sport is very popular in Brittany today.

Some New Books In (and About) The Breton Language (and Gallo)

The following information is based on reviews and notes in the following Breton magazines: *Al Liamm* 355 (April 2006) & 356 (May 2006) / *Ar Men* 152 (May-June 2006) & 153 (July-Aug. 2006) / *Bremañ* 297/298 (July-Aug. 2006). Because most of these reviews are in Breton, it is a great exercise and challenge for me as a learner to try to read them, so my apologies for any descriptions of books that are way off the mark! – Lois Kuter

Mich Beyer. *Seizh devezh warn-ugent.* Al Alarc'h Embannadurioù. 136 pages. ISBN 2-95202 38-6-7
This is the day-to-day account of 27 days in the life of Ludo and the changing emotions in his relationship to Rachel.

Yvonne Cadiou and Jean Roparz. *Yehed d'an oll! Hemañ 'zo 'vond da goll!* Emgleo Breiz.
This is a selection of proverbs collected in the area of Lokmaria-Plouzane and Lokournan (an area just west of the city of Brest).

Patrick Deriano. *Grammaire du Gallo.* Editions Label LN. 460 pages.
A first grammar of Gallo – the unique language of eastern Brittany – which will serve as an important tool for learners and teachers of this language who want to better understand its structure.

Stratis Doukas. *Istor ur prizionad.* Skrid. 80 pages. ISBN 2-9525135-1-1.
Translated from Greek by Alan Botrel, this is the memoirs of a Greek soldier taken prisoner in 1922 during Ottoman wars in Asia Minor.

Yann Fulub Dupuy. *Par dibar.* An Alarc'h Embannadurioù.
This book concerns a young man and his search for his own unique personality that can lead the reader on a reflective trip of their own.

Yann-Eñvel Kervoas. *Al levrioù e brezhoneg evid ar vugale.* Emgleo Breiz. 222 pages.
This was originally a university dissertation surveying Breton language books for children written from 1901 to 2002. While it does not include magazines for children which have been a rich Breton language medium, it does provide a listing of publishers and the number of books they published giving a good idea of the changes that occurred over the years. Three volumes (?) of this study present (will present?) the quantity of books produced: 344 titles for story books, 73 novels, and 70 comic books.

Yann-Vadezour Lagadeg. *Ar vastardez.* Emgleo Breiz.
This is a novel about the difficult life of a woman who has a child out of wedlock in a country where death can be better than such dishonor.

Langleiz. *Koroll ar marv hag ar vuhez / Danse de la vie et de la mort.* Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. 80 pages.
This is a bilingual play first published in 1938 for the journal SAV by the very well known Breton language writer Xavier de Langlais (1906-1975).

Patrick Le Besco. *Le Breton de Belle-Ile-en-Mer.* Emgleo Breiz. 242 pages.
This is an augmented re-edition of Le Besco's study of Breton spoken in Belle-Ile-en-Mer first published in 1945. Belle-Ile is located off the south coast of Brittany below the Quiberon peninsula.

Herve Lossec. *Friko Yannig Pennkaled.* Emgleo Breiz.
This the first Breton language book by this author, and it is a light-hearted tale where truth is hard to untangle from imagination.

Per-Mari Louz and Bernard Kabon. *An Amzer laeret.* Skol Vreizh.
This book is about the life of a Breton prisoner in Austria during World War II, recounted from memory by Per-Mari Louz and taken down on paper by Bernard Kabon.

Pierre Emmanuel Marais, will illustrations by Yann Quemeneur. *Nantes/Naoned – Guide historique et culturel.* Yorann Embanner.
This is a little bilingual guide (French-Breton) to the city of Nantes and its Breton identity for tourists or anyone who wants to learn more about this city its central place in Breton history.

Mikael Madeg. *Feuteunioù brudet Bro-Leon.* Emgleo Breiz.
This is a study of 169 fountains in Bro Leon. Fountains and springs are not just watering holes in Brittany (or other Celtic countries), so studies of their Breton names are important in understanding their spiritual and historical importance.

Mikael Madeg, Per Pondaven and Yann. Riou. *Anoioù badiziant Bro Leon.* Emgleo Breiz.
This is a study of Breton first names given in place of official names for people in the Leon region.

Jacques Poullaouec and Pierre Converset (illustrations). *Haïku des pierres.* Apogée.
This is a collection of art and photography of the standing stones of Carnac with haiku poetry in four languages – French, Breton, English and German.

Titeuf, Keño, bed kriz. Zep Bannoù-Heol. 48 pages.
Titeuf is one of a number of very popular comic book characters in France who now speaks Breton. This particular transformation is thanks to work of students at the Diwan Middle School in Relecq-Kerhuon.

Wales and Brittany ... and Pottery

Kathy Talbot

Links between Wales and Brittany are both extensive and varied, but the evidence for a relationship in the field of ceramics remains elusive. The cockerel plates produced at the Llanelly Pottery in South Wales in the early twentieth century have become highly collectable and reach good prices in auctions. However, the origin of the motif is not certain. Several suggestions have been made, including copying of Wemyss ware from the east coast of Scotland or the motto ware of South Devon, potteries with which Llanelly had contacts. However, the story persists that the cockerel motif used in Llanelly was copied from the products of HB Henriot in Quimper. It is certain that stylistically the cockerel motifs are very similar, although the Llanelly ones are rather more naively painted and were possibly the work of one female decorator, Sarah Roberts or Aunt Sal.



It is evident from recent visits to the HB Henriot factory in Quimper as well as the Musée de Faïence that the cockerel was not as frequently used a motif as the male and female figure in Breton dress (which now a days appears on every possible tourist object from biscuit tins to key fobs), and while the contacts between Wales and Brittany included tourism it seems unlikely that a small purchase would have led to the image being copied in Llanelly. Unlike the HB Henriot pottery, the Llanelly Pottery has not survived and closed in 1922. The works having now disappeared beneath a shopping complex. However, the importance of the cockerel motif was shown when a local furniture store, seeking an image for its

centenary celebration commemorative plates in 1983 chose the cockerel, executed on plates in the same, earlier style. Never offered as tourist items, these proved very popular and were purchased as mementos and gifts to be sent to expatriate Welsh, as far as America, Botswana, Russia and Australia.

Although the link between Quimper and Llanelly remains unproven, it is interesting to observe that the cockerel motif, which of itself has a rich history based in pre-Roman and pagan chronicles as well as Christian, is so often and widely found. However, it is remarkable how small pieces of decorated ceramic can universally have connotations of identity and place.

More Information Please: I am a PhD student researching hand painted ceramic decoration in the early twentieth century. My particular interest is in the South Wales Pottery or Llanelly Pottery which operated in the town of Llanelli, South Wales (UK) from 1840 to 1920. It has always been part of the folk lore related to the pottery that their distinctive 'cockerel' design was 'copied' from work by HB Henriot, Quimper. Links between Wales and Brittany are extensive and very varied and to further my research and establish a ceramic connection, I recently visited the Factory and the Museum in Quimper. I found that there are strong stylistic similarities between the cockerel used at Quimper and that at Llanelly. The cockerels, which usually face left, are loosely painted with fine tails, standing on a ground and with a bush or flowers on the left. However, the cockerel is not the most common of motifs used in Quimper ware but has become iconic of Llanelly ware and I have not found any real reasons or links that would have resulted in Llanelly copying the motif. I would be most interested to receive any comments and will be happy to provide further information.

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Deep Inside a breton skull

11 - The Commana menhir

Jean-Pierre Le Mat

The mist is vanishing in the morning light. The crests of the Are Mountains, sparkling with dew, appear under the caress of the sun. In the fields, around the village of Commana, the men plough and sow. From time to time they straighten their back. On the slopes, oaks, beeches and gorse bushes are growing. The heather flowers stain the rocks with their mauve color.

Gurvan observes attentively the comings and goings of the Romans. They are busy around the old menhir which stands in the middle of the village. They are engraving it, to make a boundary stone out of it. They are marking the road which goes from Vorgium to the western sea. The foreigners are afraid of getting lost, in this country of forests and moors. There are Breton mercenaries among the Roman soldiers, and their language is not very different from ours. They are nice, but rather quirky fellows. Today the weather is nice, and Gurvan smiles.

In the big city, the Gauls are mixing with their conquerors. Everyday business is going on for the shopkeepers, and the armed soldiers watch the passers-by. They know nothing about the village of Commana. The masters of the city want only to know about the boundary stones they raise along the roads and the borders. There is probably an anonymous report about this menhir, which marks out a Roman road in faraway Armorica. Maybe.

Today, like yesterday, the mist is vanishing in the morning light. The crests of the Are Mountains, sparkling with dew, appear under the caress of the sun. The men of Commana are at work. Gurvan straightens his back. He wipes up the sweat streaming on his face. He glances round towards the small group of Christian monks. They are busy, over there, in the middle of the village. They are carving a cross on top of the old menhir. These monks are peaceful, and the village offered them hospitality. They are also funny people. They speak a lot, about the



gods, the remote countries, the wonders of the paradise. At night, near the hearth, the people of Commana listen to the monks, while eating hot chestnuts. In the fire dry branches are cracking. Flames are dancing their magic farandole. When the embers are blackening, everyone goes to sleep.

Gathered in the big city, the churchmen are looking anxiously for divine truth. They want to offer power, glory and wealth to their God. They work out plans, sharpen their words, bring their thoughts under control. The Latin songs rise above the roofs, up to the sky. In the castles, the warriors are training and drilling for a conquest war.

This still morning, the mist is vanishing slowly. The crests of the Are Mountains are outlined on the horizon. The heathers cling to cracks of rocks. The men are going to and fro. They are busy in their fields. His fork on his shoulder, Gurvan is walking through the village place. He stops, and looks at the paper stuck up on the menhir. Gurvan does not understand what is written there; in French, maybe in Latin. It must be about new taxes. When the King of France needs money, he usually requests a part from the Commana people. We give him what we have gathered, keeping for ourselves only what is needed to eat. The King's agents come to collect the money. Their arrogance is like a bad rain that the summer drives out. Sometimes, they make violent war on us. The King's soldiers come, they slaughter men and women. The Commana peasants are fierce and proud people; in their turn, they burn and kill. But always time passes. Life goes on, from sowing to harvest and from harvest to sowing. The dead people are buried in the cemetery, around the church.

In the big city, lords and princes are bending in front of the King. They enthusiastically accept everything coming from him: a glance, whether it be of disdain; a word, whether it be scornful. Around the king's castle, the narrow streets are swarming with poor people. They are excited, they shout, they laugh, they cry. They live in dreams and misery. Behind the large walls of their houses, traders calculate their gains and gather fortune. Through their windows, they look at the excitement, down in the street. They are suspicious, but attentive to the mob's strength.

Up on the crests, the mist is vanishing. Between the sky and the moor, the gorse bushes are yellow, and the heather flowers are mauve. In the fields, the men plough and sow. Gurvan looks at a group of young people



who pack their bags, and pile them up at the foot of the menhir. They are leaving for war. The Republic wants them, and they are going away. The Republic needs their courage, their flesh and their blood. A little few of them will come back. They will be celebrated because they were true heroes, the dead and the survivors. At night, war stories will be told. The men of Commana will be remembered, because they were not afraid of death. The little children will listen, open mouthed. In the fire, the dry branches will crack and the flames will dance.

The big city is at the height of its fame. Its people enjoy all the resources of their wits. There are among them delicate poets, deep scientists, wise bankers. Here lives the flower of humanity. The city is becoming a buzzing hive. The pedestrians walk on the pavements. The

cars run on asphalt. Everything is organized with a frightening effectiveness.

The night scatters. The crests of the Are Mountains appear from the mist. In fields, around the village of Commana, the men plough and sow. From time to time they stop, and look around them. Oaks, beeches and gorse bushes are growing nearby. The heather flowers stain the rocks with their mauve color.

Gurvan reads the panel close to the old menhir. There will be an election soon. The democracy is asking the Commana people to send representatives. There is no reason for denying that. The men and the women of Commana will vote. They will send representatives to Quimper, to Rennes, to Paris, to Brussels, or elsewhere. Each time it is necessary, they are going to drop off their ballot paper.

Life continues, of course, from sowing to harvest and from harvest to sowing. In the evening, we shall eat warm chestnuts while watching TV or playing dominoes. In the fireplace, flames are dancing their magic farandole.

Those of the big city are seeking the attention of Commana's folks. They require their attention. They use all their resources of power and seduction. They parade their seriousness and their frivolity. They thrash about, on television screens and in the loudspeakers of radios, like shipwrecked men.

Gurvan switches off the device and puts his Wellington boots. The harvest starts today. The children of Commana enjoy themselves in the village square. The girls are playing troadig-kamm, while the boys have fun, shouting out bravely. The Breton language blooms, joyful and clear. I stay, looking at them for a while. The crests of the Are Mountains, sparkling with dew, appear under the caress of the sun.

I am Gurvan. I am old and young. Deep in my skull, I know that here, in the shade of the old menhir, childish lips echo the murmur of eternity.

New Music from Brittany

CD reviews by Lois Kuter

Jeannette Maquignon - Chanteuse du Pays de Redon. Dastum. Grand interprètes de Bretagne 1. Dastum DAS 148. 67'09.

What better way for Dastum to launch a new series of CDs than with this wonderful tribute to a woman who did so much to pass along the rich song heritage of the Redon area of Gallo Brittany. Personal reflections about Jeannette Maquignon and a wealth of photos that make up the first 20 pages of the CD notes serve to introduce her very effectively - not only her significant role in passing along her wealth of song to younger singers, but also her vivid personality and strong character.

Born in 1906 near Ruffiac in a family of farmers she lost her father to World War I. She was married in 1934 to Auguste Robert and moved to Saint-Martin-sur-Oust to remain a farmer, and when he was mobilized for World War II she would take charge of the farm as many Breton women did. Auguste Robert would die in the 1960s to leave her alone again. But Jeannette was always surrounded by friends, and the door of her home was always open to visitors.

She had a reputation not only for her singing but for her hospitality and sense of humor. Those who stopped in to see her included not only close friends and young singers, but ethnomusicologists and university scholars, as well as musicians from all over the world who might be performing in Brittany. She was generous with her time and with her song - "Il ne faut pas être ingrat, il faut savoir redonner ce que l'on a reçu." ("One must not be ungrateful, one must know how to re-give what one has received.")

I was among her many visitors and my one visit was in November 1978 when I was in Brittany for a year doing research for my doctoral dissertation on Breton identity and its reflection in language and music of Brittany. I was introduced to Jeannette by Albert Poulain, another legendary singer and storyteller of Gallo Brittany. Since we would be heading in different

directions after the visit to Jeannette's farm "Clôtures," I followed him in my car - a hair-raising 65-miles-per-hour drive down narrow country roads in a drizzling rain. To this day I wonder if Albert was hoping to lose me along the way or if this was truly the driving norm! In any case, we arrived safely and found Jeannette out in the fields behind her house with a small work crew pulling up beets (betteraves). We joined in, and the small amount of work left was quickly finished. And I took a seat like countless others at her kitchen table as she and Albert talked and joked and laughed. I was timid, and frankly had no idea what questions I should be asking as a university student seeking the secrets to the definition of "Breton identity." No matter how bold I might have been, it would have been hard to get a word in edgewise in any case. I learned far more by listening to these two talk about songs and the famous song contest of the area, the Boque d'Or, than I could have with any questions.

Jeannette's famous hospitality was certainly in evidence as we drank a "petit coup" (of red wine) followed by a round of coffee and then a pear liqueur. Departure was not easy but Albert Poulain could use me as an excuse to leave so that Jeannette could prepare for dinner guests. Without asking any scholarly questions, what I learned from such brief encounters with singers such as Jeannette Maquignon and Albert Poulain was that Breton culture was alive and well in eastern Brittany as well as in the "west" -where rural Breton speakers were all-too-often viewed as the "true Bretons." And I learned that the transmission of song from one generation to the next was indeed effectively working - not so much through any formal music classes, but through the forging of social relationships (gatherings around kitchen tables) and through local festivals and contests where people of all ages and talents shared song and stories.

I was just an outside observer who had only a superficial look at things, but it didn't take a genius to recognize the wealth of tradition in the Pays de Redon and the important role singers like Jeannette Maquignon played as individuals and as supporters of organizations like the Groupement Culturel Breton des Pays de Vilaine which produced this CD with Dastum.

The CD includes a 25 selections of songs, an interview about singing and learning songs, and a story: "The true story of the goat of Clôtures [Jeannette's farm] and the mailman of Saint-Martin-sur-Oust." The selections on the CD were chosen by friends and admirers who knew her repertoire well. They show off her wonderful low voice - especially her very powerful style of singing ballads which are featured on the CD. There are also songs for dancing, "marches," and song just for amusement. Many selections are quite short - less than two minutes - but all add to a whole which characterizes Jeannette's voice and style very well. Some recordings are less than perfect in terms of sound quality but reflect beautifully the social setting in with a song was sung - especially the response songs where Jeannette urges all present to repeat her verses. Her laughter is very much present, and this CD is a great homage to a singer who had a big impact on the lives of many other singers in the Redon area.

Jeannette Maquignon died in 1998, twelve years after she began to lose her memory at the age of 80 and needed to be hospitalized. This CD brings her remarkable voice back to life after a long absence, and the introductory notes by close friends Jean-Bernard Vighetti and Jean-Louis Latour bring her personality to life again as well. I met her only briefly and heard her sing only a few times during my stay in Brittany, but she remains a vivid memory and I was inspired, like many others, by her strength of character as well as her powerful voice.

Bagad Kemper. *Collection*. Keltia Musique. KMCD 174. 72'54. (www.bagad-kemper.org)

Readers of Bro Nevez should need no introduction to the unique musical ensemble of Brittany called the bagad. But if you do, briefly stated, this is a band patterned after Scottish bagpipe bands which includes not only Scottish style bagpipes and a drum section (snare, tenors and bass) but also bombardes. And it is the addition of the bombarde that makes all the difference, in bringing into this band the unique back-and-forth responsive style of playing that you find in the traditional pairing of biniou kozh and bombarde and in singing for dances of Brittany (in both the Breton language tradition of western Brittany and the Gallo tradition of eastern Brittany).

The bagad was "invented" and grew rapidly in the early 1950s in Brittany. While many of the bagadoù of this period disappeared, others - like Bagad Kemper - are still active today. And, of course, many new bagadoù have been established since. Today in Brittany there are over 60 bagadoù who compete in annual championships in five different levels. Bagad Kemper is in the top level and has won 18 to 20 championships (depending on your information source) to be crowned the best of Brittany. That alone should tell you that this is a CD well worth a listen.

While the heart of the repertoire for any bagad of Brittany has always been marches, airs, and dances of Brittany, from the beginning these ensembles have also included music from the other Celtic countries, Eastern Europe, and an increasing number of compositions. It is one thing to arrange non-Breton music for performance by a bagad, but today the top bagadoù incorporate a wealth of different instruments - beyond the bagpipe, bombarde and drum section - as well as guest artists in new compositions and highly innovative arrangements of Breton and world music. This CD is not a "collection" intended to present a representative sampling of performance highlights by the Bagad Kemper, but a collection of innovative collaborations by the Bagad Kemper with other artists of Brittany and the world. The Bagad Kemper has been considered somewhat "conventional," but in recent years it has taken a very adventurous route in performing with singers, guitar players, gaita players, brass ensembles and orchestras, tackling a variety of styles and world beats.

Selections on this CD come from recordings made from 1995 to 2004. While roughly half of the music on the CD evokes a Breton tradition, you hear what a bagad can do with Galician dances, English pop music, a Brazilian beat, and a Celtic-Arab fusion. Not only is the Bagad Kemper capable of innovative work, but the guest artists they work with here are top of the line. From Brittany, they invite singer Marthe Vassalo, guitarist Gilles Le Bigot and the Dominique Delahoche brass ensemble for a suite a gavottes. Gilles Le Bigot and Ludovic Mesnil on guitars with Erwan Volant on electric bass join the bagad in three selections, and Kemper joins one of Brittany's best known traditional

singers, Denez Prigent on a selection from his 2000 CD *Irvi*. To close the CD you have the bagad performing from a 1995 recording with Dan ar Braz and musicians of the very popular *Héritage des Celtes*.

Stepping outside Brittany, the bagad is invited by the Asturian (Spain) gaita player Hevia to perform on his CD *The Other Side* (2000) in performance with Suhail Serghini and the Prague Symphony Orchestra for a very interesting Arabic-Celtic fusion. You hear another gaita player Susana Seivane - this time from Galicia - in performance with the bagad for a suite of xota, dances from Galicia. While it is very common for Bretons to collaborate with fellow Celts from Galicia and Asturias, it is much less common for them to work with rock stars from South Africa - in this case Johnny Clegg. On a recording from 1999, he performs with the bagad his song "Emotional Allegiance," based on a song from India which Clegg heard in 1969 on a recording by Pete Seeger - talk about world travels.

This CD reflects the world travels done by the Bagad Kemper. It reflects the fact that the best of Breton musicians are passionately rooted in the traditions of Brittany (and their own particular corner of Brittany) while being perfectly comfortable and competent in exploring a range of traditions and rhythms from all over the world.

Nine of the 15 selections on this CD are drawn from the Bagad Kemper's CDs *Hep Diskrog* (1999) and *Sud - Ar Su* (2004), so if you have heard those CDs much of this collection will sound familiar. But these nine selections are worth hearing again and the whole collection is a tribute to the innovative talent of the Bagad Kemper and the happy explorations Breton musicians are making in rearranging their own traditional sounds and in working creatively with musicians of another beat.

Not only is this a great CD of innovative music by one of Brittany's best bagads, but you also get a DVD recording by France 3 Ouest of the bagad's performance of their suite "Azeliz iza" at the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient in 2001. Sadly, I do not have a DVD player that can handle the different setting for DVDs from France or Europe. Like video-cassettes, there are incompatibilities built in by the movie

industry, so before you purchase Breton DVDs look into a DVD player that can be set up to play them.

Dremmwel. *Lañs*. CD DREM 03. 66'12.
(www.dremmwel.com)

This CD was recorded in 2005 to mark the 20th anniversary of Dremmwel, a group that has performed a great deal, but has recorded just three CDs. The group is composed of Daniel Cadiou on guitar, Dominique Le Guichaoua on button accordion and biniou, Marin Lhopiteau on Celtic harp and fiddle, René Marchand on bombardes, tin whistle and veuze, and Eric Savina with various percussions. For this CD there are also a number of guests to enrich the sound.

Traditional singer Louise Ebrel joins the group for five of the fourteen selections, and for me these are the highlights of the CD. Leading off is the light-hearted song "Matilin" learned from her father about a mill owner who uses a more handsome but wrong material to build his mill. The gwerz (ballad) "An dragon bihan" is about a young woman yearning for her solider who has gone off to Italy. This beautiful melody is nicely augmented by harp and accordion and a mournful veuze (the bagpipe of the southeastern corner of Brittany). Louise Ebrel also sings "Ar sac'h ler," in homage to the biniou and its role in making young people dance to the dismay of the clergy. "Feunteun ar wasaleg" is an interesting string of traditional song texts and melodies with an innovative instrumental accompaniment by Dremmwel. The fifth song interpreted by Louise Ebrel is a more modern text - like the others, in the Breton language - composed by Mikaël Kerne.

Another guest on the CD is Pascal Lamour who adds an electronic beat and depth of sound to "Taol Lañs," a suite of dances from the Vannetais tradition where biniou and bombarde are paired. Over all, there is a nice variety on the CD with traditional dances and slower melodies from the Breton tradition as well as compositions including the meandering "Troellenn" ("spirals"). The CD ends with a raucous combination of Dremmwel with Les Repris de Justesse, a New Orleans style brass band, for a rarely performed dance from the Nantes area called the "galop nantais" - this is definitely a fun romp.

The jacket notes provide an introduction to the songs in French, Breton and English, as well as words to the songs in Breton. To their credit Dremmwel also uses Breton (and English) for credits and listings of instruments in the jacket notes.

At times arrangements by Dremmwel are refreshingly innovative in combining instrumental sounds, but at other times the band has a very "70s" sound - brought on for me by a plodding beat of a drum set and too-regular rhythm from an electric guitar. At times the instrumental arrangements for dances seemed a bit slow and tedious, but Dremmwel is definitely a band that has a lot of character and a unique sound. Congratulations on 20 years of contributions to the Breton music and dance scene, on stage and also off.

Didier Squiban. *La Plage*. L'OZ Production L'OZ 45. 53'09

Didier Squiban is a conservatory trained pianist with a love for jazz. His musical influences are varied and certainly include traditional Breton music at the heart. He has composed two symphonies - *Symphonie Bretagne* in 2002 and *Symphonie Iroise* in 2004, He has recorded a dozen CDs of solo piano or work in collaboration with other artists, most notably, for me, pairing with singer Yann Fañch Kemener. Much of his music is inspired by maritime Brittany and its coasts and many islands.

This CD, "The Beach," is also of a maritime theme and includes four different segments of varying length. "Quatour les sept-iles" is made up of seven shorter selections of varying moods - some with the beat of an *an dro* or a hint of a traditional Breton melody, arranged or newly composed by Squiban in his unique style. "Suite marine" has three segments including the CD's title "La Plage." "Sonate en Trio" - called "Da lec'h all" is a nine-minute trio of piano, bass fiddle, and drums. "Coda" is the fourth and final piece which ends the CD on a meditative note.

While the piano of Didier Squiban is center stage on this CD, and some of the music is in many respects quite similar in overall sound to his solo piano recordings, this CD takes a new turn in Squiban's work

with his collaboration with three musicians: Bernard Le Dréau on saxophones, Simon Mary on bass fiddle, and Jean Chevalier with various percussions. This CD definitely has a jazzier feel to it, and while one could listen to the piano and immediately recognize it as "Squiban," there's a very new feel to it all. In all his recordings there is always an element of jazz in Squiban's improvisational style, but he cuts loose a bit more in many of the selections on this CD so the music is not just "jazzy" but jazz. There is variety in the moods and swings to the music on this CD and a freshness to the sound of Squiban's fine piano-playing as he indulges in his love for jazz, and jams with some great instrumentalists.

Gayane. *He brings you flowers*. Keltia Musique KMCD 165. 60'29.

Gayane is a young singer from the Alsace region of eastern France (with some Bretons in the family tree) whose first CD has been released by Keltia Musique, a recording company that knows a good thing when it sees it. Described as folk-rock-Celtic in style, she is indeed a bit of all of that with a vocal style akin to contemporary singers from Ireland. Her voice is not easily described. It can be high and ethereal, with a very free movement reminiscent of the voices of Joni Mitchell or Joan Baez, and at other times she displays a forceful throatier style reminiscent of Native American singing. At other times she can take her voice on a jazzy rant. It is certain that Gayane has a strong voice - always melodious and in control no matter how freely she soars.

While Gayane started her career solo with a guitar, for this CD she is surrounded by some great musicians from Brittany and the accompaniment is perfect for the varying moods of the songs, supporting Gayane's voice and allowing her to roam freely with it. Musicians include Hilaire Rama on bass, Patrick Boileau on percussion, Jean-Claude Normant on keyboard, and Claude Ziegler on guitar ... among others.

The music is written by Gayane to song texts by Thierry Roehrig. Two of the songs are in French - translated from English - and ten are in English with the final song a mix of the two. So why are the songs in English? Not because Gayane has dreams of becoming

the next American Idol, but simply because she feels this is the best language for her voice. Clearly her singing in French is also fine.

The dominant theme of the songs is love - the healing power of finding a true love, loneliness in the absence of a loved one, and anger/tears with the discovery of a cheating heart. Songs evoke feelings of longings, fears and dreaming - embracing the wonders of the world, gazing at clouds, and feeling rain come down. The overall feel to the music is folksy and gentle, but there is a harder edge and drive to the beat as well. Gayane's voice is "pretty" but highly expressive, able to evoke a range of emotions found in the song texts.

CD notes include the song texts, but sadly no information about this singer who is a very hot ticket item in Brittany this summer.



HEARD OF, BUT NOT HEARD

Information about the new releases below was compiled from reviews and notes in the following Breton magazines: *Ar Men* 152 (mai-juin 2006) & 153 (July-Aug. 2006) / *Armor* 436 (May 2006) & 437 (June 2006) / *Ar Soner* 381 (3rd Trim. 2006) / *Bremañ* 297/298 (July-Aug. 2006) / *Musique Bretonne* 196 (May-June 2006) & 197 (July-Aug. 2006).

Bilikenn. *De tous côtés.* Gallomusic GAM 002.
Singer Betty Morin with musician Alban Sorette on sax, guitars, keyboards, percussion, with a repertoire from the Presqu'île Guerandaise to the Loudéac regions of eastern Brittany.

Carré Manchot. *Laÿoul!* Créon Music.
(www.carre-manchot.com)
This is a recording to celebrate the 20th anniversary of this very popular fest-noz band.

Dastum Bro Dreger. "Kement a dud fur eget moc'h bade et" - Insultes et disputes en Breton. Encyclopédie Sonore du Tregor-Goelo. Dastum Bro-Dreger EST 07.

This is a live recording of the first contest (champion of the world) for insults and challenges ("disputes") in the Breton language held in 2002. Although hotly contested, this annual event is full of humor and good fun.

Douad. *Lydiane.* CCD 001 (www.douad.com)
This is a trio with Bernard Le Martret on guitar, Edouard Heller on percussion, and Thomas Bocher on flute. They arrange traditional Breton dances and airs, as well as compositions by Bocher.

Barbara Froger. *Phénomène Bagad.* Rikou Soner RSDVD 272. Productions Premier Plan, Amiens.
This is a 46-minute DVD documentary about the bagad presenting it for those just discovering this Breton style of bagpipe ensemble (but certainly of interest to those already familiar with them). It includes interviews as well as a look at the preparation for 2005 bagad competitions by the Keverenn Alre and Bagad Kemper.

Bébert Huchait et les Vilaines Bêtes. *Villaïge-Blouze.* Kerig Productions KCD 189.
(www.lesvilainesbetes.com)
This is the second CD by this group from the region of Dol with 13 selections in Gallo in a bluesy arrangement. Various instruments are included in the accompaniments: flutes, percussion, bombarde, clarinet, accordion, guitars, and bass guitar.

Katé-Mé. *La république des papillons.* Trad Mark/Avel Ouest CD 981.
Six musicians make up this group rooted in the Gallo traditions of eastern Brittany. This third CD features compositions and texts by singer Sylvain Girault which sometimes radically transform an old song but also maintain the distinctive beat of Breton dances.

Kevrenn Alré. *Dañs ar bleiz.* Coop Breizh.
This is one of Brittany's top bagads with a performance of great music putting traditional Breton melodies and dances into innovative new arrangements. A sure hit for those who love the music of the bagad.

Fabrice Lothode and Chim Cadoudal. "Ça va durer comme ça encore pendant longtemps?"

Self-produced LCD 02.

A seasoned pair of sonneurs - four times champions of Brittany - with Lothode on bombarde playing sometimes with Cadoudal on biniou braz (Scottish style bagpipes) and sometimes with him on biniou kozh (the uniquely Breton tiny high-pitched bagpipes). They are masters of the Vannetais tradition of melodies and dances featured on this CD.

Nolwenn Korbell. Bemdez c'houlou. Coop Breizh CD 973.

This is the second CD from this Breton language singer with ten new songs. Nolwenn Korbell is one of the hottest acts in Brittany today and her voice has been described as somewhere between Janis Joplin and Kate Bush. But she has a style all her own.

Pêcheurs de Goemon - Gwerz ar vezhinerien. Ar Vro Bagan.

This CD is the musical accompaniment for a theater performance by the Breton language troupe Stollad Ar Vro Bagan. The piece is based on a novel by Yvonne Pagniez (*Pêcheurs de Goemon*, 1939). The music is composed by Hervé Lesnevan, founder of the music ensemble Ars 'Ys which performs this orchestral work. Loic Bléjean on uilleann pipes and singer Mona Jaouen are also featured.

Plantec. Plantec. Créon Music and Coop Breizh (www.plantec.new.fr)

This is a five-member group including Yannick (guitar) and Odan Plantec (bombardes), Nicholas Le Millier (biniou), Christophe Hellec (electric guitars), and Marc Gauvin. They feature jazzy-electronic arrangements of Breton dances.

Anne Postic. An Delenn vew. Coop Breizh.

First recording by this accomplished harpist - a solo tour de force of traditional Breton, Celtic and classical airs and dances, including a 10-minute Suite de l'Aven.

Soïg Siberil. Lammat. Coop Breizh CD977.

Newest CD by acoustic guitar great Soïg Siberil. I haven't seen any details about this, but you can't go wrong with this artist.

SNAP. The Second Gathering. Holmen Music HOLM CD24.

SNAP = Sweden North Pennines And Ploërmel. This project includes a yearly exchange of eight youth from 15-22 years old from the regions of Hälsingland in Sweden, the Pennines of Great Britain, and the Ploërmel area of Brittany. They work on traditional music from their home regions during three meetings in each country. This CD is the result of the 2005 gatherings.

Startijenn. Fa kozh. Coop Breizh CD Fakozh 01/1.

First CD by this group of former Diwan students who first got together while at the Treglonou middle school. They feature traditional and newly composed tunes for Breton dances on biniou, bombarde, guitar, accordion and percussions.

Bernard Subert, Marc Anthony, Pierrick Lemou. Terre-Neuvas. Cinq Planètes - TVB Productions. CD 07202.

This is a performance of song, recitation and music conceived by Bernard Subert evoking a fishing voyage to the Grand Banks in 1907 that ended in a shipwreck and rescue. Subert sings and plays clarinet and is joined by Marc Anthony on hurdy-gurdy (and song) and Pierrick Lemou on fiddle (and song). Traditional songs as well as new compositions by Subert tell of the hard life of Breton fishermen in the early 20th century.

Trévidy. Les confessions d'un con. Laure Productions/Arsenal Productions. (www.trevidy.fr) Singer and songwriter Olivier Trévidy covers a variety of contemporary themes in his compositions, and this CD includes also a song by Brassens and by Gilles Servat (in Breton).

Trio Kermabon. Trio Kermabon. Sillage Musiques SMP 001.

This trio of siblings performs in two different configurations with a focus on music from their home Vannetais region. Yann Kermabon uses the piston (a softer version of bombarde) in pair with his sister Soazig on harp, and he pairs on bombarde with brother Stéphane on biniou.



BRETONS AND BRETON MUSIC IN PARIS

Nearly one million Bretons live in Paris and the surrounding region, so one would expect to find a great deal of cultural activity there. As reported in a very interesting "dossier" on Breton music in Paris in *Musique Bretonne* 196 (May-June 2006) and 197 (July-August 2006), Breton music and culture have certainly had a long tradition in Paris where so many Bretons have emigrated to find jobs. Indeed, the newest Diwan Breton language immersion school is found in Paris. And it is well known that Breton emigrants returning to Brittany from Paris or other cities have often been very active in creating associations and organizations to support the development of Breton music and traditions in Brittany.

Regular news about Breton communities of Paris and elsewhere throughout the world can be found in the 5-6 page supplement to the monthly magazine *Armor* called *Horizons Bretons/Dremmwel Breizh*.

If you will be traveling to Paris and want to find Breton music and dance, consider also the following websites to help you locate events:

Radio Pays: www.radio-pays.asso.fr

Radio Pays is a radio station which also serves other languages of France. Founded some 20 years ago, it is still going strong.

Folk à lier: <http://folkalier.free.fr/>

Gwalarn: www.gwalarn.org

Bretons-Paris: <http://bretons-paris.bz>

Danses, musiques et traditions:

<http://danceseniledefolk.free.fr>

BRETONS AT THE 60TH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP OF PIPE BANDS IN SCOTLAND

This August Glasgow hosted the world championship of pipe bands with over 200 bands from 17 countries competing in eight levels. As listed on the website for the championship (<http://gotoglasgow.com/index.htm>) there were 21 bands in Grade 1: 8 from Scotland, 5 from Canada, 4 from Northern Ireland, 1 from the

Republic of Ireland, 2 from Australia and 1 from New Zealand. The winners were the Filed Marshall Montgomery Pipe Band of Northern Ireland with the Simopn Frazier University Pipe Band from Canada coming in second.

Grade 2 included 39 bands with 21 from Scotland and a mix from the rest of the world (one from the U.S., the Oran Mor Pipe Band). Here's where you find three bands from Brittany: Bagad Ronsed Mor Pipe Band, Bagad Brieg Pipe Band, and Bagad Cap Caval, showing that Bretons can pipe with the best of them. There are quite stringent rules to Scottish pipe band competitions down to how big a circle you can form when the band plays, so bombardes were not part of these ensembles and the highly innovative arrangements common to Breton competitions were definitely not the idea here where conforming to the norm is key. As far as I can tell from results on the Scottish Pipe Band Association website, the Breton bands had mixed success. Cap Caval came in 4th in its qualifying round where the top six bands seemed to go on for the final Grade 2 competition. They finished 6th overall. Bagad Brieg came in 7th in its qualifying round to just miss the cut-off for the final round. Bagad Rosed Mor finished last in its qualifying round - they must have had a bad day, or maybe they didn't leave the bombardes at home?

To be in Grade 2 of such a competition is certainly a sign that Breton pipers are up there among the best in the world. Congratulations to all three bands for meeting that standard.

COOP BREIZH SET TO CELEBRATE ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Coop Breizh was founded in 1957 by the cultural federation Kendalc'h to make Breton books and recordings accessible. This was a period when it was nearly impossible to find Breton material in book or record stores in Brittany. The establishment of an organization to distribute Breton materials and establish stores to sell them was key in supporting the mere existence of publishers and record producers, and the writers and musicians who hoped to have their voices heard.

Financially the Coop Breizh has gone through some hard times, and its establishment and operation has been a labor of love by Breton militants who had the vision to see that this type of enterprise was a key in the promotion of Breton culture and music. Today the Coop Breizh employs 30 people and does some 5 million euros in business annually. It not only distributes and sells books, CDs and other Breton products in its stores, but also publishes and produces these.

For more information about this cooperative to promote Breton culture, consult: www.coop-breizh.com

PRODUIT EN BRETAGNE / PRODUCED IN BRITTANY: PRIZES FOR BRETON CREATIVITY

The organization "Produit en Bretagne" was founded in 1993 to promote employment in Brittany and a "branding" of Breton companies and high quality products for consumers. It has continued to grow and one of its projects is to annually recognize music recordings and books for their high quality. The following CDs were awarded various prizes this spring:

Grand prix du disque: Régis Huiban Quartet's *Sans Sommeil*, a mix of Breton tradition and jazz.

Prix Jeune Artiste - the group Calico for the CD *La Posture*, new texts set to a rock beat.

Prix Musiques bretonnes - David Pasquet Group for *Breudeur ar stered*.

Prix Spécial - Kanerion Pleuigner for *Voix de Bretagne*, a 2-CD set of their repertoires.

Coup de Coeur - Ozan Trio for *Koñsert*, new arrangements of traditional music.

Two books were also recognized: In the category of "novels" - Christian de la Hubaudière's *La fille du faïencier*, published by Coop Breizh. In the "beaux livres" category - *Les Bretons et la mer, images et histoire* a compilation of photos, art and texts compiled by Alain Croix and André Lespagnol on the maritime history of Brittany, published by Editions Apogée.

AWEN BREIZH – 9TH EXHIBITION FOR THE ART OF BRITTANY

Poellgor an Tarv (Academie du Tareau) plays a unique role in Brittany in promoting art and sculpture in conjunction with poetry - bilingual Breton/French and trilingual poetry. This year's exhibition held in Carhaix from July 28 to August 31 is under the sponsorship of the International Celtic Congress and the Cultural Institute of Brittany (Skol Uhel ar Vro).

This exhibition and gathering of artists and poets includes the awarding of the "Priz a heson" (Harmony Prize) for the strongest relation of a poetry text to an artwork, and a conference on the importance of art in Breton identity and the Celtic influence on this art. Some 20 artists and sculptors from all five departments of Brittany will show their work and a half-dozen or more poets, writers and translators will be engaged in producing written texts for the show.

For more information visit the website of Poellgor an Tarv: www.poellgor.bzh.bz

A NEW BIOGRAPHY OF ALAN STIVELL

Anny Maurussane and Gerard Simon.

L'Itineraire d'un harpeur hero. Self-published. 272 pages.

This biography of Alan Stivell was put together based primarily on a wealth of newspaper and magazine articles about this most famous of Breton musicians who is still very much a creative force on the Breton music scene. It is not meant to tell the whole story of Stivell's life, but to serve to show his artistic growth and impact as a highly creative musician who was often a pioneer in his use of electric instruments and arrangements of traditional Breton and Celtic melodies and dances, as well as in his compositions incorporating a world beat.

Travel to Southwestern Brittany 100 Years Ago

from: **Rambles in Brittany, by Francis Miltoun.** Boston: L.C. Page & Company, 1906. 371 pages.

The following excerpt from Miltoun's travel book is drawn (from Chapter VI: Finistère – South, pp. 208-215 – the author's spelling is maintained). It presents the far southwestern corner of Brittany as he viewed it in the early 1900s. His book is intended to please the armchair traveler as well as aid the tourist to Brittany.

South from Quimper lie Pont l'Abbé and Penmarc'h, as characteristically Breton as anything to be seen in the whole province; the former has something over six thousand inhabitants, and the latter over four, and each has its own distinct characteristics.

Pont l'Abbé is a town of embroiderers. Everywhere one finds shops whose sole business it is to sell those fine braid embroideries – yellow on a black ground – which have made this part of Brittany famous.

The costumes of Pont l'Abbé are famous throughout all Brittany. The coif recalls those seen in the pictures of the ancient Gauls. It is virtually a little black velvet hood, and the coif itself is a "*pignon de couleur*," as the hostess of the hotel described it, and then, man-fashion, the author felt he was wallowing in a strange subject. Locally this confection, taken entire, it is inferred, is known as a *bigouden*, - a picturesque but not precisely instructive word.

The men wear a hat with three great buckles, and some of them - though their numbers are few – may yet be seen in the *culotte bouffante*, that peculiarly Breton species of breeches known in their own tongue as "*bragou-braz*."

With such an introduction, one might expect almost any fantastic costume to step out from a doorway, but, to realize the quaintness of it all to the full, one should see the inhabitants at the Fêtes de la Tréminiou, held on the twenty-fifth of March. Whit-Monday, the third Sunday in July, and the fourth Sunday in September.

The dances of Pont l'Abbé are famous and are indescribable by any one but a dancing-master. Inasmuch as they invariably take place in the open air, they may be accepted as the free and spontaneous expression of an emotion, which stuffy ballroom cotillions most decidedly are not.

The church of Pont l'Abbé dates from a Carmelite foundation of the fourteenth century, and is a fine work of its era, though surmounted by a curious and modern bell-tower in wood. Within the church are the tombs of many of the ancient barons of Pont l'Abbé. The magnificent rose window is of modern glass, but so admirable that one stands before it with a certain respectful awe, as before that old thirteenth-century glass in Chartres cathedral. The ancient cloisters are still preserved and surround a fine garden.

Pont l'Abbé is only five kilometres from the coast, and Loctudy, also the possessor of a fine mediaeval church, and Penmarc'h form a trio of Breton coast towns quite as worthy of one's attention as many better known resorts.

Penmarc'h – which for some inexplicable reason is pronounced *Penmar* – is situated in the midst of a great bare peninsula terminating in the Pointe de Penmarc'h. Instead of high cliff sheared off at the water's edge, as one so frequently sees on the north coast, the point sinks gently into the blue waters of the Atlantic until it is swallowed up, with never so much as a line of breakers to indicate its presence from seaward. Penmarc'h in Breton signifies the "head of a horse," and Benzec Capecaval, a village not far distant, means the same. An ingenious person will have no difficulty in following the etymology of the latter word, but the former is quite incomprehensible except to a Welshman.

Penmarc'h was for four centuries a city which kept pace with Nantes. Its early riches came from traffic in "Lenten meat," which is simply codfish.

The Church of St. Nonna is a late Gothic edifice, with a great square tower which will be remarked by all who come near it. Its interior has two baptismal fonts, strangely decorated with stone carvings of fantastic shapes, depicting the history of Penmarc'h.

Three kilometres away is the town of St. Guénolé, a tiny fishing port with fine panoramic view of the

Bay of Audierne. The chapel of St. Guénolé occupies the base of a great tower, now ruinous, but looking as though in a former day it must have belonged to some pretentious church.

“The Handle of the Torch” is one of the local sights. It is formed of a series of great rocks at some little distance from the mainland. That bearing the name of “The Torch” is separated from the mainland by the Monk’s Leap, which, according to legend, was the landing-place of St. Viaud, when he migrated from Hibernia to Brittany ages ago.

From Quimper to the Point of Raz is one long up and down hill pull of fifty kilometres, until one finally reaches the Point or Cape Sizun, known to Ptolemy as the promontory of Baboëum. It is the extreme westerly point of the peninsula of Cornouaille, and, reckoning from the meridian of Paris, - for the French do not use the meridian of Greenwich, - is just on the line of the seventh degree of west longitude. The Léon country northward of Brest actually extends a trifle farther westward, at Point St. Mathieu, but most maps do not show it.

North of the Point of Raz is the great Bay of Douarnenez, with its sardine fisheries rivaling those of Concarneau, and southward lies the shallow bay of the Audierne, whose shores, in their own way, are quite as characteristically wild as those of any part of Northwestern France.

At the extreme end of the Point of Raz are two unpretentious hotels, which will please only those of simple tastes and lovers of the solitary; both are connected with more ambitious establishments at Audierne.

The Bay of the Dead, the Hell of Plogaff, and the rocky point itself, form the tourist attractions, but it will be enough for most lovers of solitude to bask in the sunlight amid the gentle breezes from the Gulf Stream, and to leave rock-climbing to those agile spirits who affect that sort of exercise.

Near Audierne is the Church of St. Tuglan, a fine fifteenth and sixteenth century edifice, with many a legend clinging to the name of its patron saint. It is all very vague, but there is hidden superstition in abundance, if one only had the patience to work it out. All that can be learned is, that the holy man was the Abbé of Primelin, near by, and that his feast is celebrated throughout all

the Point of Raz. His statue represents him with a key in the hand, and there is a great iron key preserved in the church said to have once belonged to him. On the day of the pardon great quantities of little loaves are stamped with this key and, according to a popular belief, they will cure a mad dog of his madness, if he be given a morsel to eat, and possess many other virtues of a similar nature. In the sacristy of the church are preserved the teeth of St. Tuglan. The inhabitants of Primelin are known as *paotret ar alc’houez*, or servants of the key.

Audierne is a busy little Breton port of perhaps four thousands inhabitants, and opposite is the fishing village of Poulgoazec, with sardine factories and all the equipment of the trade. Up to the sixteenth century, Audierne was even more flourishing than it is to-day, for the codfish, which were its riches, had not left for other shores.

The vast Bay of Audierne has a wild and deeply embayed coast-line, with nothing but a population of sea-birds to add to the gaiety of the landscape.

Northward, toward Douarnenez, is Pont Croix, built in the form of an amphitheatre on the bank of the river Goayen.

Our Lady of Roseudon is an ancient collegiate church now turned into a little seminary. The peasant folk round about call it only the Virgin’s church. It is in many respects a remarkable fifteenth-century work.

From the Point of Raz in the south to Cape de la Chèvre in the north extends the great gulf known as the Bay of Douarnenez. Along its shores are innumerable little fishing villages, which seem almost of another world. Certainly they have not much in common with other sections of Brittany, to say nothing of the rest of Europe.

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