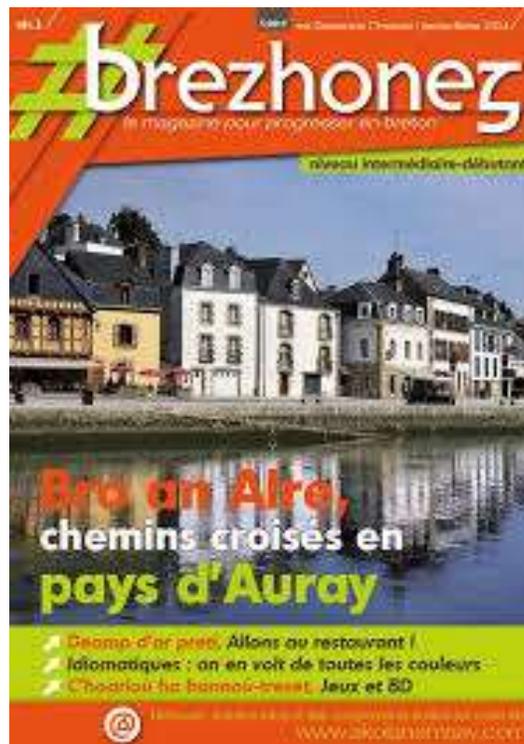


BRO NEVEZ

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



#brezhoneg – a magazine for Breton learners

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 133

Feb / Mar.2015

BRO NEVEZ 133

February / March 2015

ISSN 0895 3074

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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.

This newsletter can be sent as a PDF file attached to an e-mail instead of, or in addition to, the print version. Just let the Editor know how you would like to receive it.

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



#brezhoneg is a 24 page bi-monthly magazine designed for Breton learners. The copies I have received are for intermediary-beginner levels and include a variety of formats from comics to short articles, interviews, word games, and quick grammar lessons. A particular region or city of Brittany is featured in each issue but the topics can range from movies and music, to soccer or composting in your garden. Each page is full of color and photos and vocabulary lists will help you if you get stuck.

This magazine is produced by Skol an Emsav which also provides audio readings of some of the texts and translations and solutions to puzzles on their website: www.skolanemsav.com. Skol an Emsav has been working since 1969 to provide Breton language courses for adults. In 1980 it launched the magazine *Bremañ*, a colorful monthly magazine covering international news as well as events in Brittany. While less "pedagogical" than **#brezhoneg**, it has the same appeal for Breton speakers who want to explore use of the language for the widest variety of topics.

The International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language Loses a Founding Member: Henri Lecuyer (1924-1915)

Henri Lecuyer passed away at the age of 90 on March 2 as the ICDBL celebrates its 40th anniversary. Born in Mevent in the Department of Ille-et-Vilaine, Henri prepared for a military career and served in a variety of administrative roles. With a knowledge of German and English he was also called upon to serve as an interpreter as well during the war years. In 1952 he entered Foreign Affairs as a Commissariat aux Affaires Allemandes et Autrichiennes, and in 1953 he accepted a post as Vice Counsel for France in Costa Rica, adding Spanish to his language skills. We would return to France in 1956 and study economics, leading in 1958 to an administrative post with Euratom in Brussels.

As a young adult he discovered his Breton roots and in Brussels he played an active role with the Amicale des Bretons de Belgique which was created in 1969. As an administrator with the European Commission he would encourage direct Breton contact with European bodies, enabling a Breton presence in European affairs that did not pass through Paris.

Henri was also very active with the Organisation des Bretons de l'Extérieur (OBE) founded in 1975 as well as serving as a key player in the ICDBL. He would remain active throughout his life with both these organizations which played an important role in giving Brittany an international visibility. For his lifetime of work to promote Brittany and its language and culture, Henri was inducted into the Order of the Ermine in 2002.

I met Henri Lecuyer first when in Brittany in 1978-79 to complete research for a doctoral thesis on Breton identity and music. Upon my return to the U.S. and university studies I set to work on my thesis, but also wanted to actively support the cause of the Breton language and culture. My first letter from Henri Lecuyer – of many to follow – was dated April 2, 1980. It authorized me to create a U.S. Branch of the ICDBL. The letter stated that the executive board of the ICDBL based in Brussels “reached the conviction that your willingness to help and your knowledge of Breton language and culture are quite decisive elements to designate you as the committee’s representative in the U.S.A.” Unlike other branches of the ICDBL where a one or two individuals served as representatives, the U.S. Branch would create a membership and publish a quarterly newsletter, Bro Nevez.

I would correspond with Henri Lecuyer for the next 30 plus years and he never failed to send news of what was going on in Brittany and with the ICDBL. His letters – sometimes notes crammed onto a sticky-note or notecard – were always written in excellent English. And they always included news clippings and encouragement for the work of the U.S. ICDBL. The success of the U.S. Branch is due in no small part to the support given by Henri throughout many years.

A Loss for the Breton Language Naig Rozmor (1923-2015)

Anne Corre, better known by her pen name Naig Rozmor, died on March 15 at the age of 92. A native speaker of Breton from Saint-Pol-de Léon, she published over 30 works: poetry collections, short stories, and theater pieces, as well as translations of other literature, most notably the translation into Breton and French of an anthology of poetry in minority languages titled *Mondo Cane*.

She won many prestigious awards for her writing: the Grand Prix des Écrivains Bretons, the Prix de Poésie en langue bretonne, the Prix from the Société des Poètes et Artistes de France, the IMRAM Prize, and the Per Roy Prize. She collaborated with the Breton language theater troupe Ar Vro Bagan for some 20 years and contributed to Breton language programming on France 3 television.

For her work for Brittany and the richness of her contribution to Breton language literature she was inducted into the Order of the Ermine in 1998.



Introduction to Breizh Amerika

As stated on its website: www.breizh-amerika.com

BREIZH AMERIKA is an organization established to create, facilitate, promote, and sponsor wide-ranging innovative and collaborative cultural and economic projects that strengthen and foster relations and cooperation between the United States of America and the region of Brittany, France.

Through the development and sponsorship of ambitious artistic projects we hope to increase awareness of Breton culture, language and film to American audiences. We are guided by a passion to develop unique exchanges and collaborations between Breton and American musicians and artists, while inciting economic actors to expand opportunities and build durable Transatlantic links through our projects.

The Breizh Amerika website contains a lot of very interesting information on a variety of topics including an introduction to *The "Breizh Amerika Collective" a group of musicians from Brittany, France and the United States performing innovative music, and at the same time working to make people aware of endangered languages and traditions.*

"The Collective 2015" will be comprised of four musicians from Brittany, France and three Garifuna musicians living in New York City. From Brittany you have Armel an Hejer, Alain Le Clere, Thomas Moisson, and Gaetan Grandjean. James Lovell is from New York City and the group also includes the Garifuna Drums Band. As described on the website: "The Garifuna settled along the Atlantic coast of Central America after being forced to flee from the Caribbean island of Saint Vincent in the eighteenth century. Today, Garifuna communities mainly live in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Belize. The Garifuna language belongs to the Arawakan group of languages and has survived centuries of discrimination and linguistic domination. It is rich in tales (úruga) originally recited during wakes or large gatherings. The melodies bring together African and Amerindian elements. ..."

The Collective will have a residency in New York City from May 8 to 16 and the Breton musicians, "Breizh on the Road," will travel to Rochester, NY, May 17, Cleveland, Ohio, on May 18th, Chicago, Illinois, on May 19th, Santa Fe, New Mexico on May 22nd, and Albuquerque New Mexico, on May 23rd.

The website also includes a very interesting section on Breton American History – presenting Americans who have played a role in Breton history and Bretons who have played a role in American history. And then you will meet some Breton-Americans who had historical prominence.

The section called “BZH Business” presents just that – Breton companies marketing goods here in the U.S., American companies investing in Brittany, and a general picture of the Breton economy.

A part of the website also presents the 2015 project to bring the *Hermione* to the U.S. The *Hermione* is a replica of the 1780 ship which brought Lafayette to the United States in support of our Revolution. This ship will dock in twelve ports along the eastern seaboard in June and July.

And then there's the Blog for lots of other news and information.

So check out this website and the action of Breizh Amerika to strengthen ties between the U.S. and Brittany.

BZH-New York also Active in the U.S.



We have presented this organization in past issues of *Bro Nevez*, but it is worth introducing once again.

BZH New York was launched at the end of 2006 to promote the Breton culture, economy, tourism, and language of Brittany. It is composed of

Bretons in New York City and surrounding areas who join together to help Americans learn about Brittany and to forge partnerships to promote Brittany and its unique culture and languages. Check out the website to see the variety of activities this organization fosters: www.bzh-ny.org.

Each March BZH-New York has been instrumental in insuring that Brittany is visible among the frenzy of Saint Patrick Day activities. For a number of years it has helped bring a bagad and dance group to the huge Saint Patrick's Day Parade of New York. And beside the parade these music and dance ensembles have performed in concerts and festou noz arranged during their brief stay.

Here are planned events for this March:

BZH NY is proud to welcome Bagad Bro Landerne musicians, and Cercle Celtique Eskell An Elorn dancers to the city.

During the week of March 16-21, 2015, **BZH New York** will host **60 Celtic musicians and dancers** from the groups **Bagad Bro Landern** and **Cercle Eskell an Elorn** from Brittany, France, as they march in New York City's 254th St Patrick's Day Parade on **Tuesday, March 17th.**

In addition to marching, the 40 musicians from **Bagad Bro Landern** and 20 dancers of **Cercle Eskell an Elorn** will give educational concerts at the Lycée Français on March 16th and at Hunter College High School on March 19th. And, two performances open to the public at Central Park Wednesday, March 18th and a "Fest Noz" Friday, March 20th .

Our St Patrick week program!

Tuesday, March 17th, 2015: "Brittany Brigade" - St Patrick's Day Parade on 5th Avenue; 12pm-5pm
Follow by music all around NYC! (including OCbanon restaurant, 245W 29th Street)

Wednesday, March 18th: Concert, Central Park, Naumburg Bandshell; 11am-1pm (FREE, Open to the Public)

Friday, March 20th, 2015: "Fest Noz" Concert; 8pm-1:00am (Open to the Public)
"The Parlour", 250 West 86th St. (btw Broadway & West End Ave.), New York, NY
Tickets at the door, \$20; BZH members, \$15

Also travelling to New York to march with the bagad and dance group in the parade and to meet with Americans during their time here will be a delegation of business leaders from the city of Landerneau. This is yet another opportunity to build some bridges on both the economic and cultural arena.



Prizes for the Future of the Breton Language 2015

Prizioù Dazont ar Brezhoneg

Since 1993 the television station France 3 Bretagne has organized prizes for creative work promoting the Breton language. Since 2007 they have done this in partnership with Ofis ar Brezhoneg. Presenting the winners and runners-up in this juried competition gives a look at just a few of the innovative ways the Breton language is used today in Brittany. All of these big and small efforts to give Breton visibility and audibility certainly make a difference for the future of this language.

Prize for a Business:



1st prize: **Naoned Eyewear**.
www.naonedeyewear.bzh. Created in 2012 and based in Nantes (= Naoned) this is an eyeglass designer whose website incorporates the Breton language. Each model of glasses are given a Breton name.

From this company's website you can link to the full video of the awards program
<http://www.naonedeyewear.bzh/actu.php?t=priziou-2015-naoned-laureat&pID=4>



2nd prize: **Aplund**.
www.facebook.com/aplund. This company creates board games where you and play and learn Breton at the same time.



instant-gestion

3rd prize: **Instant Gestion**.
www.instant-gestion.fr. This is a web company devoted to helping small businesses and entrepreneurs. It makes it easy to create bills, order forms, etc. in the Breton language (or pretty much any other language).

Organizations/Associations

1st prize : **Lusk**. This is a daycare where Breton is introduced to babies and children at the youngest ages through simple activities like counting rhymes or lullabies.



2nd prize: **EduBreizh**.
www.edubreizh.com. This is a service for learning Breton over the internet – perfect for those not able to attend classes, or for those who do not live in Brittany.



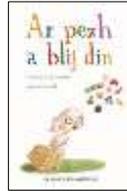
3rd prize : **Yaouank**.
www.yaouank.com. This highly interactive website is designed for teens who want to use Breton beyond the classroom. You can find videos, music, poetry, images, thoughts, travel accounts, and crazy ideas – all in Breton – ready to be shared with others.

Fictional works

1st prize: **Bili er mor**, sort stories by **Annie Coz**, published by Skol Vreizh.



2nd prize: **En dro d'al lenn-vor**, short stories by **Jef Gedez**, published by Al Liamm.



3rd prize: **Ar pezh a blij din**, a book for children by **Soaz and Saig Pouldu**, illustrated by Noémie Lassalle, and published by An Alarc'h.

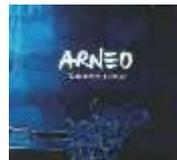
Recording of Song in Breton



1st prize: **N'int ket deuet a-benn da ziwriennañ ac'hanomp**, by the group **Rhapsodya**. (Paker Productions). This group includes Youn Roue (vocals), Erwan Moal (electricguitar), Erwan Volant (basse), Klet Beyer (drums) and Tangi Le-Gall-Carre (button accordion). See: <http://www.pakerprod.bzh/artiste/rhapsoldya/> or www.rhapsoldya.org



2nd Prize : **Koumoul du**, by father and daughter **Jakez and Bleuenn ar Borgn**. Designed for children, but of interest for adults as well.



3rd prize: **Takenn Dour**, by **Arneo** (Compimusic/Coop Breizh RFI). This group is composed of Gwenael Kerleo (electro-harp), Marielle Hervé (voice, percussions, keyboard), and Yann Cortella (samplers, keyboard, bass).

Audiovisual Creation

1st prize: **An dianav a rog ac'hanon**, directed by **Avel Corre**, with actors Nolwenn Korbell and Yann-Edern Jourdan. Produced by Tita Productions.

2nd prize: **Malo**, directed by **Benjamin Botella**, written by Géraldine Berry and Etienne Strubel, and produced by JPL Films.

3rd prize: **Anavezout Breizh**, directed by **Jean-Jacques Monnier and Olivier Caillebot** and produced by Skol Vreizh.

Community



1st prize: **Musée des marais salants**, in Batz-sur-mer, for the presence of Breton in int interactive exhibits. This is a museum present the history of salt production in the southeast of Brittany.
<http://www.cap-atlantique.fr/rubrique/musee-des-marais-salants>

Breton Speaker of the Year



1st prize: **Hervé Sebille-Kernaoudour** who directed the edition of the *Dictionnaire du breton du Trégor-Goëlo et de Haute Cornouaille* written by François Vallée (Editions Kuzul ar Brezhoneg).

2nd prize: **Monique Gentil**, the co-founder of Mammigoù, a daycare wich fosters the use of Breton in caring for babies and the youngest children.



3rd prize: **Quentin Morvan**, who caused an internet sensation with his interpretation – in Breton – of the song “Get lucky” by the group Daft Punk. Google his name to hear this.



Breton Costumes – Bro by Bro # 4 Bro Plougastel: Strawberry fields forever



The Plougastel peninsula is dedicated to the cultivation of strawberries, and this probably explains the joyful, brightly colored costumes found in the two villages, Plougastel and Daoulas. Nowhere else in Brittany do you find such a harmonious combination of purples, blues, red and green.

The men's outfit



long velvet ribbons in the back.

Bachelors wear a purple (or rather a dark fuchsia) chupenn or jacket, while married men wear blue. In both cases, the sides are heavily embroidered with flower motives contrasting with the background color. Under the chupenn, the vest or jiletenn will often be in a contrasting color, typically green under the purple chupenn. Today, the pants are black, but one might imagine there was a variety of colors in the past. The hat has a short brim curved up, with two

The women's outfit



The colors of the dresses are in the same gamut as the mens': purple, blue, green, but red can be added. The elements of the costume itself are sober: a small headdress with long ribbons, a shawl tied in the front, often in a plaid motif or made of lace tucked in the wide apron, a colored vest over a contrasting jacket, and a colored skirt. The skirt can sometimes be black, particularly for widows. The characteristic of the costume is that the colors don't clash, the fuchsia works with the emerald green, the blue is a medium blue that works with red and green, so although all these colors might be found on one person, they just give a sense of elation, not chaos. The coiffe is not very different from the Kemper one, but consists of two plain sides sewn together at the top, and bordered with lace where it sits on the head. Two white ribbons at the back are a reminder of a more complicated coiffe pattern, and then there are typically three long ribbons to tie the coiffe under the chin, and let the ends loose.



For the children, until their first communion, the little girls get colorfully decorated bonnets, made of alternating bands of embroidered ribbons and colored ones, while the boys start wearing the traditional hat at an early age! The same ribbons, with colorful flower embroideries, adorn the outfits of women and children.

It was not uncommon to see older women wearing the coiffe in everyday life, and the Celtic club of the region, Bleuniou Sivi (Strawberry flowers) is very actively maintaining the outfits and continuing to find the proper fabrics: linen and cloth in the summer, and a mixture of linen and wool for the winter.

New Books from Brittany

Presented by Lois Kuter



Yannig Baron and Jean-Claude Le Ruyet. *Tan ba'n ti 2 : le temps des cendres ou le temps du phoenix.* Breizh Impacte. 2014. 72 pages.

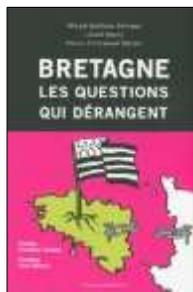
In Breton, “tan ba'n ti” means your house is on fire. And this is indeed the case for the Breton language today as the authors point out in this

second book about the Breton language which is aimed to mobilize Bretons to act to insure that Breton does not in fact disappear.

The authors note that from 247,000 Breton speakers in 1997 the number dropped in 2009 to less than 200,000 (of which 70% were over the age of 60). If the decline continues at that pace in 20 years there will be less than 100,000 Breton speakers, of which two-thirds will be 86 years old.

While Breton has been gaining ground in schools, the number of children graduating high school with a good command of the language combined with adult speakers mastering Breton is not going to make up for the decline. Rather than despair over the “cinders” left when the house burns down, the authors make some proposals for action and urge Bretons to work together to act on the good will that the majority of the population express for the future of this language.

The book is available for 12 euros and can be ordered from Yannig Baron: yannigbaron@orange.fr followed up by a check in the mail to: Breizh-ImPacte, 72 b rue Texier Lahoulle. 56000 Vannes. A check should be made out in Euros and from America should include extra for postage.



Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez, Lionel Henry, Pierre-Emmanuel Marais. *Bretagne – Les questions qui dérangent.* Yorlan Embanner. 2014. ISBN 918-2-916579-78-8. 109 pages.

I was at a loss as to how to translate the title of this book: Brittany, the questions which disconcert? disturb?, unsettle?, bewilder?, perturb? It may be a bit of all of those since this little book addresses pretty much all the “hot buttons” one needs to be aware of today as Bretons protest continued efforts on the part of the French government to redefine “regions” which either drown

Brittany in some kind of “great west” or continues to amputate the department of Loire-Atlantique.

In addressing social, political, historical, linguistic and cultural factors of Breton identity the authors squarely confront old myths and stereotypes as well as contemporary concerns. This is a book that will help Bretons themselves better understand their history and society, but it is a book that is especially useful for people outside of Brittany to get a clear and concise introduction to what is unique about Brittany.

This is not an in-depth analysis of any of the questions addressed, but a highly readable and reliable place to start an exploration of issues which unite and divide Bretons, and which in many cases have been very poorly presented in French media.

The best way to present this book is to give the table of contents and the questions addressed (my translation):

Geography – Brittany, four or five departments?
Brittany, one and indivisible?
People of Nantes – Bretons or Ligériens?
Lower Brittany and Upper Brittany – a single country?
Nantes-Rennes – two capitals?

History: our ancestors the Gauls?
Nominoe, king of the Bretons?
The Duchy of Brittany – independent?
Saint-Aubin du Cormier, the death sentence for Brittany?
Anne of Brittany, a traitor?
The union of Brittany to France – a forced marriage?
The Breton state – did it exist?
The First World War – Bretons as cannon-fodder?

Interpretation: which history for which Brittany?
Bretons and history, a problem of schizophrenia?
Bretons, all of them Celts?
The Emsav – the voice of Brittany?
The English, sworn enemies of the Bretons?
Breton militants – all collaborators? [with Germany]

Identity – how can one be Breton?
Do the Bretons constitute a nation?
Does the fest noz have a place with UNESCO (as world immaterial patrimony)?
Breton culture, open to all?
Breton cuisine, a true gastronomy?
A Breton literature, does it really exist?

Language – No more Breton Language, no more Brittany?
The Breton language – does it have everyday utility?
20,000 students – enough to save the Breton language?
Does a literature in the Breton language exist?
Gallo, a deformed French?

Symbols – Brittany as if ..
The Gwenn-ha-Du, the true Breton flag?
A .bzh internet extension – what for?

The Bro Gozh ma Zadoù – a hymn like the others?
Bécassine, ambassador for Brittany?

Politics – free Brittany?

The Breton political parties – a political response?
The FLB – terrorist group or spearhead for the Breton movement?
Autonomy – a sweet dream?
Independence – a serious direction?
CELIB – real art of consensus?
The revolt of the Red Bonnets – political coup?

Society – Bretons, alcoholics or ecologists?

Bretons, can they live without nuclear power?
Is the Breton agricultural model viable?
A Breton Riviera – only model for tourism?
Parisian immigration – a real risk?
Breton diaspora – an external generating power?
Suicide, alcoholism – Breton maladies?
Bretons – all Catholics?

For those who want a really quick reference, a glossary is included for key people and names. For those who want to delve further, a basic bibliography is very helpful. Appendices also include graphics for Breton flags, words and music for the *Bro Gozh ma Zadoù*, and some contemporary symbols.

A preface, introduction and postface add yet more perspective and context. While others might answer the questions posed in this book a little differently, the three authors are definitely well qualified to comment intelligently on the variety of issues addressed. Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez has written a number of books on geography, flags and maps of Brittany, the Celtic countries, and minority peoples of Europe. For English speakers there is his *Atlas of Stateless Nations in Europe, Minority people in search of recognition* (Y Lolfa, 2011) – see a review in *Bro Nevez* 119, August 2011. Lionel Henry is a professor of history-geography and has authored a number of works on the Breton movement and politics – see a review of his history of the political party Union Démocratique Bretonne (UDB) in *Bro Nevez* 131, August-September 2014, and a review of his biographical dictionary of the Breton movement in *Bro Nevez* 129, February-March 2014. Pierre-Emmanuel Marais has written novels in both Breton and French and has been active in promoting the Breton language and identity in the Nantes area.

To give a flavor of the questions explored in this book I have translated just one of them, a fitting choice since March 7, 841, was the date of death of the subject of this essay: Nominoë.

My apologies to the authors for any misinterpretations that might be found. While I recall learning about French kings in school history classes, no one in America is likely to have learned of Breton “kings.”

Nominoë, king of the Bretons?



Nominoë (Nevenoe in Breton, 800 to 851) is the first certified sovereign of Brittany, from 845 to 851. Called Tad ar Vro (father of the country) by the historian Arthur de La Borderie, he was at the origin of a unified and independent Brittany.

In 831, Louis the Pious, the king of the western Franks (one can't really talk about France before the arrival of the Capetians in 987) named Nominoë Count of Vannes and gave him the responsibility of representing the Frankish king in Brittany. Nominoë was a Breton prince, probably from the Poher area [area of Carhaix].

He [Louis the pious] gave him very extensive powers (title of Duke of Brittany). At first Nevenoe seemed to accept this submission to the Frank Kingdom issued by the broken-up Empire of Charlemagne to which, it must be remembered, Brittany was not a part. Nominoë founded the Abby of Redon, a connecting link between the Frank and Breton worlds.

But at the death of Louis the Pious in 840, Nominoë decided to break away from Frank guardianship. He was victorious over the Count of Nantes, Renaud, at Messac in 843 and then crushed the troops of the new Frank king Charles the Bald in the marshlands of Ballon near Redon in 845.

Nominoë then named bishops of his choice and opened proceedings for their recognition by the Roman Pope. In 850 he triumphed once more over Charles the Bald and took possession of Nantes and Rennes. He pursued his military advantage up until the Vendômois where he suddenly died. He is buried in the Saint-Sauveur Abby of Redon.

Nominoë who appears to be the first king of Brittany never had that particular title. In the Cartulary of Redon he is called the Duke of the Bretons, the Duke in Brittany, or also the Prince of Brittany. In Breton the term given is *gwledig*, which simply means “sovereign.”

It was his son and successor Erispoë who was officially recognized as king by Charles the Bald after the Battle of Jengland. But Nominoë had in any case initiated several centuries of independence for the kingdom of Brittany.

In this role he can well be considered as the “founding father” of Brittany. His son Erispoë also crushed the armies of Charles the Bald and during the treaty of Angers in September 851 forced him to recognize his

title of king of Brittany and to cede to him indefinitely the counties of Nantes, Rennes, and the Pays de Retz.

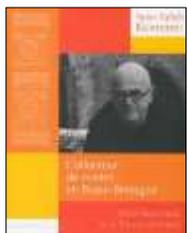
Side Notes:

The Battle of Ballon (November 22, 845)

This battle, which took place near Bains-sur-Oust in what is now the Morbihan department, saw the victory of Breton troops led by Nominoë against the Frankish troops of King Charles the Bald, grandson of Charlemagne. The key to the Breton victory seemed to be the light cavalry which harassed the heavy Frank army mired in the marshes with arrows. On the morning of the third day of battle, the Franks had to admit that their king had fled. This battlefield victory confirmed the independence of the kingdom of Brittany with Prince Nominoë at its head, thus affirmed as king. The pope Leon IV recognized Nominoë's sovereignty, sanctified by the archbishop of Dol in 848.

Breton Independence also defended in Rome

The Carolingian power had at hand bishops under its authority in Quimper, Vannes, Dol-de-Bretagne and Saint Pol-de-Leon. In 848 Nominoë sent a delegation to Pope Leon IV to obtain the emancipation of the Breton church from Frank control. The pope refused to make a statement on the petition of the bishops and sent it to a synod of bishops that was never convened. Nevertheless, he recognized the title of Duke for Nominoë, his right to wear a gold crown, and his right to be consecrated by the archbishop of Dol. Several years later Salomon obtained the promotion of Dol-de-Bretagne as capital of the Breton church. [Salomon had assassinated his cousin Erispoë in 857 to become king of Brittany].



Yann-Fañch Kemener.
Collecteur de contes en Basse-Bretagne / War henchoù ar c'hontadennoù. Yoran Embanner. 2014. 497 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-77-1.

Yann-Fañch Kemener, born in the late 1950s in Sainte-Tréphine, grew up in central Brittany where Breton was still the everyday language. Breton was his first language, and he grew up with songs, stories, and old sayings in Breton. He would become famous in Brittany – and beyond – as a master of the traditional *gwerz*, long dramatic ballads in the Breton language. In the 1970s when a new interest was growing in traditions that had been stigmatized as part of old, outdated ways, organizations like Dastum were not only encouraging the collection of oral traditions, but also creating new opportunities for performing them and for

the transmission of this heritage to new generations of Bretons. This direct transmission of an oral tradition continues today. There have been other opportunities as well to encourage a dusting off of old songs and stories at festivals and *veillées* (smaller evening gatherings). Yann-Fañch Kemener was a part of all this, and actively collected from masters of song and story from the mid 1970s to mid 2000s.

This book is a collection of stories he transcribed which have been pulled from his shelves and re-transcribed in a Breton that maintains the sound and swing of its storytellers. Notes on the particularisms of the transcription of Breton words are included. The work of pulling all this together was done by three scholars of Breton and its oral traditions: René Kergoat, Yvonne Olivier and Daniel Girauden. Fifty-seven stories from twenty-six different storytellers are included with French translations.

In his introduction Kemener describes his collection activity and introduces some of the people who shared stories with him. – neighbors as well as others he would meet in an ever-widening network,. Photos of many of the storytellers are included with their hometown, birth date and date of death in many cases since they were already elderly when Kemener met with them in the 1970s or 80s.

Whether you read these tales in Breton or in the French translations, you will get a good introduction to stories that are well known in the Breton oral tradition, and there are themes that are certainly familiar throughout Europe if not internationally. The stories have a number of common themes – the poor sons who go off to find their fortune, share their last bit of bread with an old hungry woman and are rewarded with magic wands, table cloths that produce feasts, capes that allow one to travel long distances instantly, hats that make you invisible, etc. There are evil stepsisters, sibling rivalry where the youngest son or daughter is ill-treated or underestimated only to triumph while their siblings fail. The hands of a princess and sometimes the devil's own daughter are won after many trials - cutting off the seven heads of a monster snake, emptying a well of its water using an egg shell, building a boat that can sail on land and water. There's trickery, sorcery and transformations – a horse transformed into a house, the willingly abducted woman into a ladder, and the hero into a roofer to evade the pursuit of an angry father.

Themes reoccur as do standard openings and closings to announce the beginning and end of a story. Akin to the familiar English "once upon a time" one finds the following:

*Or wech e oe, or wech 'e oe ket
Met or wech e oe bop'ed.*

*Il était une fois, non, pas une fois,
Mais c'était quand même une fois.*

To close one finds variations of the following – far more interesting than ‘The End,’ or ‘And they lived happily ever after.’

*Lost ar bik war en drejenn
Achu e' me c'hontadenn.*

*La queue de la pie dans le roncier
Mon histoire est terminée.*

The magpie's tail in the thorns
My story is now done
(my literal and less than poetic translation).



Viviane Carlier, with paintings by Loïc Tréhin. *Plantes de côtes rocheuses de Bretagne.* Yoran Embanner. 2014. 127 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-64-1.

This book presents 50 wild plants – mostly flowering – you will find on the rocky ocean shorelines of Brittany, and the peninsula of Brittany abounds in rocky coasts. This selection does not include every plant you will encounter but a good selection of both common and rarer ones. While some are found in a wide geographic area, others are very limited in range. A list of over 100 other plants to be found on rocky coasts is appended – sorted by plant families.

For each plant, you are given a lovely watercolor painting of the full plant with details of flowers – sometimes in bud stage or seed stage as well. Besides being pleasing as artwork, these would definitely help in identifying a plant in the wild.

The common French names and Breton names are provided along with the scientific name and plant family. Also noted for each plant is the period in which it flowers, the natural environment in which it is found, and height and leaf structure. Flowers and seeds/fruits are described and a short ‘history’ might include a story of how it got its common name or the role it plays in the ecosystem. Very useful to those trying to identify a plant are notes on plants that are similar and what the little differences are that might be important in distinguishing one from the other.

The general geographical range of the plant is also described and its presence in Brittany is specified. Except for plants that are a protected species, symbols are used to indicate if it is edible, medically useful, toxic, or cultivated in gardens. Symbols also indicate if a plant

is protected on a European level, in France, regionally, or in a particular department of Brittany. Likewise, degrees of recognition of its endangered classification is noted. And the degree of its commonality or rarity is also noted.

If you have forgotten everything you learned in school about plant structure, a helpful diagram and glossary are provided. Introductory notes describe the different types of natural environments found on the coasts of Brittany – rocky cliffs, dunes, beaches, inlets and estuaries, etc. Even for the rocky areas targeted in this book there are differences in geology that foster different kinds of plant life. Also interesting is a short description of how plants adapt to rocky seaside conditions of dryness, salty air, little soil, or strong winds. A bibliography provides a wide variety of books and websites on flowers and plants of Brittany and beyond.

Previously Viviane Carlier and artist Loïc Tréhin collaborated on a similar book, *Plantes des dunes bretonnes* (see *Bro Nevez* 107, August 2008, for a review).

While botanists will find this book of interest it is directed to non-specialists who want to explore nature in Brittany and learn about the plants they encounter.



Stéphane Brousse, with paintings by Sandra Lefrançois. *Batraciens et reptiles en Bretagne.* Yoran Embanner. 2014. 133 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-63-4.

Like the guide to plants on Brittany's rocky shores reviewed above, this book is designed for anyone who wants to take a closer look at nature – in this case the less loved amphibians and reptiles. France has 41 snakes and 22 lizards while Brittany can count 6 snakes, 5 lizards, and 2 turtles. Brittany has 20 amphibians of the 39 you will find in France. In this book you will be introduced to over 30 newts, salamanders, snakes, lizards and frogs and toads. To make it easier for you to encounter these creatures, the author gives practical tips on how, where, and when to find them. Also in the introduction is a glossary of biological terms, a description of bogs and marshes, and a basic introduction to the characteristics of amphibians and reptiles.

The book further assists the explorer by introducing animals related to a particular site located on a map and described in some detail. These have been chosen because they are accessible to less hardy hikers and because they present fourteen different environments and locations of Brittany – both coastal and interior - in all five departments of Brittany.

Reptiles and amphibians common to these areas (and found elsewhere as well) are each given an introduction as well as sketches and beautiful watercolor paintings that allow clear identification. Each animal's "profile" includes the scientific name and Breton and French names commonly given them. A paragraph gives identifying features and size, weight, longevity and time needed to reach sexual maturity. Also noted is particular behavior, reproduction, food eaten, and menaces to its future prosperity, along with geographic range and preferred natural environment.

This is a book you would want to take along on a hike to the locations highlighted, but it is too beautiful to get muddy! The book is not just about particular reptiles and amphibians and their characteristics and behavior, but also about the unique habitats important to biological diversity and the future of these animals which are too often feared and misunderstood.



Raymond J. Jacq, *Une famille bretonne à la poursuite du rêve américain*. Montagnes Noires Editions. 2015. 352 pages

Ray Jacq has been a member of the U.S. ICDBL since 1997 and in 2007 he sent me the book he had written in 2005 about the life of his parents Jean-

Louis Jacq (1910-1971) and Marie-Jeanne Conan (1911-1998): *It's better to Laugh Than to Cry – An immigrant journey through the twentieth century*. This book is now translated into French and I am certain it will be a very interesting book for people in Brittany who have had family or friends emigrate to the United States.

Based in large part on a diary his mother kept, as well as extensive research among family members, Ray Jacq paints a very personal portrait of the lives of a newly married couple who move to the U.S. in 1933. Jean Jacq had already spent three years (1929-1933) living in Paterson, New Jersey, working in the fabric dyeing mills there. He was among many Bretons who had come to New York and northern New Jersey to find work and earn enough money to go back to Brittany and buy a farm or start a business. Jean Jacq was from Langolen and Marie-Jeanne Conan was from Landudal – both to the northeast of Quimper, and not far from towns and small villages further to the east like Spézet, Châteauneuf-du-Faou, Briec, or Gourin from which many Bretons emigrated to the U.S. in the early 1900s.

The beginning of a large emigration to the U.S. from this part of Brittany can be dated to the recruitment of workers in 1901 by the Michelin company for work first in the factories of Clermont-Ferrand with later transfer to

Milltown, New Jersey. In a period of ten years, some 3,000 Bretons had emigrated for work in the Michelin factories where they could earn salaries often six times those at home in Brittany. With the closing of Michelin factories in 1928, Bretons in New Jersey found work at other factories – artificial silk and nylon mills in Lodi and Paterson, chemical plants in Passaic, or steel mills in Trenton. The work was extremely hard and Breton workers did not become rich overnight, and most never got close to their dreams of wealth.

That was certainly true of Ray's family, but the book is a very moving story of one family and their determination to make the best of their new country while maintaining their Breton identity.



Wendy Mewes. *Brittany – A Cultural History*. Signal Books. 2015. 294 pages.

As described on the author's website www.wendymewes.com, "This takes a thematic approach with chapters such as Stone, Sea, Forest, Town, Island relating landscape to Breton legend, history, society and culture.

The book draws on the rich oral legacy which places Brittany firmly in the Celtic tradition, as well as the works of writers, poets, painters and travellers who have been inspired by the region."

The website also gives a nice idea of the diverse topics tackled – and to her credit the author does not hesitate to look at Brittany's difficult relationship with France. *Landscape and Legends: Marches of Brittany; Druids and megaliths; St-Malo and sea adventures; mysteries of the Monts d'Arrée; Merlin in the Forêt de Brocéliande. Complexity and Ambiguity: part of France yet a separate world; nationalism, regionalism, resistance, unity and division of language; four departments or five? Writers and Artists: Chaucer, Balzac, Hugo, Flaubert, Ernest Renan, Thomas Adolphus Trollope, Arthur de la Borderie, Mathurin Méheut, Max Jacob, Yves Tanguy.*

Wendy Mewes lives in Finistère and has written a number of books and guides – especially for those who want to discover different areas of Brittany on foot. Her book *Discovering the History of Brittany* is also a welcome addition to the relatively small number of books designed to introduce Brittany to English speakers.

To get a look at Wendy Mewes books (and to order them) check out www.signalbooks.co.uk.



Jean-Pierre Le Mat. *Histoire de Bretagne – Le Point de vue breton*. Yoran Embanner. 3rd edition, 2014. 412 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-75-7.

A new edition of this very useful history of Brittany – from a Breton perspective has been published. And its English language translation should be out soon – a review to come!



Deep Inside a Breton Skull 44 Where is Brittany Located in a Breton Brain?

Jean Pierre LE MAT

Some time ago, a survey revealed that 18% of Bretons favored independence. So, an old question reappeared: Why do the Breton people support the activists but don't vote for Breton parties?

My meditations on Brittany and diligent reading of the philosopher Hannah Arendt, lead me to risk an explanation.

When it comes to define what is Brittany, the answers can be very diverse. You will say: No wonder! But I also noticed that a number of people express, one way or another, a strong refusal to address the issue. They appear to be insulted by the question. Brittany is and should remain an unquestionable evidence. Questioning what is Brittany reveals weakness or betrayal. Jean Pierre Le Mat, you are a traitor!

Well ... Brittany has existed through centuries. Our political, cultural or economical existence needed long talks and smart compromises, more than war solutions. Our existence is not linked with a warlike deed Rambo style, or with the decision of a higher authority. It took time to listen, understand, answer, convince. It took more energy and tenacity to do that in order to assert nowadays that Brittany is above any discussion. You will say: To each his own. Everybody has its own definition of Brittany. Why not? These differences of opinion and sensitivity give charm to exchanges. Well ...

All the colorful statements make up the charm of Brittany ... And this is where Hannah Arendt arises, like a devil out of the box.

In her work "*The Human Condition*" or "*Between Past and Future*" she explored the difference between the public and the private realms. The Greek city made a

difference between the "Polis", on the one hand, where speech and action took place, and the family, on the other hand, governed by the head of household.

The public domain is, according to Hannah Arendt, the world of human reality. Politics deals with the relations between individuals that are different one from the other in their sensitivity and interests. Public speaking preludes irreversible and unpredictable collective action, while private opinion is without any consequence.

The modern world changed this balance by introducing the social element to public space through work and labor. The *homo faber*, who build a work, create a new public space, which is *the market*. The *animal laborans*, the modern producer of consumer goods, locks himself in the private domain.

I will not follow Hannah Arendt in all her developments, and particularly in her idea of depoliticizing, due to the division of labor in the consumer society. Private opinions can build a public speech through associations, for instance on environmental matters. Private beliefs can also become public speech through street demonstration, boycott, petition. This is what we call now *civil society*. The concept took shape in the 80's. Hannah Arendt died in 1975.

Let us keep in mind the fundamental distinction between public and private realms. The public realm exists through relationships between different and equal men. These relations are what Hannah Arendt called the *world*. They have consequences beyond the life of the individuals who are involved. These consequences are unpredictable and irreversible. It is impossible to control which ones will take hold. Totalitarianism is a possible outcome, suppressing the *world*, shutting down History. The world can be maintained through bold actions, especially forgiveness and promise. "*The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility—of being unable to undo what one has done—is the faculty of forgiving. The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises.*"

The degradation of these faculties, mostly through lack of courage, shows the degradation of the political life. But what link is there with the behavior of Breton voters?

Most of the Bretons want a future for Brittany. But they don't want to chance it. Brittany must keep the enchantment that makes it "timeless". Unfortunately, enchantment and magic exist only in the private realm. The public domain is the place where things are changing, where reality is needed, where the enchantment disappears. In this realm, we must argue, explain, convince. We must join forces, build with others. Politics requires rhetoric (all liars! those who want a

timeless country will say) and strategy (all schemers! they will say again).

The Bretons who don't want to mix Brittany with politics are not indifferent to their small country. 1,5 million stickers "A l'aise Breizh" have been bought and put on rear of our cars. Breton music is popular. Hundreds of thousands among us speak Breton, and the others are not against the old tongue. But only a few of us would accept to break the spell. Most of us do not want to tear the image of timeless Brittany. The Breton voter is reluctant to publicly expose a treasure that should remain hidden. They don't want to make it insecure. In the sanctuary of the private realm, every Breton protects his own Brittany, which is, of course, more authentic than a shared Brittany, a common Brittany, a changing Brittany.



The Bretons know that Excalibur is at hand. But to grasp it, and intend to use it, is considered out of range of a modern politician.

Can Brittany die because of the decency of the Bretons, and their taste for an enchanted country?

Deep inside my skull, I look for a future public realm where my country can be propelled.



Heard of, but not heard – new recordings from Brittany



An Tri Dipop. *Mari-Louise*.

This group gives a folk/pop flavor to a number of traditional Breton dances in this new CD. The group is composed of singer Anjela Lorho-Pasco, trumpet player Brian Ruellan, guitarist Tristan Le

Breton and bass fiddle player Dylan James.



Bagad de Vannes – Melinerion. *Melin'Art Orchestra*. BV 05.

This DVD captures a performance of a composition by Etienne Chouzier and Kevin Hass, members of the Bagad de Vannes-Melinerion. Performed in 2013 this piece had been available on DVD where the bagad (Brittany's ensemble of bombardas, Scottish style bagpipes and percussion) performed it with a symphony orchestra. For this recording, the bagad performs with the string quartet Icare and a few wind instruments in another live performance from 2013.



Bagad Landi. *Pemp'*

"Pemp," in Breton means "five" – a fitting title for this fifth recording from the bagad of Landivisiau. But "five" also refers to the five 10 to 11 minute selections on the CD

which draw from the music of all five departments of Brittany. The Breton bagpipe band with its addition of bombardas and percussion to Scottish style bagpipes is perfectly suited for longer complex arrangements of traditional song and dance, often incorporating voices and guest musicians of all styles.



Beat Bouet Trio. *Révolution rurale*.

This is a fest noz group whose style is inspired by 90s hip-hop. Faya Gur sings and raps traditional songs in French and Gallo to a heavy bass beat, with accordion by Vanao and percussion from

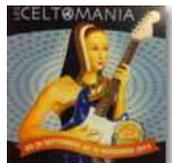
T Burt. A variety of topics are addressed in 17 selections of traditional dance of Brittany – rond de Loudia, maraichine, avant deux, hanter dro, rond de Saint Vincent and others ...



Dominique Carré. *Rendez-vous*.

This Cd presents a compositions by Dominique Carré as well as a mix of his guitar interpretations of other composers, including Irving Berlin, Fats Waller, Charles Aznavour and Kurt

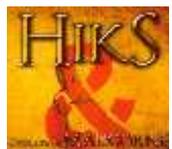
Weil. He is particularly known for his performance of Jazz Manouche and the repertoire of Django Reinhardt.



Les Celtomania 2014

This CD includes performances from the Celtomania festival including: Startijenn, Bagad de Nantes, Trio empreintes, Red Cardell, Yvon ETIENNE, Brian McCombe Band,

Johen Tannam and Nicoll Droguet, Epsilon, Cargo Winch, Norwick, Patrick Ewen, Melaine Favennec and Gérard Delahaye (EDF), Annie Ebrel, Nolüen Le Buhé and Marthe Vassallo, Lucien Gourong, The Maggie Whackers.



Hiks. *Opération Malicorne*.

In the early 1970s the French folk group Malicorne was famous for its innovative arrangement of music, combining voice, acoustic guitar and hurdy-gurdy with electric guitars. The Breton fest noz band Hiks here draws on that group's repertoire for a whole new interpretation, including Malicorne's lead singer, Gabriel Yacoub, and guest artists Marie Sauvet, and André Brunet and Nicolas Quemener.



Championnat des Bagadoù – Lorient 2014

This 3-CD set and DVD presents the championship performance of 15 of Brittany's best bagads recorded live at Lorient in August 2014. If you love the music of Brittany's unique bagpipe/bombard/percussion ensembles, this CD will give you a sample of the best.



Jean-Paul Ferrec. Mon monde à moi.

From the seaside town of Camaret, Jean-Paul Ferrec began singing in 1969 in bars and pubs of Brest. He continued to develop his maritime repertoire with Breton groups like Long John Silver,

Matelots en Bordée and Les Goristes. Here he is joined by Marc Robine for a selection of eleven songs.



Keffiou. Sachomp warni – kan ha diskana

This is the first CD by a trio of kan ha diskana singers for Breton dances.

Drawing on their work as dancers and singers with the Cercle Celtique Eskell

an Elorn in Landerneau, Daniel Kerouanton and Maurice Mingam started up the group in 1999. They were joined by André Gestin in 2001 and have performed regularly at festoù noz and festoù deiz as well as with the Cercle Celtique. This first CD includes 16 dance selections.



Maurice Poulmarc'h and Hervé Cudenec. Etre un Uhelgoad hag ar C'hragoù.

This is the first CD from traditional singers from central western Brittany, Maurice Poulmarc'h and Hervé Cudenec. Among 17 selections on the

CD are seven *gwerz* – dramatic Breton language ballads. Also included are two suites for the gavotte and a march.



Peio Serbielle, Zara.

This is the second of a trio of recordings (Naiz, Zara, Gara) by the Basque musician Peio Serbielle. Breton singer Gilles Servat and Scottish singer Karen

Matheson are also featured for a Basque-Celtic collaboration. The performances engage a large number of musicians and singers including also Konogan an Habask on bombard, flutes and uilleann pipes, as well as students from the Diwan middle school of Vannes and students from the Basque language Ikastola of St. Sébastien.



A Traveler's Account of the Crozon Peninsula from 1895

E. Harrison Barker, "The Gibraltar of France," *Littell's Living Age* 2680, November 16, 1895.



Editor's Note: This travel account includes an odd mix of observations on Brittany's landscape, history, and folk customs – borrowed most probably from other 19th century writers. It also includes some of the most dramatic descriptions of rocks and landscape you are likely to ever encounter – some might say melodramatic!

On no part of the French coast is the scenery of such stupendous grandeur and enticing beauty as on that promontory of Finistère called the Presqu'île de Crozon. It includes the small peninsula of Quéléren, which will be especially spoken of in this paper. Its rocky cliffs form the southern wall of the Goulet – that narrow passage leading from the roadstead to the vast harbor of Brest. So strongly is the neck of land defended by nature and so elaborately is it fortified by science that it has been termed the Gibraltar of France.

On the western side is the Bay of Camaret, which derives its name from a poor fishing town on the southern shore. Camaret is the best centre for studying some of the most impressive coast scenery in Europe, to which the bristling cannon adds no small interest for those who watch the armament of nation against nation. The locality has moreover been the theatre of some stirring historical events in connection with which England has played a very active part, but it is far from a railway station, and is therefore little visited.

I shaped my course to Camaret by way of Douarnenez, following for a good part of the distance of some thirty miles the coast of the most beautiful bay of France. If, as the legend says, the wickedness of King Gradlon's daughter, Dahut, was the cause of the sea forming the Bay of Douarnenez, at the same time that it destroyed the Celtic city of Is, no lover of nature can regard Dahut's depravity as a misfortune.

While on the road I heard the sound of bagpipes drawing nearer, and presently there came into view an open wagon drawn by two horses decked with flowers. The wagon itself was similarly decorated. It carried a new bedstead with bedding, a wardrobe, a table, several chairs, and other articles of household furniture. A young man in a short coat of bright blue cloth and a long waistcoat of the same color, his head covered by a low-

crowned, wide-brimmed hat of sham beaver, with ribbons flying, followed the piper. On his chubby, smooth, and rosy face there was an expression of mingled happiness and anxiety. He was about to be married, and he was taking as a present to his bride the furniture of her new home. Having left these things to be placed in the house, his next duty would be to fetch the bride from her parents. This would also be done to the merry strains of the bagpipes.

Marriage customs in Finistère have remained among the peasants very much what they were centuries ago, and their old-fashioned ceremoniousness is not their least interesting peculiarity. The Breton peasant to-day has an almost religious respect for those notions of polite manners which have come down to him from his forefathers of the Middle Ages, who as far as they dared imitated the etiquette of their princes or nearer feudal lords. The *basfanel*, who with stately bows and old-fashioned phrases performs the delicate office of asking for a girl in marriage on behalf of the suitor, is really acting the part of a matrimonial ambassador. But the *basfanel's* functions do not end here. When the bride has been undressed and put to bed by her maids, all the wedding party re-assemble in the nuptial chamber, which is more often than not the kitchen and general room. Then the *basfanel* steps forward and on behalf of the whole company he addresses the final felicitations to the young couple. This courtly personage is almost invariably a tailor. His habit of going from house to house in the exercise of his calling – the rural tailor seldom works at home – enables him to become the best informed man concerning the private affairs of all the families in his district. He is a great favorite of the women, because he is to them an unfailing fountain of local gossip and scandal. Their liking for him causes the men to despise him, but they nevertheless have recourse to his services as an intermediary whenever the need arises. Such is the *basfanel* - a name more suggestive to the Breton of ridicule than respect. *

I am now at Camaret in a house where the walls and chimney-pieces, even to the kitchen, are decorated with religious emblems. Among these is the uncouth porcelain image of the Virgin and Child, profusely draped with gold leaf, which the Breton sailor who voyaged in the Mediterranean formerly brought back from Marseille as a present for his wife or his betrothed. All such tokens of affections that died long ago in this life are piously preserved generation after generation in these old homes of Brittany, where the conservative spirit is so wonderfully enduring.

Almost at the extremity of a tongue of land stretching out into the charming bay, and forming a natural break-water, is a quadrangular tower, build by Vauban to protect the burg from the English. Time has given to it a ripe and mellow tint that glows warmly when the sunbeams strike upon the still solid masonry. It is much

broader at the base than at the top, and the walls are pierced with four rows of loopholes. This tower is surrounded by a moat, and it retains its old drawbridge. It is associated with a tragic page of English history, namely the defeat of the expedition under Admiral Berkeley, when, in 1694, a bold attempt was made to seize the peninsula of Quélern, and so paralyze at Brest the growing naval power of France. In theory the scheme was a grand strategic master-stroke, but it was undertaken with an insufficient force, and at a time when – England being divided by a dynastic quarrel - there was a constant risk of state secrets being betrayed to the exiled James II, and consequently to his protector Louis XIV. That the secret of this intended landing was so betrayed is matter of history, and suspicion is never likely to be removed from Marlborough's memory in connection with the affair.

Vauban being warned, sufficient time was given him to strongly fortify the isthmus of Quélern near the eastern end of the Bay of Camaret, but he did this in such a manner that the works were not perceptible from the sea. Consequently, when the troops led by General Tollemache had landed, masked batteries opened a deadly fire upon them. If the outworks had been carried, there were others more formidable behind these barring the way. The English fought heroically, but without a chance of success, and when Tollemache, realizing that he had fallen into a trap, attempted to retreat, it was found that the ebbing tide had left most of the boats stranded. What followed was a massacre, in which a multitude of peasants, who had armed themselves with sickles, pitchforks, and other weapons, showed greater ferocity than the French troops. According to the tradition, they seized this opportunity of avenging themselves for the loss of their sheep, which had been carried off by the English during their numerous raids upon the coast. The wild Celt of Cornouaille, two hundred years ago, was not likely to show mercy to the enemy in his power. Nine hundred Englishmen died fighting to the last in that little creek of the Bay of Camaret, still known by its Breton name, *Maro ar Saozon* (literally, Death to the Saxon), which has been badly rendered in French – *La mort Anglaise*. Legend says that the statue of Notre Dame de Roc-Amadour, which surmounted the belfry of the chapel so dedicated, was seen through the smoke from the ships and Vauban's tower to raise its arms, and stopping the English cannon-balls, to hurl them back upon the vessels. The chapel is very near the tower, on the same jutting strip of land.

Following the cliffs by the shore, I have come to that spot where the British dead lie under the grey sea-holly, the dwarf spurge that lights up the solitude with a golden flame, and the little burnet rose, that creeping along the barren ground opens its frail flower to the blue heaven and racing clouds. What a dismal sound is that of the

waves here, as a greyness spreads over the sky, and the day closes with a strengthening western breeze!

Across the narrow isthmus separating the Bay of Camaret from the harbor of Brest is the grand old bastioned wall raised by Vauban. Behind this stretch the hideous modern fortifications, and all the higher ground of the peninsula is like an entrenched camp. The great cliffs on the side of the roadstead and the Goulet are fortified from their summits to the water's edge. It would seem that wherever a fort could be grafted upon the rock this has been done. Everywhere the moor is gashed by trenches and made fantastic by earthworks, which have no meaning except to those who are interested in the science of military engineering. Stranger still to the eye accustomed only to nature in such wasteful places is the multitude of dark lines drawn against the sky. These are telegraph wires communicating with the batteries.

All these signs of man's distrust of man add to the harshness of the landscape here, while destroying something of the grandeur and solemnity of the ancient desolation. But the moor has still those smiles and dimples that lit up its face of old. Here and there a little brook wanders unseen beneath its yellow flags between banks abloom in spring with bluebells, primroses, and ragged robins, protected from the weeping winds by golden ramparts of gorse. Such sheltered nooks are sweetly green and flowery, and are all astir with the life and melodies with the song of birds.

Amidst the gorse, heather, and bracken of the open moor are smooth patches of short turf, where the daisy is ever shaken but never daunted by the breeze. Here little sheep are tethered, two together. Fed upon the foam-sprinkled herbage of these downs near the sea, they furnish the best mutton to be had in France – the *presalé* of the Paris restaurants; a name, however, that is not always employed with a scrupulous respect for accuracy. As the land narrows towards the cape that faces Brest the defensive works become more elaborate. Some of the guns pointed towards the sea are of prodigious size. The cliffs on the opposite side of the passage are also fortified from the sky line to the water. But it is here, on the peninsula of Quélern, that the greatest effort has been made to safeguard the harbor of Brest and the fleet that might take shelter in it. The cape itself is entirely a fortress.

... It is a clear June evening, with a sky transparent enough to bring back to mind something of the brilliant South. Here, on the coast of Finistère the charm of such evenings is the more joyously felt because of the grey sadness which is the prevailing mood of the sky. Climbing to the treeless hill on which the windmills are slowly waving their long arms, I make my way towards the Pointe de Penhir, the wildest bit of the rocky coast about Camaret. On the narrow tableland, which is so swept by storms from the Atlantic that even the heather

clings close to the ground with the dwarf furze, are long lines of great stones placed here by men, and among them are several well-defined menhirs. The spot is evidently one of those that were chosen for the ancient Celtic mysteries. By its height, its extreme desolation and its position near the sea it is marked out for the worship of that mystery which speaks through nature. Beyond these enigmatic stones are others that are likewise enigmatic, but in a different sense. Fragments of granite or metamorphic rock are thickly strewn all over the ground like ruins of a shattered planet.

The promontory narrows, and from each side comes the groan of the sea. But it is on the western side – that of the ocean – where the attraction of sublimity is irresistible. One is drawn by the spell of horror to the dreadful gulfs with which the cliffs are gashed. The sight goes sheer down several hundred feet to where the green waves break into whiteness, then raging like disheveled furies, leap high against the black rocks as if to tear them from the solid world. With a wail of despair they fall back and are lost in the green billow as it returns. The intermittent cries of cormorants and other birds that rear their young in the gloom of these awful fissures mingle with the eternal cry of the tormented sea.

The sun drops blood-red into the ocean, but the moon overhead is brightening. Nearer the end of the land the rocks rise higher and higher and grow weirdly fantastic in the two lights that are mingling. Faces of human similitude, terrible, grotesque, or solemn look down from the naked crags or show in profile as they stare at the sky. The two lines of cliffs meet in a rocky chaos.

A path, now descending and now rising on the verge of frightful precipices, passes up a furrow in the steep rock and leads to a spot the effect of whose almost unearthly grandeur is such that, awestruck, one holds one's breath until the shock – for so it is – of the first impression has passed off. It is called in Breton *Pluden ar loriennon* – which means, "Place that is ever green." A smooth slope of lawn-like turf, now decked with flowers of thrift and lotus, seems suspended like a hammock between the towering buttresses on the side of the precipice. It is sheltered from all winds and is thus ever green. Looking up, one sees nothing but fantastic crags against the sky; looking down, nothing but the darkly gleaming or whitely foaming seas. The two horns of the cape, inwardly curving, form a little bay, which, seen from above, is an abyss that fascinates by its sublimity and yet repels.

The problem of earning bread drives men even here, amidst these dangerous rocks where the sea is never calm and where there is no place to land. Those who are plying the oars so far below are representatives of a very interesting class of fisher people of whom there is a small colony at the mouth of the estuary of Landerneau.** Their origin is lost in the remote past. Some say that they are not Celts, but descendants of the

ancient Phoenicians who by trading upon the Armorican coast founded a colony near Landerneau. Like Peter and his brethren on the Sea of Galilee, they fish by night, and their net is of the antique sort. They have a small square sail which they hoist when the wind is blowing in the direction where they wish to go; but as they never tack, they navigate chiefly with the aid of oars and the tide. A remarkable peculiarity of these people of distinct habits is that women generally accompany men on these voyages, sharing all their perils and hardships. Indeed, it is by no means uncommon for a young girl to be apprenticed to the master of a boat.

As I gaze at the little boat tossing on the moonlit waves under the prodigious cliffs, I feel that grander even than nature here is the strength of heart of these simple people who fish at night, where rocks and sea do all that is conceivable of their power to strike mysterious terror into the soul.



Editor's Notes:

* It is unlikely that our author here was actually a witness to the wedding ceremonies he describes. It was very common for travel writers to borrow from earlier writers – in this case the source can be traced to Hersart de la Villemarqué's song collection *Barzaz Breiz* first published in 1839 with many later re-editions. While English or American travel writers probably did not consult the *Barzaz Breiz* for their information, they certainly had access to a number of articles in the popular English language magazines of the late 19th century where material translated from this book would be found. Or and author might draw information from the 1865 translation by Tom Taylor, *Ballads and Songs of Brittany*. It is not clear how the author derived *basfanel*, from the original name *bazvalan* in the *Barzaz Breiz*.



** Landerneau is not located on the Crozon Peninsula but on the Elorn River to the northeast of Brest – upper right corner of this map. It would be a long trip for a

fishermen in a small sailboat powered primarily by oars that the author describes! As for the Phoenician heritage, I could find no particular link with Landerneau, but there is evidence that the Phoenicians stopped in Brittany on their way to trade for tin in Cornwall and Britain.



A Few Notes about Bro Nevez

Did you know that you can find the most recent issues of *Bro Nevez* (2013 and 2014 issues) on our website www.icdbl.org.

The central activity of the U.S. ICDBL is the publication of our quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 12 to 15 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language and culture.

In November 2006 we published our 100th issue. In the 3,000+ pages of *Bro Nevez* produced so far, over 800 books from Brittany have been reviewed or noted, and over 300 Breton music recordings have been reviewed and an additional 900 new releases briefly described.

If you choose to receive *Bro Nevez* by e-mail as a PDF file you will benefit from having the images in color instead of the often murky black and white images captured on photocopies mailed to you. This also means that you will receive the newsletter at least a week ahead of the copies mailed by the postal service.

And you are welcome to forward *Bro Nevez* to anyone you like who might be interested in seeing it. The U.S. ICDBL is a membership organization and the dues of our members support the production and mailing of *Bro Nevez*. But sharing *Bro Nevez* with a wider network of people helps the U.S. ICDBL fulfill a mission to introduce Brittany and the Breton language and culture to a wide network of people in North America and internationally.

If you would like to get Bro Nevez as an e-mail attachment please let me know. You can also continue to receive it by regular postal service.

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