

# BRO NEVEZ

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



A Month for the Breton and Gallo Languages  
See page 3

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 141

March 2017

# BRO NEVEZ 141

March 2017

ISSN 0895 3074

## EDITOR'S ADDRESS & E-MAIL

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

(215) 886-6361  
loiskuter@verizon.net

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

The **U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)** was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation on October 20, 1981. **Bro Nevez** ("new country" in the Breton language) is the newsletter produced by the U.S. ICDBL. It is published quarterly: 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.*

For information about the Canadian ICDBL contact: Jeffrey D. O'Neill, PO Box 14611, 50 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M8L-5R3, CANADA (e-mail: [jdkoneil@hotmail.com](mailto:jdkoneil@hotmail.com)). Telephone: (416) 264-0475.



## Editorial

With thoughts of spring to come, and snow upon the daffodils (at least here where a warm February has brought them out much earlier than usual), I hope you will enjoy this issue of Bro Nevez.



## Challenges to the Public Presence of the Breton Language

In recent months local communities and the Department of Morbihan have installed signage for the Regional Natural Park of the Golf of Morbihan (Parc Naturel Régional du Golfe du Morbihan) in French and Breton, respecting a convention made in the Fall of 2015 by the Region of Brittany with France to promote the use of bilingual signage on all roads in Brittany. But new signs for the Park on State roads are unilingual in French.

Not timid about taking action to address what is clearly an effort to stifle the public presence of the Breton language, the group Ai'ta is taking down the signs with the expectation that when remounted they will be done properly as bilingual signs.

See Bro Nevez 138 (July 2016) for more about the work of Ai'ta.



## Breizh 5/5

Bretons continue to fight for the reunification of Brittany and the group Breizh 5/5 launched a campaign in 2016 to encourage towns and cities to post the Breizh 5/5 logo with signs marking the entrance to their municipality. The Municipal Council of Quimper voted unanimously to do this in time for the annual Festival de Cornouailles which attracts thousands to the city for this music, dance and arts festival. Over 100 other municipalities throughout all of Brittany have acted likewise.

But it's not only on town signs that this logo is appearing. Individuals are encouraged to put a sticker on their car or their mailbox, to wear a tee shirt or carry a tote bag with the logo. Businesses can also show support in putting the logo at the entrance to their enterprise, using it in advertising, on letterhead or on their website. Cultural organizations, likewise, can make the logo visible in publicity, websites and on concert or festival posters. And the list of those now incorporating the Breizh 5/5 logo continues to grow.

For more information, log onto the website <http://breizh5sur5.tumblr.com/>



## Le Mois du Breton et du Gallo

Launched in 2012 at the initiative of the Region of Brittany a weeklong event to showcase the Breton and Gallo languages has now grown to become the “The Month of Breton and Gallo.” This is produced by a collaborative of

Breton organizations in the Loire-Atlantique Department with the Centre Culturel Breton Yezhoù ha Sevenadur, and it clearly demonstrates that this part of Brittany (not officially part of the Region of Brittany) is unquestionably Breton.

The month long series of events includes classes and talks about Breton and Gallo but also a wide variety of activities conducted through these languages from cuisine, walks in the countryside with singers or storytellers, movies, theater, concerts and festoù noz, as well as sports with Breton language commentary. <https://mizvezharbrezhoneg44.wordpress.com/>



## Bretagne Prospective – Breizh Diawel

[www.Bretagne-prospective.bzh](http://www.Bretagne-prospective.bzh)

Bretagne Prospective is a politically neutral “think tank” bringing together Bretons from the economic, social, civic and university worlds to plan for Brittany’s future. In doing this it has created a number of documents and its website provides links to current articles about a range of events and action in Brittany related to economic planning, demography, language and culture and entrepreneurial activity.

One recent note is from **Bretagne Culture Diversité** (<http://bcd.bzh>) and the launching of an online multimedia encyclopedia called **bécédia**.



This contains information about the history, demography, nature, music, sports, cuisine, costume, and nearly anything else related to Brittany’ past and present. There are over 130 dossiers on a wide variety of topics,

presentations aimed at high school students on Brittany’s geography and its European and international relations, videos of presentations at conferences, virtual visits to exhibits, interviews with scholars and radio broadcasts. This is a rich source of information – supplementing texts to read with lots of images and sound

Also within the Bretagne Culture Diversité website are a number of other links:

Bed.bzh take you to some 600 films about the world’s diverse cultures.

Radiobreizh.bzh links you to radio broadcasts of Arvor FM, Radio Bro Gwened, Radio Kerne, Radio Kreiz Breizh and others – in Breton and French.

Bazvalan.bzh leads to recordings of native speakers of Breton and Gallo and a presentation about the importance of learning from the voices of native speakers.

Bretania.bzh is a portal to a wide variety of articles and images on Breton history and culture.

TAP Bretagne is a program to work with bilingual schools and cultural organizations to integrate Breton languages, music, dance, sports, art, etc, into school curriculum.



We have introduced Tamm Kreiz before in Bro Nevez, but it’s always worth reminding readers of the wealth of information to be found

on this website which lists every fest noz and fest deiz to be found in all five Breton departments, as well as concert dates, workshops and information about cercles celtiques and bagadoù. It also includes a wealth of information on musicians and singers of Brittany (including the opportunity to hear a bit of their work).

And certainly the numbers offered by Tamm Kreiz show the incredibly vibrant music scene in Brittany today. They reference on their site 6,500 music groups, 5,000 musicians and singers, 2,500 dates for musical events each year (of which 1,500 are fest noz), 4,000 organizers, and 420 cercles and bagads.

## Canal Breizh

[www.Canalbreizh.bzh](http://www.Canalbreizh.bzh)

This January Tamm Kreiz partnered with Dastum ([www.dastum.bzh](http://www.dastum.bzh)) to launch a web radio featuring Breton music, from the most traditional in style to new innovative creations. All Made in Breizh. And as you listen to the music stream by, you can link to information about the musicians and get lots of information about upcoming musical events in Brittany and what's coming up on the broadcast. And there is a link here to another site [www.nozbreizh.fr](http://www.nozbreizh.fr) where you can find hundreds of short samples of new and older CDs as well as images, newspaper articles and other information about Breton music. Over 3,000 musicians and groups can be found on this site which is yet another great source for those exploring Breton sounds.

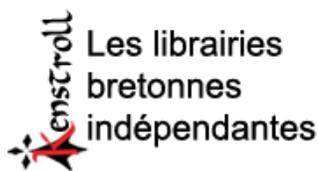


<http://www.capbrittany.com>

Cap Brittany is an online store to promote products of Brittany, including books, CDs, musical instruments, clothing, jewelry, food specialties, bowls, cups and glasses and other goods.

They are an affiliate of the bookstore Lenn ha Dilenn, and a member of the group Kenstroll (see below).

Check out the goods and explore the possibilities of getting things you love shipped here to the U.S. I would be glad to hear of anyone who has had experience with this service.



[www.kenstroll.org](http://www.kenstroll.org)

**Kenstroll** is an alliance of independent book stores that specialize in Breton culture: Ar Vro, Gweladenn, Lenn ha Dilenn, Penn da Benn, Ti ar sonerien.

Founded in 1999 the idea is to share expertise and experiences in order to support each other's work and to create public events that will bring people to these locations (book signings, poetry readings, conferences, etc.). These are stores where knowledgeable staff will help you find exactly what you want to read, and can keep you up to date on cultural activities in the area. While books are the focus, the stores also carry music, jewelry, Breton food specialties, etc.



## Federal Union of Nationalities

Bretons have long been active in working with other minorities of Europe to express solidarity and support the diverse languages and cultures of Europe. The following Facts are from the FEUEN website where you can find much more information about the work of this organization.

**FUEN**, with around 90 member organisations in 32 European countries is the largest umbrella organisation of the autochthonous, national minorities / ethnic groups in Europe.

**FUEN** was founded in Paris in 1949 – in the same year as the Council of Europe.

**FUEN** adopted the Charter for the autochthonous, national minorities in Europe in 2006. The Charter forms the basis of the actions of FUEN.

**FUEN** represents the interests of the European minorities on regional, national and in particular on the European level. FUEN is committed to protect and promote the identity, language, culture, rights and own character of the European minorities.

**FUEN** is the voice of the minorities at the international organisations, notably at the European Union and the Council of Europe and also at the United Nations and the OSCE.

**FUEN** is also full member of the European Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism established by the European Commission, and Participant in the Fundamental Rights Platform

**FUEN** has participatory status at the Council of Europe and consultative status at the United Nations.

**FUEN**, in cooperation with the European Parliament, established the European Dialogue Forum.

**FUEN's** main projects are, besides representation of interests, to establish a forum of the European minorities, European linguistic diversity, the FUEN project Solidarity with the Roma and a European citizens' initiative of the minorities.

**FUEN** organises the largest congress of the autochthonous minorities in Europe every year – where 150-250 representatives of the European minorities meet each other.

**FUEN** issues press releases, resolutions, statements and publishes the "Fundamental Rights of the Minorities" from the FUEN Charter.

**FUEN** organises – in cooperation with its members – many different events. For example the EUROPEADA, the football championship of the European minorities, and the annual meetings of the German, Slavic and Turkic minorities.

### **A Loss for the U.S. ICDBL and the Breton Language - Lenora Timm**

Lenora “Nora” Timm, a professor emerita of linguistics and former associate dean of Graduate Studies died Nov. 22, 2016, at age 73 after a recurring battle with cancer.

She was a founding member of the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language in 1980 and served as its president for a number of years.

Lenora Timm first discovered the Breton language in the late 1960s when she became aware of its threatened existence. She was determined to study the language and she both learned enough Breton to communicate well with native speakers in Brittany and she was a scholar of the language, contributing important articles about its shifting borders of use in Brittany, both social and geographical.

She was not timid about writing articles that demonstrated the challenges and roadblocks France put in the way of Bretons trying to promote their language. She spent time in Brittany when the Breton-language immersive Diwan schools were first being developed in the 1970s to fill the void of Breton in the school system of Brittany.

Lenora fully grasped the complex nature of Breton speakers in a period when attitudes were changing. Older generations were struggling with the stigma of what they had been told was a backward language fit only for poor peasants. Younger Bretons who had been blocked from learning it naturally in their home by parents intent on helping them get ahead in the world were working to learn the language and find ways to incorporate it in everyday life again. In her fictional yet documentary article “With taste and courage: Lisette’s story” (1988) she captured well the psychological, social and physical aspect of the life of older women in Brittany. She also published a work which would allow English speakers to meet one of Brittany’s most influential 20th century Breton language poets, Anjel Duval. You can find it here:

[http://www.breizh.net/anjela/saozneg/lenora\\_timm.php](http://www.breizh.net/anjela/saozneg/lenora_timm.php)

Nora was known at the University of California for her support of students. While I was not her student, she generously offered her mentorship as I completed a doctoral thesis on Breton identity as expressed in

language use and music. She shared her comments on my thesis ideas and the articles I drafted in the 1980s. And I treasured our exchanges of letters over the years. We shared a number of acquaintances in Brittany where I first met her in 1979.

I knew Nora through her many years of scholarship and support for the Breton language but she was known by those who worked with her at the University of California, Davis, for much more. The following is summarized from a memorial note prepared for UC Davis staff and faculty.

Lenora earned a Ph.D. in Anthropology at the University of California, Davis, in 1973, and then the linguistics faculty. Her doctoral thesis focused on “A Child’s Acquisition of Russian Phonology,” but she also studied language and gender, minority languages, and “code-switching” (when bilingual speakers alternate between languages in a single conversation). In one of her most widely cited studies, she showed that bilingual English-Spanish speakers were not using a simplified creole but following the grammar of each language. Nora was proficient in seven languages besides English - Breton, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Russian and Latin.

Nora also advocated for female colleagues, chairing an advisory committee on the status of women at UC Davis in 1982-83, directing the Women’s Resources and Research Center from 1983 to 1989, and co-authoring a 1989 report the status of women at the university. From 1995 to 1998 she served as a special assistant to the provost for diversity and affirmative action.

Nora became the Chair of the Linguistics Department in the fall of 1999 when it moved from being a program to a true department, and she held that position until 2007. She also served as director of the former Nature and Culture program, which from 1991 to 2011 offered undergraduates a major that combined environmental studies with the humanities. Nora served as associate dean of Graduate Students from 2007 until her retirement on June 30, 2015.

She acted on her convictions not only in defense of the Breton language, but also as an environmentalist helping to preserve thousands of acres of threatened wildlife habitat in California, Wyoming, Nevada and New Mexico. Among other conservation efforts, she and her husband, biologist Frank Maurer, spearheaded the creation of the Quail Ridge Reserve to preserve native grasses and oak woodlands in Napa County near Lake Berryessa. Married in 1985, Nora and her husband farmed 37 acres west of Davis, raising organic chickens, ducks and turkeys that they sold to restaurants.

Besides her support of the Breton language Nora helped foster Scottish American pride by supporting her husband's stone carving. He specializes in Pict and Celtic pictographs and has created unique "tartan stones" for 35 U.S. states. And Nora was an accomplished guitarist throughout her adult life.

Truly a woman of action, Nora will be missed.

The following is a bibliography of most of her articles and books related to the Breton language:

2007. "Literary nationalism in 19th century Brittany: the curious case of the Barzaz-Breiz," *Celtic Cultural Studies* 2.

1995-96. "Pronominal A-forms in Breton: a discourse-based analysis," *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 4 (March 1995): 1-33.

1994. "The limits of code-switching constraints, with some evidence from Breton/French switching," *Journal of Celtic Linguistics* 3 (May): 95-134.

1990. A modern Breton political poet, Anjela Duval: a biography and an anthology, *Studies in French Literature* 5, Lewiston, NY, Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press.

1988. "With Taste and Courage: Lisette's Story," *Atlantis*, Vol. 14, no. 1, (Fall).

1987. "The verb morphology of Carhaisien Breton," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 42: 242-292.

1984. "The segmental phonology of Carhaisien Breton," *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 40: 118-192.

1983. "The shifting linguistic frontier in Brittany," in A. Makkai and V.R. Makkai (eds.) *Essays in Honor of Charles F. Hockett*. (Hamburg, NY: The Press at Twin Willows).

1982. "Language Treatment in Brittany," *Language Planning Newsletter* 8(2) August.

1980. "Bilingualism, diglossia, and language shift in Brittany," *International Journal of the Sociology of Languages* 25.

2009. "Language, culture and identity in Brittany: the sociolinguistics of Breton," in: Ball, Martin J., and Nicole Müller (eds.), *The Celtic languages*, Routledge Language Family Descriptions, 2nd ed. (1993), London, New York: Routledge, 2009. 712-752.

1999. "Of love and land: the poetry of Naig Rozmor and Anjela Duval," in: Black, Ronald, William Gillies, and Roibeard Ó Maolalaigh (eds.), *Celtic connections*:

*proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, vol. 1, East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 377-394.

1991. "Discourse pragmatics of NP-initial sentences in Breton," in: Fife, James, and Erich Poppe (eds.), *Studies in Brythonic word order*, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science 4.83, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 275-310.

1990. "Some observations on the syntax of the Breton verbal noun," in: Ball, Martin J., James Fife, Erich Poppe, and Jenny Rowland (eds.), *Celtic linguistics / leithyddiaeth Geltaidd: readings in the Brythonic languages. Festschrift for T. Arwyn Watkins*, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science 4.68, Current Issues in Linguistic Theory, Amsterdam: Benjamins, 189-208.

### A Few Notable Bretons of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

From : Jean-Loup Avril, *Mille Bretons – dictionnaire biographique*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Les Portes du Large, 2003.

Avril's *Mille Bretons* presents 1,000 Bretons of note, revealing that Bretons have been notable actors in a number of areas – medicine, history, world exploration, arts, science, literature, sports, politics, economy ... While the book does not include Bretons still alive and/or active since its publication in 2003, it is an impressive presentation of people who had an impact on Brittany and the world more widely. I have selected just a few Bretons from this book who were active as teachers and writers in the Breton language, whose actions made an impact in the promotion of Breton as a modern living language. The following are my translations.

### Marguerite Gourlaouen

Militant for the Breton language. Born in Douarnenez February 3, 1902. Deceased in the same town May 31, 1987. The oldest daughter of a beer merchant, she raised her six brothers and sisters after the death of her mother while also helping the family business. With Breton speaking parents she added to her oral knowledge of Breton in studying grammars and dictionaries. With a love for teaching she took over the direction of the first school for Breton by correspondence, Skol Ober. She remained at its head for 45 years, using all the time left from her business to correct the work of numerous students, among them future writers. In 1977 she delegated the direction of Skol Ober to Vefa de Bellaing. Her limitless devotion earned her the name "Santez Marc'harid ar brezhoneg" or Saint Marguerite of Breton.

(Reference: Yann Bouessel du Bourg, "Marc'harid Gourlaouen et Dorig Le Voyer, deux personnes de la

renaissance culturelle bretonne." *Dalc'homp Sonj* 1987, no. 20, page 34.)

### **Vefa de Bellaing**

Cultural militant and historian of music. Born September 19, 1909 in Carhaix, Geneviève (Genofeva in Breton) Charbonnié from Sireuil became by marriage Vefa de Bellaing. She died in Guingamp on April 16, 1998. Devoted to the Breton language and culture, she founded a celtic circle (cercle celtique) in 1938 and during the war gave her support to the work of the Caouissin brothers who published *Ololé*, an illustrated magazine for children.

In 1948 with Xavier de Langlais and Ronan Huon, she created the Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerien (Interceltic camp for Breton speakers), a summer school [still active] which has been experienced by several thousands of students during 50 years. She was also a volunteer teacher for Skol Ober, a principal organization to teach Breton by correspondence [still active] which was founded by Marc'harid Gourlaouen in 1932. She was the secretary for the cultural federation Kuzul ar Brezhoneg for many years.

Along with her duties as general secretary for all the libraries of the Côtes d'Armor in St. Brieuc, she pursued a varied literary career, publishing poems, short stories, memoirs and translations in Breton magazines/journals. For many years she produced a contribution in the Breton language for Armor Magazine using the pen name Hervé Huiban. In 1962 she created the Oaled Abhervé cultural center in St. Brieuc which she led for more than 30 years.

Former student at the music conservatory of Nantes she was a good violinist. Starting in 1985, on request of the Cultural Institute of Brittany, she took on a vast research project on Breton music composers and their works. Her research led to the publication in 1992 of her invaluable *Dictionnaire des compositeurs de musique en Bretagne*, 280 pages, published by Ouest-France.

Vefa de Ballaing was distinguished in 1988 by receiving the Order of the Ermine of the Cultural Institute of Brittany.

(Reference: *Sterenn*, July 1998, no. 10, Page 6).

### **Yann (Jean-Marie) Bouëssel du Bourg**

Writer. Born in Paris, December 4, 1942; deceased in Val-d'Izé (Ille-et-Vilaine) on May 24, 1996. Son of a judge from the Fougères area, he did his studies at the Collège de Saint-Vincent and then university studies at the Faculté de Lettres de Rennes. He completed a university thesis in 1985 focused on the journal *Arvor*. As a professor of English he taught in Vannes and then

in Rennes while serving as the head of Scouts for Brittany. He published over 500 articles in Breton and in French. An ardent defender of the Breton language and of the Breton culture and traditions, he was a moving force in the commemoration of the bicentennial of La Rouërie [active in the American Revolution and in defense of Breton independence]. Among other works he published are: *Xavier de Langlais* (1977), *James Bouillé, rénovateur de l'architecture bretonne* (1977), *Ernest Le Barzic, sa vie, son oeuvre* (1982), *La Tradition arthurienne* (1983), *Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier, sentinelle de la Bretagne* (1985).

(Reference : Raymond de Sagazan, « Yann Bouëssel du Bourg, » *Bulletin de l'Association Bretonne*, 1996, p. 10.)

### **Frañsez Kervella**

Breton language writer, known as Kenan Kongar. Born in Dirinon Finistère) January 31, 1913; he died in Brélévéné (Lannion) on February 10, 1992. François Marie Kervella lost his father when he was very young. He was just 16 when he sent his first article in Breton to the Abbé Perrot for the journal *Feiz ha Breiz*. He did secondary school studies at the high school of Brest. He contributed to *Feiz ha Breiz* up until 1931. He then left Brest to pursue studies in science at the Université de Rennes until 1936. Having joined the Parti Autonomiste Breton at its early stage, he regularly sent articles to its journal *Breiz Atao* between 1930 and 1932. He was very active with Breuriez ar Brezoneg er Skolioù with Raymond Delaporte in the 1930s to promote putting Breton in the schools. In 1937 he left for Gabon as a geologist, coming back in 1938 to do his military service, and after the war his occupation led him to work for nearly 30 years in France and abroad while his wife and their children were based in Lannion. During all his life he was a prolific writer in the Breton language, contributing to numerous journals such as *Gwalarn*, *Barr-Heol*, *Al Liamm*, *Sked*, *Hor Yezh* and others. His greatest work was his grammar of the Breton language, *Yezhadur bras ar brezhoneg* (La Baule 1947, reedited Brest 1976).

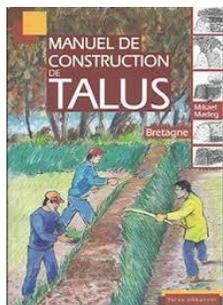
### **Loeiz Le Floch**

Breton language writer known by the name Maodez Glanndour. Born March 7, 1909 in Pontrieux (Côtes d'Armor); died in Lannion November 25, 1986. Son of a legal clerk in Trégor, he studied at the Collège Saint-Joseph in Lannion and then at the Seminary of Saint Brieuc. Ordained a priest in 1932, he pursued studies in Rome and at the Institut Catholique de Paris which led to a doctorate in philosophy and a degree in theology. Definitely back in Brittany, he taught in Lannion and was a curate in Guingamp and then rector of Louannec from 1956 to his death.

Maodez Glanndour is considered to be one of the best poets of Breton language literature. His poems were often published by the journal *Gwalarn* and *Al Liamm*. In 1937 he created a journal of religious and philosophical studies *Studi hag Ober* (study and action) which was continued after the war with *Kaierou Kristen* (Christian booklets). He also translated the Bible directly from Greek text into Breton because he felt that the Breton language transmitted better than Latin or French the power of the Greek text. Maodez Glanndour was a poet, theologian, historian, and specialist of music and traditional Breton song.

(Reference: Annaig Renault, "L'Abbé Le Floch, Maodez Glanndour," *Bulletin de l'Association Bretonne*, 1994. Pages 199-204)

## New Books from Brittany



**Mikael Madeg. *Manuel de Construction de Talus (Bretagne)*.** Yoran Embanner. 2016 156 pages. ISBN 978-2-916579-90-0

Mikael Madeg humbly states from the get-go of this book that he is no expert in the construction of "talus" - earthen and stone field

enclosures. But since the mid 1980s he has experimented in building earth walls based on extensive research – talking with farmers and studying a variety of older field enclosures, especially in western Brittany. He has become not only very knowledgeable about this type of structure that has characterized the Breton countryside, but an important voice for the protection of this traditional way to enclose a farm field. Since the mid 1990s he has engaged a number of others in learning the technique of building talus.

In existence since ancient times walls built of earth, earth and stone, or just stone, had a variety of functions – protection from enemies, animals, cold or wind, or to mark a border or keep in animals. Ecologically these walls created a micro-environment supporting a wide variety of animals, insects, and plants and worked effectively to prevent erosion. As bushes and trees grow from these earthen enclosures, they have been harvested for a variety of uses. Aesthetically, the small enclosed fields of Brittany have contributed to a very pleasing landscape.

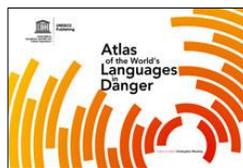
Both environmental and aesthetic reasons can be put forward for the maintenance of older field enclosures as well as the construction of new ones. The 1950s and 60s were particularly destructive with French government encouragement of "remembrement" - making small fields into very large ones, friendlier to mechanized agriculture. Big machines, big fields, but at

a cost often in soil erosion and damaging run-off into Brittany's streams. Farming has changed, and small enclosed farm fields are not likely to make a comeback, but the protection of those that still exist is worth consideration.

The bulk of this book goes into the details of actually building a field enclosure – what kind to build (all earth, a mix of stone and earth, all stone), how high and wide should it be, what shape should it be, do you want to plant grass, bushes or trees on it. Also addressed is what you need to do to maintain your field or garden enclosure. The author also addresses how to restore or rebuild an older wall that has been neglected. There are photos and very useful drawings throughout the book to illustrate exactly what Madeg is counseling.

Am I ready to build one of these enclosures for my garden areas? I have to admit, I envisioned a wonderful earthen wall in my backyard to keep the deer and groundhogs thinking, if not out of a garden. If the book demonstrates anything, it is that these field enclosures require thoughtful planning and a great deal of manpower both to construct and maintain. So I will continue to grow flowers and go to the local farmer's market for fresh local vegetables. But for those in Brittany (or elsewhere) who want to maintain or build a "talus" Mikael Madeg provides a great guide to get started.

Mikael Madeg has written over a hundred books in Breton and French on Breton family and place names, legends, architecture, flora and fauna, and customs. A large number focus on the Leon area of northwestern Brittany. He has also written fiction and his novel *Dispac'h* was awarded the Sten Kidna award for Breton language fiction in 2016. Published at the end of 2014 by the publishing house called Kêredol which was created by Madeg, this 630-page novel is set in the Leon area and relates the adventures of a Breton born in 1760 who emigrates to America to fight in our War of Independence.

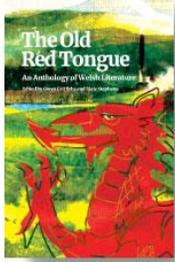


**And a Book from UNESCO**  
***Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger***, Editor-

in-Chief Christopher Moseley, Preface by Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO,

and Cartographer Alexandre Nicolas. Memory of Peoples series. 2010. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 218 pages. ISBN 978-92-3-104096-2

This work produced by UNESCO includes numerous maps (including a wall map), table and figures, and a bibliography. *It can be ordered through the UNESCO publishing website: <http://publishing.unesco.org>*



**The Old Red Tongue – An Anthology of Welsh Literature,** Lesser Used Languages of Europe Series Volume Eight. Edited by Gwyn Griffiths and Meic Stephens with an introduction by Dafydd Johnston. Francis Boutle Publishers (<http://www.francisboutle.co.uk>). Paperback 1000 pages. ISBN 978 0 9957473 1 9. Available May 2017.

Cost is 35£ (5£ discount if ordered before May 1).

Press release from the publisher:

The *Old Red Tongue* is a major anthology of over 300 texts – poems, plays, memoirs, essays, extracts from novels and short stories, hymns, eulogies, elegies, medieval prose, political and theological commentaries – from nearly 200 writers covering every period from the 6th century to the present day.

Included are selections from poets of 'the Old North' (present day Cumbria and the Lowlands of Scotland) where the first Welsh poetry was written, extracts from the Mabinogion, poems by Dafydd ap Gwilym – generally regarded as the greatest Welsh poet of all time – as well often neglected writers of the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Lewys Morgannwg and William Salesbury. In the 20th century, nearly 100 writers are represented – including Kate Roberts, Saunders Lewis, Kitchener Davies, Caradog Prichard, and contemporary writers such as Wiliam Owen Roberts, Mererid Hopwood, Menna Elfyn, Bobi Jones, Gwyneth Lewis and Alan Llwyd. Welsh texts are followed by English translations and many have been translated into English for the first time.

Over 1000 pages long, *The Old Red Tongue* introduces the English reader to the riches of Welsh literature, one of the oldest in Europe. A unique work in scale and variety, this anthology is also an invaluable resource for Welsh speakers, learners and students.

**Gwyn Griffiths** was co-editor of the Breton anthology, *The Turn of the Ermine* (2006), the first in the Francis Boutle Lesser Used Languages of Europe series. He is the author of a biography of the 19th century Welsh pacifist and patriot, *Henry Richard* (2012), also published by Francis Boutle. His other published works include travel books, translations of Breton plays into Welsh, a history of the Breton onion men and a history of the Welsh national anthem.

**Meic Stephens** was Professor of Welsh Writing in English at the University of Glamorgan and, from 1967 to 1990, Literature Director of the Welsh Arts Council. Founder of *Poetry Wales* in 1965, he edited the

magazine for eight years. He wrote the pioneering study *Linguistic Minorities in Western Europe* (1976) and compiled *The Oxford Companion to the Literature of Wales* (1986) and *The Oxford Illustrated Literary Guide to Britain and Ireland* (1992). He has also translated from the Welsh the work of Islwyn Ffowc Elis, Saunders Lewis and John Gwilym Jones.



**Deep inside a Breton skull 51 - The battle of Cattraeth**

Jean Pierre Le Mat

The Iliad is an ancient epic relating the war of Troy. It is considered as a heritage of the Greeks, although Troy was a town of Asia Minor, in present day Turkey.

The author of the Iliad is Homer. The Homeric language combines different dialects, especially the Ionian and the Aeolian. Ionia is an historical region of the ancient Greek world, but of present-day Turkey. It is located west of Asia Minor, around the current town of Izmir. Homer would have lived there in the 8th century BC, probably on the island of Chios. Aeolia is the name given in Antiquity to the northwest coast of Asia Minor, north of Ionia, on the Gulf of Smyrna.

The Ionian dialect is at the origin of modern Greek. The claim of the Homeric narratives to be a Greek heritage cannot be challenged if we stick to a linguistic basis. On a geographical basis, the Turks could claim them. But can a cultural heritage be claimed on a geographical basis?

Y Gododdin, our Iliad, poses a somewhat similar problem. The story takes place in a territory that no longer corresponds to current borders. The kingdom of Gododdin extended over the north-east of England and south-east of Scotland, roughly between Edinburgh and Catterick.



The people of Gododdin were not Gaelic people, like the Scots. Their language is a Brythonic one, like Welsh or Breton. Y Gododdin would have been composed by the bard Aneurin during the 7th century. This man spoke brythoneg, or maybe, a lost Celtic language. Brythoneg is the ancestor of our Breton language,

Brezhoneg. The Epic Y Gododdin can be considered as a heritage for the Welsh, but also for us, Bretons.

Y Gododdin told about the battle of Catteraeth. Kad-traezh, in Breton, means *the battle on the sand*. Was it on the seashore? It is said, at the beginning of the epic:

« *The Gododin relates, that on the coast of Mordej,  
Before the tents of Madog, when Owain returned,  
But one man in a hundred with him came. »*

Was it Catterick, in North Yorkshire? Was it somewhere else?

Nobody knows where it was, nor if the battle was really on a place named Catteraeth. In the epic, there is no description of the place. Aneurin was not interested in geography.

Proud historians of today tell us now that one of the army was of the kingdom of Gododdin, and the other one is a Saxon troop. Or maybe an Angles army. Or maybe another Celtic army, with Anglo-Saxon allies on each side. Maybe. Aneurin didn't tell who they are. He was not interested by politics. He was only interested by the high deeds of the heroes.

Some said that after the battle, the kingdom of Gododdin was destroyed. Aneurin told nothing about the consequences of the war. As I said, he was not interested by politics. According to the text, only two warriors survived, and the bard.

« *But three escaped by valor from the funeral fosse,  
The two war-dogs of Aeron, and Cynon the dauntless,  
And myself, from the spilling of blood, the reward of my  
candid song. »*

Let us read the epic without explanations. Let us taste it without reading the notes of scholars or scientists. Anyway, translators do not agree about the meanings of the old words. When you read different translations, you are reading different books. Let us follow Aneurin in his wild writings, passing from one translator to another. We are not looking for a truth, but for an old vision of life.

« *The heroes went to Catteraeth... »*

« *The heroes went to Catteraeth in marshalled array, and  
with shout of war,  
With powerful steeds, and dark brown harness, and  
with shields,  
With uplifted javelins, and piercing lances,  
With glittering mail, and with swords. »*

Even without understanding, let us taste the old bardic versification, with its assonance and alliteration:

*Gwyr a aeth gatraeth yg cat yg gawr  
Nerth meirch a gwrymseirch ac ysgwydawr  
Peleidy ar gychwyn a llym waewawr*

*A llurugeu clae a chledyuawr*

*“When Caradawg rushed into battle,  
It was like the tearing onset of the woodland boar;  
Bull of the army in the mangling fight,  
He allured the wild dogs by the action of his hand;  
My witnesses are Owain the son of Eulat,  
And Gwrien, and Gwynn, and Gwriad;  
But from Catteraeth, and its work of carnage,  
From the hill of Hydwn, ere it was gained,  
After the clear mead was put into his hand,  
He saw no more the hill of his father.”*

Let us meet the chieftains:

« *Three kings of the hosts  
Who sprang of the Brython,  
Cynri and Cynon,  
Cynrain of Aeron.  
The tribes of the crafty Deirans  
Were wont to ask  
Did there come from the Brython  
A better man than Cynon  
A serpent on the enemies' path?*

According to some translations, Bradwen was a female warlordess...

« *Equal to three men, though a maid, was Bradwen »*

According to other translations, Bradwen was a male warlord:

*“The equal of three men, for the favour of a maiden,  
was Bradwen”*

Probably the heroes were defeated because they drank too much.

« *The heroes marched to Catteraeth, loquacious was the  
host;  
Pale mead was their liquor, and it proved their poison; »  
« *The heroes marched to Catteraeth, filled with mead  
and drunk, »**

But other translators do not agree:

*“Warriors went to Catteraeth, their host was swift  
Fresh mead was their feast and it was bitter”  
“Warriors went to Catteraeth, a mead-nourished host”*

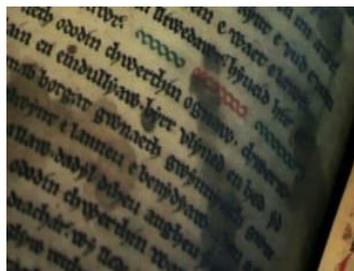
Deep in my Breton skull, I try to imagine the heroes of Catteraeth.

Life and death are not important any longer, when war comes. Excitement submerges everything.

Weapons are glittering, spirit and vigor are directed towards battle. Towards victory? Not sure it was so important.

Only feats and courage matter, and their traces in the bard's lament.

Maybe that is why the Celts never built empires.



Book of Aneurin



### Brittany and Wales

Brittany has long initiated relations with other Celtic countries with countless musical exchanges as well as a long list of twinned cities. Each year Bretons celebrate their kinship with Wales with a week-long celebration in honor of Sant Dewi, St. David, Wales patron saint. This year's events during

the first week of March include an exhibit on Wales, the screening of the movie "How Green Was My Valley," a conference/discussion on Welsh institutions, more conference presentations about Wales, a dinner featuring Welsh cuisine, a chance to learn Welsh dances and then put them into practice at a closing Welsh/Breton fest noz.



### Brittany and Ireland – Celebrated by BZH-NY in New York City

It has become customary for a Breton bagad to march in New York City's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade, and this year it will be the Bagad de Lorient. BZH-New York, the Breton Association of New York, has taken advantage of their presence to organize events in the city featuring the bagad and other Breton and Irish musicians.

On March 14 you can dance the night away with the Irish band Solas and the Bagad de Lorient who will be representing the Inter-Celtic Festival of Lorient held in August each year (10 days, 5,000 performers, and 700,000 in attendance). Also part of the evening will be the **Banda Gaites Liacin from Asturias, Spain**. The Interceltic New York fest noz will be held at the Highline Ballroom with doors opening at 6:30. Check out the BZH-NY website for details: <http://bzh-ny.org/>

On March 17 you are invited to join the bagad and BZH New York to parade down 5<sup>th</sup> avenue, followed by a late lunch at the Tout va bien restaurant – reservations needed (<http://bzh-ny.org/news/saint-patrick-2017/>)

### Bagad New York

The United States has its own bagad, the Bagad New York, made up of pipers, bombard players and percussionists from the northeastern part of the country who have roots in the Scottish pipe bands so prolific in this country. But these are guys (no women so far!) who have a passion for Breton music and culture and wanted to share that with Americans. Anyone who likes the Scottish bagpipes will love what the bagad does with this instrument in pair with the bombard and percussion. And as is the case with the bagads of Brittany, the Bagad New York has an innovative flair.

Check out their website [www.bagad.us](http://www.bagad.us) and if you are in the New York area, catch them at the upcoming events:

Interceltique Fest Noz - March 14th, NYC

Carlos Nuñez Concert - March 18th, NYC

(World Music Institute)

NEFFA - April 22, Mansfield MA

Bagad New York Live at Snugs Harbor Cafe - May 19th



### 14th Regional Inter-high school contest for Breton music

Students of the Felix Le Dantec high school of Lannion are organizing the 14<sup>th</sup> inter-high school contest for Breton music on April 7, 2017. Over the years this gathering has served to launch a number of musicians

and groups performing innovative arrangements of Breton dance music for the fest noz. Among these have been Kedal, War Sav, Sparfell, Hopopop's Kerlutin, Hamon-Martin, Spontus, and others.

The two top groups from the contest win the opportunity to appear in a tour of Breton festivals, terminating with the Yaouank festival in Rennes. The contest is always a great opportunity to

discover and encourage new talents on the Breton scene. This year the contest will end with a fest noz featuring Spontus, “N Diaz, Mari hag Anjela Loro Parscu and others who have won this contest in the past.

## Heard of, but not heard – new recordings from Brittany



### **Championnat des bagadoù – Lorient 2016.** Bodadeg ar Sonerion.

This 3-CD and 1 DVD set captures the performances of the top 14 bagads of Brittany in the second leg of the championship held in Lorient during the Inter Celtic

Festival of Lorient. Cap Caval came out the winner, but all of these Breton “bagpipe bands” are spectacular in their performances.



### **Celtic Fiddle Festival. Storm in a teapot.**

This group (which has undergone changes in its composition over the years) is well known in all the Celtic lands and here in the U.S. thanks to tours here. It is currently made up of

three master fiddlers – Kevin Burke, Christian Lemaitre, and Charlie Mckerron – with guitarist Nicolas Quémener. This CD includes 12 selections of Scottish, Irish, Galician and Breton dances and melodies, including a dañs pourleth, kas ha barh and two fisels – one featuring the dazzling guitar work of Quémener.



### **Hamon-Martin Quintet et Basel Zayed. Kharoub.**

This group of well known musicians from the area of Redon in Gallo Brittany team up here with Palestinian singer and oud player Basel Zayed

and his brother Yousef Zayed on percussions. The Quintet is made up of Mathieu Hamon (song), Erwan Hamon (bombard and flute), Janick Martin (diatonic accordion), Ronan Pellen (cistre), and Erwan Volant (fretless bass). This CD includes 11 selections from live performances in December 2016 of Palestinian and Breton songs, dances and compositions on contemporary themes and timeless human dilemmas.



### **Meskach. Eirientalism.**

This trio based in the town of Glomel in central western Brittany specializes in a Balkan and Celtic repertoire. The selections on this CD include melodies and dances from Ireland, Bulgaria,

Macedonia, Spain, Holland and Greece. The group is composed of Yves-Marie Berthou with a variety of

percussion instruments, Stella Rodrigues on fiddle and song, and Joachim Mouflin on bouzouki and electric guitar.



### **Manon Tanguy. Parmi les crocodiles.**

This is a CD of 12 contemporary songs (in French) composed (all but one) by singer Manon Tanguy. She also plays piano, ukulele, banjo, kalimba, keyboards, recorder,

harmonium and omnichord. She is joined by Laurent Duflanc on bass and Yannis Quillaud on guitars, keyboard, percussion, programming, piano, banjo and harmonica. Four guest artists add more yet instruments and vocals.



### **Dances de Toutes les Breagnes – A Series of CDs and DVDs presenting Breton dance.**

Nine volumes of these instructive presentations of dances of different regions of Brittany have been produced so far. Each includes a DVD and CD with an hour to an hour and 40 minutes of music and video. Most CDs include a presentation of 30 or more dances of one or more regions. If one doubted the rich dance tradition of Brittany this series of CDs certainly underlines the variety to be found.

#### **Volume I, Le Penthièvre**

This is the region of St. Briec, Languieux and Erquy. This volume presents one hour with 24 dances.

#### **Volume II, Le Poher**

31 dances on DVD and CD from the Poher region of central western Brittany

#### **Volume III, Le Coglais, Pays de Rennes.**

38 dances from the area around the city of Rennes in eastern Brittany.

#### **Volume IV, Le Léon**

31 dances from the northwestern coastal area of Brittany

#### **Volume V, Le Poudouvre et le Penthièvre**

30 dances from this area of central eastern Brittany between the cities of Lamballe and Dinan.

#### **Volume VI, Le Pays de la Mée**

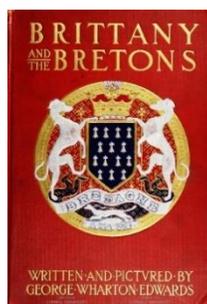
33 dances of the La Mée region (area of Chateaubriant in northeastern Brittany).

Volume VII, Pays de Baud, Pays de Pontivy, Pays de Pourlet  
An hour of dances from these regions of northern Morbihan.

Volume VIII, Quadrille de Haute Bretagne  
15 quadrille dances from the Pays of St. Brieuc, Clos Poulet, G erande, Nantes, Retz and Vignoble

Volume IX, Tr gor et Clanhel  
11 dances and 20 variations of them from the Tr gor and Calanhel areas of northern central Brittany. This is the latest in the series just coming out this winter.

See the map below to get an idea of different "pays" of Brittany



## A Travel Account from Brittany – 1910

George Wharton Edwards, *Brittany and the Bretons*. New York: Moffet Yard & Co., 1910

The following is the introductory section to this book that takes the reader through all parts of Brittany in the early 1900s. While there are some interesting tidbits of first-hand account in this book, the author relies on the literature of the time to inform him on customs and traditions which it is unlikely he would have witnessed firsthand. Travel writers often borrowed from other writers and were highly influenced by the English language translations of works by Anatole Le Braz and others.

In this introductory section outlining "characteristics" of Brittany and its people, we can fully credit the author for the abundant adoption of all the stereotypes that have graced the men and women of Brittany in this period of travel literature. And, you find most in the first few pages (if not just the first paragraph) of this chapter. It is a truly remarkable and dramatic summary of the strengths and weaknesses of Brittany and its people (mostly weaknesses) noted by many English and American travelers to Brittany in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in their books and articles for popular American and English journals. Brittany is picturesque and romantic but woefully backward. And its people are strong, brave, and independent, yet childlike, superstitious, and dirty.

George Wharton Edwards was an America born in Connecticut in 1859 (deceased in 1950) and was an award-winning artist as well as a writer. He directed *Collier's Magazine* from 1896 to 1902 and contributed to *Harper's Magazine* as an artist and writer. If you Google his name you will find access to the full version of this book as well as a sample of his artwork. I will try to include excerpts from his book in future issues of *Bro Nevez*.

As I do with each travel account presented in *Bro Nevez*, I have preserved the author's spelling.

## Characteristics, pages 1 to 15 of *Brittany and the Bretons*

Brittany; land of granite, of mighty oaks and of druidical remains; land of silence entwined with wild briar; of rocky moorland and wooded dark heights, rent by vast chasms and watered by silvery trout-filled streams; land of a terrible coast, dotted with mysterious celtic sphinxes; land of Calvaries, of dolmen, of cromlechs and alignments or Druidical Menhirs; land of pardons and of peasants who pride themselves upon their ignorance of the French language; land of poetry and romance of the middle ages.

From the terrible rocky coast to the dim mountains Arre , this region is filled with legend and superstition. The sea, ever of sinister aspect, beating upon the rocks guarding the small hamlets in which dwell the people from whence comes the flower and pride of the French Navy; men tall, brown, with long hair falling to their shoulders framing faces of ascetic sternness, simple as children, and loyal and true to their belief – fanatical if you will – but brave and fearless as lions, men from the Bay of Trepasses (Lost Souls), the Point du Raz, the Enfer du Plogoff, or the "torch" of the Penmarc'h – their one and only sin – alcohol.

Ancient towns abound with the aspect of forgotten times, enclosing still within their walls the blind unwavering faith of the Royalists, ignorant seemingly, or

maybe ignoring the fact of the Republic's existence. The mossy walls of stone, festooned with wild briar rose and glossy dark ivy, surround old chateaux of exquisite design and crumbling towers on the brink of moats filled with dark water and covered with fragrant waxy pond lilies.

In small villages with ancient thatched towers and roofs, are pilgrims, kneeling before wayside chapels, chanting their prayers in unison, their eyes lifted to the gray skies. And in the market places are fountains sacred and of fabulous renown, of a religion interwoven with druidical tradition and pagan legend. Tall carved stone crosses, of incredible design, lend to the wayside an aspect of religious ecstasy and poetry.

Monumental stone Calvaries with rude, semi-life size figures, depicting the passion and crucifixion will be found next to the humble wayside "Auberge" with its hanging bush over the door. A peasantry clad in the costume of their ancestors, the antique costumes of the land of the Breton, each piece of which has its significance. Tall stately men with long black hair hanging on their shoulder, clad in colored and embroidered vests of dark blue cloth, and "bragou-bras," or breeches ending at the knee, of baggy shape, made of sheepskin tanned, and worn with the wool inside, regard the tourist curiously.

Women and girls of a certain beauty, clad in richly embroidered corsages, large snow white linen collars, and lace edged caps of innumerable shapes and variety, each one, however, of meaning and denoting the village or province of the wearer. Wayside beggars, of dreadful aspect, haunt the churches, extending their crippled members to passer-by, and idiots capering grotesquely along the highway, are regarded here as "Children of God" and thus holy ones, to be supported and fed by the people.

Whether in diligence or railway carriage, as one penetrates this land of mystery, the aspect of the land changes rapidly after leaving Saint Malo, below which the new character is accentuated and the villages and towns take on unfamiliar characteristics. "Français, oui, mais Breton avant tout!" says the Breton vehemently.

The roads are lined with wild briar, tall trunks of deformed trees and blackberry bushes laden with delicious fruit, but the peasant would die of hunger rather than eat one of the luscious berries, which are supposed to be accursed because (they believe), the "crown of thorns" was made of the blackberry vine.

As we approach the coast, wood succeeds wood, framing the tiny villages; there are deep ravines, and vast plains appear on which are flocks of sheep guarded by solitary figures of peasants, each with a watchful dog of somewhat savage mien, and troops of

geese and small Breton cows calmly grazing, watched by peasant girls and women in snowy coifs and collars.

Then the sea on the horizon, visible between the immense granite boulders, flashing blue, and sometimes black and green, under a cerulean cloudless summer sky.

The coast from Saint Malo to the Cap Frehel in the summer months takes on the aspect of the Mediterranean, the sea is so blue, the sands so brilliant under the rays of the sun, and the ruddy colored rock flaming in the emerald and azure of the sea.

The Treguier country, after the smiling fields and flashing rivulets, prepares one for real Finistère, and below the vine-clad hills and deep green-clad valleys about Morlaix, is a great surprise to the traveler.

Here we are ushered into the region of mediaeval France and its traditions, the Calvary country, its plains dotted with prehistoric dolmen and menhir, Calvary and saint cut often from the living granite. Then follows the rock bound coasts of the country of Leon and Cornouaille, and here the land is cut by valleys of profound depth, and the granite promontories are pierced by vast caverns where the dashing Waves, ever in motion, beat upon the rocky barriers. Here the horizon is of rude aspect and elements are seemingly in perpetual warfare, the rain falling and the wind blowing often for days at a time.

From the summit of these "falaises" the eye seeks to penetrate the obscurity of the depths of the tremendous fissures of savage and superb aspect, and the isolated rocks piercing the flashing, tumbling waters of the "rade" of Brest, upon which France has lodged heavy ordinance for the defense of the coast.

Farther down below the "Leon" country, even below rocky Cornouaille and the luxuriant fields of Quimper and Quimperlé, the so-called region of Menhirs, one comes upon the mysteries of the little so-called sea of Auray and its collection of embossed islets, all of interest to the traveler and antiquarian and replete with remains of the ancient Druids.

This is the ancient Morbihan region, dwelling place of the Celts whose ancestors live among the dolmen, the cromlechs and the enormous stones in alignment, and ranged in irregular circles for no one knows what ceremonies or purpose. The small Breton boy by the roadside will inform you gravely that these dolmen are the Roman soldiers turned into stone by the good Saint Cornouaille.

We are now in the very heart of druidical Brittany, and perchance the whistling locomotive is passing over the buried bones of the tribes of old, in tumulus as yet

undiscovered at Carnac, and amid the alignments of Menec, or Kerlescan, Erdeven and Locmariaker. Beyond is the Ile de Gavrinis (the Goat), covered with still undecipherable runic inscriptions. Here was the headquarters of the savage Chouans, who camped upon the sands of Quiberon and on the fields about Auray.

Then follows the Vannes district and the savage desolation of the Landes filled with feudal ruins, replete with legends, the nocturnal domain of the fabled Korrigans in which the Breton devoutly believes, then the limitless horizon of the Salt Marshes where dwell the Salière's amid the white tent-like mounds of salt crystals visible for a long distance, like an army encamped on the plain.

For me, Brittany is neither sad nor desolate; it, on the contrary, presents a great variety of interest and amusement. The people are intensely religious of course, and they are never gay, even in their fêtes, for religion is their passion and it flourishes, despite the efforts of the government to suppress it, and, so to speak, de-Bretonize them as a people; but this has only served to intensify their religious feeling and enthusiasm.

The Breton peasant is hard-headed, obstinate to the last degree, and will resist to the death any attempt to alter his creed or customs. It may seem that the old Royalist loyalty of the Breton is of the past, but to my mind, it only sleeps, smolders, and is ready to burst into fanatical activity at the moment when opportunity arrives. At present he seems content with the republic and will be quiescent just so long as the republic respects his beliefs and leaves him alone.

This, then, is the character of the country. As to the people, how shall one picture them in words so that they shall appear to the mind's eye? I must fall back upon my sketch book for the purpose, but I shall tell some of their legends as related to me by chance acquaintances in the small inns, and in the watch towers by the sea where the coast guard keeps solitary watch over the peasantry and fisherman. Dean Church in his "Essays" says –

"The old-fashioned Breton combs his long black hair and walks about unabashed in his 'bragou-bras,' turns his back on the future and looks only to the past, on his dead ancestors and the cross and profoundly distrusts all improvements in this world. A grand, sublime, miraculous Past is contrasted in his mind with a poor, uninteresting Present, its mere appendix, and a Future without form or hope till the Last Day; the Past is to him the great reality of the world – the reality – not of diletantism, but of life-long faith."

Each town or village will have its own particular and special Saint, and to each of these is attributed some special virtue in the way of cures. For instance, Saint Gonéry, who has his tomb at Plougrescent above Treguier, is a specialist in fevers and the like, so the priests sell little cloth bags on tape strings to the peasants who devoutly wear them for a stated period, after which it is the custom to hang them upon or near the altar in the church. Then Saint Tugen exorcises mad dogs and renders their bites harmless, and Saint Mandez removes boils. But it is to Saint Yves that all prayers are directed in dire emergency; he was never yet known to fail the devout and believing ones. "Sant Ervan ar Wirionez," as the Bretons say – that is Saint Yves the Truth-shower. Especially do the Tregorrois address themselves and their payers to him, believing no matter what is asked of him, he will grant his intercession.

The Breton peasant is hospitable – when he knows you, or you have been vouched for by some one he knows – and no matter how poor the hovel there is always room near the fire, and a bowl of milk or cider will be set out on the table. "Duman e ty an homm," my house is everybody's home, is his motto, and never is a beggar turned from the door. In fact, begging is encouraged by the people throughout Brittany, and Le Braz says that in all of Brittany he knows of only one parish where it is prohibited.

In Brittany, the diligence \* is becoming more and more of a rarity, especially near the large cities. In the country districts it is still a feature of travel; generally speaking, it makes very slow progress, say five or six miles an hour, with stops at almost every "auberge" so that the driver may quaff a "chopin" of cider, or a "petite verre" at your expense, if you please. It is uncomfortable and dirty, but in traveling "en garcon" one will not mind that. The coupé contains the best seats, and the cost, of course, is proportionately greater than those of the Imperiale or Banquet on the top, from which, however, the best view is had. The fare is low, but there is an extra charge for the choice seats and a more or less generous pourboire for the driver, over and above the "chopins" which you will have contributed "en route."

Now that the railway reaches into some of the most remote regions of Brittany where formerly the diligence was the sole means of communication between the towns, one would expect to find great changes in the peasantry. But the rushing trains no longer startle the solitary figures of the flock tenders on the plains and the Breton accepts stolidly the marvel of iron bridges and immense viaducts which now cross the deep chasms and valleys of this mysterious land. Of course there is little or nothing of what we call traffic excepting perhaps in the summer season and between the large towns, for the Breton is nothing of a traveler and thus there is little change in him in the last twenty-five years. On the

northern coast the inhabitants come in contact with the "commis-voyageurs," or traders, whose influence is felt and seen in the abandonment of some of the costumes, but towards the mountains where the country is arid and poor, the people being more isolated, there the ancient characteristics are best preserved, and the costumes are still worn with pride. There the features of the peasantry are very strongly marked, the result of privations of generations. Their life is hard and their pleasures few and simple, - an annual "Pardon," a blessing from the Priest followed by a dance on the village green before the church to the sonorous strains of a bagpipe (biniou), and then the dull round of hardship and labor begin again for him.

The Breton peasant has been described and with some degree of truth, as barbaric, half civilized, rude, dirty in habit, living like pigs in cabins with earthen floors, eating chestnuts boiled in milk, and pork when he can get it.

Isolated from towns by reason of his language (Gaelic) he has kept himself apart and distrusts all who are not Bretons, particularly the French. He is patient to a fault when you respect his religion, and his laborious, hopeless life has subdued even his affections. Even the landholder or farmer is in a state of stagnation, and although he can get better prices for his potatoes and artichokes than formerly when transportation was more costly, he has not kept up with the times, his farm is run on old-time methods such as his father and grandfather used, and, except in isolated instances, he scorns new methods and modern plans for the betterment of his land. The farms are worked on a very small scale with the very least expenditure of money. The men and women labor early and late, and their gain is, of course, small. Not that there is a lack of thrift, the contrary is the fact, but they are penurious and take no pains to improve in methods. Knowing little and caring less about the great outer world, they drift along in their own way, paying strict heed to the teachings of the Church and giving generously to charities. They regard it all as an investment for the benefit of their souls in the hoped for hereafter. Beggary thrives throughout the whole region and mysticism and semi-idolatrous practices are perforce sanctioned by the Church which in vain has tried to correct the evils. If one goes beneath the surface the picture disclosed is certainly appalling, so perhaps it is best for one to view the country and the people from an artistic and poetic standpoint from which great profit may be derived. Poetic they are, these Bretons of to-day, even as they were in the past, and so I found them in my wanderings improvident yet hospitable, honest yet shrewd in a bargain, intemperate yet intensely religious.

The annual fêtes and Pardons are most picturesque and seem intended for the painter and poet, and to see the people on these occasions in their bright costumes,

the beribboned young girls and their attendant swains hand in hand on the green sward, dancing to the tunes played by the blind "binious" or bagpipe players, against the backdrop of dark oaks in the sunlight, is a scene to be enjoyed and remembered. This is Brittany as I love to recall it.

The inns throughout the country are only fair, and the traveler would do well to make his headquarters in the larger towns, visiting the remote regions by carriage. This he can arrange by a little forethought and he would better travel in company than alone, for in some of the districts, the fastness of the Montagnes Arreé, for instance, it is considered positively dangerous to go alone and unarmed on some of the unfrequented roads. But, for the most part, there is little or no real danger, only considerable inconvenience, especially if one does not happen to speak a little Gaelic or Breton; for, at times, the peasant in the more distant and remote spots will refuse to answer a question addressed to him in French. I have tested this many times in the mountains. ...

Throughout Brittany one will find the various communes fairly supplied with what may be called primary farming schools, and the younger generation of farmers born peasants are, as a rule, conforming to new theories and practices, and thus improving their systems of work. But, generally speaking, it must be said that the agriculture of Brittany is in a very poor and backward condition. For the most part, the peasantry cling tenaciously to their Armorican traditions, and, in the mountain districts, away from the sound of the railway whistle, will, as I have intimated before, refuse to speak, save in their ancestral Celtic, and are content to live in the most meager impoverished manner when, by a little study and thought, they might be fairly well off and comfortable. But I question, from what I know of them, whether after all they would be any the happier for new conditions. Some years ago an attempt was made, through agricultural exhibitions, to give them practical instruction, and a national school of agriculture under most excellent management, consisting of experts and a system called the Six-Ferme-écoles, was established upon a farm of twelve hundred acres situated at Grand-Jouan near Quimperlé, where practical irrigation and up-to-date drainage was taught. But I fear that the time is long distant in the peninsula when the new order of things will displace the old.

One great drawback to advancement is the lack of sympathy between the landed proprietors and their tenants; the former being, as a rule, absentees who wring from the tenants all that they can. Living among the distractions of Paris and the larger towns, they care little for the state of the land so long as the farm is in any way productive, and they thus leave all questions which might prove troublesome to themselves to the

agents who invariably grind the unfortunate tenants to the last sou.

The Breton peasant certainly has a hard and most hopeless life. The average family consists of man, wife and two or three children, together with, perhaps the aged father and mother, who are generally unable to work. Thus, then, the man and wife are alone the wage earners, and upon their labors, the labor of two, six subsist. The daily income is very small and it is well nigh impossible for them to save anything.

In the farm houses during the summer months the whole family are astir at about four in the morning. The cows must be attended to, milked and fed, and the pigs, quaintly called the Chevaliers de Rohan, driven out to forage for themselves along the road-side under the guidance of one of the children. The men harness the heavily built horses and then return to the house for breakfast which, as a rule, indeed almost invariably, consists of bowls of hot milk soup. They then work until ten o'clock, when they go home to a meal consisting of buckwheat and milk boiled together into a porridge, a food much esteemed and indeed nutritious. There is then a siesta until noon when at bell ring the work begins again, lasting until three in the afternoon, at which hour dinner, consisting of pickled dried fish or buckwheat cakes and hot milk is served. From seven to eight is the hour for supper, the principal meal of the day, usually of bacon and potatoes, excepting the "Jours Maigres" or fast days, when fish alone is served and eaten. Cider is the drink in the season at supper, but it is usually exhausted by winter as the supply retained for home use is limited and ends with harvest time.

I am told that wages are very low and, witnessing the daily life of the peasant, I can well believe that they make as little as \$32.00 to \$38.00 per annum with board on the farm as above, but they are idle much of the time and must subsist upon such odd jobs as they can find. This seems a gloomy picture of this ancient province, but I must add that there are here and there instances of thrift and prosperity among the proprietors who are doing all they can to ameliorate the unhappy tendencies of the peasant to live from hand to mouth, and these are increasing so that their influence is making for betterment of agricultural conditions. But as a rule poverty and superstition is as evident here as on the west coast Ireland, where similar conditions of landlord absenteeism and its inevitable result prevails.

On the coast the agricultural customs are most peculiar. One of the most so is the harvest of "vraic" or "varech" as the sea weed is called. The supply of this is, of course, almost unlimited, and thus thousands of loads

are harvested each year. There are two kinds, "vraic venant," which is that washed ashore by the waves, and "vraic scié," that cut from the sides of the immense rocks upon which the Atlantic Ocean dashes itself. I am told that there are two periods of harvesting this latter each year. The first is the month of February after the first full moon, lasting six weeks, the second after the middle of June and ending arbitrarily by the first of September. The vraic is most valuable manure and is applied directly to the plowed fields and allowed to rot. Some of it is burned and the resulting ashes are sold for some mysterious purpose or other. The answers to my inquiries were very vague and confusing. Indeed, one ancient, gray-haired Armorican, in immense balloon-like "Bragou-bras" (knee breeches) of sheepskin, who seemed to be the overseer of the crowd of peasants whom I surprised at work among the rocks, snapped his fingers in my face and cursed me most eloquently and volubly, with a floriated detail concerning my forebears and descendants whom he specified with a picturesqueness that would have been quite embarrassing to one more sensitive than I. Afterwards I was told that he was named Yann Ar Scär, that he hated the English, indeed all foreigners, and was a sort of local poet and singer of great repute. I wish that I might have heard him sing, for most certainly he had a voice and no mean ability as an orator. ...

\* Editor's Note: What is a diligence?

This vehicle is often noted in early travel accounts of Brittany so it is worth a quick description here, since I have always wondered what this could look like. In fact, it was a kind of stagecoach. The following was an image provided on Google:



<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>page</u>
Challenges to the Public Presence of the Breton Language	2
Breizh 5/5	2 - 3
Le Mois du Breton et du Gallo	3
Bretagne Prospective – Breizh Diawel	3
Tamm Kreiz and Canal Breizh	3 - 4
Cap Brittany	4
Les librairies bretonnes indépendantes – Kenstroll	4
Federal Union of Nationalities	4 - 5
A Loss for the U.S. ICDBL and the Breton Language -Lenora Timm	5 - 6
A Few Notable Bretons of the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century: Marguerite Gourlaouen, Vefa de Bellaing, Yann Bouëssel du Bourg, Frañsez Kervella, Loeiz Le Floch	6 - 8
New Books from Brittany: Mikael Madeg, <i>Manuel de Construction de Talus</i>	8
And a Book from UNESCO – <i>Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger</i>	8
<i>The Old Red Tongue – An Anthology of Welsh Literature</i>	9
Deep Inside a Breton Skull 51 – The battle of Cattræth, Jean-Pierre Le Mat	9 – 11
Brittany and Wales	11
Brittany and Ireland – Celebrated by BZH-NY in New York City	11
Bagad New York	11
14 <sup>th</sup> Regional Inter-high school contest for Breton music	11 – 12
Heard of, but not heard – New recordings from Brittany	12
Danses de Toutes les Bretagnes – A Series of CDs and DVDs presenting Breton dance	12 – 13
A Travel Account from Brittany – 1910 George Wharton Edwards, Brittany and the Bretons	13– 17

