

BRO NEVEZ

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



VIVRE TRAVAILLER DÉCIDER

EN BRETAGNE

*Grande manif
pour l'emploi
et la Bretagne !*

Quimper Kemper
2 novembre 2013 / 2 a viz Du 2013
15 h / 3eur g.m.
Place de la Résistance

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BEVAÑ LABOURAT DIVIZOUT

Collectif
Travailler Décider
en Bretagne

Live, Work and Decide in Brittany

KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 128

Nov. 2013

BRO NEVEZ 128

November 2013

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.

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

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Editor's Note - My apology for the lateness of this "November" issue of Bro Nevez. I wanted to capture news from the November 30 demonstration in Brittany, and it has taken a great deal of time – as always – to research and synthesize information for Bro Nevez readers. I hope you will enjoy this issue. - Lois

On the Cover

Bretons Hit the Streets to Demand the Right to Live, Work and Decide in Brittany

On November 2nd some 20,000 Bretons (some estimations go as high as 30,000) took to the streets of Quimper for a gathering in support of employment and for the rights of Bretons to "live, work, decide" in Brittany.

This brought together workers, businessmen, farmers, truckers, shopkeepers, and people of nearly all occupations concerned with policies made in Paris that stifle Brittany's economic development.



This large mobilization was sparked by the proposed implementation of an Ecotax (on January 1, 2014) which would tax large trucks based on mileage and theoretically encourage more transporting of goods by rail and river. Nice idea on the part of thinkers in the big city of Paris, but not an effective means of truly limiting emissions (since trucks are just one part of the picture). And who would be paying the most taxes? Why, Bretons who count on trucking to get produce (animals, milk and agricultural products) to market. Agriculture is a big part of the Breton economy and Brittany is the top producer for vegetables in France. Would the taxes be used to invest in rail or maritime traffic in places like Brittany and rural areas where farmers and manufacturers have the longest distance to reach markets? No. But they might be used to build more roads which would encourage more driving.

It did not take long for Bretons to recognize that the Ecotax would not have much of an impact on improving the environment, nor did it take long to recognize what a disastrous impact it would have on small, more remote agricultural businesses and enterprises that are already hard hit by the economic crisis. With a cost of 300 million euros a year in administrative costs this tax is seen as a colossal waste of money. A poll showed that 75% of Bretons want the tax to be eliminated.

And there was unity in protests where 350 businesses who are part of Produit en Bretagne closed their doors for an hour of protest on October 17 and several hundred others set off sirens and horns in support. On October 24, at the initiative of Breton Deputy Marc Le Fur, 81 Deputies in the French National Assembly filed a proposition to eliminate the Ecotax. In a less peaceful show of opposition to the tax on October 26, some 1,000 Bretons (farmers, truck drivers and business people) blocked a major highway for 48 hours using tons of cabbages. Several protestors and police were injured (one seriously) when things got violent in

clashes with riot police. Many of the demonstrators wore red caps to symbolize the similarity to the Breton Revolt of the Bonnets Rouge in 1675 over taxation. *

On Tuesday, October 29, The French government announced that it had “indefinitely suspended” the Ecotax.

The suspension (but not elimination) of the Ecotax was one small victory for Bretons in their efforts to fight the highly centralized administration which hampers their ability to address economic and environmental issues (and there certainly environmental issues to be addressed in Brittany). It is clear that Bretons are determined to “live, work, and decide” in Brittany and not submit to policies only in the best interest of Paris which are imposed upon them.



A second demonstration was held – this time in Carhaix – on November 30, with an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 people (and at least one person put the number at

40,000!). This was held on the site of the Vieilles Charrues festival and included a number of speakers from various professions – industry, agriculture, small businesses, artisans, and entrepreneurs – as well as musical performances by the Morvan Brothers, Dom Duff, Gilles Servat, Gwenynn and Plantec.



Photo by Jakez Gaucher

There were people of all ages from all walks of life, with a profusion of red caps and Breton flags. Even larger than the November 2 demonstration in Quimper, this peaceful gathering certainly demonstrated the will if Bretons to “live, work, and decide” in Brittany. For more coverage of this event consult the website www.agencebretagnepresse.com.

Readers of *Bro Nevez* know Jean-Pierre Le Mat as a regular contributor to this publication. He is certainly a prolific author with a passion for Breton history, but he is also an independent businessman and President of the Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (CGPME) of Côtes du Nord. Here is my translation of his speech at the November 30 rally. It is short, but covers all the essential points which motivated so many Bretons to gather.

We are the Indigents at the end of the earth.

But we are not just that ...

There are here entrepreneurs who innovate outside of the box;

There are here merchants and artisans who love their towns or their villages;

There are here workers and peasants who maintain their professional conscience, even when they are asked only to be in compliance with legislation;

There are here people who cannot believe that to work as a volunteer for an organization it will be necessary to sign in with the URSSAF;

There are here Breton speakers who want to live in a multilingual country;

There are here people from Nantes who do not want to be cut from their historical roots;

There are here a people who do not want to live under a thumb;

There are here Bretons who want to live, decide and work in their country.

I am proud to be with you. I am proud to be a Bonnet Rouge.

*Fill the grievance books**! Put your demands and your hopes in them. These will be the proof that the will and the intelligence of a people are far superior, much higher, than the calculations of bureaucrats, no matter how loaded down they are with diplomas.*

Our collective will and intelligence are the leverage which will enable us to get Brittany up on its feet again.

Together, say it loud and clear, “I am proud to be a Bonnet Rouge”!

– Jean Pierre Le Mat

* To learn more about the Bonnet Rouges you are invited to view a 15 minute YouTube video where Jean-

Jaques Monnier, one of this year's inductees into the Order of the Ermine – see later in this issue – talks about this 17th Century uprising in Brittany.

http://youtu.be/O9tT09TQR_E

** These were books made available to protestors similar to lists of grievances drawn up by each of the three Estates in France in 1789 at the beginning of the French Revolution.



A New School Year for the Breton Language

Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg has published numbers for the 2013 school year and once again the numbers have grown for children from pre-school through high school who are in bilingual programs in the Public and Catholic schools and in the Diwan immersion schools. With 15,338 total this is an increase of 4.3% (632 more students than in 2012).

The public schools have 6,662 students in bilingual programs (up 6.5%), the Catholic schools have 4,971 (up 3%) and the Diwan schools have 3,705 (up 2.2%). If you include the 27 students in the Paris Diwan school (15 in preschool and 12 in elementary school), the total is 3,732.

For those who like numbers here are some charts to show numbers by Department, by school type, and by school level. (Diwan Paris numbers are not included in these).

Number of students by School Type and level

	Pre-Schl /	Elem. /	Mid Sch. /	High Sch. /	Total /	Growth
Diwan	1,277	1,310	816	302	3,705	+ 80 2.2%
Public	2,930	2,864	685	183	6,662	+405 6.5%
Catholic	2,013	2,395	493	70	4,971	+147 3.0%
Total	6,220	6,569	1,994	555	15,338	+632 4.3%
% Growth	3.6%	5%	2.1%	12.6%		

Number of Students by Department & School Type

	Diwan	Public	Catholic	Total	Growth	% Growth
Finistère	1,978	3,231	1,876	7,085	+427	6.4%
Morbihan	537	1,344	2,248	4,129	+ 94	2.3%
Côtes d'Armor	688	1,259	377	2,324	+ 32	1.4%
Ile-et-Vilaine	168	593	411	1,172	+ 65	5.9%
Loire-Atlantique	334	235	59	628	+ 14	2.3%
All Brittany	3,705	6,662	4,971	15,338	+632	4.3%

Number of students by Department and level

	Pre-Schl /	Elem / Jr High /	High Sch /	Total	
Finistère	2,778	2,928	967	412	7,085
Morbihan	1,814	1,845	426	44	4,129
Côtes d'Armor	856	1,039	383	46	2,324
Ile-et-Vilaine	483	498	138	53	1,172
Loire-Atlantique	289	259	80		628
All Brittany	6,220	6,569	1,994	555	15,338

And a few numbers for the Diwan schools – from the Diwan website www.diwanbreizh.org

Diwan has 46 schools (including one in Paris for pre-school and elementary school children). It has 6 middle schools (3 in Finistère) and the one high school in Carhaix.

It employs 370 teachers, directors and administrators, as well as 130 non-teaching staff.

This Diwan high school was ranked number 1 in France (of over 1,900 schools) by *Le Figaro Étudiant* (www.lefigaro.fr) for student success in the baccalaureate exams (99%) as well as other factors considered for student achievement.

Employment and the Breton Language

The research section of the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg has completed a new study on the job market and competence in the Breton language. This follows a study completed in 2006 when some 900 posts for Breton speakers had been found. By 2012 this had grown to 1,300 – a 40% increase. The majority of jobs (80%) are in bilingual education where there are over 800 teachers today. Other jobs include administrative work, media and culture, as well as services for young children. By 2017 the number of full-time jobs for Breton speakers is expected to be between 1,500 and 1,900.

Banque Sonore Breton

<http://Banque.sonore.breton.free.fr>

Thank you to Bill Reese who alerted me to this new project

From the website:

The project

The Breton Dialects Sound Archive is a collaborative project for making available on the Internet a wide range of recordings of traditional Breton-speakers made over the past dozen years or so.

The purpose of these online archives, compiled by a team of volunteer collectors all keen on studying the language and traditions of Breton-speaking Brittany, is to share with the broad public the wealth and diversity of this important cultural heritage.

The corpus

The recordings in our archive come from individual collections, and for the most part have not yet been published. Some of them were made as contributions to the work of private associations such as the Société d'Ethnolinguistique Bretonne, or have been taken from other online projects, such as the Dictionnaires Bretons Parlants.

The corpus includes recordings made for a variety of purposes, ranging from the study of sounds, grammar and vocabulary to the investigation of traditional farming techniques, folk medicine and popular beliefs.

Each recording has been carefully selected, transcribed, translated and catalogued, and in some cases comes with iconographic materials. Thanks to the dedicated search engine specially developed for this project, linguists, ethnologists, teachers and students, whether already seriously involved or just curious, may easily find in the corpus whatever information is of particular interest to them.

Legal note

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Liberty, Equality, Fraternity But only in the French Language

In order to insure that local schools are aware of and follow administrative decisions and educational policies of the National Education system (public schools), Academies have been set up and each has a Rector who represents the State. There are 30 Academies in France. The one for Brittany covers the 4 departments of Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes d'Armor and Ile-et-Vilaine and the Rectorat is based in Rennes.

This autumn the President of the Regional Council of Brittany, Pierrick Massiot, asked the Recteur d'Académie de Rennes, Michel Quéré, if it would be possible to have the motto of France "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité" presented in both French and Breton on the

facades of Breton high schools. The Rector had the following explanation as to why this was not possible in a letter to the President of the Regional Council dated October 3, 2013: (my translation follows the text from his letter):

Je souhaite ...attirer votre attention sur la proposition d'afficher la devise de la République dans la langue régionale. Or, le principe d'indivisibilité de la République s'impose à toutes et tous, et doit trouver son affirmation dans l'affichage de sa devise sur les édifices publics. Ce principe fondamental me paraît donc s'opposer à ce que la proclamation de la devise de la République, qui contribue à l'affirmation de l'identité nationale, puisse être faite dans une autre langue que celle de la République.

I would like ... to call your attention to the proposition to present the motto of the Republic in the regional language. Well, the principle of indivisibility of the Republic is imperative for all men and women, and must find affirmation in the display of its motto on public buildings. It seems to me that this fundamental principle stands in the way of the proclamation of the motto of the Republic, which contributes to the affirmation of the national identity, to be done in any other language than that of the Republic.

Kevre Breizh, a federation representing some 40 cultural organization (and thousands of their members) had the following strongly worded response which neatly sums up the disgust felt with this prohibition to state the high ideals of the French Republic in regional languages. (my translation – LK)

Mr. Rector of the Academy,

We have become aware of your letter to the President of the Regional Council of Brittany dated October 3, 2013, in which you judge that in virtue of the principle of indivisibility of the Republic, you feel that its motto which contributes to the affirmation of the national identity: cannot be expressed in any language other than French, and should not be accompanied by any translation in a regional language. How do you explain this position? What does this choice of monolingualism reveal about the translation of universal values?

What you are saying to our fellow citizens and to children who pass through the doorway to schools each day is that the Breton language, just as other regional languages, has no legitimacy to transmit "the common ideal of liberty, equality and fraternity" which in conformity with the preamble of the Constitution is the foundation of our institutions. And that, despite the Article 75-1 of this same Constitution which affirms that "the regional languages belong to the patrimony of France." And despite, yet more, the recent law to Reform the Schools of the Republic, which in its Article L.312-10 officially recognizes "a bilingual teaching in the

French language and in regional languages.” Are you not aware that Bretons were in the forefront of the Revolution against Royal absolutism and that the motto of the Republic was inscribed in Breton and in other regional languages before the excesses of the Abbé Grégoire, Barrère and of the Terror?

How can you, as Rector of the Academy of Rennes, explain to children in bilingual classes that the Breton that they use in school does not have the right to express the motto of the Republic which can only be printed in French?

But, of what Republic are we speaking?

The refusal to translate the motto “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” in a regional language poses a question, evidently, on the nature of the Republic. Your position tells us that you are not referring to a civic nation founded on the will to live together, but to an ethnic nation founded on an exclusive cultural and linguistic heritage. The choice does not contribute to the recognition of universal values but to give a French exception. This ethnicisation of shared ideals, reduced to “franco-françaises” values, is a blow to their spread; not able to be translated, they cannot be sent out except as a will for imperialism and domination.

On September 11, 2013, the European Parliament voted on the Alfonsi Resolution for linguistic diversity within the European Union, with a crushing majority (625 voices versus 26 voices essentially coming from the European extreme Right, with French parliamentary members representing half of these) to ask its States to condemn discriminatory linguistic practices which target the identity and linguistic practices of communities whose languages are threatened. Your letter is a reminder of the opposition to this resolution and the most somber moment of French colonization.

What fear drives a high official who claims the power to take such decisions? Is it that regional languages could develop at the pace of botanical invasive species if one does not beware? Is it that they menace a Republic which is so insecure about its values? Fear has never been a part of democracy, such is its danger.

We will leave to you the responsibility of your words which reflect a detestable return to the past towards a sickening nationalism well distanced from the values of equality and respect which the schools must transmit and favor. Words which in contrast demonstrate a growth of movements retreating into their own pride and identity, which France seems to sadly lead the way today in Europe.

For the executives of Kevre Breizh, the President, Tangi Louarn

Kevre Breizh is made up of: Agence Culturelle Bretonne de Loire Atlantique, La Levrig, Amzer Nevez, Ar Falz/Skol Vreizh, Ar Redadelg, Association des Écrivains Bretons, Association des Enseignants de Gallo, Bertaeyn Galeizz, Bodadeg ar Sonerion, Dastum, Digor Gwengamp, Breizh Unvan/Bretagne Réunion, Dihun, Div Yezh, Diwan, Englev Bro An Oriant, Emgleo Breiz, FALSAB, Gouelioù Breizh, Gouren Breizh, Identité Bretonne, KBP/Association de Professeurs de Langue Bretonne Paris, Kanomp Breizh, Kendalc’h, Kuzul ar Brezhoneg, C’hoariva, Poellgor An Tarv, Radio Kerne, Sked Brest, Skol an Emsav, Skol Uhel Ar Vro/Institut Culturel de Bretagne, Skourr Breizh Kendalc’h Keltiek, Spered Kelt, Stumdi, Ti ar Gouren, Ti Ar Vro Kemper, Tud Bro Konk, Unvaniezh ar Gelennerien Brezhoneg, War’l Leur



Four Remarkable Bretons Inducted into the Order of the Ermine



From left to right : Martial Ménard, Yves-Pascal Castel, Jean-Jacques Monnier, Tangi Louarn.
Photo by Maryvonne Cadiou www.agencebretagnepress.com

On November 9, 2013, four new members were inducted into the Order of the Ermine at a ceremony held in Saint-Nicolas-de-Redon.

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

Yves Lainé, Chancellor of the Order of the Ermine, noted in his speech that this was the 29th ceremony for the Order of the Ermine since it was resurrected by CELIB and then again by the Cultural Institute of Brittany 25 years ago. Since 1972, 110 individuals have been named to the order, 67 of which are living. These are people who have made remarkable contributions in the fields of Breton language and culture, history,

science, economy ... This distinction is not given to mark the end of a life of activity, but for a life-long service to Brittany and continued responsibility for this.

The following presentations of the four new members of the order of the Ermine are my translations of a presentation written by Maryvonne Cadiou (for Yves-Pascal Castel) and Christian Rogel and published on the Agence Bretagne Presse website on November 10, 2013. My apologies for any mis-translation - Lois Kuter

Yves-Pascal Castel

Born in 1928 in Saint-Pol-de-Léon, he was ordained as a priest in the Quimper diocese in 1951. Former professor, he is today chaplain of the Juvénat de Notre-Dame of Châtealin. With a doctorat in art history he is co-author of a dictionary of French gold and silver engraving. He was a Researcher for the Commission Inventaire of Brittany (in 1980). In 1979, with Marie-Madeleine Tugorès, he was an investigator for reporting by the Regional Direction of Cultural Affairs (DRAC – Ministère de la Culture) for the Region of Brittany, to contribute to the Regional Service de l'Inventaire.

His bibliography is immense, and it seems, unpublished. Author of numerous books on religious art of Brittany, he became particularly know for his *Atlas des croix et clavaires du Finistère*, published in 1980 by the Société archéologique du Finistère. This monumental work put together by a small team under his direction, has written references for some 3,000 crosses and calvaries of the department. A sketch of each was done for the work. A new addition will be possible with the addition of 500 more references gathered by the author. His study of *Roland Doré et les enclose paroissiaux*, published by the Musée des Jacobins of Morlaix in 1988, reinforced his notoriety. He has also published articles in the *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère* and in *Ar Men* one of which was on the sirens [not the alarm systems] sculpted on chapels and churches.

He also published a study of the circle crosses of Brittany, *Association du cercle et de la croix sur les croix monumentales de Bretagne in Britannia Monastica*, n° 8, p.175-182, *Corona Monastica : moines bretons de Landévennec, histoire et mémoire celtiques : mélanges offerts au père Marc Simon*, Landévennec, 2004, 427 page, as well as a story of a pilgrimage to the Sept-Saints of Brittany during the summer of 1983 in a re-edition of "*Tro Breiz*" en tête ou "*fou comme l'oiseau*" by Joseph Thomas (1983).

One can look at his numerous recent contributions in the "Art et Histoire" section of the website Chemins de Bretagne (www.chemins-bretagne.com) with a series of articles on the religious art of Finistère, sun-dials, the enigmatic hand, Angels, the Pietà, the cult of Saint Jacques and Sainte Marguerite in Finistère, the cult of

Saint Isidore in Brittany, the 70 Sibyls of Finistère, the retable of the Evangelists of Rumengol (in Faou), and preacher Michel Le Nobletz of the 16th century in Lower Brittany.

Jean-Jacques Monnier

Jean-Jacques Monnier, born in 1944 in London to parents active in the Forces Française Libres, has for a long time been the anonymous author of numerous editions of the History of Brittany and the Celtic Countries published by Skol Vreizh in Morlaix. This grew out of Ar Falz, of which he is a member, and this troupe includes Breton teachers of the Left, who support the Breton language and culture in public schooling. It was the *Histoire de Bretagne pour tous*, first aired in short films on the public channel FR3-Bretagne, then published in the form of a book with CD discs (audio-livre) which, in collaboration with Olivier Caillebot, made him known to a larger public and led to his participation in conferences throughout Brittany.

Former professor of history in Lannion, where he has been a Municipal Councilor with the Union Démocratique Breton for a long time, he was sometimes led to oppose the Socialist Mayor who refused to fund Diwan in 1997. He comes from the Catholic social movement which had a strong influence in the political evolution of Brittany.

His experience of Breton politics for some twenty years allowed him to write a thesis on the political comportment of Bretons, on which he is a recognized specialist, and he wrote numerous articles in *Le Peuple Breton*, magazine of his party (UDB) for which he served as the director of publication for a number of years. Quasi-permanent member of its executive leadership, he was part of its Political Bureau for 15 years.

His competency as a historian and his political activities have come to use in plunging into the complex history of Breton militants during the Second World War. He corrected the usual portrait, often not very objective, in showing that love for Brittany wasn't incompatible for a number of Bretons actively participating in resistance to Nazi occupation.

More recently, the Bonnet Rouge movement of October 2013 contesting the weight of taxation gave him the opportunity to recall with precise detail the precursor insurrection of 1675 directed against an omnipotent and centralizing State.

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Été 44 : Résistances et Libération en Trégor, Skol Vreizh, 2004 ;
Résistance et conscience bretonne (1940-1945): l'hermine contre la croix gammée, (with Preface by Mona Ozouf), Yoran Embanner, 2007.

Tangi Louarn

Born in 1947, Tangi Louarn is one of the most active militants, for nearly 50 years, in living, promoting and defending the Breton language and culture. Former civil servant with Travail, he led intensive and effective action in different Breton as well as European organizations, and as he has said himself, these actions were always conducted in a collective framework.

Having the good fortune to be raised in the Breton language and briefly schooled in Breton in Plouézac, he was involved early on in Skol an Emsav (École du relèvement ou du mouvement breton) along with his sister Lena Louarn, another member of the Order of the Ermine. Since its origins in Rennes, Skol an Emsav has propagated a thirst to reappropriate Breton and a desire by a young generation to reestablish the chain of transmission of this language in the family. Skol an Emsav has thus served as one of the practical and intellectual bases in the exceptional adventure to create a network of schools from pre-school to high school in which teaching is done in Breton.

Heavily invested with his wife Anna-Vari Chapalain in the founding association of 1976-77, he played a major role in the creation of the Diwan pre-school in Quimper in September 1977.

His service in the direction of Diwan led to close contacts with action of the European Union and Council of Europe in the promotion of the Charter of Minority Languages for which France is one of the rare states to refuse ratification. He is the Breton representative in the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.

In his city of Quimper he presided in the group of Breton cultural associations in the collective association Ti ar Vro Kemper which is a very active center for Breton culture.

Member of the Cultural Council of Brittany, he has been able to confirm that the integration of this into official consulting bodies of the Region of Brittany has had the effect of underling the necessity of a setting in which the

numerous Breton cultural associations can express propositions with vitality and force. He carries their words in the name of their federation, Kevre Breizh (Federation de Bretagne) based in Carhaix-Plouguer, with is also the city of the Diwan high school.

Martial Ménard

Marital Ménard perfectly symbolizes the idea that a conducting wire does not prevent a life made up of rebounds and that gaining the respect of the greatest scholars through serious and rigorous work can be done in maintaining a joyous personality endowed with great humor and expansive freedom of political thought.

Born in 1951 to parents from Lanrelas, between Loudeac and Rennes who emigrated to Paris, he was oriented to the trade of cook, but military service in Guadeloupe set off a pressing desire to return to the country of his ancestors and practice their original language.

In nine months, through weekly lessons in Paris and with the help of Skol Ober correspondence courses, he got to a point where he could express himself in Breton and moved to Quimper at the age of 23, finding work as a cook. He gave classes in Breton and met young people, including Yann-Kel Kernalegenn, who was ready to take spectacular action for political reasons.

One year after he started to participate in explosive operations he was arrested in 1979 with several members of the FLB-ARB and was condemned to seven years of prison. With amnesty following the election of François Mitterrand he had only to complete two. These two years of prison would be the time for a self-reformation of a higher level which allowed him to deepen his knowledge of Breton.

He was ready to transmit it to younger children and participated in the adventure of the Diwan schools. In 1983 he gained the agreement of members of the federation of the Diwan schools to focus on the edition of books in Breton for youth, succeeding in negotiating contracts for co-production with European editors to furnish little Bretons with the best quality production. *An Here* (the sowings) published more than 150 works before being forced to close in 2006, in part due to orchestrated political attacks.

In order to furnish an indispensable tool to young Breton students, he oriented a part of the activity of An Here towards the elaboration of a first all-Breton dictionary, and with a team including several university scholars, published it in 1995. An augmented version followed in 2001. During this time he had received an exceptional manuscript in French and published it in 1998. These were the unpublished memoirs of a peasant and free-thinking merchant of the Quimper region who had been a soldier under Napoleon III in

Algeria and in Mexico, who had learned several languages and died in poverty in 1905. The *Mémoires d'un paysan bas-breton de Jean-Marie Déguinet* were an extraordinary success (more than 200,000 copies sold).

Martial Ménard is also a specialist of Breton vocabulary on sexuality, as well as popular satirical expressions or insults. He then moved into less publicly visible activities such as *militant press in papers and the internet* (Breizh Info), then on the popularization and illustration of Breton for small books and columns in the daily paper *Ouest France* since 1998

Published in 2012, his *Dictionnaire français-breton* of 1,456 pages and 51,116 entries is a monumental work which will be of major importance in the development of science and letters in the Breton language since it permits one to say pretty much everything in Breton, even in the most subtle domains. He has entered definitely in the realm of great lexicographers of Breton, such as Grégoire de Rostrenen, Louis Le Pelletier, Jean-François le Gonidec, Amable Troude, François Vallée and Roparz Hemon.

Medal of the Cultural Institute of Brittany

In addition to honoring Bretons (and sometimes non-Bretons) who serve Brittany in an exceptional way, the Cultural Institute of Brittany created a medal for an act of importance for Brittany. This year the medal was awarded for the first time to David Lesvenan, president of the association PointBzh for their work to create a .bzh Internet domain extension (see www.pointbzh.com). Also recognized was the engagement of Christian Ménard, mayor of Châteauneuf-du-Faou, who proposed the idea in 2004 and Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez, vice-president of the association for .bzh who had launched an on-site petition on the geobreizh.org website to collect 10,000 signatures during the course of several months. This international recognition of Breton identity was the result of hard work by many.

Patrick Malrieu, President of the Cultural Institute of Brittany, noted that the roots in the BZH symbol which was promoted by Bretons of Paris (Erwan Nicol, Hervé Gilbert, Jean-Claude Le Norm and Marcel Courtial) and became very popular on car bumper stickers – despite being outlawed by the Ministère de l'Équipement in the 1970s.



Festival of Books in Brittany

www.festivaldulivre-carhaix.org

The Gouel al levrioù e Breizh (Festival of Books in Brittany) is held on the last weekend of October annually in the town of Carhaix. Some 90 publishers and 300 authors participate and the weekend includes a number of different activities. This 24th year for the festival had a European theme with representatives from the Basque town of San Sebastián as honored guests.

Activities for children as well as adults included theater and story-telling, music and song performance and crafts related to books. But, the main feature was the opportunity to meet authors and see the wealth of books in French and in the Breton language produced in Brittany.

Two New Books from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter



Yves Mervin. Joli mois de mai 1944 – la face cachée de la Résistance en Bretagne.
 Devoirdememoireenbretagne.wordpress.com. ISBN 9768-2-016579-52-8. 2013. 517 pages.

With this book Yves Mervin reminds us that it is important to remember the victims of war and to avoid idolizing heroes or basking in illusory glories of the “winners.”

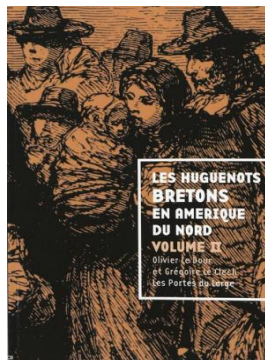
Indeed, no one wins in wars. During World War II in Brittany during the German occupation some Bretons chose to fight German occupiers – they are called Resistants - and in this fight they also went into battle against their Breton neighbors and countrymen, killing and terrorizing those who were thought to be, or actively were, collaborating with German occupiers. Farmers taking advantage of new markets during the occupation might have their barn burned down. Anyone

thought to be too chummy with German occupiers could be targeted for attack. Anyone thought to have revealed information about Resistance members to the Germans could be executed.

Mervin describes this period in Brittany as a civil war and points out that while Bretons killed some 100 to 200 German occupiers in combat in Brittany (and not several thousand as the Resistance movement has claimed) over 600 Bretons were killed by Breton Resistance fighters. This is perhaps not a lot compared with some 3,000 civilian deaths from Allied bombings of the Breton cities of Nantes, Saint Nazaire and Brest. And it is certainly small compared to the toll on Breton civilians and Resistance fighters in Brittany from German soldiers. Half of some 4,000 Bretons deported during the war would never return.

Mervin points out that the liberation of Brittany was the result of Allied and American army action. While the work of Resistance fighters to sabotage German equipment and travel routes and to supply information to Allied forces was very important, the guerilla warfare waged in the rural areas of Brittany did not have the glorious impact on winning the war that one might believe from stories passed down about the Resistance movement.

It is certainly impossible for most of us born in the U.S. to imagine the challenges of living under the occupation of a foreign army. What would we do to carry on with life, to work for renewed freedom, or to simply survive? Mervin does not paint a pretty picture, but he does present a wealth of detail to help one better understand the complexity of social, economic and political relations within Brittany during this period. Like his 2011 book, *Arthur et David – Bretons et Juifs sous l'Occupation* (see Bro Nevez 123, August 2012), this book does not try to present a neat and tidy chronological sequence of events. Nor does it try to justify actions which seem today horrific. Mervin does not in any way excuse the criminal and inhumane actions of Bretons during World War II, but provides a context so we can better understand how our view of history and the depiction of this period requires acceptance of some ugly truths. There are heroic acts in times of war but there are also acts of barbarity and cruelty, and too many innocent victims.



Olivier Le Douarin & Grégoire Le Clech. Les Huguenots Bretons en Amérique du Nord – Volume II. Editions Les Portes du large. 2013. ISBN 978-2-914612-31-9. 735 pages.

This is the second volume of history of Breton Huguenots and their emigration to North

America. This volume focuses on families who moved to New France (Canada) and New York State (particularly the Hudson Valley) in the 17th and 18th centuries. As the author points out, this was not a sudden mass movement, but a movement over a period of 150 years and “Bretons” had in many cases been removed from Brittany for several generations before arriving on American shores.

The Calvinist movement would reach Brittany later than in other parts of France and would be strongest in eastern Brittany. While the total numbers were small, Protestantism was adopted by a large number of Breton noble families and middle classes – merchants, doctors, lawyers, and workers associated with those families. Those who came to New York were largely from Vitré and Nantes, with a smaller number from Rennes and a smattering with roots in other cities. In mid-16th century Brittany Protestants numbered just several thousand people.

The persecution of protestants would lead to emigration of Bretons to other French regions, Switzerland, the Channel Islands, England, Germany and the Netherlands during the 16th century and then again from the 1660s through the early 18th century. Most would move initially within Europe with the hope of returning eventually to their home region. Those Bretons who crossed the Atlantic to New York did so primarily through England or the Netherlands.

The book succeeds in providing a context to understand the economic and political climate Huguenots would find during the period of their arrival – 1640 to 1760, with a large number between 1680 and 1705. This was a period when settlers were moving west, trading with and warring with Native tribes, with the colonies populated by settlers of various religions and European roots. The Breton Huguenots would integrate well into the developing American colony learning new trades such as fur-trading and succeeding as slave-holders.

As was the case for Volume I, the authors present a great deal of genealogical information, and in this Volume the focus is on the history of four ancestors who arrived in New France in 1665 as part of the Carignan Regiment, whose mission was not only to defend French territory but to populate the Saint Lawrence valley of Canada. First up is Pierre Marc de Garmeaux, whose name traces him to the area of Rennes. He was a *coureur des bois* – a trader of furs and goods, legal and contraband, in remote areas who would later relocate from New France to Albany. His numerous children would remain in that area and their descendants would move to new territories like Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana and even California and Washington State. The family name would change and become de Garmo. Today Americans might most readily recognize the name of singer Diana Degarmo who appeared in 2004 at age sixteen on the TV show

American Idol. There were other descendants who did well in the music business after generations of traders, tanners, scholars, abolitionists, soldiers and other trades and passions.

Another Huguenot ancestor whose story is told is René Poupart, born around 1650 in Plessé (the area of Blain in Brittany). He too would be a trader after departing the Carignan Regiment and would also enter into illegal trade of furs. He would move his family to the Hudson Valley. His children would move between Montreal and New York, and their sons and daughters would travel to new frontier areas as well as Louisiana.

The third family to be traced is that of Christophe Bruzai. He would move from Canada to become a successful farmer in the area of Albany, New York, and lead a reasonably peaceful life. Of his 12 children 7 would be responsible for a considerable number of descendants in this region of New York, difficult to trace with the family name changing to Brussie, Burssy, Bressey, Brusie, Breese or other versions. His descendants would remain farmers, but also become bankers and industrialists, and military officers, among other trades. Best know of his descendants to Americans would be astronaut Roger Bruce Chafee.

The fourth family to be presented is that of Jean Le Fort with family roots in Vitré, and this is a complex story to trace with false leads in names and places. He was a farmer who moved from New France to settle on the Mohawk River in New York, apparently to escape a murder charge. His family would continue to live in this region of New York, but descendants also struck out to new worlds as well. Some would distinguish themselves in the American Revolutionary War.

Those are but a few of the families presented in this very detailed book. And Le Dour and Le Clech are careful –as in Volume I – to underline how difficult it was sometimes to trace Huguenots from France back to Breton roots. This is not a book that reads like a novel even though the family histories can be enjoyable. It is certainly a book where Americans will find they are learning a great deal of new information about their own history. It is a book that is invaluable to those with an interest in genealogy and the history of Canada and New York State.

The footnotes include nearly as much information as the text, making up over 180 pages of the 735. Some 30 pages of bibliography and a list of websites are invaluable to those seeking more information. An index of 14,000 names cited in both volumes 1 and II is also a key resource for those seeking to identify specific individuals. Nearly 300 illustrations (maps, drawings, portraits, reproductions of paintings) bring the people and settings to life.

This is the 24th title in the books published by Les Portes du large, which specializes on Breton exploration and travel around the world (www.portesdularge.com). For my review of Volume I of *Les Huguenots Bretons en Amérique du Nord* see Bro Nevez 15, February/March 2013, and for a review of Le Dour and Le Clech's book *Les Bretons dans la Rouée vers l'or de Californie* (the California Gold Rush) see Bro Nevez 105, February 2008.

A new Collection of Song in Brittany



Polig Monjarret. Kanaouennoù Breizh – Musique et chants populaires de Bretagne. Mignoned Polig Monjarret, Dodadeg ar Sonerien, Dastum, Dastum Bro-Ereg. 2013. 296 pages.

The third volume of music collected by Polig Monjarret, **Kanaouennoù Breizh.** has come out this

December, produced by the associations Mignoned Polig Monjarret, Bodadeg ar Sonerion, Dastum and Dastum Bro-Ereg.

This follows two massive collections of tunes, *Tonioù Breizh Izel*, volumes 1 & 2, and time time features songs – traditional and contemporary, in both Breton and French. Texts and music are included. These are songs Polig Monjarret himself collected during the second half of the twentieth century as well as songs that were composed to document events of the times by writers and singers such as Per-Jakez Hélias, Youenn Gwernig, Pierre-Marie Mevel, or Visant Séité. These new texts depict events of this period - agricultural demonstrations, political events, outrage over black tides (oil spills) and other events.

Over 200 songs are included with notes on their origins and a translation. An introduction in Breton, French and English presents the period and the collection work of Monjarret, and photos present his notes, letters and portraits of collectors who contributed songs to him and some of the singers who performed them.

This volume can be ordered via Bodadeg ar Sonerion contact@dodadeg-ar-sonerion.org / www.bodadeg-ar-sonerion.org or Dastum vpc@dastum.net / www.dastum.net

The Reappearance of *Ar Soner*

I have been exchanging *Bro Nevez* for the magazine *Ar Soner* for a number of years. When I received nothing after the issue Number 390 in 2009, I assumed that I had been dropped from this exchange of publications. To my surprise and delight Number 391 dated October 2013 arrived in the mail this fall.

The first issue of *Ar Soner* was published by Bodadeg ar Sonerion in May 1949 and it had as its aim to help Breton musicians and music lovers learn more about their heritage. It was to be an invaluable aid to musicians in the newly created bagads of Brittany as well as to musicians playing in pair with biniou koz and biniou braz with the bombard. Throughout the years, this magazine has included information on the life of the BAS, music scores, lots of details about piping contests, and excellent articles about Breton music and culture more generally.

This latest edition is full of information about what's going on in the piping world of Brittany – dates and information about contests, concerts, and musicians – and it also includes a section of information prepared by Dastum to present the music and dance of various regions within Brittany. These beginner's guides of several pages give a basic portrait of dances, instruments and music and how to find out more – directing musicians to traditional recordings where they can hear masters at work.

Ar Soner is available by subscription – contact arsoner@sonerion.org for details. Or consult the website for Bodadeg ar Sonerion www.bodadeg-ar-sonerion.org.

A Not so New CD from Brittany

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

Annie Ebrel, Nolùen Le Buhé, Marthe Vassallo. Teir.
L'Oz Production. L'OZ 76. 2012

Reviewed by Lois Kuter

If you are at all familiar with the Breton song tradition you will surely recognize the names of Annie Ebrel, Nolùen Le Buhé and Marthe Vassallo, three of a number of outstanding younger women singers who perform ballads as well as songs for dancing. And you will recognize a number of the songs on this CD starting with “Peder Varivonig,” a mix of four versions of a song about a young woman abducted by English sailors who returns to shore with the help of a little fish.

The melodies will be familiar but their delivery here certainly isn't as the three singers introduce intriguing

harmonies which you will not hear in the Breton song tradition. This startling combination of three voices for a number of selections on this CD is remarkable in how traditional melodies and verses remain intact, yet are presented in an entirely new way with complex layers of voice.

It is safe to say that these three ladies are among the best singers to be found in Brittany today. Just above and below the age of 40, they have all been on the Breton scene for a number of years. Born in 1969, Annie Ebrel is celebrating 30 years of performance this year. Born in 1972, Nolùen Le Buhé has been active since the early 1990s as has been Marthe Vassallo, born in 1974. All three are masters of the solo *gwerz* – long ballads in the Breton language with a free rhythm – as well as song for dancing which is normally done in pairs in a responsive style, the best know of which is the *kan ha diskan* style of central western Brittany with its overlapping of voices at the beginning and end of phrases. Their performance of dances on this CD (*hanter dro*, polka in “*kan ha trsikan*” style, and a *gavotte* from the repertoire of Manuel Kerjean) make you want to get up and dance.

Each singer has the opportunity to show off as a soloist. Nolùen Le Buhé sings “*Distro ar Martoled*” where you clearly hear her roots in the Vannetais Breton repertoire. Marthe Vassallo performs “*Fañch ar C'halvez*,” the tale of an unrepentant smuggler, and Annie Ebrel sings “*Ar riboterez laezh*” about a woman who insists on churning butter on Assumption Day to the horror of her servant – a risk which brings its penalties.

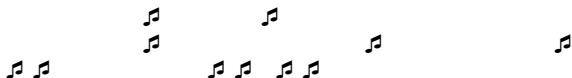
Interspersed are other ballads as well as some playful songs to test a singer's ability to string together tongue-twisting syllables or to imitate the sound of songbirds and barnyard birds.

The mastery and deep roots in Breton tradition has allowed these three women to successfully create a new way to present their repertoire on this CD. All have also performed with other singers and musicians of Brittany in duos, trios or as part of an ensemble to interpret the rich repertoire of Breton song. One of my favorite CDs is *Voulouz Loar* where Annie Ebrel works with bass fiddle player Riccardo DeI Fra for a jazzy swing. Likewise Marthe Vassallo has been part of two innovative groups, Loened Fall and Bugel Koar, and has performed with the Bagad Kemper and Gilles Le Bigot. Nolùen Le Buhé has performed with a number of other singers and has been part of the groups Tan Ba'n Ty and Tan De'i.

All three women have powerful and unique voices – each beautiful in its own way. This is perhaps why the voices are not identified in CD notes for the performances, although those discovering these singers for the first time might appreciate an identification (as

well as a brief bio). The CD notes do include the texts to the songs (all but one are Breton language songs) with shorter summaries in French and English. Photos shot during a residency at the Château de Kerjean nicely present these three lovely ladies and give a hint of their personalities.

For the quality of all these performances and the interesting arrangements of some classics from the Breton song repertoire, this is a CD that can be recommended without any qualification. You just can't get much better than this.



Heard of, but not heard – Short Notes on New Recordings from Brittany

Notes for the new CDs below are drawn from information from *Ar Men* 196 (Sept-Oct 2013), *Musique Bretonne* 236 (July-Aug-Sept 2013) & 237 (Oct-Nov-Dec 2013), and especially from the new releases section of the Coop Breizh website (www.coop-breizh.fr). If you "Google" the names of musicians you will very often find some sound clips to hear just how wonderful they sound. - LK



Les Allumés du Chalumeau. *Les Allumés du Chalumeau*. Aremorica Records.

Two *sonneurs* combine on a variety of instruments for a live performance. Ronan Le Gouriérec plays bombards and baritone

saxophone and François Robin performs on veuze – the bagpipe of the Loire Valley of southeastern Brittany – as well as a variety of electronic devises. . This CD includes 10 selections, compositions and arrangements of Breton music with Irish, African, jazz and be-bop influences.



Anne Auffret, Daniel Féon, Loïk Le Griguer, *Les Plus beaux cantiques de Bretagne*. 3 CD set.

This 3 CD set includes religious hymns from the Trégor region. They are performed by singer Anne Auffret with Daniel Féon on bombard

and Loïk Le Griguer on organ. Many are well known, but among the over 30 on these recordings you will find a variety of themes and some lesser known gems.



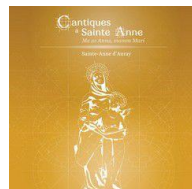
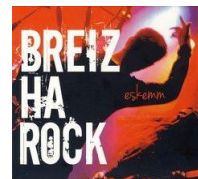
La Belle Bleue. *Le Refuge*.

This CD includes 13 selections by this rock band which includes Mathieu Picot and René Berger as lead vocalists who also play guitar and other instruments, as well as

Anthony Cany on percussion, Antoine Sorin on bass and vocals, and David Gouin on guitar, djidjeridoo and vocals.

Breizhharock. *Eskemm*.

Called Eskemm (exchange, in Breton) this CD features bagpipes and electric guitars in 10 selections of traditional tunes and original compositions. This unique combination is traced to Cedric Le Bozec and gatherings at the L'Atelier café in Treffrin in 2009. Also participating are Fred Moreau, Jean-Marc Ilien, Soig Siberil, Pat O'May, all of whom are part of the composition and arrangement of the 10 selections on the CD.



***Cantiques à Sainte Anne – Me so Anna, mamm Mari*.** ADMAS 001.

Sainte-Anne d'Auray has been a town where choral music has celebrated the unique religious traditions of Brittany. Here you will hear the wealth

of choral performance from Vannetais Brittany with music of the Camerata Sainte Anne and organist Véronique Le Guen. This includes well and lesser known "cantiques" in honor of Saint Anne who is particularly revered in Brittany.



Carre Manchot, *Mamm an avaloù*.

Carre Manchot is a well-established and well-loved fest noz band of Brittany. For this CD they are joined by Kan ha diskan singer Patrick Marie. Two songs are included on the

CD which features dances including a suite for the gavotte and for the fisel, kas-a-barh, Scottish, ridée, circle circassien, and a waltz.

Digresk. *Rezistañs*

Second CD for this band of six with a repertoire of Breton and Celtic tunes with a rock beat. This is music for dancing the dances of Lower and Upper Brittany. You'll find biniou and bombard leading the way, but also electric guitars and a rock-band drum set, accordion and flute.



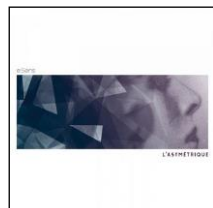
Dremmwel. *Traou mad best of*.

This group is rooted in traditional Breton music and can combine *gwerz* or *kan ha diskan* with an instrumental mix from the world. Their arrangements pull from a wide geographic and style range, but Brittany is always at the heart of it all. This "best of" CD of 17 selections includes re-mixes and reinterpretations of some of their best loved work with a number of guest artists.

Eien. Eien. Ride On Muisic ROM 004

This is newer generation fest noz band composed of Gwenole Breton (percussions), Mael Guego (guitar), Gweltz Lintanf (accordion), Meriadeg Lorho-Pasco (clarinet) and Dewi Lorho-Pasco (flute and song).

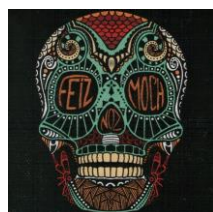
The perform a variety of dances – most composed by themselves – including polka, laridé, a gavotte suite, cercle circassien, hanter-dro and pilé menu.



E.Sens. L'Asymétrique. L'OZ Production L'OZ 77.

This is the second recording for a group from Finistère with a jazzy flavor. Members of this band include Gilles Thomas (drums), Steven Prigent (keyboard), Nicolas Morvan (Sax, flute, clarinet) et Florent

Jacques (Bass) for a unique combination that is poetical and “asymmetrical.”



Feiz Noz Moc'h. Feiz Noz Moc'h. Pagansmusica / Albumtrad.com PAG002

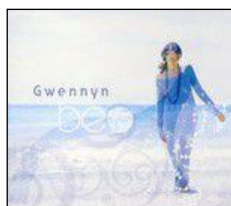
This CD features an encounter of Breton and Gascon musicians initiated by guitarist Roland Conq. You will hear song by Lors Landat

of Brittany and Matèu Baudoin from the Artús family of Gascony. Traditional Breton melodies and dances from both areas and the Breton language and Gascon language are featured. Hurdy-gurdy (Vielle à roué) and fiddle also provide melody but there is a great deal of energy to this performance where two rich traditions meet.



Fred Guichen, Le Voyage astral.

Virtuoso button accordion player Fred Guichen performs 11 of his compositions to show off the range of sounds this instrument can produce in the hands of a great performer.



Gwennyn. Beo

www.gwennyn.com
“Live” in Breton, this CD called *Beo* features singer Gwennyn who plunges us into a world of Celtic mythology with sumptuous voice and melodies. She sings in the

Breton language with originality and beauty.

Gwerziou – Les plus belles complaintes de Bretagne.

This is a great selection of singers and groups to present some of the best known and interesting *gwerz* (Breton



language ballads) – with solo voice and instrumental arrangements to accompany singers. Included are selections by Denez Prigent, Yann Fañch Kemener with pianist Didier Squiban, the group Barzaz in which Kemener is the singer, the trio of Patrick Ewen, Gérard Delahaye and Melaine Favennec, the group Gwerz with singer Erik Marchand, Nolwenn Korbel, Nolwenn Monjarret, Lina Bellard & Rozenn Talec, and the group Storlok



Erwan Hamon and Wencleslas Hervieux. Si vous dormez.

This duo on bombard and organ has played together for some 20 years and present here traditional tunes and melodies from their native region of Gallo Brittany (with

a few compositions inspired by this tradition). Both have been immersed in music through family and numerous opportunities to dance and sing in Brittany. As is the case for Bretons who have strong roots in their culture, these musicians can also compose and arrange in new ways.



Joa, 1^{er} Album.

This is a group made up of three musicians: Armel an Héjer, a singer, Malo Carvou, flute player, and Ronan Bléjean, accordion player. The 12 selections – most songs in the Breton

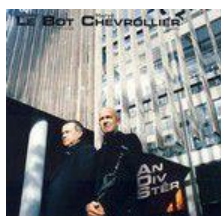
language – are from the Breton tradition. They are joined by guest artists Soig Siberil (guitar), Jamie McMenemy (bouzouki) and Xavier Lugué (bass fiddle).



Kroazhent, Capital (E)

Described as a band that plays Breton music with an urban spirit, this group includes biniou and bombard but also electric guitars, drums and electronic beats. This CD includes a variety of dances

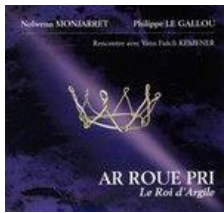
including a dans léon, gavotte, hanter dro and an dro, Scottish, and a waltz, non-dance melody, and a lullaby to bring a bit of calm.



Didier Le Bot & Hervé Chevrollier. An div stêr.

Didier Le Bot (bombard) and Hervé Chevrollier (biniou) are sonneurs de couple based in Lorient, their home town. They present 16

Breton melodies, dances and compositions on this new CD. They are joined by Hélien Brunet on laud, Guénaëlle Hérou on song, Julien Le Mentec on bass and keyboards, and Glenn Le Merdy on percussion.



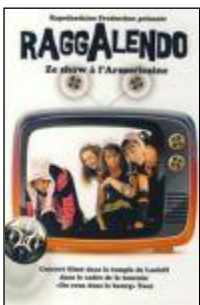
Nolwenn Monjarret & Philippe Le Gallou. Ar Roue pri.

The mellow low voice of Nolwenn Monjarret (who has inherited a rich repertoire from mother and father Zaïg and Polig Monjarret) is paired here with guitarists Philippe Le Gallou for 13 selections – traditional songs in Breton, a composition by Le Gallou and an Irish ballad. The title song, Ar Roue Pri is a poem by Per Jakez Hélias set to music by Michel Magne. Yann Fañch Kemener joins for 5 songs for an unusual and interesting blend of two very different but excellent voices.



'Ndiaz. 'Ndiaz

This CD features four musicians who perform Breton dances with a hint of jazz and the music of India. The group includes Jérôme Kerihuel on tables, Timothée Le Bour on saxophone, Youenn Le Cam on trumpet, and Yann Le Corre with chromatic accordaion. This CD includes dances such as the rond de Loudéac and rond de Saint Vincent, laride, ridées, polka plinn, a waltz and bourée.



Raggalendo. Ze Show à l'Armoricaine.

Raggalendo is a group of wild Breton women who can be enjoyed on CD but best appreciated on DVD. This new DVD is from a performance at the festival "Les routes de Lanleff" in 2012. This includes songs from their three albums.

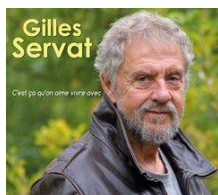


Andrea Seki. Son Atlantel. Elfic Circle Project

Andrea Seki is an Italian musician who discovered the Celtic harp while living in Brittany. In this second CD he pays homage to the Atlantic Ocean and the maritime world that borders it. He is joined by David Hopkins on percussion, Jo Van Bouwel with song, Fabrice de Graef on bensuri (Indian flute), and Suduya with electronics. An immersive experience where the talent of the harp player is not lost.

Gilles Servat. C'est ça qu'on aime vivre avec.

Singer-songwriter Gilles Servat has been on the Breton scene for many years with songs well loved for their militant defense of Brittany as well as songs on all aspects of contemporary life. This CD is a bit more

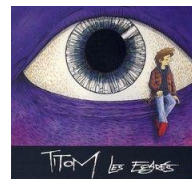


“electric” in sound with a rock beat but also a jazzy swing and calm beauty in more traditional arrangements.



Startijenn. El TaQa Live. Paker Production 012. www.pakerprod.com

A high energy fest noz band with nine selections including dances like the plinn, Rond de Saint Vincent, an dro and a waltz. One might suspect an influence from beyond the borders of Brittany with titles like “Istakhbar,” Gamil El-TaQa,” and “Gasbah E. TaQa.” Members of the band are Konogan An Habazk (biniau), Kaou Gwenn and Jérôme Kerihuel (percussions), Tangi Le Gall-Carre (button accordion), Erwan Moal (electric guitar), Tango Oillo (acoustic guitar), Youenn Roue (bombard), Sofiane Saïdi (song) and Erwan Volant (bass guitar).



Titom. Les Égarés.

A band combining the dance plin, groove, gavotte and a bourée folk rock, with song rooted in tradition and brimming with poetry. Thomas Lotout on bombard composes a number of pieces. Other members of the band include Raphaël Chevalier on fiddle and cello, Gaëtan Grandjean on guitars and bouzouki, Patrick Boileau on drums, Stéphane DeVito on bass, and Yannig Alory on flute. Guest singers for this CD are Annie Ebre land Farid Aït Siameur.



Wig a Wag. Wig a Wag #6

This fest noz band provides 11 selections of Breton dances – laridé, gavotte, ridée, plin, and dro, hanter dro, rond de Saint Vincent, and kas a barh, with a bourée and Cercle circassien – dances that have “invaded” Breton festoù noz to the joy of dancers.



Deep Inside a Breton Skull 40: Ghosts and Myths

Jean Pierre Le Mat

"There was three kings in the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
Jonh Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
Jonh Barleycorn was dead."

The old Scotsman was in good mood. He was humming happily, the barrel of his gun on his shoulder. His smiling face was framed between bushy whiskers and barred by a red moustache. In his left hand he gripped the butt of his weapon while on the right he removed the small branches in front of him.

The second hunter was probably as old as him. His short hair and his clean-shaven face let show the almost geometric patterns of his wrinkles. Unlike his companion, who moved as a feline, his movements were a little rough. An observer would have attributed this stiff look to an authoritative temper and a light osteoarthritis.

Last year, the man was hunting the grouse. It was in Scotland, between Aberdeen and Dundee, in the lands of Kenneth MacDonald. This sport requires good eyesight and excellent reflexes. To prevent deep despair of the many shooters who are returning empty-handed every evening, the landlords organize a royal hospitality. Hunting grouse is a rich man's sport because, as everyone knows, the wounds of pride require expensive care.

Our stiff hunter immediately fraternized with the old landlord who spent his days hunting and his nights comforting the clumsy people. They found many similarities in their usual pleasures, history, beer, and mathematics. They referred with nostalgia to their colonial experience and they laughed heartily.

This year, the old Breton had invited his Scottish friend to a boar hunt, not far from Trecesson, in the Broceliande forest. But today the pleasure of hiking was stronger than the excitement of hunting.

After two hours walk, the two men stopped and sat side by side at the foot of an oak tree. The Scotsman rummaged through his bag. He pulled out a bottle of good whisky, and also two crystal glasses he wiped thoroughly with a white handkerchief. He handed one of the glasses to his companion, poured in it an honest glassful prior to using in turn. He wedged the bottle in the leaves and they clinked their glasses cheerfully.



Broceliande forest is truly remarkable, said the Scotsman, his eyes wandering. This depth ... This

mysterious atmosphere ... It reminds me the woods around Glencoe, where my ancestors-ghosts are staying....

- Your ancestors-ghosts? answered the other gaily. You're kidding, I presume? What do you mean?

- Oh, it's a very sad story, said the Scotsman frowning ... But excuse me! I did not see that your glass was empty. Let me serve you ...

- OK ... Thank you, not too much ... If you do not mind, tell me the sad story of your ancestors. Dear Kenneth, you excited my curiosity.

The Old Scotsman was silent a moment, turning the whisky in his glass with an indolent wrist movement. He breathed deeply the scents of the forest and closed his eyes. When he opened them, they had found their malicious sparkle.

- You know, I belong to the clan of the MacDonalds. On feast days, I wear the tartan colors of my family. I own lands in the east of Scotland, but my ancestors lived in the West, in Glencoe. Oh, it was only a minor branch of the MacDonalds, compared to those of Keppoch or Glengarry! They were great poets, terrible hunters, heavy drinkers ... Good people! May God keep them!

The story happened three centuries ago. At this time, there was war between the Stuart dynasty, which was of Scottish extraction, and another royal family, which was foreign to us. The MacDonalds of Glencoe were the last to take side for the Stuarts. It was not because they pondered too much, believe me. It was rather inattention. They caught up quickly. They fought like lions, according to our bards ... or like wolves, according to our enemies. They were the last to disarm. It was rather inattention, like in the first case.

Clearly, these tough guys had no political sense. But they had sense of hospitality, like all those who live in the Highlands. During the winter 1691, they welcomed in their home two companies of soldiers led by Robert Campbell of Glenlyon. This man had been a supporter of England, a miserable man, although he was a Scotsman. However, the duty of hospitality suffers no exception, and the people of Glencoe opened their doors. They were unaware of what is felony. Robert Campbell dared to violate the law of Highlands. The guest turned against his host. Alasdair MacDonald and thirty-six of his men and women were murdered. Those who fled perished in snow and cold.

The old Alasdair (we call him Maclain) comes back from time to time and he haunts the glen. He tries to finish the nap during which he was treacherously killed, and he is rarely in good mood. He stayed a little rough. At this time, you know, everyone was like that.

When you come back in Scotland, we will go to Glencoe, I promise you. I do not know if we could meet Maclain. But you will see that the large trees near the river are impregnated with his rudeness, his sorrow and his hospitality.

Another glass of Glenlivet?

- Half a glass, thank you ... My dear Kenneth, you surprise me. I did not think a man like you can believe in ghosts. Even worse! You are familiar with them. How can an educated fellow, with a scientific knowledge, be caught in such divagations? Show me that your story is worth better than the trifles told by grandmothers to prevent children playing in the ruins or to steal apples.

Well, your whisky is excellent. Tasting such a nectar in Broceliande is a refined pleasure ...

- Before answering you, let me time to refill my glass... Well, you may be disappointed. I will not talk about magic. I will not even tell you about paranormal phenomena. We will deal with ghosts as mathematical problems.



Let's see ... (The old Scot was looking for something in the sky). We'll take the example of the planet Pluto. According to the disruptions in the movement of Neptune and Uranus, the astronomers Percival Lowell and William Pickering postulated its existence and calculated the position. That was in 1915. The planet was discovered

fifteen years later by Clyde Tombaugh, not far from the theoretical place. Thus, Pluto had been a ghost planet for fifteen years. You can believe in it or not. It disturbed the movement of others, being unseen and without any legal existence.

You understand my method for hunting the ghosts? A system with bizarre behavior can always be seen as a set of multiple systems. Some of them are still unknown. They are ghost-systems.

Alain de l'Isle, Universal Doctor at the Paris University during the twelfth century, relates an interesting story that puts us on the trail of a ghost. According to him, the traveler, in Brittany, who argued that King Arthur was dead was immediately insulted by the locals. And it is better for him to escape quickly, for fear of being stoned. The ghost of Arthur, obviously haunted Brittany, and led your ancestors to extreme acts.

Today, reasonable people are strayed out of their way by ghosts. Ghosts of heroes, haunting the place of their high deeds. Ghosts of rich people staying during the time of their damnation in the cottages of the poor, making their life even more miserable. Ghosts of

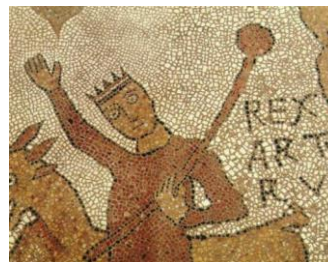
victims chained to tormentors. Ghost of tormentors chained to their victims...

The old Breton had listened to the argument of his friend. He let the silence settle for a few seconds, and then he replied:

- You have shaken my belief, Kenneth, but you did not convince me. Anyway I feel that it was not your goal. It is true that the existence of some celestial bodies had been predicted by astronomical calculations. But the discovery of Pluto is not a good example, and you could not ignore it. Calculations of Pickering and Lowell, based on wrong observations, were false. The discovery of the planet near the predicted position is pure coincidence.

Dear friend, it is not with such tricks that you will confuse me!

Another drop of whisky? ... OK, but it will be the last one... Cheers Kenneth, cheers ... What about? Ah yes ... You claim a scientific approach. No offence, but you lack modernity! There could be invisible beings. Why not? But what challenge us are not foreign entities, but unknown properties of our world and of our mind.



My ancestors who refused to believe that Arthur was dead were not prompted by a ghost. They were led by a myth, a feature of their unconscious. The myths are scars of the past, registered in the archives of our brains. Similarly enrolled in the brain of the swallows are the ways of migration. The eternal return of the eels to the Sargasso Sea is mysteriously engraved in their poor nervous system...

- Ah ah ah, my dear! I propose a toast to this fabulous duel in the fourth dimension: the ghost of Arthur against the myth of Arthur. An alien hero against a virtual hero...

Let me temper your enthusiasm. Some of the impulses of Bretons can probably be explained by myths. But you cannot explain that a geographical map is engraved in the brain of swallows or eels. It is more reasonable to assume that a ghost pushes them towards their destiny.

The old Breton had his breath taken away. He was on the verge of suffocating, when he saw the delight of his Scot friend contemplating his amazement.

- Animal-ghosts, Kenneth? I would like to meet one of your strange creatures, man or beast...

The Scotsman carefully placed the empty bottle and the two glasses in his bag. He stood up, looked at his companion with a smile and made to leave.

The old Breton would take a step when he stumbled in the leaves and fell to his knees. The Scots rushed to help him up. Together, arm in arm, they laughed.

- My dear friend, said the Scot, you'll probably tell me that whisky has special features. You do not know John Barleycorn, a ghost from my country. He is famous for his pranks and vivacity. I saw him going out of the bottle, and leaning against the tree where we were sitting. His hands clinging to the lower branches, he shot his feet out between your shoulders. That is really what you felt, isn't it? Ah, the funny guy! I no longer see him...

And the old red-haired man, supporting his companion, went humming:



"John Barleycorn was a hero bold
of noble enterprise ;
For if you do but taste his blood,
Twill make your courage rise..."

**A Little History from A New Handbook to
Brittany and Adjacent Parts of Normandy,**
Ward, Lock and Co. – circa 1930

The English Ward, Lock & Co's Tourist Handbooks – like modern-day versions are primarily about sites to be seen and roads to be taken. But guide books always include a bit of history and a presentation of the "manners and customs" of a country. The following is drawn from the this guidebook to Brittany which has no date to be found, but appears to be published soon after 1928 – the latest date found in referencing events in the text of the book.

Such a condensed presentation of Brittany's history and its people obviously leaves out a lot of important detail and is subject a great deal of wild oversimplification and inaccuracies. As is the case for much of travel literature, this text is rife with stereotypes borrowed from other writers and one wonders if the writer ever set foot in Brittany!!! But hopefully *Bro Nevez* readers will find it interesting as a reflection of the travel guide genre of this period. And the themes of this text are not totally unrelated to the articles you have already read in this issue!

BRITTANY

When Julius Caesar conquered Brittany in 56 B.C., before crossing the Channel, it was under the domination of the blue-eyed, flaxen-haired Gauls; and they had been preceded by at least one other race – the builders of the dolmens which are now one of the marvels of the country.

In Gaul, as in other parts of the Roman empire, the crushing burden of the land-tax ruined all but the richest landowners, and to escape the exactions very many deserted their estates. Thus there came to be much unoccupied and ownerless land which, in the 5th century, began to fall into the hands of Britons flying across Channel before the Picts and Scots. Later the invasion of Britain by the Angles and Saxons caused another great wave of emigration. There was also a great exodus from Ireland to the north and west coasts of what is now Brittany.

Some bands of the immigrants were led by monks and others by warriors. At first, they continued their allegiance to the princes of the territories they had left. Some of those princes visited their colonists, were even granted a portion of the new land and had palaces there. But in the homeland, under the increasing pressure of the Angles and Saxons, the status and power of the British chiefs declined and in due course the colonists asserted their independence of rulers in Great Britain, living under local chiefs of their own choice, but maintaining the institutions and speaking the language of their forefathers, a language which many of their descendants still use and which is fundamentally identical with that of their racial relatives in Wales.

Lesser Britain

So thoroughly did the Britons take possession of the great western peninsula of the country now named France, that it lost its old name of Armorica and became known as Lesser Britain in contradistinction to Great Britain on the other side of the channel.

From A.D. 510 the Britons of Lesser Britain, or the Bretons as they came to be called, were nominally subject to the Frankish kings at Paris, but incessantly they were in revolt, although they had been allowed to have their own chiefs and to live under their own laws. In 843 the Frankish governor of the province led a successful revolt against Charles the Bold and was crowned King of the Bretons. Some thirty years later the kingdom was broken up as the result of Norman invasions and lack of unity among the Bretons. That condition lasted between thirty and forty years. It was ended by the expulsion of the Normans. The rulers of the re-united portions of the country took the Title of Dukes of Brittany.

The Dukes

Up to that time no foreign customs had been introduced. The Bretons had lived in petty tribes, of which each formed a "plou," a word met with in many place-names, and they had their own little kingdoms, but after the expulsion of the Normans these kingdoms disappeared and feudalism was established.

Fresh trouble came to Brittany through the accession of William of Normandy to the throne of England, the duchy having to bargain alternately with France and England and to endure being the battleground for both.

In 1166 Duke Conan IV abdicated in favour of the English king Henry II, whose aid he had solicited against his nobles. Henry's son Geoffrey married Conan's daughter. Their son Arthur became Duke of Brittany, and being the rightful heir to the crown of England on the death of his uncle Richard was murdered at Rouen by King John, 1205, an act which led the Breton nobles to turn from England to France. On the death of the duke in the middle of the 14th century, the heads of the houses of Blois and Montfort claimed the succession. One house was supported by England, the other by France, and the war became a trial of strength between those countries. It continued nearly a century, during which most of the towns of Brittany were drenched in blood.

In 1488 Duke François II was succeeded by his daughter Anne, who became the wife first of Charles VII of France and then of his successor Louis XII. The daughter of the latter marriage was married to the Duke of Angoulême, who succeeded to the throne of France as François I (and who met Henry VIII of England on the Field of the Cloth of Gold). As dowry, she took to her husband the duchy of Brittany,

When she became queen she ceded the duchy to her husband and to his descendants; but the Bretons were still to have their own parliament, and this they retained until the Revolution, often rising against what they regarded as French infringements of their liberties, franchises, usages and customs, which Louis XII had pledged himself and his heirs to respect.

Monks who crossed the Channel or who came from Ireland made a determined attempt to convert the native population to Christianity, and provision was made by ecclesiastics for meeting the spiritual needs of the colonists and for the education of their children. Cathedrals, parish churches, chapels and convents with schools attached arose throughout the land. The first primitive structures, which the missionaries often helped to build, were succeeded by buildings of stone, many of which are now the glory of the land and the delight of tourists.

The Reformation

The Reformation was embraced by a few nobles, but by the people it was not accepted. So long as no attempt was made to compel them to change their religious beliefs, the Catholics and their Calvinist neighbours might have lived together in peace, but the Duke of Mercoeur, the governor of the province, resolved to make Brittany a stronghold of the league which a section of the Catholics had formed for placing on the throne the Duke of Guise, who under Henry III had been at the head of the army, instead of accepting Henry of Navarre, the rightful heir, who was a Calvinist.

The duke succeeded in convincing the Breton Catholics that their religion was in danger. Then the unhappy province became the scene of fierce fighting, of burning and ravaging, of indescribable atrocities. When at the end of nine years peace was re-established, the province was swept by a plague. By the war and the pestilence, Brittany was nearly depopulated.

In 1675 peace was broken by an insurrection, barbarously suppressed, of the *Bonnets Rouges*, against the imposition of the Gabelle, a tax on salt.

Acts of the government set up at the Revolution in 1789 led the Bretons, for the defence of their religion, to support the royalist cause in the Wars of the Vendée (named from a part of the adjoining province of Poitou) and the Wars of the Chouannerie.

THE BRETONS

As in the past, so now, the Breton is strong in his religious convictions, and Brittany is the stronghold of Catholicism in France. The intensely religious character of the people should be remembered when visiting their churches and observing their Pardons and the Processions connected with their worship.

Truthful, industrious and hospitable are the Bretons. They are also proud and courageous, excellent sailors, and a fine and healthy race. Three-quarters of all those who man French ships come from the Breton peninsula, and the political economists of France say that the Bretons form one of the greatest reserves and hopes of the Republic. They have, however, little initiative, and so fervent is their love for their country that they make bad colonists.

Their love of independence, and perhaps their obstinacy, which is generally admitted to be one of their characteristics, may have made them sometimes a difficult people to govern. To one duke his brother-in-law is said to have written: "Monseigneur, I declare to God I would rather be the ruler of a million wild boars than of such a people as are your Bretons."

Language and Dialects

The Breton language is used in some of the ecclesiastical schools, in the pulpits of the churches around which the old language is commonly spoken, and there are writers who make use of it. The language is most perfectly expressed in popular poetry; many old songs have been lovingly collected.

The dialects fall into four groups, and are found in the districts centering respectively upon Vannes, Tréguier, Saint-Pol-de-Léon and Quimper. The inhabitants of these four districts, moreover, have distinctive traits.

The Vannetais have been described as almost Oriental in dress and appearance, the Trégorrois as refined and literary, the Léonards as fanatics bent on atoning for their sins and regarding dancing as almost a crime, while the people of Cornouaille, the region around Quimper, delight in gay costumes, in music and dancing.

The native dances are gay and interesting to watch. The music is provided by the biniou, the Breton bagpipes, which requires two performers and which, by the way, are never said to be "played" but "sounded." One of the musicians sounds a kind of clarinet, the other the bagpipe proper, which consists of a bag with one drone and a smaller pipe with holes that are fingered. The recognized place for the orchestra consists of a couple of chairs set on a table or on up-ended cider casks, on which the musicians beat time with their feet, often enclosed in wooden shoes.

Costumes

Each of the old clans has kept its originality, so that there is a variety of costumes, but with the exception of the women's white caps and the men's low-crowned, broad brimmed hats with a velvet band passing through a large buckle from which long streamers depend, the ancient costumes are not generally seen except on festive occasions and at the pardons. After being used they are carefully put away and every care is taken to preserve them in good condition. Those of the women are very valuable by reason of the embroidery and lace upon them, and they are handed down from mother to daughter.

There are nearly 800 types of coifs, of which each locality has its own design. They are of linen and lace. Some have streamers, some chin straps, some both, some neither. Some completely cover the head, others are but a narrow strip. Among the least becoming is the cap worn by the women of Morlaix. It resembles a lobster's tail. In one respect the coifs are all alike. They always look as if they had just been laundered.

How the Breton lives

With the exception of the great arsenals, shipbuilding and the production of sail cloth, the manufacturing industry is of small importance. The land and the sea provide the principal occupations., and in Brittany these are closely allied. Hundreds upon hundreds of young men work in the winter upon the farms far inland and come down to the sea at the approach of Spring, to ship in some long-shore fishing smack or to go to Newfoundland, the Orkneys or Iceland. The peasant leads a life of hard labour, but he draws a competence from it.

Before the fleets depart they are solemnly blessed. After a mass followed by a sermon, a procession is formed and goes through be-flagged streets to the quay off which lie the ships adorned with all their flags. The ecclesiastics go aboard a waiting boat in which they make the circuit of the vessels and conclude the benediction.

The peasants' cottages and the small farm-houses are usually badly lighted and ventilated. Often they consist of but one room with a floor of hard-trodden clay and a ceiling supported by great rough-hewn rafters from which are hung the knives, forks and dishes, as in a ship's cabin, or these table articles rest with great loaves of bread on a shelf which crosses the room just below the ceiling, and is stout enough to support the weight of a suspended side of bacon.

Furniture has been reduced to the smallest quantity. Two or three closed and paneled beds or bunks line one side of a wall and perhaps there are a wardrobe and a clock. Beneath the beds are oaken chests in which the household linen is stored. There is a long table with a bench on either side, a great fireplace with its crane, and on a wall an assortment of highly polished pots and pans.



Would you prefer a copy of Bro Nevez by e-mail?

I would be happy to send Bro Nevez by e-mail as a PDF file to you (as well as by "snail mail" if you like to lounge in a comfortable chair to digest it). Please let me know your preference. We are trying to get more back-issues of Bro Nevez on the U.S. ICDBL website. Please feel free to share Bro Nevez with anyone who might be interested in reading it!

Lois

An Introduction to the U.S. Branch of the International Committee for the Defense of the Breton Language (U.S. ICDBL)

The Breton language is spoken by an estimated 175,000 to 200,000 people in Brittany, but it is threatened with extinction as older speakers are not replaced by younger ones. The Breton language is no longer forbidden in schools or totally hidden from public view, but France continues to withhold the resources necessary for its development as a healthy living language, despite demands from an ever widening Breton population for its support and growth in the schools, media, and public life.

Who are the Members of the ICDBL?

Some U.S. ICDBL members are of Breton heritage, but the U.S. ICDBL is intended to be a group of “anyone and everyone” showing support for the Breton language rather than an organization for Breton-Americans like so many other “ethnic” organizations in the U.S. We do have quite a few members with Irish, Scottish or Welsh heritage, so there is a strong inter-Celtic element to our work. Most of our members speak neither Breton nor French and most have never been to Brittany. But we all have some reason to help fight for the survival of the Breton language.

What the does the U.S. ICDBL do?

With Members of the U.S. ICDBL dispersed throughout the U.S. --from Maine to Florida, from Alaska to California, and lots of states in between—we do not hold meetings or have the ability to carry out many projects as a group.

Quarterly Newsletter for Members and Subscribers

Our central activity is the publication of a quarterly newsletter called **Bro Nevez** (“new country” in the Breton language). It’s not slick and glossy, but includes 15-20 pages of current information about what is going on in Brittany related to the Breton language, and short articles on a range of topics, from music and dance, to sports, travel, the economy, or history. 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 800 new releases briefly described.

The U.S. ICDBL Web Site:
www.icdbl.org

On our website we have published a guide to Breton music (updated in 2006), a guide to learning materials for the Breton language, an introduction to and map of the Celtic languages, a presentation of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools, and two documents presenting the Breton language and why it is endangered and what is being done about it. Bretons themselves have created many great websites to present their country and its culture, and we provide links to a large number of excellent and reliable sites created by Bretons themselves.

Other Action

We assist people from the U.S. and all over the world with requests for information about the Breton language and culture. ICDBL Members throughout the U.S. have been ambassadors for the cause of the Breton language by distributing information at Celtic cultural events and music festivals or concerts, and by simply discussing their concerns with friends and acquaintances.

More direct support for the Breton language ...

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan—Breton language immersion schools-- for over ten years with a small annual contribution from our Members. We have maintained a personal link with the children of one particular Diwan school—Skol Diwan Landerne—since 1992 when Lois Kuter, the U.S. ICDBL Secretary, was invited to become the school’s “godmother.”

As is the case for all branches of the ICDBL, our support of the Breton language is mostly symbolic—the fact that outsiders care at all offers encouragement to people in Brittany who are working to sustain the Breton language and find new and creative ways to use it. And we know that this has been noticed and much appreciated in Brittany.

PLEASE JOIN US. YOUR SUPPORT SHOWS THE PEOPLE OF BRITTANY THAT THEIR LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT TO THE WORLD

A yearly membership (including subscription to our newsletter) is just \$20. If you would simply like to subscribe to our newsletter, without becoming a Member, that is also \$20. Make out a check to “**U.S. ICDBL**” and mail it to the address below.

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