

BRO NEVEZ

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



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KUZUL ETREVROADEL EVIT KENDALC'H AR BREZHONEG

No. 169

March 2024

Bro Nevez 169

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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. Contributions, letters to the editor, corrections, and ideas are welcome from all readers and will be printed at the discretion of the Editor.

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

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Editor's Note

As you will read below many challenges remain to the health and growth of the Breton language. But, you will also read of positive events and work by a variety of organizations and individuals to make the Breton language a part of their work and everyday life of Brittany.

And it seemed fitting to reintroduce the work of the Diwan Breton language immersion schools which have been so important in pioneering work to make sure children have the opportunity to learn Breton in school. Diwan continues to face challenges to its growth, but can certainly celebrate the positive impact it continues to have in enabling children from preschool through high schools to master the Breton language (and French).

Challenges for the Breton Language



High School Students Stand Up for Their Languages

As reported by the organization *Pour que vivent nos langues* (so that our languages may live) 42 high school students from Corsica, Occitania, the Basque country, Alsace and Brittany traveled to Paris on February 7 to stage a short demonstration in front of the Ministry of National Education. There they spoke out on issues that impact the future of the languages they speak – Corsican, Occitan, Basque, Alsatian and Breton.

This gathering preceded the presence of six students who presented their views to French Deputies who are members of the study group "Langues et Cultures Régionales." The students asked that the State establish a real statute to insure that these languages will survive the precarious position in which they have been put by the State. Among other issues to be addressed are the insufficient place in the schools for regional languages and the Article 2 of the French Constitution ("French is the language of the Republic") which has been used as a weapon to block advances.



Demonstration in Saint-Brieuc to Urge the Department of Côtes d'Armor to Act

On February 3 some 750 to 1,000 people took to the streets in Saint-Brieuc to protest inaction on the part of the Department of Côtes d'Armor to support the Breton language. This was called by the Guingamp Diwan school with the support of Ti ar Vro Guingamp and Kevre Breizh. A particular problem has been the lack of support for the Diwan middle school of Plésidy and a blockage of an annex to it in Perros-Guirec.



Koun Breizh Urges Resistance to Pressure for the de-Bretonization of Place Names

The following is my translation of a press release posted on the

Agence Bretagne Presse site. LK

Open letter from Koun Breizh to Mr. Chesnais-Girard, President of the Region of Brittany so that he supports Breton placenames severely menaced by the application of the disastrous 3DS law related to the postal service. The Region must intervene to remind them of their rights and duties to communes which depend on the postal system.

March 3, 2024

Mr. Le President,

What one could fear is happening right before our eyes. The application of the 3DS Law is in a silent manner leading to the de-Bretonization of our countrysides. According to Article 169 of this Law: "The municipal council operates in the designation of roadways and place names, including private roads open to traffic." All communes must henceforth designate the roads and place names, to give a number to each user and provide the address in the Basse Adresse Locale format in the national address base, according to the unilateral norms of the postal service.

The operations have begun and are not yet completed for the small communes.

The communes apply this law in line with the postal service, often choosing a French name for the routes that do not have a name, leading to the progressive disappearance of Breton words associated with names of places. At the request of the postal service they mix French and Breton in adding "rue" or "chemin" to a Breton language designation, which is absurd. For technical reasons there have been some place names that disappear when taken hold by the Basse Adresse Locale.

The Breton designation for places is condemned to fall into disuse, as at Plouezoc'h with the names Lansalut, Coat Quiff, Porz ar Prat, Kerverc, Kerall, Leoc'hen.

It's a whole country that changes in designation and thus in culture and identity right under our eyes. Frenchification brings this on. Due to bad technical reasons, freedom is given to societal control and the will to bring uniformity which characterizes this country and its technocracy; it's our linguistic patrimony which disappears in defiance of rights and cultural diversity

nevertheless recognized by France as in the ratification of UNESCO convention.

How will we recall to our children tomorrow that we form a people with a memory, a culture, and singular languages when these latter are no longer written into our countryside?

How will we recall to our children tomorrow that we are a people when our history is nowhere taught to our children?

For a courageous commune that refuses this rampant de-Bretonization and makes this known in the press, how many others do it without even seeing the problem? The question was raised to you in 2019 by a collective of Breton artists and the cultural movement when the mayor of Telgruc-sur-Mer gradually de-Bretonised names with designations as inappropriate as "Rue du Pélican." [See *Bro Nevez* 151, September 2019 for a report on this]

It seems indispensable to us that the Regional Council of Brittany, legally in charge of the defense of our Breton patrimony and our languages, take a strong initiative in regard to the situation of urgency in which we find ourselves today. The situation is much too serious to refuse action with the idea that the communes are in charge of naming their streets and that they must apply the law.

The association Koun Breizh, whose object consists of defending Breton memory, asks you in the most solemn manner to urgently act in this situation and to remind all communes that they have the right to keep intact the designations of our place names, while attributing to each a number, and this, despite whatever the pressing demands of the postal service or technical difficulties there may be.

And we ask you to set up a mapping of the ensemble of our names in partnership with all our communes and to contract with the association of mayors of Brittany for a plan for the protection and valorization of this patrimony.

The law has given you the right to act in these matters. We can wait no longer in face of the rampant de-Bretonization of our country.

Please believe, Mr. President, in the expression of our highest consideration,

For Koun Breizh
Yvon Ollivier



The Breton Language in the Nantes Pays

Bretons are rightly protesting a postal service push to have communes of Brittany adopt new road names (or change them) to French versions. As older names disappear from memories and from signage, information about Breton history also disappears. As noted in the preface by Antoine Châtelier (doctorat in Breton and Celtic Studies, Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, Rennes 2) to the book by **Bernard Luçon, *Noms de lieux bretons du Pays Nantais – 4100 toponymes*** (Yoran Embanner, 2017), names will evolve with time, but Breton language place names in the Nantes Pays, the western part of the department of Loire-Atlantique, testify to a long presence of the Breton language there.

You can read about this remarkable study by Bernard Luçon in *Bro Nevez* 142 (June 2017) but the preface below makes a strong case for the importance of studying place names in understanding the history of the Breton language. *This is my translation and I apologize for any misinterpretation of Antoine Châtelier's text. – LK*

Queens, kings, dukes, and notable personalities ... too often the historical works have had the tendency to shed light uniquely on the "great personages" and to speak only of great uprisings, wars and changes. Peasants, fishermen, workmen, artisans ... these crowds of life which have gone through the centuries have often fallen through the trap door. But how can we understand their daily life? Their environment? Their customs?

Research of toponymy has in common with archeology a revelation not of a history of the sensational but very much that of the usual, the familiar. While archaeology teaches us through the study of personal property, for example, place names research offers an angle perhaps even more intimate: language.

Fields, rivers, bogs, villages, hills, cliffs, megaliths, fishing zones ... Those women and men named their immediate environment and transmitted these names from generation to generation over centuries, even millennia. Names coming straight from Antiquity are not in fact rare. If they are often ancient, place names are none the less living objects, and each generation changes them as linguistic changes occur. Certain place names are truly books of history, carrying in them 2,000 years of linguistic evolution of the Nantes Pays. Latinized Gaulish names, Bretonized and then Frenchified with a Gallo and French pronunciation are not rare. A formidable data bank, it is surprising that toponymy is not the object of patrimonial protection since place names are of great richness, they surround us, they are in all our conversations, yet we don't see them, worse they are often abused.

We don't see them until the day they jump in front of our eyes. Breton toponymy has a way of appearing stranger,

more exotic to the eyes and ears of those who take the trouble to observe them, and they have seduced a number of those who are curious: Bernard Luçon is among them.

"Ann dianaf a rog ac'hanoun" (the unknown tortures me), the famous motto inscribed on the Dobrée museum in Nantes gains its full sense. The Breton language, a mysterious continent, draws our curiosity before seizing us entirely. It reveals a world. Suddenly the names which surround us make sense! Suddenly these familiar names which had only been gibberish appear in all their meaning, here the "end of the woods," there, the "village of the moor."

... The study of the toponymy of the Nantes Pays requires an absolute rigor and knowledge in Breton, Gallo, Latin, Gaulish, and their respective evolutions, or still in phonology: to that add the scouring of archives and the pleasure of ruining one's eyes on difficult handwriting, and of course in reading reference works.

Finally, one cannot forget the essential work on the ground to collect traditional pronunciations of toponymy from older people ...

Language of "ploucs", language despised for centuries and not having the rights of citizenship, today some even put into question the historical practice in the department [Loire-Atlantique]. It would be an "invented" language drawn out of a hat. Nevertheless, through the pages of this book, it is very much there, the Breton language, and very much alive in all areas of everyday life (nicknames, first names, names of trade, plants, animals...). As the author says, it's an "engulfed continent" which appears before our eyes, that of an important part of the Nantes Pays during a millennium and a half. Better yet, the practice of this language in the Nantes Pays no longer appears as a marginal point in the history of Breton. This book shows us to the contrary, the Nantes Pays as an entire part of this space, and even a key role. The Nantes Pays raises questions essential for the understanding of the origin (especially of dialects) and the evolution of the Breton language. It's the only Breton department of a fairly restricted territory, as the zones found in Basse Bretagne, showing mixed zones and zones where the Breton language manifestly was never even spoken. Gallo and Breton have cohabited there for centuries.

Finally, be reminded of the spiny problem of the origins of the Breton language since this latter appeared in the Comté de Nantes before its integration into the Kingdom of Brittany. The case of the Retz Pays is also in itself an opportunity for learning. I think and I hope that this work can nourish in turn numerous studies which will throw light on shadowy areas revealed by the author, the more so since he also examines problems which in the Breton domain are far from concerning just the Nantes Pays.

From page to page, line to line, centuries go by and in filigree one can perceive with bitterness the slow disappearance of a language. Because it's just not in consideration of the patrimonial and university side; if a language is no longer spoken it dies. Effectively UNESCO worries about the future of the Breton language which has just a few over 6,500 speakers in the department today (OAPB); this is certainly the weakest number that the Nantes Pays has known in all its history. But don't break out the violins yet since more and more peoples learn this language, alone, in their family, or with associations such as Kentelioù an Noz or Skol an Emsav. The immersive and bilingual schools are developing. Granted, they do not speak Breton like a Paludier of the 18th century, and that's very normal, but these people converse, laugh, create, sing, speak Breton to their children; in brief, they write the upcoming pages of what is a long, very long history, providing for it to last for a long time.

Another Take on the Breton Language in the Department of Loire-Atlantique

A short report on March 8th by Visant Roué of the Ofis Publik are Brezhoneg aired on France 3 Pays de Loire included some quick facts about the state of the Breton language in Nantes and the department of Loire-Atlantique. It was noted that there are a number of accounts from earlier centuries testifying to the presence of the Breton language in this part of Brittany, including a report from around 1500 from an Austrian traveler who reported hearing Breton in Nantes.

As for today, Visant Roué noted that recent studies show that around 6,000 people in Loire-Atlantique speak Breton and an additional 9,000 understand it. There are some 1,000 students in bilingual schools and several hundred adults taking classes in Breton.

While this is not groundbreaking news, it is important information to counter those who claim Breton was never spoken in Nantes and who would deny its presence today in Loire-Atlantique. Certainly those who attend the many festivals, festoù noz, and musical events in Loire-Atlantique are well aware of the strength of Breton identity in this part of Brittany.

Advances for the Breton Language (and Gallo)



Ya d'ar Brezhoneg – Yes to Breton
(information adapted from the Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg website – fr.brezhoneg.bzh)

The Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign began on October 5, 2001 in Carhaix where 175 private sector organizations signing on to the campaign participated in an opening ceremony. The campaign was

opened for communes (equivalent to our townships) in 2004 and then to inter-communal structures in 2006. Today some 790 private-sector organizations, 239 communes, and 20 inter-communal structures have signed on to the charter.

Signing on means that these groups will incorporate the Breton language in their activities. There are several levels of engagement, and each group determines just how to incorporate Breton – in public signage, publications, operational communications, or otherwise.

This February the Football Club of Lorient was the first professional soccer team to sign onto Ya d'ar Brezhoneg to promote the Breton language, enhance action already in progress and develop new action.

Seven actions are to be implemented in the next three years for the Level 1 of the campaign. Three basic actions identified were the inclusion of Breton language articles in the club's magazine, on greeting cards, and letterhead and administrative documents. Four other specific actions were also identified:

- Communication in Breton on social media
- Regular articles in Breton on the internet site (fclorient.bzh)
- Messages in Breton on the stadium's big screen
- Messages in Breton on LED banners

Breton has already been present in the work of the club – for example on player's uniforms and in engaging Morwenn Le Normand as a speaker for the stadium and singer of the Breton anthem "Bro gozh ma zadoù" before each match.

While the actions can seem small, the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg campaign has been effective in building a public presence for the Breton language and encouraging its use in the day-to-day operations of businesses, local governments and organizations of all sizes. Certainly, putting Breton before the eyes of soccer team fans will give it prestige and reinforce its place as part of Breton identity.



A New Center for Breton Language Activities in Quimper

(map from geobreizh.bzh)

Information for this note was drawn from Quimper-bretagne-occidentale.bzh

The organization Quimper Bretagne Occidentale has as its mission the development of French-Breton bilingualism in the city of Quimper (pop. 63,500) and surrounding areas. This February it launched a project to

create a center for Breton language activities in Quimper. Supported by the city, it will transform unused retirement home buildings into a center for Breton language and cultural activities – a space for lodging as well as for classes and activities of all kinds.



Mizvezh ar Brezhoneg – Month of the Breton Language

March is a month when attention is focused on events to celebrate the Breton language (and as you'll read below, Gallo as well). Hundreds of events of all kinds, educational and entertaining, for children and adults, are held throughout Brittany during the month to encourage the use of Breton.

Here are some examples:



Diwan and bilingual schools hold open houses to help parents learn about their programs.

Numerous activities are organized for children, including games, storytelling, music and films, and even a

workshop to learn circus tricks and stunts.

There are informal gatherings in cafés, bars and restaurants to share coffee, a drink, or a meal over a conversation in Breton.

A number of lectures and workshops are organized – conducted in Breton or bilingually – on topics such as plants and trees, place names, costumes and coiffes, bee keeping, cuisine and cooking, song, and dance (including the Lindy Hop!), other minority languages, early bilingualism, and the status of Breton in the schools, past and present.



One can meet authors or participate in a reading session of a Breton language book.

There are exhibits on Breton writers of the Trégor and about trails and wildlife.

One can go on a walk to discover the countryside or town sights led in the Breton language – and this includes a trek to the top of the bell tower of Notre Dame in Quimperlé which includes a challenge to learn 30 Breton words.



There are a number of games, trivia contests and tests of knowledge on different subjects – sports, history, geography, etc. which offer a fun way to learn and use Breton.

A call went out for daily haiku poems in Breton and contributions of writing and words to be posted on social media.

There are theater productions in Breton by Ar Vo Bagan, Pregomp Asambles and Nolwen Korbell ...

No month would be complete without concerts, festoù noz and veillées to dance, hear Breton language songs and storytelling.

There are lots of cinema showings for young and older viewers, including *Terminator 2* in Breton.

You can practice yoga in the Breton language.

And there are many opportunities for beginners to take some lessons and classes for those of other levels as well.

All in all, one has the opportunity to have fun using the Breton language, learning new things, or perfecting one's competence in informal social gatherings.



Le Maez du Gallo – The Month of Gallo

Held for the seventh year, the Gallo language also makes use of March to hold events and introduce this

language through a wide diversity of events and informal festive gatherings. Four themes have been identified for this year:

- Teaching the language
- Sharing knowledge in and about Gallo
- Publishing, theater, and music
- Audiovisual creations and their distribution

Some of the 60 or so events include:

- Quizzes in and about Gallo
- Classes for beginners and social opportunities for Gallo speakers to exchange ideas
- Library exhibits of books in Gallo
- Book readings for children
- Cinema and theater in Gallo
- Special radio programs
- A trilingual exhibit on Breton costumes
- An exhibit on artisans and earlier trades of Gallo Brittany
- A workshop on food and cuisine
- A workshop on teaching minority languages with Gallo as a model
- Walks in the countryside with Gallo speakers, including storytelling
- Veillées and concerts for children and adults

- Lectures and a special homage to Albert Poulain and Eugénie Duval, famous singers and storytellers of Gallo Brittany

Like the events for Mizvezh ar Brezhoneg, those of Maez du Galo are open to the widest public and invite one to learn and enjoy this unique language of Brittany which has often been overshadowed by the Breton language. And, as is the case for the Breton language, events and opportunities to learn Gallo are definitely not limited to just the month of March.

Some of the organizations active in organizing the Month for Gallo and active year-round in its support are:

Bertègn Galèzz, Rennes
 Ti ar Vro Saint-Brieuc
 CAC-sud 22, Saint-Caradec
 La Granjagoul, Parcé
 MJC La caravane, Servon-sur-Vilaine
 Ti ar Vro, Dmeruance, Dinan
 L'Ôtè du galo, Rennes
 Radio Plum'FM, Serant



Saint-Brieuc prepares a trilingual booklet for families (map from geobreizh.bzh)

Towns of Brittany (and France) provide what is called a “Livret de famille” to

guide families through required procedures for actions such as conducting a marriage or welcoming a new baby. The town of Saint-Brieuc (pop. 45,100) has promoted Brittany’s linguistic patrimony in putting Breton and Gallo along with French on signage at the entry to the town and in using Breton for the mayor’s editorial contribution to the municipal magazine, The town’s internet site also includes a presentation of the history and presence of Breton and Gallo in this area of north central Brittany.

The trilingual Breton-Gallo-French family booklet is a first for Brittany, although Rennes, Lorient, Quimper and Carhaix have prepared Breton-French materials. While respecting the required official content of the publication, Saint-Brieuc has included a trilingual cover, first page and subject titles to give visibility to both Breton and Gallo.

More information can be found on the Saint-Brieuc website: www.saint-brieuc.bzh/information



Prizioù Dazont ar Brezhoneg

Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg and France 3 organize each year Prizes for the Future of the Breton language to recognize new actions promoting the Breton language. Prizes are financed by the Region of Brittany and in each of the categories the winner receives 1,500 euros and the second and third place winners receive 500 euros. This annual event offers the opportunity to present a variety interesting projects and creations that show that the Breton language can be incorporated into economic, social, governmental, and cultural life.

The following are the categories and the winners in order of their ranking (1, 2, 3) as announced on March 15. The awards ceremony was held in Nantes, offering a reminder that Nantes is in Brittany and the Breton language has a presence there.

Associations



Heklev podkast (heklevpodkast.bzh) was created to provide a format for radiophonic programming in the Breton language. It engages a young team of media producers, actors/actresses, authors, translators, and sound engineers, with a particularly rich offering of audiobooks for children.



Sked (sked.bzh) is a cultural center in Brest with a rich offering of Breton language classes for all levels as well as a range of Breton cultural activities. They are nominated for their pioneering work to open a daycare center in the Breton language called Jibidi in partnership with the city of Brest, the Caisse d’allocations familiales, and Protection maternelle et infantile.



Deus'ta (deusta.bzh) is a two-day event featuring Breton language song, dance, and other creations in support of Breton language action in the area in and around the city of Brest.

Fictional books



Herve ar Beg, Amiraled Kab Horn (An Alarc'h, 148 pages). Tale set at the beginning of the 20th century of a young man who embarks on a two-year shipping trip to haul coal from Wales to San Francisco, depicting well the life on board sailing ships of this period.



Kristian Braz, *Moussa, istorioù berr*. (Al Liamm, 180 pages). Third collection of short stories by Kristian Braz presenting a range of personalities and life challenges.



Jorj Abherve-Gwegen, *Ribin-diribin* (An Alarc'h, 174 pages). A novel about a young hitch-hiker who take a job during university vacation time to drive a tour bus across Europe.

Collectivities



The commune of Lauzach (Ti Ker Laozeg) (56) which has implemented numerous actions in favor of the Breton language including the opening of a bilingual school stream.



Lorient area (An Oriant Tolpad-Kêriou) (56) for its nomination of an official focused on the Breton language and the creation of a position dedicated to this.



The Regional Nature Reserve of Plounérijn (Mirva natur rannvroel Plounerio) (22) for its translation of learning materials and information into Breton.

Audiovisual

Emmanuel Roy, *Penn-kil-ha-troad* (France3-Bretagne). A series of eight videos featuring young women undertaking sports and jobs of a physical nature normally viewed to be the domain of men.

Mai Lincoln, *Ki ma mamm* (Kalonna Production, Brezhoweb), 19-minute fiction filmed in Douarnenz about facing the arrival of old age in the family.

Dounia Wolteche-Bovet, *Re ar menez* (Tita Productions), 52-minute documentary about families in the Menez Du fighting to preserve their way of farming and living.

Businesses



Warenghem – A whiskey distillery based in Lannion whose website is in French, Breton, English and German language versions. The company has signed the Ya d'ar Brezhoneg charter.



Mel ar Vro – honey producers who provide a Facebook page and packaging in the Breton language



Bzh Ascenseurs – elevator makers and installers based in

Vannes who provide a Breton language version of their website.

Song



Barba Loutig, *Blev*. Group made up of Loeiza Beauvir, Linal Bellard, Elsa Corre and Enora De Parscau who sing in Breton (and French) and include a polyphonic sound not commonly found in Breton song.



Ivarh, *Huñvre*. Group which draws from the Breton song tradition and composes its own songs in the Breton language.



Morwenn Le Normand and Roland Conq, *Daou*. Duo who create performances in Breton (and French) for children.

Breton Speaker of the Year

Nolwenn Le Dissez – A speech therapist who offers sessions conducted in the Breton language, currently based in Ergué-Gabéric.

Christelle Chevalier-Gaté – a psychologist, trainer and researcher based in Plouvien, she founded the organization Heol al Loar to incorporate the Breton language in her work.

Thomas André – A young skipper from Brest who participated in the Mini Transat races. A former student of Diwan, he promotes the schools in his work.



A Re-Introduction to the Diwan Breton Language Immersion Schools

My translation from the Diwan website (diwan.bzh) with a few additional clarifications - LK

Diwan in Short

The Diwan schools in the five Breton departments form a network of 46 primary schools, 6 middle schools, and 2 high schools. At the beginning of the 2022 school year the network educated 4,045 students, about two-thirds in primary schools and a third at the secondary level.

The schooling is free of charge, non-denominational (secular) and open to all; in this manner local collectivities partner with the network.

They propose an immersion teaching which enables the students to achieve complete mastery of the Breton language and the French language, both oral and written.

The establishments are under a contract with the National Education system. The State thus takes charge of the teachers' salaries. These teachers follow official programs established by the Ministry (of Education) and are inspected like their counterparts in public and private schools.

The primary schools, middle schools and high schools are associative establishments, directed on a volunteer basis by the families who work with students and teachers as members of the Association d'Éducation Populaire. Parents are also engaged in Comités de Soutien. Financing of each establishment is backed by the activities of one or more support committees; through organizing sportive and friendly cultural activities, these support committees gather money which allows enrollment for no fees.

A project and specific operational model

- Access to bilingualism through an immersion method.
- Breton is the principal language of teaching and life of the schools.
- Teaching in French beginning at the primary school level allows a very good mastery of the French language.
- Pedagogical continuity from preschool through the baccalaureate.
- Teaching which incorporates the contemporary cultural reality of Brittany.
- Families engaged in the education project and its evolution.

... And a school like the others

- Classes under contract with the National Education
- Trained teachers holding the same diplomas as those in public and private schools.
- Schools which follow official programs.
- Students who have a scholarship identical to that of other students, passing the same examinations and participating in the same evaluations.

The Diwan Charter (1977)

Adopted in 1977, the year of Diwan's creation, the Charter is part of founding texts, with the statutes of the association, revised in 2016 and the networks convention adopted in 2011.

1. The Diwan association is open to all families who want to secure an education in the Breton language for their children, without socio-professional philosophical or political discrimination. The schools are free of charge and open to all.

2. Diwan exists by the fact that the National Education does not provide a place for the Breton language, but demands taking command of its schools as a public service for a democratic and remodeled teaching in Brittany, allowing the use of Breton as a vehicular language from preschool to the university in all areas of teaching.

3. Diwan is independent of all philosophical, confessional, political or syndical training. In consequence, Diwan affirms that its combat requires the respect of religious, philosophical or political convictions of all its members whatever the range of these, as long as they are not contrary to the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. This indispensable tolerance leads Diwan to protect the laicity in its teaching and to guarantee freedom of thought for each person.

4. Diwan puts into place a democratic teaching with real collaboration with parents, local collectivities, and teachers. Diwan asks parents to create a climate in its family life favoring expression in the Breton language in everyday life.

5. Diwan is engaged in promoting the use of Breton in the midst of the association on all levels; in addition, Diwan promotes a cultural development in the Breton language giving each child of Brittany a maximum of chances to take charge of their natural, social, and economic environment.

6. Diwan declares its hostility to all linguistic uniformization and is supportive of diverse forms of cultural expression, affirming that only their complementarity is a source of unity, mutual and collective enrichment. The Breton taught in the preschools of Diwan is that used in their geographic and human geography.

7. Conforming with inalienable rights of peoples to express themselves through their own culture, Diwan calls on all people who love democracy, Breton cultural organizations, and syndical organizations notably for teachers, to fight with it for more justice and against all forms of cultural domination.

8. Diwan declares itself in solidarity with all peoples who fight for their cultural identity, including there immigrant workers, affirming that their diversity contributes to an enrichment of the human patrimony.



Skol Diwan Landerne

The U.S. ICDBL has supported Diwan since our founding in 1981 – sometimes with a small financial contribution, but mainly through making the remarkable work of Diwan to provide schooling in the Breton language known to the readers of *Bro Nevez*. Since 1992 we entered into a special relationship with the Diwan school of Landerneau. I first

visited the school that year as well as in 1995, 1998 and 2007. Other U.S. ICDBL members have also visited bringing our greetings and modest financial support in 2001, 2010 and 2012 (to name a few years).

Founded in 1986, Skol Diwan Landerne remains a vibrant school for children who are able to master Breton (and French) in its classrooms. And parents are actively engaged in supporting the school and its programs.



An important event each year for fundraising has been the Foire Bio Landerneau. The March 16-17 event is the 26th year for the fair which features organic gardening and farming.

Proceeds from the modest entry fee and other sales go to Skol Diwan Landerne and make a huge difference in meeting an operational budget.

The fair includes numerous workshops and presentation on subjects such as native plants and animals of Brittany, actions in support of sustainable agriculture, cooking and use of native plants in everyday life, along with events for children such as bilingual Breton-French storytelling session. Also present are over 100 booths with craftspeople and artisans, information stands and product sales in support of organic gardening.



Bemdez, ur frazenn ouzhpenn – Each day, a new Breton sentence

Ofis Publik ar Brezhoneg published a nice little booklet which allows English language users to go from month to month and learn a short phrase for each day of a given month. By the end of the year, you can master 365 phrases related to everyday life. Even though the month of March may be mostly gone by the time you get this issue of *Bro Nevez* and read through it, I am reproducing here the phrases for the month of March. The initial phrases might be especially useful for beginning level learners.

I have additional copies of this little phrase book and would be happy to send one to anyone interested. Just send me an e-mail to confirm a mailing address. – LK

Meurzh / March

- 1 Kompren a rit? / Do you understand?
- 2 Petra a dalvez? / What does it mean?
- 3 N'ouzon ket, tamm ebet. / I haven't got any idea.

- 4 Gallout a rez adlavaret, mar plij? / Would you repeat, please?
- 5 Petra a lavarit? / What are you saying?
- 6 Petra 'peus c'hoant da gaout? / What do you want to have?
- 7 Marteze! / Maybe!
- 8 A c'hall bezañ? / Why not?
- 9 Posupl eo. / It's possible.
- 10 N'ouzon ket. / I don't know.
- 11 Hervez eo. / It (all) depends.
- 12 Ne gav ket din. / I don't think so.
- 13 Gwelet e vo! / We'll see!
- 14 Setu amañ ma breur. / This is my brother.
- 15 Ha setu ma c'hoar. / And here is my sister.
- 16 Anavezont a rez Brest? / Do you know Brest?
- 17 Ya, un tammig bihan. / Yes, I know it a bit
- 18 Anavezont a rez Marzhina? / Do you know Marzhina?
- 19 Ya, anavezhont a ran anezhi. / Yes, I know her.
- 20 Anevezout a rez tud ma familh? / Do you know my family?
- 21 Ne ran ket, n'anavezan ket anezho, digarez. / No, I don't know them.
- 22 Anavezout a rez ma nizezed? / Do you know my nieces?
- 23 Ya, anavezout a ran anezho. / Yes, I know them.
- 24 Ne ran ket, n'anavezan ket anezho, digarez. / Sorry, I don't know them.
- 25 Plijout a ra dit? / Do you enjoy it?
- 26 Ya, plijout a ra din kalz. / Yes, I like it very much.
- 27 Ne blij ket an dra-se din tamm ebet. / I really don't like that.
- 28 Ket, faziet oc'h. / No you're wrong.
- 29 Ket, 'm eus aon. / No, I'm sorry.
- 30 N'eus ket anv! / No way!
- 31 Mat eo din ober an dra-se. / I agree to do it/this/that.

Nevezhañv zo! / It's spring!



Ar Men - A Rock Solid Magazine from Brittany

Presented by Lois Kuter

I am not a big spender, nor does my retiree status permit big spending, but I have a few indulgences which others might consider less interesting than eating out regularly at a fancy restaurant or going on shopping sprees. One is a subscription for home delivery of the Philadelphia Inquirer daily newspaper. The cost goes up and up, but I consider my subscription a contribution to keeping print media alive. Reading the newspaper has become a pleasant part of my morning routine, even if the news is often not pleasant at all.

A second indulgence is a subscription to *Ar Men* magazine, also quite costly especially for mailing it to the U.S. from Brittany. In the case of this magazine, the expression “you get what you pay for” is apt because this is a high quality publication. With the exception of seven missing issues (111, 165, 166, 167, 186, 190, 201) I have a complete collection of this 70-80 page magazine from No. 1 which came out in February 1986 to no. 158 of January-February 2024. In addition, there is an index of numbers 1 to 40 and a 140-page special issue from 1998. So far, *Ar Men* occupies nearly 5 feet of bookshelf space.

It is fitting to go back to the editorial of *Ar Men* No. 1 to see why this is a magazine that has had a unique role in providing a window on Brittany:

Editorial from *Ar Men* No. 1, February 1986

Brittany, we all think we know it well. But as soon as we seek to know more about a specific aspect, Breton material seems just what it is: prodigiously rich and still little explored. Certainly there exist numerous valuable publications, but it is difficult today to get a clear picture of the whole between very specialized periodicals and not so accessible university studies, not to mention publications for tourists. Lacking is a big magazine presented in an attractive and modern style, open and readable for all, serious, but without jargon, and especially a magazine that is alive.

Solidly anchored in our land and open to offshore winds, Ar Men is a resolutely modern publication in its form and operation, without concession to passing fads. A magazine of its times, it does not give in to a slightly vain pleasure of the musicality of words or general ideas. Ar Men, it's the priority given to people, facts, analysis, images. It's a magazine of reference rather more than caprice. It is made first of all for those who love Brittany.

No official organization behind this magazine, no press groups, but those with passion who are also rigorous professionals. The editors of Ar Men are associated with a seasoned team who five years ago founded a magazine concerned with quality and authenticity, Le Chasse-Marée. This enthusiastic project will have the same success.

The promises of this editorial have been well kept since the beginning of this bi-monthly magazine in 1986. The authors of articles and notes are experts in their fields – some university affiliated and many others not. The content is rich in detail, yet easy to read – even for someone like me whose mastery of French is far from perfect.

Ar Men is an attractive magazine – full of photography and drawings in its 70 to 80 pages. The layout is pleasant and easy to navigate on pages measuring 8 ½ by 10 ¾ inches. Each issue is bound like a paperback

book with sturdy covers of a heavier paper. Advertising is minimal.

Perhaps its strongest asset is the continued diversity of subjects addressed – history, archaeology, folklore, legends, music and dance, festivals, costume, art, architecture, nature and the environment, agriculture, business, industry, and maritime life of Brittany – often including an article about one of the other Celtic lands. Shorter reports of events in earlier issues have given way to more book, CD, film and exhibit reviews which offer a way to keep on top of the creative output of Brittany.

As promised in its first editorial *Ar Men* is a magazine of reference and the content seems to be timeless. While some articles reflect a particular period of time, most are as relevant and interesting today as when first written. The *Ar Men* website – armen.bzh – allows one to search for a particular topic, author or place to locate articles and issues in which they can be found. Access to the articles themselves requires a subscription (and this seems fair enough) but one can order particular issues if desired via the website.

I will keep up my subscription and enjoy rereading old issues for the knowledge and rich imagery they provide of people and places of Brittany – past and present.



Championship for Top Level Bagadoù – Round One

The following information was drawn in part from an article by Benoit Thibaut for France3-regions published on their website February 25, 2024 (<https://france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr/bretagne>)

Readers of Bro Nevez should already be familiar with the Breton bagad (pl. bagadoù), an ensemble made up of bagpipes, bombards and percussion. While modeled on the Scottish bagpipe bands, the bagad took off in the 1950s and developed a uniquely Breton sound, drawing on traditional Breton melodies and dances and developing complex and innovative suites which sometimes incorporated other instruments or singers. And in the international spirit of Bretons, influences from other world traditions and styles might also be incorporated.

The federation called Sonerion (formerly called Bodadeg ar Sonerion) was created in 1943 and officially founded in 1946. Today it oversees some 130 bagadoù organized into four levels. Championships for each level are hotly contested and the quality goes up each year. For level 1

there are two championship rounds – the first in February at the Le Quartz theater in Brest and the second in August during the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient.

The winners of the first championship round have been announced as follows, and as you will see from the points posted, the gap between the winner and runners-up is narrow. This February 25th it was the Bagad Cap Caval of Plomeur in the Bigouden country who came out on top.

- 1- Bagad Cap Caval (Ploemeur): 17.34
- 2- Bagad Kemper (Quimper): 17.08
- 3- Bagad Brieg (Briec): 16.72
- 4- Bagad Roñsed Mor (Locoal-Mendon): 16.38
- 5- Bagad Kevrenn Alré (Auray): 15.98
- 6- Bagad Kerlenn Pondi (Pontivy): 15.73
- 7- Bagad Soneiren Bro Dreger (Perros-Guirec): 14.99
- 8- Bagad Sonerien an Oriant (Lorient): 14.74
- 9- Bagad Saozon-Sevigneg (Cesson-Sevigné): 14.72
- 10- Bagad Ar Meilhoù Glaz (Quimper): 14.60
- 11- Bagad Pañvrid ar Beskont (Pommerit-le-Vicomte): 14.48
- 12- Bagad Melinerion (Vannes): 14.29
- 13- Kevrenn Brest Sant Mark (Brest): 12.87
- 14- Bagad Bro Konk Kerne (Concarneau): 12.77
- 15- Bagad Boulvriag (Bourbriac): 11.----96

It seemed interesting to provide a brief description of each bagad and their creations to this leg of the competition. The bagadoù were asked to draw their suite arrangements from a specific area of Brittany – for this year the Trégor-Fañch-Plinn traditions. The following is my translation of the presentations by Benoit Thibaud for France3-regions.

Bagad Cap Caval (Ploermeur)

The Bagad Cap Caval, title champion, presented a suite from Saint-Michel en Grève called "Vers la lieue de Grève". This celebrates their 40th anniversary. Since 2008 the Bigouden sonneurs have won nine championships for bagadoù.

Bagad Kemper (Quimper)

The Bagad Kemper of Quimper is as well known for its numerous artistic collaborations and musical creations as for its many championship titles. Drawing its music from the Breton tradition it has been the champ twenty-three times. The group continues to build its story with a new creation, "Kenson – Concerto pour bagad." For this performance the Bagad Kemper was inspired by the famous song Kan a boz.

Bagad Brieg (Briec)

The Bagad Brieg was champion of Brittany in 2007. In this concert the bagad recounts the lamentations of a young man in mourning. An account in the style of the gwerz repertoire of Lower Brittany sung in the Trégor.

Bagad Roñsed-Mor (Locoal Mendon)

Created in 1969 by Alan Le Buhé, the Bagad Roñsed-Mor of Local Mendon moved into the level 1 category in 1981. It won the championship of Brittany title four times – in 1990, 1993, 1999 and 2003. It presents its new suite, freely inspired from the recent tradition of sonneurs of the Pays Fañch, with an exploration of the dañs tro plinn.

Bagad Kevrenn Alré (Auray)

The Bagad Kevrenn Alré is one of the oldest ensembles. It has eight championship titles for bagadoù. For this presentation the Kevrenn Alré pays homage to the 73rd infantry regiment of Guingamp which suffered heavy losses on April 22, 1915. In order to build back the morale of its soldiers the lieutenant colonel de Tonquedec added a paired biniou-bombard to the regiment's band – the photo of which became a symbol of the Breton presence on the war's front. The "clique des biniou" in 1917 formed the first bagad to exist. In order to pay homage to these soldier-sonneurs the Kevrenn Alré presents its 2024 creation "Dans les champs de Flandres."

Bagad Kerlenn Pondi (Pontivy)

Kerlenn Pindi, the bagad of Pontivy, presents "Lusk an erv," the plough furrow's rhythm. A look at what could be the evolution of a territory and area through the repertoire of the Plinn pays.

Bagad Sonerien Bro Dreger (Perros-Guirec)

The Bagad Sonerien Bro Dreger was born in the pink granite of Perros-Guirec in 1983. The association fostered the training of future musicians thanks to volunteers and professional teachers. The Bagad Sonerien Bro Dreger proposes in this suite a dive into one of the famous veillées of Trégor initiated by Roger Laouenan and Maria Prat. For this Beilhadeg Bro Dreger we find ourselves on the evening of March 26, 1960, in the Salle de Fêtes of Louannec. Little by little people fill the room to overflowing – it's a success.

Bagad Sonerien an Oriant (Lorient)

The bagad of Lorient has cultivated a music of traditional inspiration for forty years in the image of their city whose history is made from exploders and mariners. The sonneurs expand their repertoire with mixes and more contemporary influences. In 2017 the bagad performed in New York during an inter-Celtic evening in Manhattan. In September the bagad will carry the colors of Brittany to Shanghai. The suite proposed puts an accent on the repertoire of singers of central Brittany in a lovely trip through the hills of Pays Fañch.

Bagad Saozon-Sevigneg (Cesson-Sévigné)

The bagad Saozon-Sevigneg of Cesson-Sévigné is an ensemble including a bagad, bagadig [for younger players] and a training school. Anchored in the Rennes Pays, the Bagad Saozon-Sevigneg participated in the creation "No Land" by composer Olivier Mellano in

collaboration with singer Brendan Perry of Dead Can Dance. The bagad has launched into an exploration of funk, jazz and hip-hop with its projects "Straed." Today the bagad Cesson presents Skolvan, a suite of airs of Pays Fañch.

Bagad Ar Meilhoù Glaz (Quimper)

The Moulin Vert [green mill] is one of the neighborhoods of Quimper. In June 1951 Jos Cadiou, Léon Goraguer and Pierre Pulvé thought of a bagad for children as part of that neighborhood's school. The bagad quickly gained a reputation. In 1982 the bagad transformed and participated in the national championship. In 1995 it arrived at the elite level. The Bagad Meilhoù Glaz presents a suite inviting one to walk on the sunken pathways guided by the repertoire of Anne Auffret, guardian of the "Plinn soul." This suite is named "Tronjoly."

Bagad Pañvrid ar Beskont (Pommerit-le-Vicomte)

The Bagad Pañvrid ar Beskont is happy to make its great return to the first level. With a repertoire drawn entirely from the great sonneur of Trégor Daniel Le Féon, the Bagad Pañvrid presents its new suite titled "Ar Plac'h Ifernient."

Bagad Melinerion (Vannes)

The bagad of Vannes has the heavy duty of opening the championship. This bagad which performed in 2017 at the Olympia [theater in Paris] is known for its musical talents and its vest of a smoky blue color. The musicians make it a point of honor to honor Breton music. The sonneurs present a suite called "On dansait toute la nuit."

Kevrenn Brest Sant Mark (Brest)

In 1947 the Ocean Liberty, a cargo ship loaded with chemical products, exploded in the port of Brest killing twenty-six and leaving hundreds of wounded. Yann Camus and Pierre Jestin assembled some musicians and set off on a tour to raise funds for the victims. The Kevrenn Brest Sant Mark was born. For this edition, the bagad presents Konskried Ploilio, a march of the Trégor sonneur Jean-Pierre Le Cornoux. The Kevrenn links together three airs for the dañs plinn.

Bagad Konk-Kerne (Concarneau)

The Bagad Konk-Kerne of Concarneau today explores the pays of Trégor and Fañch through the prism of photographs by Mme Yvonne Kerdudo who discovered photography in the studios of the Lumière brothers. Returning from "Vieux Marché" she traveled by bicycle to photograph the countryside and those who worked on it. The sound of the dance and of work is present in this suite "Ar Vapeur."

Bagad Boulvriag (Bourbriac)

The Bagad Boulvriag of Bourbriac, situated 10 kilometers from Guingamp was created in 1953 by Etienne Rivoallan and Geroge Cadoudal. Since 2019 the

bagad has competed in the level 1 category. The Bagad Boulvriag presents a linking of airs from the Pays Plinn based on two themes of Madame Marie-Joseph Bertrand of Canihuel – "Ar Verjelenn," the shepherdess, and "Ar Gomer," the gossip. These themes become a leitmotif which allows the establishment of a link between airs for marches, melodies and dance.

Explore more about the bagadoù of Brittany and competitions on the Sonerion website: sonerion.bzh, and listen to performances on sonotek.sonerion.bzh. (although this latest contest is not yet available).

Heard of but not heard - 14 new CDs from Brittany

Information for these notes has been drawn from *Ar Men* 258 (Jan.-Feb 2024), *Musique Bretonne* 277 (Oct.-Nov.-Dec. 2024), the Coop Breizh website, notes and links from Agence Bretagne Presse, as well as sites for some of the performers.



Bagad de Vannes Melinerion. *Livioù*.

For their 70th anniversary the Bagad de Vannes Melinerion has put out a new recording which captures well the

innovative style of the Breton bagad – an ensemble of bagpipes, bombardes and percussion with much added. This CD includes six suites of music – from 4 to nearly 13 minutes each with compositions and arrangements of traditional Breton dances and melodies.



Fred Boudineau and Joseph Kerdellant. *Pau e Cordas*.

This is a duo composed of longtime-resident of the Monts d'Arrée and guitarist Fred Boudineau and flute player Joseph Kerdellant from Morlaix. They present ten of their compositions inspired by music of Latin America.



Breizh Disorder. *Vol. 12*

This is a compilation from the punk-rock festival of Breton groups which is celebrating its 25th year. This is the 12th compilation from the festival and it includes 27 performances.



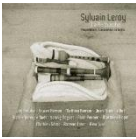
Digresk. *Rekap*. Aztec Musique CM 2921

Created fifteen years ago, Digresk draws on Breton traditions and incorporates styles such as electro-pop, rock, rap, metal, and funk, performing both in concert at for festoù-noz. With a strong rhythm provided by a bass drum and electric guitar, instruments also include accordion, bombarde and bagpipes which add a traditional touch to the sound and dances. Voice samples are provided by Kevin "MC Zegoc" and the songs touch on ecological and social issues. This CD includes 16 selections of the past fifteen years of performance recorded live for this CD.



Matthieu Jubin. *En Pays Breton*. HDLG

This new album features 20 solo piano performances by Matthieu Jubin drawn from classical works by early 20th century Breton composers. These include Guy Ropartz, Paul Le Flem, Rhené Bâton, Louis Vuillemin, Paul Ladmirault, Jean Cras, Louis Aubert, Jean Langlais, Charles-Augustin Collin. One can find an excellent article by Gérard Simon about these composers and Matthieu Jubin on the Culture & Celtie site published February 23, 2024 (<http://culture.celtie.free.fr>)



Sylvain Leroy. *La Recherche – propositions d'un sonneur de biniau*.

This CD is an exploration of the many ways a biniau might be played, from traditional pairing with the bombarde to engagement with jazz/rock groups or fest noz bands. The CD includes 17 selections with several solos by Leroy as well as his collaboration with a range of musicians and singers. Included are Matthieu Riopel, Mathieu Hamon, Mathieu Sérot, Rozenn Talec, Erwan Hamon, Jean-Yves Le Bot, Jorj Botuha, Alex Tual, Alain Pennec, Alain Naël, Yannig Noguét and Hotel No. 3.



Rozenn Le Trionnaire and Jérémy Simon. *Skeud/Reflet*.

This is a duo created in 2021 with clarinetist Rozenn Le Trionnaire and accordion player Jérémy Sion (who plays several varieties of accordion). They combine the styles of classical, jazz and traditional Breton music.



Marchand-Menneteau-Lange. *Hiri*. Musiques Têtues 5286117

This CD features kan ha diskan style of singing for the dances fisel and plinn of central western Brittany. Master of traditional Breton language song, Erik Marchand, is joined here by two younger singers, Erik Mennetau and Youenn Lange, who had been mentored by Yann Fañch Kemener, another master who passed away too young in March 2019. With one selection in trio, the three pair off in different combinations and provide melodies as well as dance suites. Those who love the unaccompanied Breton language song tradition of central western Brittany will welcome this recording which includes some well known and some very little known songs.



Janick Martin Trio. *Sôg song*.

Accordion player Janick Martin has teamed up with a number of Breton musicians for arrangements of traditional Breton melodies and dances. Here he brings a jazzy flavor to 9 selections (6 of his own compositions as well as arrangements drawn from Breton and Kurdish traditions). He is joined by Julien Tual on electric guitar and Simon Latouche on trombone with guest artist Robin Fincker on tenor saxophone.



Moger Orchestra. *There must be a passage*. Musiques Têtues CMT 131723

This is a group of nine musicians from central Brittany with a mix of string and wind instruments. This is described as a sound between electric pop and jazz with lots of improvisation. Original texts (in English) by Griselda Drouet and Dylan James. Musicians include Dylan James (vocals and bass), Etienne Cabaret (bass clarinet), Pauline Willerval and Léonore Grollemund (cello), Christelle Séry (electric guitar and vocals), Nicolas Pointard (drums), Floriane Le Pottier (violin) Sakina Abdou (alto sax, bass recorder, vocals), and Régis Brunel (baritone sax).



Red Cadell. *Bordel*. Arfolk 1209.

With 32 years of performances this is the 11th album from Red Cadell, not including others on which they can also be found. This band is well known in Brittany and Europe and is described as an eclectic mix of styles including roots in traditional Breton music, rock, blues, folk and punk, with influences from the Latin, Slavic and Berber traditions. This CD includes a number of autobiographical songs composed by Jean-Pierre Riou who provides lead vocals as well as guitar, mandolin, banjo, flute, bombard and harmonica. Others in the current group are Pierre Sangra (guitars, violin, saz, banjo, mandolin), Fred Lucas (bass guitars, keyboard, organ and electronic programming), and Hibu Corbel (drums, percussion, electronic programming).



Terry Riley / Erwan Keravec. *In C//20 sonneurs*. Offshore Buda Musique 860391.

Erwan Keravec is known for his innovative use of bagpipes. Here he adapts American minimalist composer Terry Riley's composition "In C" normally performed by a classical orchestra for a performance by 20 musicians with bombard, bagpipes, binious and veuze. Those who love bagpipes and bombarde will find this a fascinating and very unusual dive into contemporary sound.



SkeeQ. *Mascaret*. La Compagnie des Possibles.

This is a trio composed of three seasoned Breton musicians: Floriane Le Pottier on violin, Mael Lhopiteau on Celtic harp, and Tristan Le Breton on guitar. They present 11 compositions inspired by the melodies and dances of Scandinavia. They are joined by a number of guest artists for some of the selections: Josefina Paulson (nyckelharpa), Tim Le Net (accordion), Dylan James (bass fiddle and electric bass), Coline Genet (violin), Clément Lemennicier (bugle), Martin Chapron (bouzouki) and Maxime Le Breton (piano).



Thalie. Topaze. CD Talieco.com
Singer and actress Nathalie Presles – alias Thalie – presents her own song compositions on the sea, landscapes, love and life of Brittany. She is accompanied by François Verguet on guitar, as well as Soïg Siberil on guitar and Mathilde Chevrel on cello.

And a New Book



Denez Prigent. Gwerz Denez. Éditions Ouest-France. 812 pages.
Today going by the single name Denez for recordings and concerts, this singer is known for his mastery of the traditional Breton language gwerz – a ballad evoking dramatic and historical events. He is also known for setting Breton song texts to electronic mixes. This book presents Denez Prigent as a poet with 136 gwerziou he composed in Breton with a French translation provided.



Brittany at the Celtic Bayou Festival

The Celtic Bayou Festival was begun in 2016 and this year took place March 15-17 in Lafayette, Louisiana. For the first time, Brittany will be well represented at the festival thanks to the work of Breizh Amerika. Irish fiddler Gerry O'Connor (no stranger to Brittany) headlines the music offerings with a range of talent from the U.S. as well.

Festival-goers had the opportunity to hear Breton musicians Pierre-Jacques Autret and Tanguy Soubigou, and participate in a Breton dance workshop. Breizh Amerika had a stand to present Breton products and a stand for crepes. And there were also workshops about Brittany throughout the festival schedule.

Whiskey tasting has been a part of this festival (as well as a Guinness Cook Off and Baileys Bake Off) and this year Brittany was represented in the whiskey tasting by the distillery La Mine d'Or of Morbihan.

This is not the first time Breton musicians have performed in Louisiana thanks to the Breizh Amerika Collective which brings Breton musicians together with those of the U.S. and France. In 2016 and 2017 the Collective had concerts in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Arnaudville and Scott, Louisiana (and toured other cities as well in the U.S.). The Festival de Bretagne

organized in 2017 included the Breton musicians of the Collective then: Simon Creachcadec, Tanguy Soubigou and Thomas Moisson.

The Festival International de Louisiane has also hosted Breton performers – in 2019 the Bagad Plougastell was a sensation.

The Presence of Brittany at American “Celtic Festivals”

Bravo to Breizh Amerika for bringing Breton musicians to the U.S. for concerts and collaborations with American musicians of various musical heritages. While Breton musicians have toured in the U.S. in the past (Dan ar Braz, Alan Stivell, Kornog ...) their presence has been rare and audiences thin, since most Americans have never heard of Brittany, or confuse it with Britain or know of it only as a trendy women's name.

What are called “Celtic festivals” in the U.S. rarely venture beyond Ireland and Scotland. It is rare that even Wales – a better known part of the five Celtic speaking nations for Americans – is present.

There has been an exception with the Potomac Celtic Festival (Oatlands Celtic Festival from 1994-1997) which has from its beginning in 1994 included representation each year of at least all six Celtic speaking nations – Ireland, Scotland, Wales, Isle of Man, Cornwall and Brittany. Since the mid-1990s Asturias and Galician musicians and dancers were regularly present.

Brittany has certainly not been absent at this two-day festival held in June in Leesburg, Virginia. The U.S. ICDBL was part of it from the beginning in 1994 to the end in 2009 with an information stand growing from a single card table to several tents and displays about the Breton language and culture.



This was thanks to Susan Baker, an active presence in the organization of the festival, and Philippe Berthier, who carried the flag of Brittany in opening ceremonies and helped man the ICDBL stand. Although active in representing the Welsh language and music, another U.S. ICDBL member, Cheryl Baker (also in the photo), was also a regular part of the festival and supported the presence of Brittany. More on other U.S. ICDBL members later ...

Besides the information stand, U.S. ICDBL members did some workshops in 1995, 2000 and 2001 on the Breton language and Breton music. And we provided several articles about Breton language and culture in the

festival's program book, an important way to reach hundreds of festival-goers.



As for music, 2002 was a banner year for Brittany with the presence of Alan Stivell and the Bagad Lann Bihoue. A regular presence from Brittany was Nolwenn

Monjarret performing Breton song (1996-2000, 2002) presenting workshops on Breton song (1996, 1997) and song and dance (1998). She contributed an article on Breton music in the 1997 program book of the festival.

Also representing Brittany was the musical group Tornoad, a mix of Breton and American musicians whose more "electric" music was a bit of a shock for the acoustical festival. They performed in 2002 and 2003. You also had a group from Cornwall, Anao Atao in 1996 whose Cornish and Breton musicians performed music from both countries.

American musicians – most of them members of the U.S. ICDBL – also included Breton music in their repertoires at the festival and performances elsewhere. John Trexler and changing partners and names for his performance was at the festival from 1995 through 2002 and introduced audiences to the bombard, biniou, and hurdy gurdy with commentary on the Breton heritage of these instruments.

Moch Pryderi, whose repertoire included music of Wales Cornwall and Brittany, performed from 2001 through 2006. The group Iona whose members were active in organizing the Potomac Festival performed at nearly every festival, including Breton music in their presentations. Beyond the festival they introduced Brittany to numerous audiences in the Washington D.C. area through concerts and recordings.

Last but not least, festival-goers were able to learn Breton dances thanks to workshops first by Nolwenn Monjarret (1998) who would cheerfully launch us into a plinn despite sweltering June heat. Workshops were then offered by Jan Zollars from 1999 to 2006. Besides being a long-time U.S. ICDBL member, Jan has served as an American liaison with the Inter Celtic Festival of Lorient.

By 2008 with some scaling back in programming and a less colorful and meaty program book, it was clear that this festival was nearing an end. 2009 was the last of this truly Celtic festival of the U.S., one which was created and implemented by volunteers, and which fostered an appreciation and knowledge of Breton language, music, and dance.

The Department of Finistère – A Source of Information from 30 Years Ago

In 1993 and 1994 (30 years ago) I received as gifts from the Conseil Général du Finistère (General Council of Finistère) yearly day-planners. These were elegant 180-page hardback books which included lots of tidbits of information about Breton history, places, and people, as well as practical information about the work of the departmental council, including photos and contact information for the 50-some members of the council.

Each week of the year was spread over two pages beginning with Monday and ending with Sunday with days of the month numbered and different colors for each month. Each day had 21 lines for hours 8 am through 9 pm (21 in European countries). Names of the days of the week and months were trilingual in French, Breton and English. On the side of each week was a column with an entry on some subject related to Finistère – famous people, authors, musicians, historic sites, legends, flora and fauna, etc.

Before getting to the weekly entries you were treated to some 45 colorfully illustrated pages of information on people, history, sites, economy, festivals and events and a useful chart of postal codes for the towns of Finistère.

Following the weekly entry pages there was yet more information which might include several pages of Breton language lessons such as phrases or vocabulary. Also to be found was a calendar of saint days as well as information about the General Council and its members.

While some information in these day books has become outdated since the mid-1990s, much of the very short profiles of people, places and history are still of interest. I have chosen a few to include below in this issue of *Bro Nevez*.

Before those tidbits of information, it is worth introducing the department of Finistère. The map below is drawn from the website geobreizh.bzh, one of the few places where you can find maps of Brittany which include all five departments. A Google search of maps of Brittany invariably include only the four departments of the Region of Brittany. As Bretons in the department of Loire-Atlantique (and elsewhere in Brittany) continue to demand the reintegration of that area into Brittany, it is important to present "Brittany" as a historically and culturally intact area.

In case it needs pointing out, Finistère is the department in orange to the west (left) on the map which follows.



The 1994 day planner from the General Council cites the population of Finistère as 838,687 (from the 1990 census). Statistics from the 2021 census show a population of 921,638. Brest is the largest city with 139,926 (2019 numbers) and Quimper second largest with 63,283. Finistère is 7,733 square kilometers in size (2,600 square miles). This is roughly equivalent to our state of Delaware (2,489 square miles). Delaware's population is 1,032,000 (2019).

Brittany's population (all five departments) is roughly 4.7 million, akin to that of Louisiana with 4.6 million. Brittany's area is approximately 15,790 square miles, a little short of the area of the states of Maryland and Delaware combined.

From an American perspective, Finistère and Brittany as a whole may seem small in size, but hopefully *Bro Nevez* has shown that it is very rich in history and culture.

Here are few entries from the Finistère General Council's 1993 daybook to illustrate some of the interesting people and places of that department – my translations from the French and images drawn from the daybook.



Victor Segalen, 1878-1919

A student at the high school of Brest, then maritime doctor, Victor Segalen discovered Tahiti, then China and Tibet. His travels to foreign lands inspired his work with both geographical knowledge and inner travel: *Les Immémoriaux*,

Stèles, Peintures, Équipée. "It would take more than a half-century for his light to reach us. When in 1919 one found him dead at the base of a tree in the forest of Huelgoat, no one in Brittany other than Saint-Pol-Roux knew who he was." (C. Le Quintrec, *Les grandes heures littéraires de la Bretagne*).

The Narcisse des Glénan – A Treasure of the Isles



The isle of Saint-Nicolas in the Glénan archipelago shelters the smallest nature preserve of France. One finds there the Narcisse (narcissus) des Glénan, a unique variety of the world discovered in 1903. Picking it is forbidden.



The Aviator Le Bris – The Pioneer of Douarnenez

In 1856 on the beach of Ste Anne Jean-Marie Le Bris flew with a glider pulled by a horse. A monument placed at the point of Tréfeuntec is dedicated to this pioneer of aviation.



Yeun Ellez – The Doors to Hell

The communes of Brasparts, Botmeur and Brennilis are placed around the marshy basin of Yeun Ellez. We are at the gates of Hell. The bogs, covered in part now by an artificial lake, have been considered for centuries as the open gates to the Other World, that of the damned and wandering souls. Here the valet of Death is everpresent.



800 Megaliths – The Bigouden Carnac



The megalithic alignments of Lestriguiou-La Madeleine, bordering Plomeur and Penmarc'h, numbered 800 menhirs. The centuries of modernization have done their work: under religious pretexts or in plans for redevelopment of rural spaces these witnesses to our prehistory have been erased from the map. Today some fifty remain. To be visited: the archeological museum of St. Guénolé.



Poullaouen – The Country of Miners

The beds of silver-bearing lead of Poullaouen and Huelgoat were regularly mined from the beginning of the 18th century. Poullaouen, which had the most important mine shafts of the region had up to 5,000 inhabitants. [today the population is some 1,300]. The mining installations were closed in 1919.

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