

# COMANN

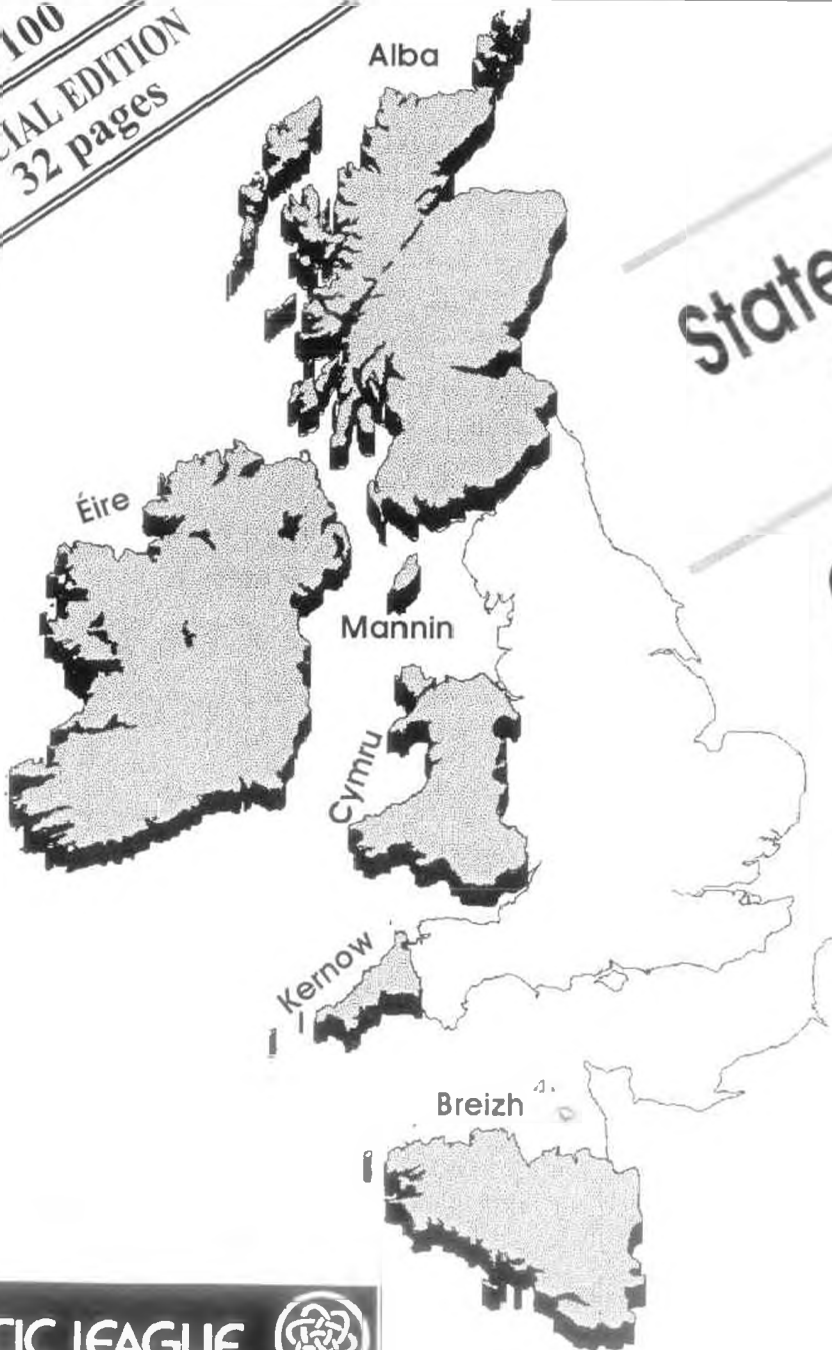
A LINK BETWEEN THE CELTIC NATIONS

Winter 1997/98  
£2.00

No. 100  
SPECIAL EDITION  
32 pages

State of Nation  
Reviews

Celtic Poetry  
supplement



CELTIC LEAGUE



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Rob Gibson

## ***The movement to Scottish self-government***

In the summer of 1977 hopes of a breakthrough to devolved government for Scotland seemed certain. The emasculated Scotland Act was passed in August 1978 and in the mandatory referendum on St David's Day, 1979 Scots voted narrowly in favour (51.6% to 48.4%), but due to the wrecking 40% rule the Yes vote lost as only 32.9% of Scots had voted Yes.

In the recent book of key Scots historic documents Paul H. Scott the most prolific propagandist for the values of an independent, culturally confident Scotland took John Steinbeck's quote from his letter to Mrs John F Kennedy for his title piece. He wrote - 'You talked of Scotland as a lost cause and that is not true. Scotland is an unwon cause.' To those who fought on when hope seemed dashed, the 74% and 63% *Yes Yes* votes on 11th September 1997 ended twenty years of despair and opened a new era in Scottish public life.

Two significant groups of Scots who dragged the nation back from the deep depression of the Thatcher decade deserve every praise. In all 18 years of British Tory rule, which the Scots rejected from the first taught lessons that the divisions in the ruling Labour party in 1979 were fatal. Keeping the light shining took various forms. Those choosing a devolution settlement of limited autonomy set up a Campaign for a Scottish Assembly and subsequently in 1989 a fourth historic Claim of Right was signed by Labour and Liberal MPs representatives of the Scottish Trade Unions, STUC, the Scottish churches and civic bodies.

The reason for Labour's inclusion and the SNP's abstention was the stunning 33% swing by Jim Sillars to win the Govan constituency in a by-election in November 1988.

Whilst castigated for separatist behaviour the SNP kept the pressure on Labour to promote and deliver what they had failed to in 1979. However the centralisation of Tory rule, which included the imposition on Scotland of the hated and short lived Poll

Tax and Thatcher's demise, kept another focus on driving the Tories from Scotland. This became an obsession through the botched 1992 General Election. Labour had failed four times to dislodge the Tories. Neil Kinnock resigned as their leader and Scot, John Smith continued the internal work to make Labour electable to an increasingly consumerist SE English electorate.

He had embraced devolution in the

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1970s, along with pro-European Community views. He considered Scottish Home Rule to be unfinished business and as the settled will of the Scottish people. His sudden death in 1994 led to the elevation of Tony Blair whose ruthless surge for electability dropped most of what Labour cherished of its socialist past. The catharsis was a purge of old hands, dropping Clause IV the socialist policy aim and suddenly imposing on Scotland in a policy switch in the summer of 1996 a new two question referendum to test Scottish will not just for a parliament but whether it should have tax varying powers. Deep suspicions were raised as the crucial General Election loomed on 1st May 1997.

A fundamentalist strand in the SNP represented by the *independence nothing else* concept moved from being the province of anti EU, pro Scottish

sovereignty campaigners to the Sillars faction of the SNP who bounced the party into fighting the 1992 election under a *free by '93* unofficial slogan. In the event Sillars himself lost his Govan seat and retired to the edges of politics as a Scottish Sun columnist and business contact with the Arab world. Whereas inside the SNP and Scottish life the benefits of the EU were brought home with a growing use of Independence within Europe to build to a 33% vote in the European Parliament Elections of 1994 which saw SNP gain a seat in NE Scotland. This gave Labour -six and SNP two. From a Tory majority of Euro seats in 1979 they now had none. This focus had boosted the democracy movement since it had attracted over 40,000 demonstrators onto Edinburgh streets when the EU heads of state held their summit in December 1992. The media blackout on the size of the demo stemmed from a view that devolution was dead.

Nevertheless the stunning victory for Blair's New Labour on May 1st 1997 at last removed the last 10 Tory MPs from Scotland and produced the biggest peacetime victory for any one party since 1832. Having voted overwhelmingly for change Scots gave a 23% vote, a virtual standstill in 1992 terms, to SNP which doubled its MPs to 6 putting the party now the clear second choice in Scotland for five years. [The full details are described in *Carn 98*]

In UK terms the 41% Labour vote benefited from the first-past-the-post voting system to distort its representation. So fair voting systems became the watchword for the proposed Scottish parliament. Indeed the new Foreign Secretary, Scot, Rob Cook, a former No man in 1979 and now an ardent Yes advocate gained cabinet agreement that the next European Election poll in 1999 should be fought under a fair voting system. This in turn led the opposition Liberals, with the second biggest number of Scottish MPs, to join with the SNP in calling for fair voting in local council elections when Labour's *Yes Yes* referendum campaign hit early difficulties in August due to the suicide of

the MP for Paisley South, Gordon MacMaster, and the subsequent charges of sleaze amongst local councillors and a neighbouring Labour MP.

Fortunately a huge reaction built up against Bruce Pattullo, the Governor of the private Bank of Scotland, in the middle of the campaign. He demanded a No vote against tax varying powers but polls showed little change in overall support despite a high don't know, won't say block. In the event the cross party campaign led by Labour's new Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar, along with Scottish Liberal leader, Jim Wallace and SNP leader, Alex Salmond, hit the ground in the last week of campaigning after the enforced suspension of the previous week between Princess Diana's death and burial.

The stunning *Yes Yes* result on a 60% poll, the same level of voting as in 1979 nevertheless met the government condition. Dewar's White Paper, Scotland's Parliament [2] had been a best seller and without fuss a united Scottish public delivered their positive verdict. Blair was vindicated, his Secretary Donald Dewar, delighted that the Scots could look forward to the millennium; Alex Salmond for the SNP kept independence in the frame, 'making a success of running some of our affairs is the best grounding for people wanting to run ALL our affairs,' he said. Trade union leaders, church leaders,



doctors and tourist chiefs were joined by business representatives who welcomed and accepted the result and the challenge.

So after 300 years a democratic Scots parliament is on the way. The battles for Scotland's future now recognise devolution as the status quo. A fortnight later on 26th September Salmond in his SNP Conference Speech called on Donald Dewar to locate the new parliament in the heart of Edinburgh and to formally consult the people's view, and accept the people's will, for the people's parliament. A new, hopeful, focus for Scottish life, culture, environment and development was proclaimed in the campaign posters in Gaelic, Scots and English. Tha! Tha!, Aye! Aye!, Yes! Yes! - it is an exciting 0time to be alive in Scotland.

Rob Gibson



*Alex Salmond on the campaign trail*

# A' Ghàidhlig

fàilte

## Fichead Bliadhna a' Fàs

The twenty years since Carn's last detailed account of the position of Gaelic has been a very contrary period for the language. On one hand the 80s and 90s have witnessed an increasing interest in Gaelic and the development of an infrastructure for the language in such fields as broadcasting and education. These decades have, however, also seen a decline in the number of Gaelic speakers and signs of the final collapse of the language in its heartland.

The 1980s were a decade when the Gaelic revival could be said to have reached a critical mass, building upon the hard work of the previous decades. Realisation by Gaels of the fact that the language was dying on its feet combined with more concerted lobbying on the part of the Gaelic community was instrumental at this time in leading to increased government support for the language in such areas as the arts, education and broadcasting. The report "Cor na Gàidhlig - Language Community and Development" (1982), funded by the Highlands and Islands Development Board was a key factor in leading to a more sympathetic government view of the language. A significant change ushered in following this report was the formation of Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG), the national Gaelic development agency, a move which saw CnaG taking over from An Comunn Gàidhealach as the main Gaelic lobbying

group. The 1990s have witnessed a continuation and acceleration in demand for and provision of infrastructure for the language. They have also been a period in which the profile of the language has risen and in which the debate is increasingly moving towards issues of community development and the status of the language.

One of the most encouraging developments of the last two decades has been the expansion of Gaelic medium education at all levels. The Gaelic pre-school council Comhairle nan Sgoiltean Araich (CNSA) was founded in 1982 and has overseen the growth of Gaelic medium pre-school education. Since its inception, CNSA has established over 140 Gaelic pre-school groups which in 1996 had an attendance of 2,510. Progress in the primary schools has been no less marked. Following initiatives for bilingual education in Skye and the Western Isles in the late 1970s, the 1980s saw the

development of Gaelic medium primary education. The first Gaelic medium primary units were opened in Glasgow and Inverness in 1985 and by the 1995-96 session there were 51 units offering all or part of the curriculum through Gaelic, many being situated outwith the Highlands. By 1995-6 the number of pupils being educated through Gaelic had risen to 1,461. The development of Gaelic medium secondary education, despite some stumbling blocks, has also been progressing and by 1996, around 130 children were being taught some subjects through the medium of Gaelic.

The revolution in Gaelic education has also progressed into further and higher education. From 1983 onwards, Gaelic has been used as a medium for further education courses in areas such as business studies, rural development and broadcasting at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig the Gaelic medium college on Skye. From a handful of students at the beginning, Sabhal Mòr has expanded greatly and hopes to have 162 students by 1999. As a constituent college of the projected University of the Highlands and Islands, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig intends to introduce degree level Gaelic medium courses by the turn of the century. Lewis Castle College in Lewis also teaches some courses through the medium of Gaelic. A very welcome addition to the Gaelic education scene in the late 1990s has been the establishment of much needed Gaelic immersion courses which have been developed in areas such as Clydebank, Edinburgh, Inverness and Fort William and which seem set to expand in numbers in the near future.

The growth of immersion courses reflects the growing number of people throughout Scotland interested in learning Gaelic. The society for learners and supporters of Gaelic - Comann an Luchd-Ionnsachaidh - was founded in 1984 and has recently recruited its 1,000th member. Research by Dr. John Galloway has suggested that there are up to 8,000 Scots actively learning Gaelic and a poll for BBC Scotland has gone further, stating that over a million people are interested in learning the language. While both of these figures are too high to be an indicator of the number of people who will actually learn the language, they do serve to show the large amount of goodwill existing towards Gaelic in Scotland.

In addition to Gaelic education, the other great success of recent times has been the expansion of Gaelic broadcasting. Radio nan Gaidheal the Gaelic radio station was established in 1985 and by the late 80s was broadcasting for around 28 hours per week. The amount has since increased to around 40 hours per week and in 1996 a national Radio nan Gaidheal service serving the majority, though not all, of the Scottish

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population was inaugurated. While the high quality radio service has played a key role in the Gaelic revival, being highly popular amongst Gaelic speakers and learners however, it is through television that the language has made its greatest impact on the population of Scotland as a whole. In 1990 the Broadcasting Act established the £9.5 million pound Gaelic Television Fund, administered by Comataidh Telebhisean Gaidhlig which was to increase Gaelic T.V output from 100 hours to 300 hours per year.

The Gaelic arts have also been a key component of the Gaelic revival. Fèis Bharraigh, the first Gaelic community festival was held in Barra in 1981 and became the model for the Fèisean nan Gaidheal movement which today is responsible for 26 feisean in a variety of different locations. While the National Mod continues to be a central event in the Gaelic calendar, it has now also been joined by an increasing number of local Mods. The Gaelic arts have also been aided by the formation of Proiseact nan Ealain, the national Gaelic arts project. The national Gaelic theatre company Tosg has also recently been established, based at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, where it is joined by a new HNC certificate in the Gaelic Arts. In the period in question, Gaelic music has continued to gain converts to the language, particularly through Runrig and Capercaillie.

Despite all the aforementioned advances however, the position of Gaelic remains more precarious than ever. This can be seen most clearly from the 1991 census in which the total number of Gaelic speakers fell from around 80,000 to around 66,000. In addition to this overall picture, the most worrying figures came from the Gaelic heartland of the Western Isles. According to the census, only 49% of the children between 3 and 15 in the Western Isles were able to speak Gaelic as compared with 67% in 1981. In addition to this, only around a quarter of children in the Western Isles attend Gaelic medium schools. Studies by Kenneth MacKinnon have also shown that

only one Gaelic speaker in three lives in an area where Gaelic is the majority language and that even in families where both parents speak Gaelic (this being only about 1/3 of all families containing a Gaelic speaker) only 72% of the children were Gaelic speakers.

There are still positive signs for the future, however. Perhaps the most important of these has been the upsurge in cultural and political nationalism in Scotland which helped ensure that the 1997 referendum had a very different result from that of its 1979 predecessor. A component of this, aided by the growing visibility of Gaelic through areas such as music and television, has been that Gaelic is increasingly coming to be seen as a language which is important to the whole of Scotland - as a national language rather than as a peripheral, regional one. Public goodwill to the language has been steadily increasing and anti-Gaelic views, once common, are being heard less and less often.

1997 has been a year of great hope for Gaelic containing as it has the election of a new government and the appointment of the first ever Minister for Gaelic in the form of the strongly pro-Gaelic Brian Wilson. Even more significant has been the resounding double yes vote for a Scottish Parliament which will bring control of Gaelic policy back to the Scottish people and which will certainly contain a larger proportion of nationalist MPs.

Following the single largest change to Scotland's constitution since 1707, Comunn na Gaidhlig (CnaG) hope to see the second largest in the form of national official status for Gaelic by the year 2000.



**COMUNN NA GÀIDHLIG**

Going hand in hand with official status is CnaG's proposal for a national policy for Gaelic education which would inject more security into Gaelic medium provision and help to afford it some protection from the parochialism and short-termism of local authorities.

Having tackled some of the more pressing infrastructural issues in the course of the 1980s and 90s, the Gaelic movement is now beginning to tackle broader issues as to the language's future. Education and broadcasting are simply not enough to save a language and discussion is now shifting more and more towards ways of creating

and strengthening Gaelic as a home and community language. Coimhearsneachd Ghàidhlig Dhùn Èideann has been founded in Edinburgh as a pilot Gaelic community group which can help to bind the disparate urban Gaelic population together. Another significant move has been the development of Taighean na Gàidhlig - Gaelic houses - which act as community centres for Gaelic. Such centres have already been established in Dingwall and Melness and plans are underway to establish a large Taigh na Gàidhlig for Edinburgh. Such projects reveal an increased confidence amongst friends and supporters of Gaelic which bodes well for the future. This has also been manifested in the increased tendency of Gaels to use the language of civil and human rights with reference to Gaelic provision and in the increased willingness of Gaelic speakers to campaign for the language. Too often the energy of Gaelic activists has been sapped through endless campaigns to protect what we already have against cuts. Official status and a national policy on Gaelic education would enable Gaels to concentrate their energy on more positive fields and with more tangible results.

There can be no doubt that 1998 will find Gaelic in a very different situation from that which it occupied in 1978. Basically Gaelic has been rapidly changing from a language with a community but no infrastructure to one with an infrastructure but no community. Any attempts to remedy this situation must both protect Gaelic in the Gàidhealtachd and develop the language's massive potential in the Lowlands. The development of community initiatives throughout Scotland combined with legislation for official status and Gaelic education will be key strategies to this end the twenty first century. Another crucial factor which has not been mentioned by most Gaelic groups so far is the need for a more language planning centred approach to Gaelic. The protection and revitalisation of Gaelic will be a very complicated and multi-faceted task. Scotland could benefit from a language planning agency with the aim of carving out a viable future for Gaelic and with sufficient finance and power to carry this out. Such a body would have to recognise the seriousness of Gaelic's current situation and would have the duty of drawing up a blueprint for the language's survival based on thorough academic research and comparative study of other minoritised languages. It is to be hoped that any Gaelic Language Board or similar organisation set up by official status legislation will be based on such a model.

Alasdair MacCaluim



### *Introduction*

**Brittany has all the characteristics of a nation. Its people are descended from a fusion of the Celtic immigrants from Britain with the Celtic and pre-Celtic inhabitants of the Armorican peninsula. The Bretons have 1150 years of history in common. For 700 years they constituted an independent State, they were annexed by France in 1532 but became fully absorbed only 200 years ago in the French State. They possess a culture and language of their own, the only Celtic language spoken on the continent of Europe. However, while they have a sense of community, feeling in ways different from the French, the majority of them do not claim the right of self-determination as a nation.**

### *French Policy*

**T**o understand the Breton situation it is essential to be well acquainted with the French State's policy towards its ethnic minorities. To consolidate a construction which was achieved in several instances by military conquest, the State proclaimed the doctrine of one-and-indivisibility and denied the existence of such minorities by referring to its own notion of equality. They were subjected not only to laws and regulations but also to strong psychological pressures in order to bring about their linguistic and cultural assimilation and the extinction of their sense of collective identity. The State was divided into departments to be administered under strict control from Paris with no reference to the historic provinces. Soon after World War II, aided by an intense patriotic propaganda, it appeared to have achieved its aim, having in Brittany demonised the national movement and finally succeeded in getting the vast majority of parents to give up transmitting the Breton Language to their children. Our article "Breton Language Survey" in **Carn 99** shows that Breton is indeed one of the most endangered European minority languages.

All attempts made since 1945 by means of parliamentary bills to obtain legal status for it or to establish its teaching in schools on a serious basis have been thwarted. With the aim of eradication well within sight and the desire to avert international criticism, a softer approach was adopted by "granting a Cultural Charter in 1977, opening some bilingual classes in State schools (to reduce support for the all too independent Diwan schools?), as well as leaving it to the regional and other local councils to give subsidies to publications, festivals, etc. if they wished, within their overall State-controlled budgets. Lip service was paid by government figures to the contribution of the regional languages to the rich tapestry

of France's culture but the facts continued to testify to a deep rooted hostility towards them [and to a determination to do nothing to promote their recovery]. Just when the European Charter for Minority Languages was being proposed for signature by the Council of Europe's member states, France amended its constitution to make French **The** language of the Republic, thus ruling out the adoption of that Charter. Numerous instances in the past 2 or 3 years indicate that the state, faced with the success of the Diwan system of education and the unexpected interest of the Bretons in saving their language, is presently engaged in a counter-offensive to claw back its stingy concessions.

### *The Breton People*

Kept ignorant of their origins and thousand years of independent history, made to believe that their own language was only a patois unfit for modern expression, devoid of political leadership throughout the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, the Bretons had generally come by 1925 to accept the State propaganda that they should become "French like everyone". The emergence of a national movement for self-government around 1920 thus seemed to them like asking to reverse the clock: only a minority dared to join it while in others it evoked distrust or hostility. It was easy after 1945 to heap opprobrium on those who, in view of the critical state of the Breton nation had seen France's defeat as an opportunity [but also to try and discredit the nationally minded members of cultural and languages organisations.] However the revolution achieved in the 60s by the Breton farmers was accompanied by the appearance of a new political movement for self-government, and a gradual increase in self-

confidence among the people. Surveys carried out in the 70s and 80s showed what while 50% of them saw themselves as being Breton but also French, 20% were "Breton above all" (In Breton-speaking areas, and in rural areas of Upper Brittany, the figure was even as high as 37%). Today 80% or more in Lower Brittany want Breton to survive and to be taught in all schools, albeit on an optional basis, and the sense of Breton identity is quite widely felt and recognised as an important factor in the field of economic competition. Yet these attitudes have not yet translated into a significant support for the parties which campaign for self-government. Nor do those who hold them seem to realise that rather drastic measures are needed to restore the Breton language to a healthy position in society.

## Breton Parties

By comparison with the advance being made towards self-government in Scotland and Wales, the Breton political "movement" appears to be making very little headway. Those two countries are held as examples for Brittany to emulate but there appears to be no willingness to learn from the fact that it was by rallying the vast majority of the supporters of self-government that the Scottish and Welsh national parties were able to force the London government to partially concede their demands whereas in Brittany a dispersal of efforts between a variety of pariteis leaves these with a marginal role in the political field and a weak impact on the population, to begin with. They have several objectives in common, but they differ on social issues and in their tactics and methods.

The UDB can claim to have the strongest support and the best organisation. It puts great emphasis on being socialist. By means of pacts with the French leftists it can secure seats on local councils and thus seek to influence their decision on Breton matters. By allying themselves with parties from other regions they hope to push France towards federalism but in the second rounds of general elections they act as a conveyor belt for candidates of the French left. Their approach is therefore a pragmatic, reformist, regionalist one.

POBL stands for Brittany's right to national sovereignty and the establishment of a Breton state with membership of a European federation. Their primary concern is to get institutions empowered to deal with the Breton interests. They avoid raising social issues (they might well argue that until a Breton State is set up, a Breton party can do very little to solve social problems but can their silence on such



*POBL Congress, Mur, 11-12 10 97. Members of the party's Executive Committee P. Montauzier, Yann Fouere and Jean Cevaer, with guests from other European countries*

matters be the reason for failing to attract militants?)

EMGANN is outspoken in its advocacy of Breton independence. On social issues its position appears to be more radically leftist than that of the UDB in its support for workers' grievances and its criticism of the ruling bourgeoisie but it is not clear what proposals it has for a socialist Brittany. It has committed militants, present in the streets, in demonstrations, prepared to risk their personal freedom. It organises the annual Breton language festival which is increasingly successful.

Anyone longing for the emergence of a national party capable of mobilizing militants like EMGANN, presenting reasoned arguments for self-government like POBL, addressing social injustices and the excesses of a liberal system which is destroying countless ethnic communities and bringing about an ecological disaster, taking into account that half the Breton people are not left-inclined, anyone who believes that such a party would offer the best chance of maximizing popular support and bring about the necessary recognition of our national rights will again be bitterly disappointed by the absence of a common Breton front in next March's regional elections.

A. Heusaff

## Teaching of Breton in schools

This article takes stock of the situation in the present school year regarding **bilingual education** (Breton-French) either by deep immersion

(DIWAN) or by partial immersion with parity of hours (State schools, Private Catholic schools). It does not deal with other types of teaching Breton varying from a simple initiation to up to three hours a week and from the nursery to the secondary level. In that second field the Breton Teachers Union (UGB) records a **widespread jacobinic offensive** (= all children must be taught through French only); this takes various forms such as not informing pupils of the availability of courses and open hostility.

Yet, in spite of the absence of a general campaign to inform families by the education authorities if there were a genuine linguistic policy, in spite of the lack of trained teachers which prevents the opening of new schools or streams, particularly in Morbihan, bilingual education has progressed more than ever this year. ('Stream' meaning a succession of classes taught bilingually, in a school where teaching is otherwise in French).

### Encouraging figures

In all 4011 children and teenagers are now being taught bilingually, as against 3412 in 1996 and 3037 in 1995. This is an increase of 17.5% compared to last year and of 32% compared to the previous one. It took 12 years to reach a total of 1000, then 4 years to 2000, 3 years to 3000 and 2 years to 4000. This movement can only accelerate given that the pyramid of the age-groups is well balanced: 1821 in nursery schools, 1607 in primary schools, 482 in colleges and 101 in the (Diwan) lycee.

The strongest increase in absolute terms was in Diwan (+ 255), followed by the private schools (+ 204) and the public

ones (+ 133). However in percentage terms the increases were respectively 17%, 27% and 11.6%. A detailed analysis would show that the more seriously a true bilingualism is applied the firmer the progress.

Regarding the geographical distribution. Finistère being entirely in the Breton-speaking area comes first with 34 'sites' and 1913 pupils (+ 20%), (but a number of these come from Morbihan and Loire-Atlantique where no bilingual colleges exist). Morbihan has 24 sites and 998 pupils (+ 15%). Côtes-d'Armor 11 sites and 766 pupils (+ 10%). In percentage terms the progression is highest in Upper Brittany with + 37%, 221 children in the 3 Ille-et-Vilaine sites and + 29%, 113 children in the 3 Loire-Atlantique sites.

The prize still goes to Diwan but all deserve congratulations for this evolution.

Exam results are excellent. 12 Diwan students presented themselves for the first time for the "baccalauréat" (GCE A-Levels), all got it (six with honours), as in Lannou in 1996. The first pupil from a Catholic school to do the History-Geography paper in Breton for the O-levels in Vannes got a 96% mark.

Six new sites were opened in September: 4 in public schools and 2 in Catholic ones. The third Diwan college opened in Kemper. This makes a total of 75 bilingual sites (26 Diwan, 26 Catholic and 23 public) at primary level, 3 colleges and a lycée (Karaez).

A follow-through in the teaching of Breton exists otherwise in about 15 public and private colleges and in 4 lycées (Lannou, Rennes, Lannerster, public; Vannes, Catholic). But their teaching can hardly be called "bilingual" as generally it amounts to only between 6 and 10.5 hours a week in Breton (Vannes being yet the best).

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### ***A crying need: a Breton linguistic policy***

However pleasing the above figures are they cannot blind us to reality! 75 bilingual sites at primary level, that means even by counting only the communes of Lower Brittany that 95% of them have no teaching of Breton. And even if one takes into account the 18,000 primary and secondary pupils who, we are told, are learning some Breton (in addition to the 4000 bilingual ones), that represents only 3% of all the school-goers of Brittany.

In this country 95% of the young people are deprived of access to the Breton language. That was the crucial question to be raised at the conference about the future of the Breton culture held in Rennes on October 4th. In view of the results obtained through bilingual education everywhere

else in the world, we are in Brittany witnessing a sheer pedagogic waste and the deliberate sacrifice of a culture.

Whereas seven years ago the present writer went for 38 days on hunger strike in Vannes to draw attention to the need to train teachers (then for public schools), nothing serious has since been done by the education authorities to solve the problem. In Morbihan no public school could be opened in the past 3 years and a private school post remains without teacher in spite of all the efforts to fill it.

Parents are asking for bilingual schools in numerous communes throughout Lower Brittany. I could name a dozen, to mention but State schools. Some officials allege, to relieve themselves of responsibility, that one of the reasons, if not the main one, is

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***'If we had in Brittany a linguistic policy similar to what exists in Wales, Catalonia, the South-Basque Country or Fryslân, our language would be in a comparable situation to theirs.'***

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the lack of demand on the part of the Bretons themselves. How can they then explain that in schools where a bilingual stream is introduced, it progresses rapidly, attracting 20, 30, 50 and sometimes 100% of the children (this happened in the St. Gilles schools in Henbont recently, when such a stream started at nursery and preparatory level). Everything is possible when the school principal, the teachers and the parents, properly informed, want it.

The centralisers, heirs to the Jacobines of the 1789 Revolution by tradition or by training, allied to the inertia of the gigantic educational administrations which put a constant brake on innovation, are still trying to oppose a world movement, but they will also be left behind in our country, and fairly soon, if we apply our energy to it.

Yannig Baron

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### ***Teaching of Breton History Outlawed?***

For several decades now the Breton Movement, the Emsav, has fought more and more strongly for our language to have its place at every level of society. The progress it has made in the field of

education has not been matched in any way by a teaching of our history.

There are plenty of books devoted to it. In the past ten years alone a large body of literature has been produced on the subject, monographies, local and national history, sociological studies, etc. But if you ask young people or adults, they are unable to name any important figure of the history of Brittany apart from the Duchess Anne (who became Queen of France!). A recent opinion poll showed that over 85% of the Bretons know absolutely nothing about the past of their country.

How could a people that has forgotten its own history have a clear awareness or sense of its identity? In fact, the Bretons have not forgotten because they were never taught their history. General, public education has been organised by the French State from 1881 onwards: since then we have been taught only the history of France.

The majority of teachers in Brittany are Breton but they are obliged to abide by the programme dictated by the Department of



*Laying a wreath at the monument to the 6,000 Bretons and their European allies who fell for Brittany's independence on 28.07.1488 at St. Aubin du Cormier (Commemoration organised by Koun Breizh, 27.07.97) Courtesy Th. Jigourel.*

Education in Paris. [Obey or else...!] I was warned by the inspector who came in January 1997 to investigate a complaint by a teacher from another school that I was a "racist" because I taught my pupils the history of Brittany from the early Celtic period to the 16th century when we lost our independence: "We, you and I, are paid by the State to teach the history of France, and we have to do it."

What can be done to change things? To attack a fortress from the outside would need a whole army... Or we could win by cunning, using a Trojan horse in the form of a Breton Teachers Trade Union. That in my view is the best way to get inside the

dinosaur-like Department of Education. I hope it is possible

School inspectors may tolerate the teaching of local aspects of the history of Brittany but I doubt if a comprehensive (and truthful) account of it is possible without legal change.

Our national identity expresses itself through both our language and our history. But the latter has not been brought properly into play by the Emsav. Why are we waiting to do so?

Jakez Gaucher

## Breton for Adults

The great majority of the "traditional" Breton speakers are illiterate in their language. They are familiar only with their dialects, these are now grammatically rather defective, crammed with French words and locutions, lacking in the necessary neologisms. However, with the new widespread desire to save the language, many people outside the militant organisations increasingly realize that they must improve their knowledge of it or learn it from scratch. The all too few school-goers to whom it is taught must see that it is not a thing just for the school room, to be put aside once they have finished their studies. It is up to the adults who failed to transmit it 40 or 50 years ago to give the example of using it. Since no stigma attaches any longer to it, it should not be too difficult to overcome inhibitions. By multiplying classes for them and providing numerous occasions for them to meet, they could contribute, for several years to come, more than the schools to a consolidation of the language's position. Immersion is the key to proficiency.

Many opportunities now exist for adult to acquire a basic ability to speak Breton. As early as 1932 the OBER correspondence school was set up, free of charge. Since the war, Kamp Etrekeltiek ar Vrezhonegerian (KEAV) has brought hundreds of people together annually for a fortnight in July to practise their knowledge in a near-holiday environment. Both undertakings are going stronger than ever. Other correspondence schools now exist, plenty of textbooks, cassettes, various aids (from the minitel to the Internet) are available to isolated students. Courses of various duration, extending from week-end classes to "stages" (training courses) lasting a week or two are offered at different times of the year but mainly in Summer (by such organisations as Skol an Emsav, Ar Falz, An Oaled), or on a continuous basis by Spered ar Yezh, Roudour, Stumdi. In several districts, cultural associations have formed



federations, e.g. Mervent in the SW, Sked (Brest), Emglev Bro an Oriant (Lorient) under the aegis of which numerous classes are held, mainly in the evening. Thus Mervent, which consists of 13 groups and employs 3 paid and 6 voluntary teachers, runs a total of 29 classes a week attended by many public and private school teachers (who will hopefully in turn teach the language in their classes). Attention is being given by several of these associations to the need to train teachers. The necessity for putting the acquired knowledge into daily use cannot be sufficiently impressed on all. Speaking Breton must be the priority.

It is imperative that those who take seriously the task of restoring our language to daily use in society should help the people who are willing to speak it to recognise one another in public places. Many may not be bothered to wear a badge whenever they go out, yet I cannot think of any better way than making something similar to the Irish fainne (not too expensive as each person would find it convenient to have 2 or 3 such badges). It would need to be publicised widely. I wish that Servij ar Brezhoneg would assume the care of "marketing it", for that they will need some additional public funding, at least initially.

A. Heusaff

## Breton in Public Life

Having no official status, Breton has a very low profile in public life. Its spoken use is very rare in official occasions. However you can see it on some road signs in parts of the country, essentially in some western administrative areas.

This is the result of years of campaigning by Breton-language militants. In the late 70's and early 80's demands for Breton or bilingual road signs were carried out by the members of Skol an Emsav, and throughout the 80's and the 90's more vigorous methods were used by **Stourm ar Brezhoneg** members who daubed thousands of road-signs all over Brittany. Their demand was very simple – that Breton forms of place-names be seen along roads, and therefore that Breton be recognised as a language to be used in public life. Some local authorities responded to that demand, and today you can see Breton indications on the road signs of some localities. The administrative areas of "Finistère" and "Côtes d'Armor" – which can be compared to counties in England or Ireland – have done most in that field, but we are still very far from completely bilingual road signs in those areas. The replacement of French-only signs with bilingual ones is going on slowly. Most local authorities have no real policy in that field, apart from yielding to local demands. And place-names are more willingly "translated" into Breton, than other indications such as "car park" or "no entry". The response of the people has generally been very good as was shown in an opinion poll carried out by the Finistère Departmental Council in 1992 – 82.5% of the people of that area were in favour of bilingual Breton-French road signs.

*As for commercial signs, or commercial publicity leaflets, Breton was used for those at the beginning of the century, when a lot of people spoke only Breton, but it wasn't any more in the second half of it, when everyone knew French. Very recently some commercial firms have started using them in their publicity or on the signs of their shops, as a mark of identity. Here too the response has been good, so that the number of such firms is increasing – supermarkets such as Leclerc, Intermarche or Carrefour, car makers such as Volkswagen, airline companies... have used Breton in their publicity. But, for them, Breton is rather a symbol, a mark of Breton identity, than a useful language.*

Speaking Breton on public occasions – either religious offices, cultural festivals or civic ceremonies – is on the rise too, but still very limited.

In the eighties some members of the Linguistics Section of the Breton Cultural Institute created a special commission to advise the local authorities which wanted to put up Breton signs. This is how the Toponymy Commission was created in 1986 on a voluntary basis, but with a secretariat inside the Breton Cultural Institute. After a few years the Commission changed its name to "Servij ar Brezhoneg" (Breton Language Service) to give a better picture of the whole range of work it was carrying out – not just toponymic studies but translations of all sorts for the public. Servij ar Brezhoneg now has a secretariat with two full-time and one part-time worker, whose wages are paid by the Breton Cultural Institute, financed by the Brittany Regional Council, the Loire-Atlantique Departmental Council and the European Commission.

That secretariat and the voluntary members – over a hundred people throughout Brittany – are carrying out their work in various fields – toponymy, terminology, translations... Inside Servij ar Brezhoneg was created TermBret, a terminology center, *working like other terminology centers in countries such as Catalonia or Euskadi*, on specialized vocabularies, terms required for administrative purposes, for sailing, etc. Extension of the use of the Breton language in new fields has made the need for developing adequate terminology imperative. TermBret face the same problems as in many other countries wishing to develop a language that has not been widely used in the past for education and administrative purposes – dialectal differences, extensive use of French words in the spoken language etc. But the activities of TermBret and Servij ar Brezhoneg have been generally welcome. Another interesting feature in recent years has been the demand for a monitoring body

to oversee the position of the Breton language. Servij ar Brezhoneg has rightfully pointed out the need for such a watch-dog to give information on the linguistic situation, on the number of Breton speakers but also on the state of Breton in schools, on the use of Breton in public life, etc. *The project has already a name, "Arsellva ar Brezhoneg" ("Breton language watch-dog"), but it will only be realized if the regional and local authorities decide to give it the necessary means.*

Iwan Kadored

### **Breton Music**

The Breton music is remarkable for the wealth of its modes and rhythms and for the great number of tunes which have come down to us from the past. Many of these have been collected during the past century and a half. The collections are preserved by the association **Dastum** and are put at the disposal of the musicians.

The biniou kozh (meaning "the old bagpipe", a bagpipe with a short chanter and one drone) and the "bombard" (an old type of oboe) are the traditional instruments in Lower Brittany generally speaking, but there is also the clarinet in Upper Breton Cornwall (Kernev Uhel), the "veuze" in the Gwenrann/Guerande area, the hurdy-gurdy around Dinan... The accordion and the violine were introduced in the 19th century, the Scottish bagpipe and almost all sorts of instruments in the 20th, not forgetting the Celtic harp which was rediscovered after World War 2.

Today we have about 5,000 players of biniou, bombard and drum, 2,000 harpists, 40 choirs which sing in Breton, over 300 professional folk singers and musicians. More than 60 CDs are published annually.

The CDs are used in radio, by the independent (Community) and the official stations, though mainly in their Breton language broadcasts. Our music has its place in the festou-noz (traditional dances) all the year around as well as in the Summer festivals where it is performed by musicians and dancers affiliated to the big organisations Bodadeg ar Sonerien, Kendalc'h, War 'l Leur which have a total membership of more than 25,000.

Competitions for pipers and musicians playing as duos take place frequently, attended by large crowds. In Summer they are held outdoors, in sports grounds. In Winter halls are always packed.

New works of Breton music are being composed, some in the style of popular airs, e.g. by Alan Stivell and Roland Becker, others in a more classical vein, e.g.

by Per Yves Mogn and Rene Abjean for choirs and orchestras.

In conclusion, our music is very much alive, rooted in the treasure of our traditions and confident in its future. In half a century Brittany has regained possession of her music.

Tugdual Kalvez

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### **A Brief Survey of the Cultural Scene**

For centuries it was by the ordinary people that the Breton culture was borne but in this century its promotion had to rely increasingly on a minority of educated people. Now fortunately there is again a widespread appreciation of its value coupled with a strengthened sense of Breton identity. Its protagonists want it to be a basis for creative developments. Its most popular expression is in the field of music. The festou-noz bring into play numerous groups of traditional musicians and kan-ha-diskan singers, they have proved that they were not a fad. Not only do they strengthen the sense of community they also take their place in the Breton struggle, e.g. in support of fund gathering for Diwan. Throughout the Summer, festivals are organised throughout Brittany, attracting tens of thousands of people. The big ones are generally commercialised, allowing only a minor role for the Breton language but they offer opportunities to musicians to become known, they can even stimulate composers to create and stage important works, as at the Lorient Interceltic Festival

Breton wrestling, gouren, has won hundreds of adepts. The Gouren federation has sought to interest young people in other Celtic countries. Similar forms of this sport exist in Cumbria, Iceland, Fryslân. Tournaments take place between wrestlers from these countries and Brittany.

Theatre in Breton, has gained a renewed impetus in particular thanks to the professional group "Strollad ar Bro Bagan". There are at least 3 other well established groups. The Diwan schools involve their pupils in staging plays as part of their policy of "total immersion". The fact that only about 30% of the people of Lower Brittany understand Breton obliges producers frequently to use French as well as Breton in their scripts.

It is reckoned that 70% of the Breton speakers now live in towns. In several of these, the various associations involved with the Breton language and culture have formed federations to maximise their efficiency. Some have now premises at

their disposal which they are using for the dissemination of information or for holding conferences.

The volume of book publishing in Brittany is greater than in any region in France apart from Paris. Most of this is in French, but even then it relates largely to Breton matters. Let us mention as publishers of books in Breton AL LIAMM, Mouladurioù Hor Yezh. An Here, Brud Nevez.

As regards films in Breton, incentives for their production are provided by the annual Festival des Minorités held annually in Douarnenez as well as by the Interceltic Film and Television Festival, but Brittany lags far behind Wales in that respect. The Breton Cultural Institute/Skol Uhel ar Vro (S.U. ar V.) and the Breton Cultural Council came into existence in 1977. The Institute, centred in Rennes, has 16 sections grouping people active in various fields of the Breton culture. It receives from the Regional Council an annual subsidy of 4.5 million Francs. It thus can help the publication of magazines and books in Breton. Its most active section deals with the language. It includes the Language Service which publishes a copious monthly volume of cuttings from daily papers and other publications testifying to all that is done for Breton in various fields, public life, media, advertising, publishing, cultural life, education... Subscription is 100 F/annum, to Servij ar Brezhoneg, Skol Uhel ar Vro, 1 rue R. Ponchon, 35069 Roazhon cedex.

A meeting was held in Rennes on October 4 under the aegis of S.U. ar V. and of the B.C.C. to debate the question "What future for the Breton culture in the 21st century". Attended by some 300 people it decided to urge the elected representatives of Brittany to work for the implementation of the following proposals: (a) a strengthening of the roles of S.U. ar V. and of the Cultural Council; (b) the creation of a Breton Television Service; (c) the extension of the teaching of the Breton Language and history throughout Brittany; (d) a strengthening of relations with the other Celtic countries.

It remains to be seen how the said representatives can be motivated to act. The deep estrangement caused by 200 years of adverse indoctrination makes it very difficult to overcome the resistance of many councils to such proposals as they can always allege a shortage of financial resources.

Alan Heusaff



## From Referendum to Referendum



Robat ap Tomos

1979 TO 1997

A referendum was held in Wales on September 18<sup>th</sup> 1997 on whether the population of Wales wanted to have an elected Assembly with limited powers. The result of the vote was a narrow majority of 50.3% in favour of Wales having its own assembly, with 49.7% voting against (a majority of nearly 7000). It will be explained below that the narrowness of this majority does not mean that the Welsh nation is reluctant to have its own elected body.

A previous referendum for a similar type of assembly was held by the previous Labour government in 1979, and the result was a 'No' vote by a majority of 4 to 1. It is significant that this was also the proportion of English-speakers to Welsh-speakers in Wales, as language and national identity (the two closely connected in Wales) played an important part. The events over the next 18 years contributed much to making the result of the 1997 vote different.

A few months after the 1979 referendum a general election was held in the English state which was won by the Conservative and Unionist party, whose right-wing policies are based on capitalism and the maintenance of English rule in the Celtic countries. They won a majority of seats in England which enabled them to govern the state, despite winning only a small minority of the seats in Wales (and Scotland), and the notorious Margaret Thatcher came to power. The Conservatives have never been the largest party in Wales, with what support they have now, and have ever had in the past, based on the areas that are longest anglicised or have the largest numbers of English immigrants, that is the borders and the northern and southern

coastal belts. The Tories went on to win the next three general elections, each time through winning a majority in England, but with only a small minority of seats in Wales where, as always, Labour was the majority party. For 18 years Wales was governed by a party she had not voted for, and it was only when England decided to go Labour in the 1997 general election that the burden was lifted. It was this experience of 18 years of unelected Tory government, which included the intentional destruction of the coal-mining industry in south Wales - the foundation of many communities for generations, that influenced the attitude of many English-speaking Welsh people towards Wales having some control over her own government.

The 1979 referendum result was no surprise but it still demoralised the national movement for a while. However the battle for the language went on against the Tories, and to many the national recovery began in 1980 when the government was forced to yield to the campaign for a Welsh language television channel. The campaign had been led by Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg, the Welsh-language society, but was joined from many directions. The willingness of Gwynfor Evans, the former Plaid Cymru president, to go on hunger-strike as part of the campaign will remain unforgettable.

Following the granting of S4C, the television channel which has been a vital support for the language, a major campaign for the language movement in the 1980s was for a 'Deddf Iaith Newydd', a new law which would give Welsh-speakers the right to use their language in all aspects of their everyday lives and would make bilingualism the norm in Wales. The Tories opposed this fully and the campaign grew in strength. The Tories showed their adeptness by splitting the Deddf Iaith Newydd campaign through creating not a law but a quango or committee of nominated individuals who would oversee various language matters in Wales, called

the Welsh Language Board. This quango, while on the surface appearing to be promoting the use of Welsh, and indeed they have made some small contributions to the language, has been a major obstacle to the extending of language rights in Wales. The weakened campaign for a *Deddf Iaith Newydd* continued, finally forcing the drawing up of a language act which took force in 1993 but which is so weak that is questionable whether it has improved language rights at all. While the *Plaid Cymru* M.P.s in London tried to strengthen the act, they voted against it on the final vote because it would prove an obstacle to further progress rather than a benefit. The campaign for a law of language rights in Wales continues.

With a Labour government in power and a Welsh assembly on the way the outlook for many aspects of the language seems brighter. However one great threat remains. A phenomenon which started in the late 1970s, the immigration of English into Welsh-speaking Wales in such numbers that not even their children can be assimilated in places, continues and is eroding the size of the part of Wales where Welsh is the natural community language rapidly. It threatens the existence of a Welsh-speaking Wales (as opposed to a diaspora of Welsh speakers scattered through a sea of English). The answer proposed by *Cymdeithas yr Iaith* is a *Deddf Eiddo* or Property Act to allow control of the sale of land in Wales in order to prevent this happening. Discussions with the new Labour Secretary of State have started.

The last 20 years have seen a slow strengthening of the support for *Plaid Cymru*, the national party, in Welsh-speaking Wales. In the 1979 election they lost one of their three seats, *Caerfyrddin/Carmarthen*, but held the two northern seats of *Caernarfon* and *Meirionnydd* - areas which they have held ever since. Their parliamentary representation returned to three in 1987 with the gain of *Ynys Môn*. A fourth seat, *Ceredigion*, has been held since 1992. Successes in English-speaking areas have been most notably substantial numbers of councillors in some southern valley council areas.

When examining the results of the 1997 referendum one must remember that the vote was open to all living in Wales, which includes a substantial proportion of English incomers who, together with those of their children and descendants who are totally unassimilated, make up at least 20% of the population and possibly over 25%. (This proportion is not as high as that in *Kernow* and *Mannin*, but it is considerably higher than that in *Alba* and *Eire*.) Otherwise the result would have been much more decisive in favour of an assembly for Wales, and if the vote had been restricted to those who speak Welsh - the basis of the nation - the

vote in favour would have been overwhelming.

Wales has previously been divided into three theoretical parts on the basis of political identity, the three labels applying both to sections of the population and to the

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*...one great threat remains. ...the immigration of English into Welsh-speaking Wales in such numbers that not even their children can be assimilated in places... It threatens the existence of a Welsh-speaking Wales...'*

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areas in which the respective 'types' predominate. These types are 1. 'Welsh Wales' - the Welsh speaking areas where most people have a Welsh national identity, are sympathetic to Wales and have a tendency to support, to varying degrees, self-government for Wales. 2. 'British Wales' - English-speaking and firmly unionist, mainly areas that were anglicised by high immigration where many of the inhabitants, even when native to Wales, look towards England and are reluctant to accept the label 'Welsh'. 3. 'The Valleys' - the (until recently) industrialised coal-mining area of south Wales where people, though English-speaking, are largely descended from Welsh-speakers and

consider themselves Welsh (not necessarily as their nationality).

This three-fold division of Wales was reflected in the referendum result. The mainly Welsh-speaking counties of *Ynys Môn*, *Gwynedd*, *Ceredigion* and *Sir Gaerfyrddin/Carmarthenshire* voted Yes, with the size of the No vote corresponding to the proportion of English immigrants in each. The anglicised counties, including those such as *Conwy* and *Sir Ddinbych/Denbighshire* where many of the natives speak Welsh but are outnumbered, voted No. The 'Valley' counties of *Glamorgan* and *Gwent* however, changed from 1979 and voted Yes with Welsh Wales, this allegiance thus out-voting British Wales.

The return of a Labour government to London in 1997 has changed the outlook in Wales for both the language and the prospects of a degree of self-government in Wales. The new Labour Secretary of State has already held productive discussions with *Cymdeithas yr Iaith*, something which the Tories were refusing to do. While the devolution referendum was an obstacle Labour had imposed on itself in order to gain more support in England during the election campaign, the Yes victory has now finally erased the clouds of the 1979 defeat. There is a new political atmosphere of optimism in Wales at the end of 1997, but we have not so much overcome our difficulties but have gained sight of new opportunities to tackle the challenges.

Robert ap Tomos



*Cymdeithas yr Iaith members take action against the Halifax Building Society who had refused to use Welsh, saying "English is the language of Britain" The Halifax subsequently yielded and now recognise our language*



# The Pain and Joy of Rebirth

There is absolutely no doubt that the too close for comfort victory in the devolution referendum on Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup> marks a watershed in Welsh history.

Despite the narrow winning margin the fact is enough Welsh people were willing to vote for a new future. It was a vote for hope which starkly contrasted with the totally negative tactics of the 'Just Say No' campaign that fed vampire-like on peoples' fears, prejudices and lack of national self-esteem. The true colours of the No Campaign were revealed to me when distributing 'Yes' leaflets in Cardiff's main shopping street, the unfortunately named Heol y Frenhines/Queen Street. Spotting an insipid pasty young Tory giving out his Brit propaganda (English only leaflets of course) I decided to ask him if he had any Welsh or bilingual leaflets. No was his answer due to the fact that apparently no-one speaks Welsh in Cardiff, our capital city, and besides there are more people who speak 'immigrant' languages in the area than Welsh speakers. After correcting him regarding the reality of the linguistic situation in Cardiff I asked if indeed there were more speakers of these languages would it be possible for him to provide me with leaflets in say Punjabi, Somali, Gujarati..... Well I'm sure you can guess the answer I received. To me this little episode summed up quite perfectly the real nature of the No Campaign. Despite their protestations about cost, democracy etc, etc, their real agenda was and still is to keep the United Kingdom united. Naturally what this means in reality is that English political, economic and cultural domination would continue with the Celtic countries as cannon fodder for their industries and armed forces, our accents, languages and values as objects of disdain and effete humour.

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*'...how can a person adequately put into words the sensation that takes hold of you when for once WE won...'*

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Whilst distributing leaflets in Cardiff on that fateful day one aged English gentleman kindly explained to me why he

as an Englishman did not believe in Welsh devolution. 'You see we don't want to see the Welsh go. WE want to keep you'. 'But perhaps Sir' I replied, 'WE don't wish to be kept'. The old colonial gent smiled graciously obviously disbelieving that Welsh people could *really* feel that way. Ah, I thought there we see the attitude that won and LOST an empire. Thankfully enough people did feel strongly enough to vote yes although I must confess I would not wish that last hour before the momentous Carmarthen result, when defeat seemed to be certain, on my worst enemy. The resulting scenes of jubilation, and I was one of the fortunate few who was in the Park Hotel in Cardiff and can boast in best rugby tradition that 'I was there!', were unbelievable. Hard bitten world weary journalists from around the globe stood amazed at the euphoria that took hold of us all. After all how can a person adequately put into words the sensation that takes hold of you when for once WE won, the pent up frustration and injustices of centuries suddenly released in a torrent of raw, uninhibited Celtic passion, the dam of emotion burst and the tears that followed said more than a thousand eloquently phrased words. That night we could have witnessed one of the last nails mercilessly hammered into our national coffin, instead a nation was reborn. I recall one tearful and stunned young lad going from person to person, his only words, 'Dyn ni'n genedl (We ARE a nation)' Yes, we have undoubtedly taken a huge step. Already there is a new self-confidence apparent in Welsh public life. After the totally biased coverage by the English media perhaps this new aggressive confidence was best demonstrated by one of the Secretary of State For Wales personal aides. When London based ITN asked for an interview with the Secretary of State the aide's response was short and not so sweet and with the expletives removed went something like 'We don't need the English press anymore'.

I couldn't have put it better myself.

Like all births, or in this case rebirths, there will inevitably be a certain amount of discomfort and as our ancient/brand new nation matures there will be teething problems. Indeed, we have already seen a number of councils throwing petulant tantrums. Surprise, surprise a number of

town councils in heavily colonised and Anglicised Monmouthshire, Powys and Pembrokeshire have taken a number of clumsy swipes at the Welsh language. It is of course a complete coincidence that these were areas that voted no in the referendum. With no other way of opposing the democratic mandate for change these Jurassic colonialist councillors have cynically tried to whip up largely imaginary fears about the Welsh language in a transparent ploy to divide our nation. Yes, the age old colonial tactics of divide and rule are still being deployed in a desperate rearguard action. That is of course where Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg comes into the picture. Such cultural buffoonery is meat and drink to a society that for some 35 years has made a habit of deflating the egos of the pompous and publicly shattering seedy prejudices. Councillors in Tref-y-Clawdd decided that they would no longer use the Welsh name and that the town would only be known by its English name, Knighton. However after a nocturnal excursion by members of Cymdeithas yr Iaith these fading political relics discovered that their lovely English name had been painted out on road signs throughout the area and that some of these signs had miraculously vanished. Needless to say this reprehensible decision was reversed within less than a week. Good guys I bad guys nil.

Other unenlightened town councils have also decided to dabble in a spot of linguistic cleansing and undoubtedly by the time this article sees the light of day they too will have been taught a salutary lesson in cultural respect. Clearly, despite taking our precarious first steps on the road to full nationhood there is no room for complacency.

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*'Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg remains totally committed to ensuring a full Parliament for Wales...'*

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Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg remains totally committed to ensuring a full Parliament for Wales and to opposing anti-Welsh bigotry in all its ghastly incarnations. The first and perhaps the most difficult hurdle has been successfully negotiated it is now incumbent upon all of us in Wales who believe in our nation to work as we have never worked before and realise what for so long has remained only a dream. The road to freedom is now a little bit clearer, the rest is up to us.

Gareth Kiff  
Cadeirydd Cenedlaethol /  
National Chairman  
Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg

8 page  
Supplement

# Celtic Poetry



Aonghas Macneacail

## *carn as a chiad*

tha sinne, nar éideach áraid, an seo,  
ann an breacan briathrach, an seo,  
far an do sgiùrs na dròbhairean mòra  
sinn, an seo ann na garbh chriochan  
creagach ar tìr, cuan sgeireach air aon  
taobh, beanntan loma bulbhagach a  
caitheamh faileis dubha an gruaim air  
plaidean molagach nan stiall tana  
talmhainn, an cuibhrionn fearainn  
seo, a roinn sinn leis na luibhean is  
na feannagan, agus sinne gun chrann  
gun charbad, gun luingeas, gus am  
faca na dròbhairean mòra mar a spion  
sinn an toradh a grinneal is clach, is  
gum fàisgeadh iad feum as na stiallan  
dhan tug sinne ròicean dhe 'r saothair,  
agus rinn iad tearbadh eile, libhrig  
iad cuibhrionn eile dhan imreachd,  
ach dh'fhàg iad sinne, fuigheall dhen  
fhuigheall, dh'fhàg iad sinne, sluagh  
brìsg mar phlaosg air an leòn dubh  
a rinne iad, dh'fhàg iad sinne dha na  
feannagan, dha na luibhean, dha  
na siantan coma, dha na creagan is  
dha na clachan, dha na gaothan fuara,

ach, ga b'oil leotha, tha an anail  
fhathast a bualadh cléibh, agus tha  
sinne fhathast a sineadh pòir dhan  
talamh lom, agus, dhan fheadhainn  
a rinn am fuaghal, an aghaidh nan  
gaillionn, a rinn am fuine, an aghaidh  
nan gort, cuireamaid clach ris a chiad  
ann an còinneach gorm an dùbhlain,  
agus carn air a chlach  
de bhlàthan ruadh dòchais,  
carn beò air a chlach  
nach bu leac ach clach iuil

Aonghas Macneacail

## *Ur c'harn a-douez kant*

Aman emaomp, sell, gwisket diouzh hor giz,  
Ur gwiskamant gwiet kaer.  
Aman lec'h omp bet divroet gant marc hadourien saout,  
Aman en hor bro c'harv meinek  
Ar mor roc'hellek diouzh un tu  
Ila kernioù ar menezioù noazh  
O ledañ ur skeud teñval trubuilhus  
War al louanoù strizh a zouar  
An tammig bro-mañ a rannomp gant ar strouezh hag ar brini  
Ha ni hep arar na bag na karr  
Betek m'o deus merzet ar varc'hadourien  
Penaos e teue ganeomp eost diwar ar mein,  
Gwelet o deus penaos tennañ gounid  
Eus an tachennoù strizh goude hon holl strivoù,  
Ha setu m'o deus rannet ac'hanomp adarre.  
Kaset lod ac'hanomp da lec'h all  
Ha lezet ma zud, un dilerc'h dister a dud  
Ha lezet ac'hanomp neuze  
Paour-kaezh tud bresk evel ar gleizenn war ar gloaz du  
Lezet o deus ac'hanomp d'ar brini, d'al louzeier  
D'an amzer griz, d'ar rec'hier ha d'an avel yen.

Met daoust dezhe e klever c'hoazh talmoù ar galon  
Ha hadañ a reomp ar greun en douar noazh  
Ha neuze evit ar re o doa gwriet a-enep d'ar riv  
Hag ar re o doa pobet a-enep d'an naon  
Lakomp 'ta ur maen war an c'hant,  
Dae ar vein kinviék glas  
Ha war ar maen bleunioù ruz a-vern  
Ma vo ar c'harn leun a vuhez hag a c'hoanag  
Ha na vo ket ur maen-bez  
Met ur maen-bonn.

Translated from Gàidhlig into Breton  
by Diarmuid Johnston and A.H.

## Spi

Da Chanig

N'eus nemet daou dra: pignat ha diskenn  
ha c'hoazh ne vez na pignet na diskennet:  
emañ ar Bed unvan ha lies  
dezhañ mentelezhioù tost-tre an eil ouzh eben  
ha n'eus nemet daou dra: Gouloù pe Deñvalijenn.

Bez' 'z eus ouzhpenn klemmigan ha mousc'hoarzh ar mor  
o ruilhal dibaouez bili, eskern, kregin ha tud,  
koadajoù gwisket gant barv ar bezhin  
ha lamm gwenvidik ur pesk ar gouloù glas.

Bez' 'z eus ouzhpenn garm ha kanenn ar gwez  
dindan skourjez pe flourad an avel  
burzhud an aval e dibenn an hañv  
ha kistin o strakal e skodoù-tan an oaled.

Bez' 'z eus ouzhpenn gwander ha nerzh ar vaouez  
kevrin ar vaouez-gwreg, mamm ha c'hoar  
evit sankañ da benn ouzh douster he askre  
ha santout o talmiñ an denezh da zont.

Youenn Gwernic  
Nevez-hañv 1990

Youenn Gwernic,  
Poet and Sculptor  
Photo by  
Soaz Maria,  
Courtesy:  
Th. Jigourel



## An Eneoù Marv

Dirak ar mor e hirc'hortoz,  
En habaskter fresk ar serr-noz,  
Kalonoù gwar ha glac'haret.  
Bet gant o fared trubardet.

Gant keuz ha reuzioù ezteuzet,  
Netra er bed-mañ ne c'hedont,  
'Met enved iskis an isfont,  
O floupo a-flav hag a-fet

Deut d'e benn bremañ o remzi,  
Dre garet diharz ha disi;  
Pa n'en deus gour oute soursi,  
Ne van ken dezhe finveziñ.

Disked ha sec'h eo o selloù.  
'N'o amblori karc'hariet,  
Nag ar gouloù ne welont ket.  
O troidellat er pelloù.

Endra m'o c'hlis skeudoù disaour.  
A-gelc'h ledan a-us an dour,  
Dispaket-bras o divaskell,  
Estlamm o garmadeg varvel

Herve Seubil gKernaoudour  
Miz Du 1994

Translated from Breton into Irish by Éamonn Ó Cíosáin

## Na hAnamacha Marbha

Cois na mara ag siorfheitheamh,  
Imboige úr an tráthnóna,  
Croithe umbhala atá buartha,  
Indiaidh a gearad a thréig iad.

Ag cumha is tubaistí traochta,  
Gan súil le haon ní sa tsaol seo  
Ach éanlaith aduain an duibheagáin,  
A alphas iad siar ar an toirt.

Ach 'tá ídithe a n-aimsir,  
Le teann grá gan teora gan cháim;  
Tharla gan bheann orthu ag neach,  
Níl de bheart rompu ach bású.

Scamall ar shúile gan deora,  
Carraithe atá siad i ndobhrón  
Ní léir dá n-amharc an folús,  
'Tá ón imigéin ag fáinniú,

Is scáthanna gránn' á sliochadh,  
Cruinn ina gciorca os sáile,  
A sciatháin ar leathadh timpeall.  
Ní scaoll go dtína ngáir bhásmhar.

## Dóchas

Níl ach dhá rud ann: dreapadh is teacht anuas  
ach fós ní dreapadh ná teacht anuas é:  
tá an Saol aonchineálach is ilghnéitheach  
a thoisi mórán mar a chéile  
is níl ach dhá rud ann: Solas nó Dorchadas.

Tá, freisin, caoineadh is miongháire na mara  
is í siorraí ag rabháil duirlinge, cnámha, sliogáin is daoine,  
bruth-faoi thír feistithe le féasóg feamainne  
is siorraíocht an tsonais i léim éisc sa solas glas.

Tá, freisin, liú is ceol na gerann  
faoi sciúirseáil nó faoi chuimilt na gaoithe  
míorúilt an úill i dtús an tsamhraidh  
is enóite capaill ag cnagarnach i measc chipiní na tine.

Tá, freisin, laige is neart mná  
rúndiamhair na mná céile, máthair is deirfiúr  
go dtig do cheann a leagan ar bhoige a bachlainne  
is cuisle an daonna le theacht a bhrath

Translated from Breton into Irish by  
Éamonn Ó Cíosáin

## Sochraid

Tá sí básaithe faoi dheoidh  
bhí aois mhór aici;  
bhí sochraid mhór aici:  
bhí Hindley ann – Kinsella, Heaney –  
An Taoiseach agus Aire na Gaeltachta,  
an Rialtas go léir  
agus an Freasúra –  
Oró sé do bheatha abhaile!

bhí a clann is a leasclann uile ann,  
an t-easpag, an sagart,  
is an Dochtúir Ó hIrghile  
fíon bán ná dearg níor sparáladh uirthi;  
bhí lucht na teilifíse ann  
is iad ag carnadh na bhfód ar a cónra  
Oró, is anois ar theacht an tsamhraidh!

cuireadh a colaínn os cionn chláir  
baineadh sine-shíneadh as a cnámha –  
is í á caitheamh ó dhuine go chéile  
'Is liomsa í!' 'Is leatsa!'  
'Is linne í in éineacht!'  
Sineadh suas le do bhéal í  
gan luid uirthi  
ach oiread leis an lá a rugadh í  
go dtugais póg di –  
ar a tóinín –!  
Ó, a dheabhail, nach óg í!

Liam Prút



Liam Prút

## Encledhyas

Hy a verwys wosteweth  
ha hy gyllys pur goth.  
Bras o an encledhyas a gafas:  
yth esa Hindley orto – Kinsella, Heaney –  
an Taoiseach ha Menyster an Wydhalekva:  
an Governans yn kettep pen  
ha'n Enebyans.  
Ho, lowena dhys ha wolcum osta tre!

Yth esa hy thylu y'n le ha'y lestylu oll,  
an epscop ha'n oferyas  
ha Doctour Hillery.  
Ny ve sparys warnedhy an gwyn gwyn na ruth:  
yth esa tus an bellwollok ena  
hag y war y geler ow palas towargh.  
Ho, lemmyn re dhufa dhyn an haf!

Y'n nos y fe hy horf gorrys a'y wroweth.  
Hy eskern a ve tennys kepar ha mellow chayn –  
ha pubonen orth y thewlel an yl dh'y gyla.  
'My a's pew!' 'Ty a's pew!'  
'Ny a's pew oll warbarth!'  
Pan dheth hy nes dha frygow  
heb gwysk vyth adro dhedhy  
namoy es an jeth may fe genys  
ty a ammas dhedhy –  
war an tyn –!  
Re'n jawl, ass yu hy yowynk!

Translated from Irish into Unified  
Cornish by N.J. Williams

## As Agreed At 'X'

Ar tharla tú riamh ar shean-cháipéis  
Is nóta postúil mar é insilithe  
ag bun an leathanaigh, ag  
Focaire éigin a cheap gur Dia é  
ar feadh lae  
Is is ró-mhinic go mbéa leis  
Dá bhfoireann  
ach Dia an údaráis is an chumhachta 's an phoimp  
seachas Dia an láimh chúnta.  
Och aí bionn seal aca, seal gort  
Is gan tábhacht dá laghad leo ina gcuid postúlachta  
nuair a sheictear í i bhfuacht na mblianta siar



Pádraig Ó Snodaigh

Pádraig Ó Snodaigh

## Car Dro Agreiz en 'X'

Rigo why besca doaz bedn gwarack coth,  
ha caned broazleveres an parna,  
screffes kensa letherednow e hanow  
ort pedn dewa an vullan  
gen nebun fickier reeg credgy e bosa Dew  
rag edn journa?  
He ree veno andelna veva aweath  
tha e vayny,  
buz an Dew a othoredgack ha pohar ha solemnyta,  
ny an Dew an doarn gwerras.  
Eah, fey, ma dothans ago preze, ha preze scallayack ew,  
ha heb matter broaz et ago fasow,  
po gwelles en yeinder a vlethidniow dewetha.

Translated from Irish into Modern  
Cornish by Richard Gendall

## Tudual Huon



Tudual Huon

## Dec'h war dec'h

Dec'h pa oan savet  
da c'houlaouig-deiz  
ur pistig em c'hreiz oa diwanet.  
An diegi, evel ur maen-touch,  
am sache e strad va gwele.  
Chomet oan d'ober choukig,  
da selaou da gomzoù plijadur.

da sellet ouzh kornigell ar vuhez  
o treiñ ingal war ar planchod  
ha chom a-sav  
gorrek

Tudual Huon

## Inné ar a theitheadh

Inné tar éis dom éiri  
ag breacadh an lae  
d'airíos arraing im chroí.  
An drogall a tharraing mé  
amhail adhmaint arais sa leaba.  
D'fhanas im sháimín só  
ag éisteacht leat agus tú sásta,  
ag amharc ar chaiseal an tsaoil  
ag casadh go réidh ar an urlár  
agus é ag moilliú  
chun stad.

## An Gan Geltek

Ha'n dywisygeth havysi  
a-dryv Kastell Pil ow sedhi  
an vorvoren vanowek  
a dhyllas dhe'n neves  
notennow es ha hudel  
avel oll an goelannes  
ughel mes rudhvelyn golowys  
Ow diwskovarn a glywas  
an gan yn Manowek mes  
ow holonn a glywas  
an yeth Kernewek.

*Ny woer hi pes gweyth y kerdhis  
War hy lerg, yn hy skeus, a-is  
Ny woer hi pes kamm 'veu rekmys  
Dre wlaskor hy lev, hys ha hys.*

Bayr Pheveril eth ha bos  
Fordh Tregeryan yn Tewynn Bleustra  
Purt ny Hinshey eth ha bos Porthia  
ha'n Awin Neb eth ha bos Heyl.

Gans tus bal kernewek ow kewsel  
an yeth freth a blomm ha synk;  
gans Henry Jenner ow palas  
moen yethek an ynys ma:

Plethys o gwydhalek  
yn tynn gans brythonek  
dhe wul an gan geltek.

P. Hodge

## Yn Arrane Celtiagh

As turrysee jeean  
nyn soie cooyl Cashtal Phurt ny h-Inshey  
hug Ben-Varrey Vannin  
gys niau  
clinkyn dy h-aash as obbeys  
myr ny foillanyn heose  
agh soilshaghyn jiarg-bwee  
Cheayll y daa chleaysh aym  
yn arrane ayns Gaelg agh  
cheayll my chree  
yn chengey Chornagh

Cha sOeck cre cho foddey hooill eh  
Cooyl eck, sy scadoo eck, heese  
Cha sOeck quoid kesmad hie  
er coontey  
Liorish reeriaght e coraa,  
kione gys kione

Haink Bayr Pheveril dy ve  
Bayr Tregeryan ayns Tewynn Bleustra  
Purt ny h-Inshey dy ve Porthia  
as yn Awin Neb dy ve Heyl.

As meaineyderyn Cornagh loayrt  
chengey flaaoil leaoie as shine  
as Henry Jenner reuyrey  
meain-chengey yn Ellan shoh:

Fecit vaOn Ghaelg  
dy chionn lesh Brytnish  
yn arrane Celtiagh O'yanoo.

(Lowender Ynys a llow, Manow mis Metheven 1997 - an kan yn kres o kenys gans  
Bucca dhe don Manowek)

## Peñse

E devn da selloù tener  
Maen-strink ar spi  
Am broud  
Koll sont a rin ennout fenozh  
Ha peñse a rin e mor glas  
Da voud

Tudual Huon

## Longbhá

In iochtar do shúile grámhaire  
Drihtle ghlégeal an dóchais  
Spreagann an dúil ionam.  
Bead anocht ag dul thar foras,  
Im long bháite i muir ghorm  
do bheithe.

Translated from Breton into Irish by  
A. Heusaff

Translated from Common Cornish into  
Maux by Brian Stowell

## Ny Tree Reayrtyn S'aaley

Ny tree reayrtyn s'aaley, rere rouailtagh reagh –  
Lhie-ghreiney aahoilshaghey er glionney dy lhune:  
Irree ny greiney lurg oie dy chiaull as rinkey;  
As soilshey gastey gial ayns sooillyn graih my chree.

Ny tree reayrtyn s'aaley, rere Manninagh moyrnagh –  
Lhie-ghreiney my-heear harrish Nherin ny nooghyn;  
Irree ny greiney harrish Sostyn ny seihltee;  
As mish aynshoh lesh shilley er'n Ellan Sheeant.

Ny tree reayrtyn s'aaley, rere yn dooiny jeeragh –  
Lhie-ghreiney Oie'll Voirrey bannit ayns y Nollick;  
Irree ny greiney Laa Caisht, tra dirree nyn Jiarn;  
As graih erreeishagh meen ayns eddin Yeesey Creest.

Bob Carswell

Translated from Manx into  
Welsh by Robat ap Tomos



Bob Carswell

## Y Tair Golygfa Decaf

Y tair golygfa decaf, yng ngolwg y dihiryn gwyllt llon –  
Machlud yr haul yn disgleirio ar wydraid o gwrw;  
Codiad yr haul ar ôl noson o fiwsig a dawnsio;  
A'r golau disglair byw yn llygaid fy nghariad.

Y tair golygfa decaf, yng ngolwg y Maniawr halch –  
Machlud yr haul yn y gorllewin, dros Iwerddon y seintiau;  
Codiad yr haul dros Loegr fyddolfrydig;  
A minnau yma â'm golwg ar yn Ynys Gysegredig.

Y tair golygfa decaf, yng ngolwg y dyn cyfiawn –  
Machlud yr haul ar Noson Wyl Fair (Noswyl y Nadolig) sanctaidd;  
Codiad yr haul ar Ddydd y Pasg, pan gododd ein Harglwydd;  
A'r cariad toreithiog mwyn yn wyneb Iesu Crist.

## Deth-Tarth Keltek Noweth

Keltyon arta a gemer aga le  
gans franketh noweth may hallens y gwellhe

Wosa cansow 'vledhynnow yndan an yew  
Agan spyrys coth tom yu lemmyn yn few

Pandra 'wra agan lettya? Ny won poran  
Ny agan honen omdhrehafen ynban

Ledyoryon an bys agan syns kyns  
Ensompel da lemmyn dhyn ny yth yns

Gwren ny ledya an bys gans skyans down  
Dyworth agan lynyeth. Avonsen hep own

Whegh whor vryntyn on ny a'n keth meny  
Whegh toll-corn ughel gwren ny gorseny.

Dres oll an bys Keltyon yu scullyes  
Gans oll aga nerth ny a vyth trelyes

Sevel warbarth a wra dhyn ny cref  
Ughella ughella a vyth agan lef

Oryon fals dhyn ny lemmyn settyes  
Y fyth kyns pell gans colon dha sconyes

Why oll na wreugh gortos! Deugh why yn rag!  
Gylls an termyn may hyllyn bos stag

Translated from Unified Cornish  
into Irish by N.J. Williams

Ray Chubb

## Maidneuchan Nua Ceilteach

Glacann na Ceiltigh a t-ionad is dual  
go mbláthóidh siad faoi shaoirse nua.

Faoi smacht a bhíomar ar feadh na gcianta  
ach maireann an tseansprid beo gan spionadh.

Cén bac atá orainn? Ní fios dom féinig.  
Trínár neart féin is ceart dúinn éiri.

Na naoimh fadó a threoraigh na glúine:  
iontach an eiseamláir iadsan dúinne.

Treoraimis lenár n-oidhreacht eagnaí  
pobail an tsaoil. Ar aghaidh gan eagla.

Seisear siúr ón aon fhuil uasal  
atá ionainn féin nó sé bhinnbhuabhall

Scaipeadh na Ceiltigh ar fud na cruinne:  
claochlófar trína neartsan sinne.

Deirtear nach neart go cur le chéile  
is cloisfear ar nglórna ag dul i dtréine.

Srianadh sinn le teoranna bréige:  
beifear le ríméad go luath á dtréigean.

A phobal mo chléibh, ná fanaigí siar!  
Bristear ár lainsis is bímis saor.

## Gleann Eilg 1956

Muir ciùin, gainmheach rèidh  
 Grián carraich 's nàbaidh  
 le gunna, duine treun

toirt ballachan a shealg,  
 mas fhior, gu cladach  
 far am biodh spòrs gun chealg.

Dh'fhalbh sinn gu sàmhach,  
 dà allt dhubh a' siubhal  
 smuaintean uaine is amh.

Stad sinn os cionn mara,  
 fada shìos faoileag gheal  
 mar aingeal naomh allail.

Mar aingeal naomh tuinne  
 na suidhe leatha fhèin  
 gabhail beachd air cruinne;

's thog mo nàbaidh gunna  
 's ghabh e oirre sealladh  
 's cha robh 'n truaghan tuilleadh

's dh'fhairich mi briseadh dùil  
 's briseadh saoghal cridhe,  
 mo dhaonnachd dith a sunnd:

gnìomh suarach gun adhbhar,  
 gam dheanamh nas lugha,  
 's gath a' chiont' gam thadhal

Maoilios M Caimbeul

## Gleann Eilg 1956

Mor sioul ha traezh kompez,  
 heol nev'amzer, hag un amezeg  
 bagol gant e fuzuilh,

Ur c'hrennard o vont d'e heul  
 d'an aod, sañset da chaseal.  
 O c'hedal dihued dizrouk.

Dilavar hon eus kerzhet  
 dalc'het pep hini gant red  
 e breder kriz pe eeunek.

Savet omp war an tornaod  
 ma par hor sell war ur gouelan  
 re bar d'un ael en e sae wenn.

Un ael heneuz gouestlet d'an donn,  
 pell en traoñ 'n e gluch 'n e unan  
 oc'h arvestiñ ouzh e ved.

Savet beg ar fuzuilh,  
 buket ouzh an evn, ha setu  
 kaset an tamm tru da netra.

Mantret on diwar an taol ganas,  
 rannet gantañ ma c'halon,  
 disteraet an den ac'hanon

Pegen dismeg diboeil an taol,  
 me ivez zo mezhekaet  
 ha gwanet gant ar giriegezh

Translated from Gàidhlig into Breton  
 by A. Heusaff

## Radharc

Iar geomhlui sna dumhchannai  
 nior fhan eatarthu ach leathshuil –  
 súil ghorm na spéire,  
 a fabhraí féir  
 ar dhath an óir.

Biddy Jenkinson

## Gwel

Goude bezañ gourvezet en tevennoù  
 ne chome etrezo nemet ul lagad -  
 lagad glas an oabl,  
 liv an aour war  
 e valvennoù geot.

## Tlachteolaíocht

Paisean ard uasal  
 fágann  
 eiscir peacá

Biddy Jenkinson

## Geomorfologiezh

Ur garantez bras ha nobl  
 a lez war he lerc'h  
 un darrosennad\* pec'hedoù

Translated from Irish into Breton by  
 Éamonn Ó Ciosáin

Notenn: ar ger iwerzhonek *eiscir*: zo ur  
 seurt kae uhel hag a ya a-dreuz  
 Iwerzhon eus bro Dulenn betek  
 Gaillimh, bet lezet war lerc'h oadvezh  
 ar skorn. Signifiañ a ra ar ger *ros* un  
 dra heñvel a-walc'h e Kerne

## Lomman

She lomman creoi ta sheidey veih'n hiar  
 Harrish ny sleityn rooisht as moanee liauyr.  
 Agh fo nyn gassyn hene ta mirrilyn dy liooar,  
 As markiagh er y gheay ta feeagh braew mooar

Bob Carswell

## Awel

Mae awel fain yn chwythu o'r dwyrain  
 Dros y mynyddoedd moel a'r mawndiroedd eang.  
 Ond o dan ein traed y mae digon o ryfeddodau,  
 Ac yn marchogaeth ar y gwynt y mae cigfran fawr hardd.

Translated from Manx into Welsh by  
 Robot ap Tomos

## Gwennol

A wennol, A wennol, deez, lavar an gweer,  
mar bell peleah vee che drethe termen gwave heer?  
Me geath tuah sooth pols bean, ma guthman,  
Leb ma a whirny da stella an previan.

A wennol, A wennol, ma obma tha nyth,  
en skeber aworra en trester ew gwres.  
Per thaa me a ore, rag me an gwraze enna,  
ha me an owna car drova en kensa.

A wennol, A wennol, tha che me veath scose,  
en kidniath mor menta buz gurtas en close.  
Na ellam gweel hedna, na, leez me a verow,  
buz me vedn doaz trea en gwainten, me an thethow.

Edn voze me a adgan en sooth war an oon,  
na ellam omwetha rag cara hye down,  
buz pecarra gwennol na vedn gortas pelha,  
drethe oll an beaz hye a vedn moaz tha wandra.

Richard Gendall

Richard Gendall



## Fáinleog

A fháinleog, a fháinleog, tair, inis an fhírinne dom.  
Cá rabhais go dtí seo ar feadh an Gheimhridh fhada?  
Do chuas ó dheas tamall, a chara,  
Mar a mbíonn na feithidí ag crónán i gcónaí.

A fháinleog, a fháinleog, seo í do nead.  
Sa scioból thuas ar an mbioma mar a bhfuil sí déanta.  
Tá a fhios agam go han-mhaith, ós mise a dhein ann í,  
Agus deiseod í mar a bhí sí an uair sin.

A fháinleog, a fháinleog, bead im sciath duit.  
Sa bhFómhar má bhíonn tú sásta ach fanúint cóngarach.  
Ní féidir liom é sin a dhéanamh, ní féidir, ar eagla go bhfaighead bás.  
Ach tiocfad thar n-ais san Earrach, geallfad san.

Tá aithne agam ar chailín ar an móinteán ó dheas,  
Agus ní leigheas agam air ach grá mór a thabhairt di,  
Ach mar an bhfáinleog ní fhanfaidh sí níos sia,  
Imeoidh sí le fán an tsaoil go léir.

## Gelert

Y Ci na fu farw  
yn awr  
yn llwybr pererindod  
holl anoracs  
y byd

Y Ci na fu  
yn awr  
yn ddafydd ar bob  
Goliath  
creigiau Gwynedd.

Y Ci na fu erioed  
na laddodd 'chwaith  
Riupart yr Arth  
ym Meddgelert -  
trueni

Y Ci na fu ond  
fel aberth cyfleus  
i gleddyf y Rhiant  
cartwnaidd  
- onide?

Y Ci na fu -  
fel Buddug -  
yn barod i lyfu cyllyll  
yr anoraciaid  
rhyddfrydig

David Greenslade

## Gelert

Mur an do dh'eug an Cù  
A dh'aindeon sin,  
Is ceum nan co-creutairean e,  
Feadh na cruinne-cé.

Mur an robh an Cù uair beò,  
A dh'aindeon sin,  
B'e Daibhidh an aghaidh gach Goliath,  
Air carraig Gwynedd.

Mur an robh an Cù ach na ròlaist,  
Cha bhíodh e comasach,  
Riupart am Mathan a chur gu bàs,  
Ann am Beddgelert,  
Bu mhór am beud.

Mur an robh an Cù riamh,  
Cha bhíodh an lobart ghoireasach aige,  
Fo chliadheamh athair an leinibh,  
Nach eil sin ceart?

Ged a tha an Cù ach na ùirsgeal,  
Agus eachdraidh Bhodicea an fhirinn,  
Chi na daoine faoin ach bàs mi-cheart,  
Ach 's e gaisge a tha a' ceangail iad ri chéile!

Translated from Welsh into Gàidhlig  
by Gilleasbuig Lachlain \*Illeasbuig

Translated from Modern Cornish into  
Irish by Merfyn Phillips

## Stubbin, Gow Kiarail

Ta'n stubbin çheet hood ayns y laa,  
Kayt caarjoil, t'ad ooilley gra.  
Cha jean eh gobbal strugey meen,  
Cree ta bog, jarrood cree reen.  
T'eh shirrey graih as treisht ass towse,  
Lhieen e chorp dy kiart lesh foays.  
Agh eisht t'eh goit ersooyl dy bieau.  
Currit stiagh ayns bastag doo.  
Atreih, kialgeyrns ren çheet er,  
Cosney argid son roosteyr.  
As nish t'eh er ny chur ersooyl,  
Raipit magh veih thie er-roul,  
Ta'n onid echey caillit nish,  
Ribbey sollagh fuirraght rish.  
Cre fodmayd jannoo, stubbin voght?  
Jeeragh lheie ersooyl gyn loght?  
Fodmayd shassoo seose as scrabey,  
Gobbal goll magh er y vaatey.  
Cha nel ansoor ry gheddyn ain,  
Agh peeagheree ta faagit dooin.

Brian Stowell



Brian Stowell

## Cathe Manx, Kebmar Weeth

Ma an cathe Manx a toaz thewh en termen deeth,  
Cathe caradow, oll car driggans laull.  
Na vadnava sonya soodel cloer,  
Colan ew vedall, nekeves pub droag breze.  
Ma e wheelas carenga dres ehan,  
Lenol e gorff a trozor vase.  
Buz nena comeres ew eker mar scoen,  
Agoye tha ganstell towlies ew.  
Puna deceyt trawethack reeg cramyta nese lebmen.  
Dendel muna rag leddarn war neb coor!  
Eah, ma hye moaz lebmen pell thor e trea,  
Squatches dre nearth, lowse, esgeres.  
Na velha sempill, elyn na glane,  
Rag hye, maglan ew ploos, scantlower cuzal.  
An Gathe Manx en dewhan, drellen nye gweel?  
Tetha tha veaz, an Deez Manx gwyrrian?  
Nye ell sevall ha scrivas ha garma,  
Ny tha nye an scathe ha meaz.  
Metessen nag eze gorriby,  
An peath ew geres ew eedgan.

Translated from Manx into Modern  
Cornish by Richard Gendall

## Ogof Arthur

Pa werth brenin dan hudlath gwsg?  
A'r tad, Uthr Pendragon, dan y gro?  
A Myrddin wedi mynd i'r coed?

Am fod Brenin Cwsg yn fodd i genedl ddehongli;  
a'r deffro, gyda'r gwanwyn, yn werth yr aros hir.  
Dwg pob derwen ei fesen,  
yn y mes mae Mudiad Ysgolion Myrddin

Ac am yr arch -  
onid swydd y tad  
yw troi ei wyneb at farwolaeth  
at y llu o dduwiau a duwiesau,  
ac ar eu cyfer nhw lenwi pair y ddaear gyda'i gorff?

Megis Uthr.  
Megis Myrddin.  
Megis Arthur.

A gâr y chwedl, edrydd.  
Mae Cymry wrth yr ogof  
a'r dadebru'n araf sisial yn y graig.

David Greenslade

## An Uaimh Aig Art

Am bi righ na chadail fo gheasaibh airigh air cail?  
Agus 'athair Uthr Pendragon fon ghrinneal?  
Agus Merlin leis an t-sruth?

Le righ na chadail tuigidh nàisean ri aiseirigh san Earrach,  
Is shiach don fheitheamh,  
Fasaidd gach darach cnò-daraich.  
'S e sgoiltean Mherlin a tha sna chroileagan.

A thaobh na ciste-laighe,  
Chan eil dleasdanas aithar,  
'Aodann a thionndadh gu bàs,  
A chum diathan is ban-diathan gu leòr,  
Agus a' cur aghaidh orra,  
Coire mór na talmhainn a lionadh leis a' chorp aige.

Coltach ri Uthr,  
Coltach ri Merlin,  
Coltach ri Art.

Ma bhios gaol aig duine.  
Air an sgeul seo, aithrisidh e i,  
'S ann a tha Ceiltich air beulaibh na h-uamha,  
Agus dùisgeadh a' dèanamh crònan gu mall air a' chreag.

Translated from Welsh into Gàidhlig  
by Gilleasbuig Lachlainn 'Illeasbuig

# é i r e



Micheal  
Mac  
Aonghusa

## PEACE AND PROSPERITY?

When the Celtic League was founded the English empire was still something of a major force. The blood-red bits on the map of the world could be seen without the aid of a magnifying glass. The break-up of the United Kingdom appeared to be a pipe-dream.

The Orange Order virtually controlled the Northern Ireland statelet with the connivance of successive London governments. That hegemony was challenged by the Civil Rights Movement in a peaceful campaign which was met by violence from loyalist gangs and the paramilitary RUC and B-Specials.

The Battle of the Bogside in which the unarmed community of west Derry defended itself against the RUC and B-Specials in August 1969 was followed by the invasion of nationalist Belfast by the RUC and loyalist gangs. In August and September of 1969 3,500 families were driven from their homes in that city. Unionists sang:

*On 14 August we took a little trip,  
up along Bombay Street and buried out  
all the shit.  
We took a little petrol and we took a little  
gun  
and we fought the bloody Fenians  
till we had them on the run.*

In the years that followed nationalist homes in Belfast, in particular, suffered continuous systematic raiding and vandalism by the British Army. Internment in August 1971 completed the alienation of

the nationalist community. Only a minority of those detained were Republican activists.

On 30 January 1972, Bloody Sunday, English paratroopers shot dead 13 unarmed civilians on an anti-internment march in Derry. Following that it seemed to tens of thousands of people that armed struggle was the only way forward.

In March 1972 the Stormont parliament and government was replaced by direct rule from London which has pertained except for the brief period of the power-sharing executive (1973-74). This experiment was the result of the Sunningdale Agreement between the Irish and English governments but was shattered by the loyalist strike, a near-putch carried out with the blessing of Ian Paisley.

The 1970s saw the increasing "Ulsterisation" of the conflict (whereby the RUC and the UDR played the major role in the suppression of republicanism, rendering the British Army less visible), the increase in sectarian murders by loyalists and the attempts to criminalise political prisoners. The latter followed the withdrawal of "Special Category" status in 1975. This led to the harrowing H-Block crisis involving prisoners refusing to wear prison uniform and "going on the blanket" and the "dirty protest" (refusing to slop out and smearing "slops" on the walls of their cells).

Tomas Cardinal Ó Fiaich was moved to say "one would hardly allow an animal to live in such conditions, let alone a human being." When all else failed prisoners went



Bobby Sands, RIP

on hunger-strike, ten of them dying between May and October 1981. They

included Bobby Sands MP and Kieran Doherty TD.

The H-Block crisis created a new leadership in Sinn Fein epitomised by people like Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Danny Morrison. It was Morrison who coined the celebrated maxim "with a ballot box in one hand and an Armalite in the other." This was misinterpreted at the time as a militaristic stance but was in fact indicative of a more political approach.

The New Ireland Forum of 1983-4 and the Hillsborough Agreement of 1985 were opposed strenuously by the Unionists. The latter established the International Conference and a permanent secretariat situated in Belfast and gave the Irish government the right to be consulted on a range of northern affairs.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw a series of exploratory meetings between Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein and John Hume of the SDLP. As the scope of these meetings widened there was a large input from the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds. From this process came the so-called Hume-Adams agreement. It signalled a convergence of outlook on the part of militant republicans, constitutional nationalists and the Irish Government on the basis of national self-determination and an unarmed strategy.

The peace process initiated by this agreement was never welcomed by the Tory government whose idea of solving the Irish question was to suppress republicanism. The IRA ceasefire of 31 August 1994 created a new situation. After a generation of war the quality of life improved greatly for all in the Six Counties. It eventually collapsed because of the failure of the English government to react positively to it. The fall of the Reynold's government, in circumstances that have not been fully explained, weakened the process.

However the defeat of the Tories in May 1997 opened the way for a second ceasefire in July.

This ensured that in September when the Stormont talks began Sinn Fein sat alongside representatives of the two governments, the main nationalist party, the Social and Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Women's Coalition, the Alliance Party, the small unionist parties representing loyalist paramilitaries (PUP and UDP) and the principal unionist voice, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP). The latter led by David Trimble have been reluctant participants. They have been propelled into the process by the unionist community who, as shown in opinion polls, want their political representatives to talk to Sinn Fein. Only Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the rump UK Unionist Party remain outside the process.

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***'What can be expected is an interim agreement which will end forever the inferior status of the nationalist community...'***

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The Stormont talks are bound to be difficult. It is unrealistic to expect them to result in a united Ireland in the short term. What can be expected is an interim agreement which will end forever the inferior status of the nationalist community, recognise the Irish citizenship of all in the region who cherish it and allow for substantial all-Ireland institutions.

A symptom of newly-found confidence in the nationalist community has been the refusal to tolerate the provocative and insulting behaviour of Orange lodges marching through their areas. Such marches carry the old message of "Croppies lie down" and are a ritual marking of the caste pecking order. Events on the Garavagh Road in Portadown show that the English state, even under a Blairite administration, is prepared to baton and kick men, women and children to make way for Orange sectarianism.

The late Jack Mitchell, Scots democrat and scholar (who died 21 April 1997) wrote in his last poem:

*Yes, Adolf Hitler's Brownshirts  
had their traditions too -  
riotous revels reaching back to the Dark  
Ages.  
No, they were not the first  
to go through the ghettos like a dose of  
salts,  
assaulting, insulting, terrorising;  
but they enriched the tradition with their  
own mix  
of depravity and efficiency.  
Strict-belted, jackbooted, chinstrapped,  
the roar was the only mouth-music  
they could muster.  
Braying their hate-chants  
bearing their barbaric insignia, they  
marched out of history.*

While the Orange Order is an anti-Catholic body its primary purpose is to keep Protestants in line. This is becoming increasingly difficult as more and more Protestants reject sectarianism and a growing number accept the inevitability, and even the desirability, of a united Ireland. Indeed a recent book, *Further Afield* by Marilyn Hyndman, a collection of interviews with 40 people from Protestant backgrounds indicate how close many of them are to a quasi-republican position.

Many observers have spoken of the alienation of the unionist community, a

phenomenon that is to be found wherever one group of society has been used to perpetuate hegemony over another group and finds it is no longer of any use to the real rulers. One is reminded of the pitiful lament of Edward Carson, "I was only a puppet, and so was Ulster, and so was Ireland, in the political game that was to get the Conservative Party its power."

The alienation of unionists is heightened by demographic and social changes. At the May general election 42% of the population of the Six Counties voted for nationalist candidates. Derry city council, once a bastion of Orange domination, is now under nationalist control. Belfast has a nationalist Lord Mayor for the first time ever and is likely to have a nationalist majority in the next election or two. A paper from the Department of Foreign Affairs recently leaked suggests that within a generation people from the nationalist community will dominate the professions.



*John Hume*

Indeed considering the long-term demographic trends the Six Counties will have a nationalist majority by the second generation of the 21st century.

The course of the 26 county Republic in the period under review has been dominated as much by economics as by politics. The Anglo-Ireland Free Trade Agreement of 1965 put the last nail in the coffin of the already-abandoned efforts at self-sufficiency. It strengthened the neo-colonial relationship with the English state. The Republic joined the Common Market as it was then called on 1 January 1973. Membership transformed the neo-colonial nature of the state to one of dependence on Brussels. In 1972, 1986 and 1995 the Treaty of Rome, the Single European Act and the Treaty of Maastricht respectively were adopted by large majorities of Irish voters.

In all three referendum campaigns the word "grants" was chanted like a mantra. Up to now many, if not most, Irish people

have regarded the European Union in its various manifestations as a welfare facility. So far the whole of Ireland has been classed as a less-developed region of the Community. This has brought many benefits through the Structural Fund. Nobody really believes this status can continue to be justified.

This is because the Irish economy has expanded in recent years and shows no sign of a downturn in the foreseeable future. Foreign commentators have, with justification, dubbed the country "the Celtic Tiger." A colloquium of economists forecast in October 1997 that virtual full employment (defined as an unemployment rate of 5% of the workforce) was achievable at the turn of the millennium. This is from a nadir of 18% unemployment in 1986.

Thirty years ago most Irish exports went to Britain. Although the countries of Britain are still the biggest single market for Irish goods that entity has relinquished its former domination of the Irish economy. The cutting back on EU funds and grants might well be a blessing in disguise as Ireland for the first time is able to stand on its own in an open economy situation.

Computerisation has had a major effect on social as well as economic life. Indeed, the way the Irish have taken to computers has been phenomenal. The country has been quick to exploit the opportunities thrown up by the new Information Technology sector.

It needs to be said that many have not benefited from the Celtic Tiger economy. Chronic poverty and homelessness still exists in the cities. Drugs and drug-related crime is a major problem. The treatment of the small Travelling community is a national disgrace. Social Welfare officials, gardai and judges often behave in a deplorable manner towards those under their control and conditions in prisons are appalling. Racism has been absent from the Irish scene up to now but has reared its ugly head in a marginal way with some sly encouragement from a small number of politicians.

The last 20 years have seen the fairly thorough secularisation of Irish society. The Church is no longer the power in the land it once was. Discussions about the morality of contraception in the 1970s seem to belong to another era. Divorce has been legalised by a small majority in a referendum. It should be said that church-based groups are in the forefront of the struggle for social justice and often more radical than the parties of the left.

In the 1960s Ireland became an urban society although practically everybody has roots in the land only a generation or two back. This trend has continued. In recent years the average income of farmers, already way below the average industrial

wage, has been falling and the small farmer seems set to become an anachronism.

Thousands are leaving farming every year while many others are dependent on EU grants, a source of income which is not going to continue indefinitely. Farming is largely circumscribed by EU regulations and quotas. The ultimate obscenity in a world racked with hunger must surely be the set-aside procedure whereby farmers are paid to render parts of their land unproductive.

Social welfare benefits and services have improved greatly. In a recent study Pearse McKenna (in the weekly paper *Unity*, published in Belfast) has shown that such benefits and services are in many cases superior to those pertaining in the United Kingdom.

Irish forces have played a positive and progressive role in UN peacekeeping operations, notably in the Lebanon. The advantage of being a small neutral and impartial country has been the crucial factor in the success of Irish participation in such operations in 16 countries. Recent developments in this field have seen the emergence of international forces under NATO control to enforce a kind of "Pax Americana" under the guise of peace-keeping. The pressure for Irish participation in such adventures is a challenge to neutrality and Irish antipathy to imperialist militarism.

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*'Neutrality and membership of the EMU are likely to be the main issues of contention...'*

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For some years the Republic has found itself locked into an EU common foreign policy which does not always reflect traditional Irish values or the country's sense of solidarity with the developing world. Neutrality and membership of the EMU are likely to be the main issues of contention in the referendum to ratify the Treaty of Amsterdam.

Not everything in the Irish state is rosy but as Risteárd Ó Glaisne remarked in the Celtic League Yearbook of 1964 life is full of new beginnings. That truth is even clearer in the flux of 1997. Hopefully we will soon be energised by the emergence of other Celtic Tigers.

M. Mac Aonghusa



# Irish – Growth and Decline

Cathal  
Ó  
Luain



## Introduction

In looking back over almost 20 years to the last series of comprehensive *state of the nation* reviews (published in *Corn 21*) a number of positive items stand out very clearly on the Irish language front while many of the negative features observed then continue to exist or have even deepened.

The positive items are the eventual founding of an Irish language TV channel, *Teilifís na Gaeilge*, and the strong upsurge, sustained over many years, in the demand by parents for Irish medium education for their children resulting in a steady increase in the number of Irish medium schools. The negative aspects relate to the general position of Irish in education, language rights and more worrying the continuing decrease in the transmittal of the language from one generation to the next in the Irish speaking areas (*Gaeltachtaí*).

## Mass Media

*Raidió na Gaeltachta*, founded in 1972 after an intensive campaign, including operation of a pirate radio, developed considerably in the eighties. Broadcasting was expanded from the initial two hours a day. Lunchtime broadcasting came in the mid eighties and the station now operates continuously from 8.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m., each day. The service improved in depth and quality and gives a good range of coverage in news, current affairs, sport, drama, music and local news.

A welcome addition in Dublin was *Raidió na Life*, broadcasting in Irish (but with all types of music) between five and eleven. The station operates with the help of *Bord na Gaeilge* (*BnaG*, the state board for the Irish language) and a volunteer team who give their services free in production, presentation and general assistance.

In the mid seventies protests began about the disgracefully small amount of Irish language broadcasting on the national television station, *RTE1* (and later *RTE2*). Irish speakers began refusing to pay their TV licences, many were brought to court and some jailed for periods of a few weeks. A ginger group *Freagra* ran a campaign of protests marches (which some hundreds attended), painted graffiti, put on pickets, organised *chain-ins*, climbed the *RTE* mast at its HQ in Dublin and interrupted broadcasting in the studio on one occasion. No real overall improvement resulted. In the eighties a national campaign was organised - *An Feachtas Náisiúnta Teilifíse*

(*AFNT*) - with broad based community support in the *Gaeltacht*, and the involvement of Irish language and other national cultural organisations. Intensive lobbying was carried out at local and national level and a small trickle of court appearances, by those still refusing to buy a licence, continued. At last light appeared at the end of the tunnel when the then Taoiseach, C.J. Haughey, announced in March 1991 that a service would be set up in 1992.

Matters did not progress at anything like that speed but the commitment was adhered to by successive Governments and *Teilifís na Gaeilge* (*TnaG*) began broadcasting on Halloween 1996. The last protester to be jailed incidentally in 1992, was Ciarán Ó Feinneadha, active in *AFNT* and previously leader of *Freagra!* The service was set up for about £17.5m and will cost about £10.5m a year to run. The most important thing about *TnaG* is that it exists: space does not permit discussion on the methodology adopted or the philosophy obvious. *TnaG* broadcasts from about 4.00 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. each evening. Only five and a half hours of this is in Irish however as *Euronews* from 6 to 7 p.m. is all in English. The four to six slot is aimed at children while the later segment covering a soap opera, sport, pop, etc. is very much aimed at an under twenty audience except for the news (this is generally of a good standard). *TnaG* claims an audience of about 310,000 and it would seem that the broadcasting of old Gaelic football and

hurling championship matches after 10.30 (commentaries in English) is designed to bolster figures - presumably also the curious policy of broadcasting foreign language films with subtitles in English! There is much room for improvement and let us hope that after such a length of time taken to obtain a vital service that TnaG rises to the challenge to provide a quality service covering all age groups and interests.

## Education

Twenty years ago there were 18 Irish medium primary schools and 5 second level colleges. Today there are 114 primary schools and 25 second level colleges/units. As cities like Dublin and Cork expanded groups of parents, intent on providing an Irish medium education for their children, came together in the suburbs and with the help of Gaelscoileanna (the national Irish medium school movement, founded in 1973) set up schools to ensure that. The movement also took firm hold in many other towns and cities around the county. Parents took on themselves the continuous round of fund raising activities required to bridge the gap between state funds and what it costs to run a school.

Central to this activity in most cases was the desire to ensure the place of Irish in the community and the promotion of its use.

Initially Gaelscoileanna as an organisation had sparse resources and no full time staff. Since 1978 it has been grant aided through Bord na Gaeilge and despite

difficulties from time to time has had the capacity to employ a full time organiser and in more recent years an assistant in addition to funding its activities. It has active subcommittees working on planning, second level education and on providing courses and material for both teachers and school management boards. Its presence has grown in the educational field and in the political arena. A welcome development has been the setting up of a patronage system under Gaelscoileanna auspices which is independent of the Episcopal system. A number of schools founded in recent years have opted for this system with some of them being interdenominational schools. To try to address long term major funding Gaelscoileanna founded the *Foundation for Irish Medium Education* which has undertaken with slim resources some large scale fund-raising activities with some success. Growth always creates problems of course and not the least of the problems of many Gaelscoileanna are caused by poor and inadequate accommodation. This is a direct result of Department of Education policy of refusing capital expenditure on necessary school buildings. Over half of the primary Gaelscoileanna have no permanent premises. Furthermore, with generally falling school numbers, due to demographic changes, the Department has tried to pursue in one instance an amalgamation of a Gaelscoil with two English language schools, a move which was successfully resisted.

The threat of the panel remains: a system whereby teaching positions cannot be filled by interview by a school if surplus

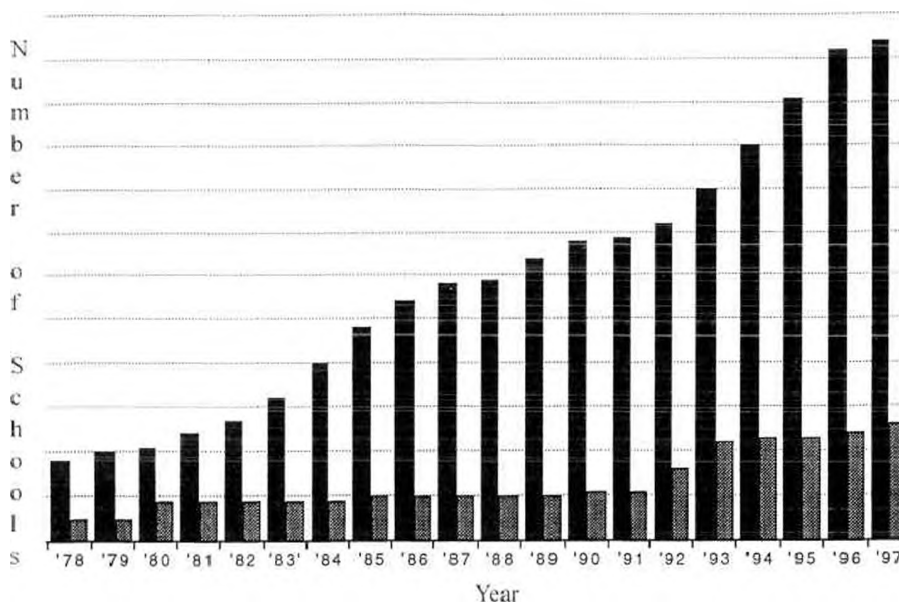
teachers, most with no fluency or interest in the language, are available elsewhere. Little has changed over the years in some regards. The question of Irish language textbooks at second level is still a vexed one and the attitude of the Department of Education to long term planning, for what is a demonstrably sustained growth, still seems to secretly wish that all would disappear overnight. A recent welcome development, however has been, following sustained lobbying by Gaelscoileanna, the setting up by the new Minister of Education, Micheal Ó Máirtín, of a support structure for Irish medium education which would also plan and co-ordinate the provision of textbooks and aids to learning and teaching through Irish. Let us hope that this will have real powers and resources.

In the North particular problems are faced due to the lack of recognition given by the Department of Education there to schools in existence even for a number of years and to the lack of trained teachers available.

Unfortunately the position of Irish in the education system in general has weakened due to decisions made many decades ago. More recently, in 1992, the oral Irish examination for applicants to the teacher training colleges was dropped. The failure rates for Irish in the Intermediate Certificate have more than doubled since the mid seventies so that those who either fail or do not take Irish amount to 30% of candidates while the figure for the Leaving Certificate is 25%. There is a need for urgent remedial action in the context of an overall active bilingual State policy.

## Growth in Irish Medium Schools 1978-1997

■ Primary Schools ■ Second Level



## Language Rights and the State

This is still an area of grave concern. Judgements in the courts have not favoured Irish. A Supreme Court judgement in the early eighties confirmed that although Irish speakers have the right to use Irish in court cases there is no obligation on the courts to deal with their cases through Irish (even in Gaeltacht areas!). There have been continuing cases of difficulties with local authorities, State bodies and semi State bodies in the cases of Irish speaking individuals trying to conduct their business with them through Irish. In the Gaeltacht they have acted as an anglicising influence over the years. Notices, information and forms in Irish, or even bilingual ones are rarely provided in offices serving the Gaeltacht. There has been no provision to ensure that there is even a minimal proficiency in Irish achieved by staff in Gaeltacht offices.

It took an individual (Ciarán Ó Feinneadha again!) to highlight the

ignoring of Irish in the new vehicle numbering plate system introduced in 1990 leading eventually to a system which has at least each county name in Irish on the plate - albeit somewhat small!

The situation can only be resolved by the introduction of a Bill of Rights - a measure Conradh na Gaeilge and other language organisations have been pressing for over many years.

## Gaeltacht

The decline in the numbers of families rearing their children Irish speaking in the Gaeltacht areas has gathered pace over the last 20 years. Údaras na Gaeltachta - the Gaeltacht development authority has been successful in bringing employment to Gaeltacht areas and the Gaeltacht co-operatives have been an invigorating force but despite this the erosion continues.

Some pessimistic commentators have put the Irish speaking population in the official Gaeltacht areas (population about 60,000?) to be below 10,000. Certainly surveys and analysis of data related to the language capability of primary school children in Gaeltacht areas indicate continuing decline with only some core areas in the larger Gaeltachtaí in Galway and Donegal coming close to what could be expected from a vibrant Gaeltacht.

## Conclusion

While significant progress has been made in some areas depressing trends continue in others. Survey results indicate a high level of support for the Irish language in the general population. Studies have also shown that Irish is seen as important in marketing. The language has made considerable progress in the North. Other aspects of Irish culture such as traditional music and dance continue to flourish.

There is a need for strengthening of the legal status of the language and a Bill of Rights. It is essential that measures be adopted to halt the decline in the Gaeltacht areas. Active promotion of bilingualism in local and central Government bodies must be pursued and proper funding for bodies such as Gaelscoileanna - coupled with constructive instead of obstructive policies - is required.

Cathal Ó Luain

### Celtic League Internet Site

<http://www.manxman.co.im/cleague/>

e-mail General Secretary:

[b.moffatt@advsys.co.im](mailto:b.moffatt@advsys.co.im)

e-mail Assistant G.S.

[mkermode@enterprise.net](mailto:mkermode@enterprise.net)



# A Confident Cornwall

Up until the 1980s Cornwall had been mostly conservative politically, voting mainly for the London parties or for local government independents. It was only after 1979, when Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister of the UK, that interest seemed to pick up in the culture and, following on, the politics of Cornwall.

In 1983 MK (founded in 1951) had their first official Cornwall Councillor elected for Penzance, this allowed them to have a platform to put forward the views of MK to a wider audience.

During the early 80s the Perranporth Conferences began, these twice yearly conferences led to the formation of several pressure groups especially in the latter half of the decade. Some of the main issues to contribute to the rise of Cornish nationalism were the Tin crisis which led to the closing of Geevor Tin Mine and the loss of many jobs at South Crofty. The imposition of the Poll Tax which led to the first *Poll Tax riot* outside Scotland and the formation of CAPT (Cornwall against the Poll Tax) also led to the revamping of the Stannary Parliament which although elected in the early 70s had not been taken seriously. It was this issue which brought them to the forefront and also brought the nationalist parties to public attention.

The other main issue which brought the concept of Cornish Nationhood to the fore was the Euro Constituency debate where Cornwall is joined to the English City of Plymouth merely to make the numbers fit. Every time that the boundaries are changed there has been a public enquiry where the points for the Cornish nation are put forward (and then ignored by the Government). *A new problem appears to be in the offing with plans for proportional representation, although plans have not been finalised reports suggest that Cornwall will be included in a south west regional super-constituency election on a party list system.*

The late 80s saw a low point in MK fortunes at a time when most people were worrying more about keeping work and finding enough money to buy food and housing than whether Kernow was a free

nation.

The 90s brought a minor increase in prosperity along with which came an upturn in the fortunes of MK this also occurred after major restructuring of the party workings. MK were able to increase the number of elections that they fought and put up candidates in all six districts.

This built up and in 1997 MK fought a strong campaign in the UK General Election (See Carn 98) which brought an end of Tory rule in Cornwall.

Celtic League member, Dick Cole was elected the new Chairman of Mebyon Kernow at the party's conference in Fraddon during October, 1997.



Dick Cole

During a speech to the Conference, he called on the people of Cornwall, to step up the campaign for devolution to Cornwall. He said "like the Celts of Wales and Scotland - we are a Tory-Free zone at Westminster. But like them - we must fight to win a powerful elected body for ourselves - our own parliament or assembly." (To this end there are plans to set up a constitutional convention for Cornwall to get all party support for this end.)

1997 presented two images of Cornwall to the wider world. The first, Keskerdh, Kernow 500, saw thousands of Cornish People recalling a rebellion 500 years before with confidence, pride and not a

little fervour. (See *Carn* 99) The second image was of neglect, with Cornwall caught in a continuing spiral of economic decline with job losses, continuing low wages and high unemployment, ignored by central government.

While the march was essentially a cultural expression of Cornish identity, it became more and more difficult to distinguish between the cultural and political messages.

On Blackheath Common, the marchers of 1997 made the Blackheath Declaration, calling for a better deal for Cornwall.

The declaration has been widely supported by bodies such as the Cornish Gorsedd and the Celtic Congress. Mebyon Kernow and even Cornwall's four Liberal Democrat MPs went further, adding demands for a Cornish Assembly

*As far as the UK Government is concerned we simply do not exist.*

Cornwall's demands for a greater control of its own affairs have not met with a favourable response. The Blackheath Declaration has been ignored. Calls for Cornish Assembly, a Cornish Development Agency, a Cornish University and fair funding for Cornwall as a distinct entity have simply not been listened to. Just as the people of Scotland and Wales voted for the first vestiges of self-government, the new Labour government has, callously, continued to inform Cornwall that it cannot have its own assembly or development agency, but will be submerged into a 'seven-county south-west' based on Bristol or Taunton.



Cornwall needs its own powerhouse institutions - not for the sake of window dressing - but in order to win a much better deal for our people.

Whereas the economic conditions for most parts of Britain have greatly improved over the last 2-3 years, Cornwall continues to be stranded in a trough and unrequiting, and that is the reality of Cornwall for many ordinary Cornish people today.

#### Hope for the Future

There is hope for the future. The events of 1997 have shown a Cornwall which is proud. Our challenge for the new millennium, is to make our vision of Cornwall a modern reality: culturally, politically and economically.

We must consign to the dustbin of history, the years of Cornish neglect.

As the new Grand Bard Ann Trevenen Jenkin said at her inauguration in September, "there is a new spirit abroad, the spirit of An Gof and Flamank, those brave men who stood up for Cornwall and what we as individual Cornish people want. We must never forget their sacrifice, nor the dedication of so many in 1997, who actually marched for Cornwall who were with us in spirit ... there are so many threats to Kernow, and each of us must do our best to keep and develop our culture, our history, our language and identity."

Martyn Miller

This remarkable and realistic beginning certainly needed adding to and developing, which would undoubtedly have been attended to eventually had Jenner not fallen ill and died.

Continued interest in Jenner's work, particularly its very logic and realism, and the remarkable endurance of tradition evidenced by the fact that even to this day previously unrecorded words from the historical language are still turning up, has resulted in a second revival of the *traditional* Cornish language as used by our latest Cornish-speaking forefathers. This began in 1982 with a programme of research to add to Jenner's work, and to fill in the gaps. Since then *Teere ha Tavaz* and the *Cornish Language Council* have been formed, both dealing in the research, promotion and teaching of what was known of *Modern Cornish* in the early 18th century, a convenient and explicit term that we use today for the revived traditional language.

Interest in *Modern Cornish* is increasing rapidly, not only in Cornwall but in many other countries. This historical Cornish is now widely accepted in academic circles where, due to its realistic policy of avoiding invention and borrowing, it has earned the confidence of many universities and an ever widening circle of professors. A mark of this confidence has been the appointment by the University of Exeter of Neil Kennedy, Chairman of *The Cornish Language Council*, as part-time Tutor in Cornish Studies with the Department of Continuing and Adult Education, and of Richard Gendall, President of *The Cornish Language Council* and Director of *Teere ha Tavaz*, as Hon. Research Fellow in the Institute of Cornish Studies with responsibility for the language.

A happy note to sound is that followers of R.M. Nance's *Unified Cornish* (launched in 1928) and of *Modern Cornish* (revived by Jenner in 1904, and gradually returned to after 1982) are co-operating, and well on the way to achieving a greater unity within the Cornish Language scene.

It has taken a long time measured in years of research to produce dictionaries, course books and other learning material, and the list of these is still not complete, but part one of *A Practical Dictionary of Modern Cornish* was published this May, and part two will be ready by Easter 1998, followed by a new grammar and course book. Already the dozen classes being run in the west, and regular *coossies* (social get-togethers or ceilidhs) integrated by Neil Kennedy, are well attended, and now producing proficient users of the language (some now teaching in their own right).

The most concentrated interest in *Modern Cornish* is, indeed, in Penwith, Kerrier and Carrick; from this area sprung

## The Cornish Language

*In the following articles the three language groups in Kernow give an overview of the work they have been doing to develop and promote the Cornish language.*

## Against All Odds

It was Henry Jenner of St. Columb who, at the beginning of this century, first set about the revival of the Cornish language, fallen out of general use since the end of the 18th century, but surviving in scattered remains till the end of the 19th century, even into the 20th century, in a rich tradition of vocabulary, even some phrases.

Jenner's revived Cornish was no invention. In his *Handbook of the Cornish Language 1904*, he pieced together a workable idiom most properly based upon the vernacular as last used by native speakers in the 17th and 18th centuries.



all our literary knowledge of Cornish, and here in Penwith it survived longest. This does not mean that there is no interest further to the east, and in fact it is in the east, the Menheniot near Liskeard, where *Teere ha Tavaz* has its centre.

*Teere ha Tavaz* engages both in research and also in public relations, it also serves as an information and tuition centre.

An increasing number of university students avail themselves of the services of *Teere ha Tavaz*, given free. The case of Katuscia Galli of Cremona in Italy is typical. Externally tutored from *Teere ha Tavaz* by many long letters and telephone calls, she was awarded her doctorate by the *Universita' Cattolica Del Sacro Cuore, Brescia*, in 1996.

*The Cornish Language Council*, centered at Mabe near Penryn, is now organising tuition that will lead to qualification for the adult GCSE, receiving much generous advice and help from the Welsh Joint Education Committee. Information regarding courses and *coossies* can be had from the Chairman, Neil Kennedy, at Tregenze Vean, Antron Hill, Mabe, Penryn, Kernow TR10 9HH, tel. 01326.375362.

*Teere ha Tavaz* has for several years been working with Estate Publications, who produce the well-known series of tourist maps, advising other historical forms of place-names, and whose current project is the production of an all-Cornish map. Craig Weatherhill, Conservation Officer for Penwith Council, being our own officer responsible for place-names, has been instrumental in the setting up of the first batch of signs using historical versions of names at the approach of villages and towns, and various notices connected with places of public resort, such as archaeological sites, historic mine sites etc.

There is no more effective force in the presentation of one's nation and country to the world at large, and the demand for national recognition, than the possession and use of a native language. As our sole surviving englyn states in its third line: **Dean heb tavas a gollas e deer:** *A man without a tongue lost his land.* It is well also to remember what the westerners used to reply when spoken to in English: **Me na vidna cowz a Sowsnack!:** *I will not speak English!* The future for Modern Cornish is bright if we can take these two statements to heart.

Anyone interested in the Cornish Language and needing further information can write to *Teere ha Tavaz* at Tregriff Vean, Menheniot, Liskeard, Kernow, PL14 3PL, or ring 01579.343366. Please enclose a stamped and addressed envelope or reply coupon, as the group operates on a voluntary basis, having no income.

Jan Gendall

# Unified — preparing for the next Century

In 1987 the Cornish Language Board decided on a 5 year period in order to make the change from Unified Cornish to Common Cornish. (Exams were to be offered in Unified for as long as was needed). It could not have been anticipated at that time that the Unified Cornish spelling, which had formed the foundation of revived Cornish in 1928, would prove so resilient. People it seems are not prepared to reject an old friend so quickly. Most Church services continue to be held in Unified, the Cornish Gorseth continues to use Unified and a number of Cornish cultural organisations seem unwilling to change.

Following a failure to compromise with supporters of Common Cornish in 1989 Agan Tavas was reformed in the following year from a closed society for fluent speakers of Cornish into an open society whose aim was to support Unified Cornish. It has achieved its aims by publishing books, advertising classes in Unified and organising an annual language weekend and other events.

In 1995 Dr. N.J.A. Williams of University College Dublin, the first professional Celtic scholar to study revived Cornish in depth, had published his new book *Cornish Today*. Members of Agan Tavas were pleased to see that his preferred option out of the three forms of revived Cornish currently available was Unified Cornish.

However, Dr. Williams went further than to say that Unified Cornish was the best choice currently available. To bring Unified in line with modern Celtic studies he was proposing some changes! How would this be accepted by supporters of Unified Cornish. Having examined in detail Dr. Williams' Unified Cornish Revised (UCR) the Agan Tavas further studies sub-committee concluded that the differences between UCR and Unified were not that great. It was decided therefore that those members who wished to continue using Unified could do so and those members, probably those more advanced in Cornish, who wished to use UCR could do so and neither group would come under pressure from the other.

It was further decided that in order that all Cornish speakers could make a proper assessment of UCR a hand book was



Wella Chubb, 14 (foreground) and his brother Trystan, 12. They are the youngest members of Agan Tavas and both speak Cornish fluently as natural or native(?) speakers. They have both won the Map Melyn shield for projects in Cornish at the Cornish Gorseth.

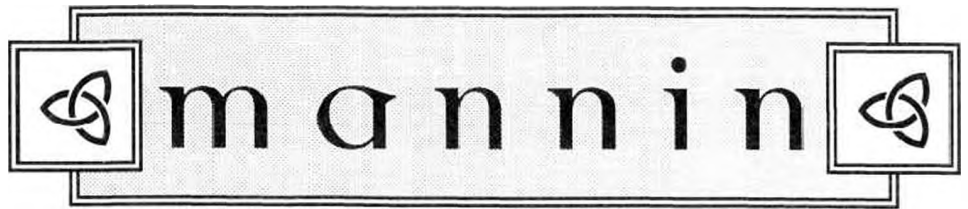
required. Therefore, following a request from Agan Tavas, Nicholas Williams has prepared *Clappya Kernowek* which sets out the pronunciation, amended grammar and changes to some of the vocabulary for UCR.

It would be difficult to set out here all the detailed changes contained in UCR. Basically the sound system of Unified has been slightly emended, some of the grammar has been simplified and words borrowed from the other brythonic Celtic languages have been replaced with words of genuine Cornish origin albeit that they are often words adopted into Cornish from English.

Therefore Nicholas Williams has put forward sensible and cautious amendments to Unified that are preparing it for the next century. The way perhaps that the language movement in Cornwall should have taken 10 years ago.

Ray Chubb  
Secretary Agan Tavas

# Thirty Years of Service to Cornish



The Cornish Language Board was set up in 1967 by joint resolution of the Gorsedd of Cornwall and the Federation of Old Cornwall Societies to take over the work of promoting the Cornish language.

Fifteen members of the Board are elected by the membership of *Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek* (The Cornish Language Society) which is open to all who support the revival of Cornish. The Board and Federation of Old Cornwall Societies provide two representatives, Cornwall Council and the University of Plymouth, one each. The examinations of the Board are validated by the Education Committee of Cornwall Council and by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The Board's highest examination is that of the Institute of Linguists, accepted by degree awarding bodies as the equivalent of one year in a degree course.

It was owing to the initiative of the late PAS Pool that in 1978 the Board set up *Kowethas an Yeth Kernewek*, now an independent organisation.

Over a hundred titles are on the Board's publication list, among them Dr Ken George's *Gerlyver Meur* "The Large Dictionary". The latest publication is *Skeul an Yeth* a complete course in spoken and written Cornish for class and private use. The Board supports classes in Cornwall and overseas. One of these is at Harvard University following lectures given in the USA by Dr George.

The Board receives a constant stream of requests for information and help: names for children and pets (even for a cow) houses and boats. Booklets in Cornish have been provided for Truro Cathedral and for Treliske Hospital and commercial undertakings wishing to use Cornish have been given support.

In 1987 the Board, after consultation decided to change to a reformed system of pronunciation and spelling, known as Common Cornish based on Middle Cornish, correcting the deficiencies of the former Unified Cornish, but the Board continues to provide an examination service for those who wish to continue with the older system and advertises and sells books in Unified Cornish.

The Cornish Language Board looks forward to the next century with confidence in our resurrected language.

It is opportune that an article such as this be written with the Scottish and Welsh referenda as points of reference. The "buzz-word" at the moment is devolution, and many commentators make reference to Mannin as an example of devolution and perhaps what the other non-independent countries should be looking for. The quite obvious implication is that we, the Celtic countries, should not be seeking total independence.

Immediately after the referenda results, Mannin's Chief Minister, Donald Gelling MHK, stated his belief that Alba would inevitably look towards Mannin as a devolution role model. However, Mannin is not an example of devolution in the true sense since she has always been independently governed. Even during the very darkest era of our subjugation by the English Crown (immediately after the Revestment Act of 1765), when the lieutenant governor (the Crown's representative) virtually had the powers of a viceroy, the very fact that the governor had such autocracy helped maintain an air of independence. The 32 member Tynwald (Manx parliament) was retained throughout though it had no fiscal powers.

Mr. Gelling went on further to say that we could not really become much more autonomous without "going right over the edge and into total independence." That statement does not stand up to any serious scrutiny since, despite having fought hard (diplomatically speaking) for the return of fiscal independence throughout the subsequent 200 years (achieving ultimate success in 1958), the governments of the past three decades have effectively handed all fiscal control back to the UK with the sole exception of income tax.

In terms of law-making, health services and education, the Manx government inevitably follows the Westminster government. Nearly every day, you will hear a member of the Manx government stating that a change in law or practice is "to bring us into line with the UK" What they really mean is England and the changes in Alba and Cymru will make this even more obvious. Autonomy is



Mark Kermode

meaningless unless it is exercised.

Nonetheless, Mannin's independence on paper has taken significant steps over the past thirty years, during in fact, the life-span of both the Celtic League and Mannin's only political independence party, Mee Vannin. The lieutenant governor has had most of his powers removed and no longer presides over Tynwald. Compare this to thirty years ago when that office effectively dictated government policy. The change has been effected via the creation of an executive council of politicians elected by the House of Keys. This body is now the policy-maker, but it clearly brings the choice of policy little closer to the people.

As mentioned, these last three decades have also seen the continued presence of Mee Vannin, the Manx Nationalist Party. How has it contributed to the changes, and what future role does it have? Although Mee Vannin has had elected representatives at all levels of government (though none at the moment), the majority of its work has been achieved from without government, via campaigning, lobbying and taking part in consultation exercises. The result is that much of Mee Vannin's original suggestions for the acquisition of greater independence have been adopted by the "establishment" government but, the party would contend, inappropriately i.e. the increasing political independence has not been used to further the security and self-determination of the Manx people but rather to afford a comfortable tax-haven for United Kingdom ex-patriots. The very purpose of self-government was questioned at the 1992 Illiam Dhone commemoration when the Mee Vannin oration closed with the words, "...not a government acting to ensure the perpetuity of an independent nation, but a society engineered to ensure the perpetuity of an independent government."

This misplacement of values has led to further large scale immigration, development and the marginalisation of the Manx people. Although the government emphasis has changed from population increase directly to increased business activity, the result is exactly the same. The

Manx People are now officially a minority in their own country, and this marginalisation is set to continue. Inevitably, reactive campaigns have resulted, epitomised by the FSFO campaign of the late 1980s. This culminated in the arrest and conviction of three Manx cultural activists on arson charges. These campaigns have produced significant short term results. The Manx government is exceptionally sensitive to any notion that there is dissent to its policies and direct action has always thrown it into turmoil.



*Alliam Costain, Mee Vannin member, who was narrowly beaten in the 1996 Manx General Election*

The small size of the community has always made it difficult to sustain such campaigns, however.

Given this situation, Mee Vannin's role could be deemed to be more important than ever, yet it will have to show a considerable increase in activity and consistency if it is to deflect the government from its current

course of creating a pure tax-haven state who's only reason for existence is to pay for an independent government.

This dominant aspect of Manx political economic development is undoubtedly going to bring Mannin into conflict with the EU. Although the Manx government stubbornly refuses to acknowledge the fact, there is an increasing political movement in the EU to regulate the tax-haven economies. Those members of the Manx government who claim that, since Mannin is not part of the EU or the Customs Territory, Europe cannot interfere with our economy are naive in the extreme. Whilst any future moves by the European Union to exercise control over Mannin's finance industry may meet with short term jingoistic opposition from the government, the reality is that Europe has the power to indirectly control the Manx off-shore industry. Statements from the industry's own bodies regarding regulatory legislation would appear to acknowledge this fact. Since the Manx government cannot even secure fishing quotas for its own territorial waters, the future looks grim.

Given that Alba probably now has as much independence in real terms as Mannin, but with the additional benefit of access to European funding, it would do well to look in another direction for increased independence. Meanwhile, a Manx government that traditionally legislates to harmonise with the UK will increasingly find itself legislating to harmonise with England: A sad reflection on a government whose leader believes we have gone as far as possible on the road to autonomy without full independence.

**Mark Kermode**

one accepts this definition of language death or not, it is manifestly the case that interest in, and support for, the language has grown markedly in the last few decades. This growth has led to increasing willingness on the part of the Manx Government to fund teaching of Manx in schools, a development which was almost unthinkable some decades ago.

*Yn Cheshaght Ghailekagh* (Manx Language Society, or Manx Gaelic Society) was founded in 1899. Throughout most of its history, it has operated as a preservationist society rather than a revivalist one. And in society at large in Mann, the study of Manx in order to be able to read the Manx Bible was tolerated, while speaking Manx was seen as a dangerous activity. However, from the late 1930's, a small group of non-native speakers of Manx took to using the language in an everyday sense. After the Second World War and up to his death in 1987, this group was led by the charismatic figure of Doug Fargher, nicknamed *Yn Breagagh*.



*The late Doug Fargher*

Doug Fargher organised language classes for adults and instituted the influential *Oieghyn Gaelgagh* (Manx Speaking Nights) in pubs, where Manx speakers and learners met to practice speaking Manx - and to publicise its continuing existence. From the late 1940's, native speakers of Manx had been tape-recorded by the Irish Folklore Commission and the Manx Gaelic Society, giving precious archives of the Manx of the late nineteenth century. Doug Fargher and his associates saw these recordings as being of enormous importance in their efforts to promote the language.

Doug Fargher's life's work was his English-Manx Dictionary, which was

## LANGUAGE RENAISSANCE

This overview is concerned virtually exclusively with the preservation and development of Manx Gaelic culture, with particular reference to the native language, music and songs. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Manx language was in decline. By the early years of the twentieth century, Manx had virtually disappeared as a community language, apparently despised and ridiculed by almost all Manx people themselves. The word 'apparently' is used advisedly here, because more research is needed to find out more (where possible) about the real attitudes of ordinary Manx people to their own language. The issue of language, and particularly of language change, is infinitely more complex than is generally acknowledged. There is more than a

suspicion that most Manx people had a love-hate relationship with the language and that, quite often, their expressions of contempt for it masked deep feelings of impotent rage and regret about its decline. Such complex attitudes are evident today.

Although Manx was no longer a community language by 1900 - 1910, the Bible and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer were available in Manx, along with a respectable body of native literature in Manx. The practice of summarising new legislation in Manx was never discontinued. And there were always those who learned to speak Manx fluently as a second language. The last recognised native speaker of Manx, Ned Madrell, died in 1974, a date usually highlighted by academics as the 'death' of Manx. Whether



*Manx language playgroup, Mooinjer Veggey*

published in 1979, with assistance from the Manx Government. This assistance was in itself significant in view of the government's previously determined neglect of Manx.

Census returns in the Isle of Man have generally recorded the numbers of those claiming to speak Manx. This number bottomed out in 1961 at 165 and rose steadily after that, reaching 634 in 1991. While the numbers of really fluent speakers would have been significantly less than the census figures, these official returns act as a measure of popular support for the language.

In 1991, influenced by political developments and a Gallup poll showing solid support for Manx in schools, the Manx Government appointed a Manx Language Officer (Brian Stowell) and seconded two Manx-speaking teachers (Phil Kelly and Peggy Carswell) to teach the language in schools on a peripatetic basis. The scheme was modelled on the teaching of instrumental music, where small numbers of children come out of classes to be taught to play musical instruments.

When parents and pupils were canvassed in May 1992, the returns showed that the instrumental music teaching model was not really valid. Almost 2,000 pupils (primary and secondary) wanted to study Manx (roughly 20% of the total school population). In the primary schools, about 40% of all pupils aged seven and over registered to take Manx (with parental support). These numbers could not be coped with given the resources allocated and tuition in Manx was delayed for a large number of pupils. Manx classes started in the schools in September 1992. In mid-November 1992, there were 1,141 pupils taking Manx in the primary schools and

282 in the secondary schools, giving a total of 1,423. In later years, the numbers levelled out at roughly 700 - 800 in the primary schools and about 100 in the secondary schools. Critics of Manx in schools who had (mainly tacitly) expected the whole thing to melt away quickly were confounded.

The introduction of optional Manx in schools has proved a great success, but the position of the language is not particularly satisfactory. The Isle of Man unfortunately adopted the English 'National' Curriculum which has resulted in over-loaded curricula and a simplistic adherence to 'useful' subjects. Manx (like music) is generally regarded as peripheral.

There is a tendency for people in Mann (including some of those working for the national cause) not to appreciate the importance of making tuition in Manx available in the schools. In fact, this demonstrated the very strong demand for the language by the public, thereby silencing vocal critics of Manx in Tynwald.

***It cannot be overemphasised how important it is that the Manx Government has begun to fund the Manx language and culture in a regular way.***

the Manx parliament. More importantly, there are now many hundreds of young people who can understand and speak some Manx and think of the language in a sympathetic way. Following Brian Stowell's retirement in 1996, Phil Kelly

took over as the Manx Language Officer, with Catreney Craine being appointed as a peripatetic teacher of Manx in schools. Continuity of the schools programme was thus retained.

In September 1997, a course leading to the General Certificate in Manx (equivalent to a British General Certificate in Secondary Education) started in secondary schools, with eleven candidates initially. It is expected that adults will be able to take this course from September 1998.

Also in the government sector, use of Manx on departmental stationery has become general, along with Manx on many government vehicles. *Coonceil ny Gaelgey* (Gaelic Advisory Council) was set up as a quasi-government body to provide authoritative Manx translations of official titles, street names, etc. Following the efforts of a very effective supporter of Manx in Tynwald, Peter Karran, the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee was set up with a view to increasing the amount of Manx used on Manx Radio. There has been some progress in this area, but there are difficulties at present because of the small number of Manx speakers who can work in radio. Also, the Manx Treasury has imposed restrictive criteria on the ways the Gaelic Broadcasting Committee can use its budget. Nevertheless, there is optimism that further progress will be made.

Hand in hand with the increasing interest in the language went the revival in Manx music, song and dance. With the issue of their books of Manx folk songs, *Kiaull yn Theay*, Colin and Cristl Jerry were pivotal in this revival. A significant number of young people have been attracted to Manx folk music. In this, Mann is fortunate in having an excellent system of peripatetic teaching of instrumental music in the schools - a feature which is not appreciated by some teachers of other subjects. Several groups of young Manx musicians have had a great measure of success, including *Paiçhlyn Vamin* and *Ay Fenee*. Among adult musicians, The Mollig Band, led by Greg Joughin, has pioneered new expression of Manx music and song.



*Colin and Cristl Jerry*

It cannot be overemphasised how important it is that the Manx Government has begun to fund Manx language and culture in a regular way. Possibly because it has qualms over such funding, the Manx Treasury has recently shown signs of wanting to 'rationalise' the ways the funding takes place. The Department of Education budgets for Manx in the schools, the Manx Heritage Foundation funds projects concerned with Manx culture, as does the Manx Arts Council to some extent. By far the lion's share of government money goes to Manx National Heritage, which has an impressive track record in the form of the Manx Museum in Douglas, castles at Castletown and Peel, a brand new heritage centre at Peel, as well as other excellent centres of 'heritage'. However, the enormous amount of money allocated to Manx National Heritage has so far been spent in a way which has paid little regard to the central role of the language in Manx heritage. There is a danger that, in handing millions of pounds to Manx National Heritage, Treasury officials think 'Right - that's taken care of Manx heritage and culture'. Hence the call for the now highly effective Manx Heritage Foundation to get rid of the debased word 'heritage' and adopt a new name. (Many people think that the Manx Heritage Foundation is the same organisation as Manx National Heritage).

There have also been noteworthy developments outside the government sector. A language support group called *Caarjyn ny Gaelgey* (Friends of the Manx Language) was set up by Peter Karran. This group now rents a government schoolhouse in the centre of Mann as its base, organising adult Manx classes and social events there. This work complements that of the Manx Gaelic Society, which has published essential Manx language books and has recently instituted a successful Manx Language Week, held each November.

Potentially of great significance has been that a small number of families are raising their children as bilingual in English and Manx (or 'Neo-Manx' as some scholars would prefer). For the first time in about a hundred years it can be claimed that there are new native speakers of Manx. Following this development has been the official opening in 1997 of a Manx language pre-school playgroup, *Mooiñjer l'eggey* ('Little Folk'), supported by *Caarjyn ny Gaelgey* and the Manx Heritage Foundation. 1997 has also seen the beginnings of some form of education through Manx for young children. For one half-day per week, a group of about ten children who are either fluent in Manx or know sufficient Manx are receiving tuition through the language, under the auspices of the Department of Education.



George Broderick

The academic study of Manx was relatively neglected for many years. To a large degree, the balance has been redressed by the work of Robert Thomson and George Broderick, the leading authorities on Manx. At present, George Broderick is engaged on a massive survey of Manx placenames.

The postgraduate Centre for Manx Studies was recently established in Douglas. This is a tripartite venture involving Liverpool University, Manx National Heritage and the Department of Education.

Manx is generally dismissed as having 'no literature'. While this is not true, there is a dearth of original literature in Manx which relates to modern living. It is therefore significant that, in the 1990's, the Manx Branch of the Allied Irish Bank instituted a biennial prize for writing in Manx. Recipients of this prize have been Bob Carswell and Joan Caine.

The Internet is now an important tool for the dissemination of information on Manx culture. In this respect, invaluable work has been carried out by Phil Kelly and Mark Kermodé (see Website <http://homepages.enterprise.net/kelly>).

The same general trends are seen in Mann as in the other Celtic countries: a weakening of aspects of the old, traditional culture which was saved and guarded by a small number of dedicated people, while at the same time knowledge and awareness of that culture diffuses out to a larger number of sympathetic people. Mann is fortunate in being a compact island: it is foolish to think that all is lost because the traditional Manx are in a minority. The time has long gone when incomers could be Gaelicised. What is now emerging in Mann is not a Manx society in the old sense. But neither is it truly English. We have a great creative future ahead of us.

Orree Crennell

All Liamm bimonthly magazine in Breton. Subscription 180F, but 200F/250F surf./airmail outside State and 100F for non-earners, to Per ar Bihan, 16r. Des Fours à Chaux, 35400 St.Malo.

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## Carn 100 – A Milestone

To publish the one hundredth issue of a magazine is a significant milestone for any organisation. In the case of CARN and the Celtic League it is even more notable considering that all our activities, including the publication of our quarterly magazine, are funded solely by our membership subscriptions and that Carn is produced by voluntary and unpaid efforts. It was only fitting then that the Celtic League A.G.M. decided that our one hundredth CARN issue should be a special one to mark the occasion. While various suggestions were made as to appropriate content and format the final decision was left to the editor, Patricia Bridson. She decided that reviews covering political and cultural affairs over the past twenty years or so in each Celtic nation should be the main content with a special supplement of poetry in the Celtic Languages. Poetry has long been a thriving Celtic art and this supplement is unique in containing poems in all six Celtic languages with translations into another Celtic language; to help bridge the Celtic linguistic gap poems in the Goidelic languages are translated into a Brythonic language and vice versa. Unfortunately space did not permit inclusion of a lengthy account of the C.L. Military Monitoring Campaign - this will appear in the next issue.

The twenty odd years covered by the reviews show significant achievements in some countries, steady progress in others and serious threats in all.

A Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly are at last on the way after two decades of disappointment. Gaidhlig has made considerable progress but its heartland is declining. In Wales while the Welsh language has made great strides the Welsh speaking areas are under continued threat from English immigration. Cornwall has a greater confidence and while difficulties exist with three versions of Cornish demand has expanded for the language. Although Mann has yet to exploit its autonomy fully the Manx language now commands respect

and has been given a place in the educational system. In Brittany despite sustained opposition from a centralist state the Breton language has made inroads in education but transmission of the language from one generation to the next is gravely imperilled while chances of any autonomy are remote at present. In Ireland after almost thirty years of strife in the North we are edging towards peace. The growth in Irish medium schools and the commencement of TnaG give satisfaction but the continuing decline in the strength of Irish speaking areas is a cause for grave concern.

There has undoubtedly been further growth and consolidation in inter-Celtic consciousness in the last two decades. With the arrival of new Celtic assemblies we look forward to further progress towards the Celtic League aim of an inter-Celtic federation. It is noted that an element of the disappointing proposals tabled for discussion in the talks on the North is an intergovernmental council with representation from Dublin, London, the North, Scotland and Wales. Providing this is not a ploy to dilute executive powers for any North - South body it has possibilities of development - let us hope that this is the case.

Finally, a thanks to all who contributed articles and to the poets who allowed us to publish their poems, particularly those written especially for the issue. Our gratitude goes also to those who undertook the difficult task of translation. Particular thanks is due to our Editor who cajoled, persuaded and ensured that, albeit a little delayed despite her best efforts, a high quality special issue has been produced.

An issue like this costs more money of course and we would ask all our members and supporters to make an extra effort in selling it and to use it to best benefit to recruit new members to provide us with an even more solid base from which to continue our work.

Cathal Ó Luain, Convenor, Eanáir, 1998.

### Membership and Subscriptions

All those who agree with the constitution and aims of the Celtic League are eligible for membership. The membership fee (including *Carn*) and subscription rates are IR£10; Stg£10; 90FF or US\$20.00 (US funds, cheques drawn on a US bank). Europe Stg.£10 outside Europe Stg.£13.00 airmail.

For information about the Celtic League contact secretaries:

**ALBA** Risnidh Mag Aoidh, 7/1 Newton Street, Gorgie, Edinburgh, EH11 1TG.

**BRÉIZH** Jakez Derouet, 14 route de Kemper, 29000 Pluguen/Pluguffan, Brittany.

**CYMRU** Jina Gwyrfai, 3 Croes Y Waen, Waenfawr, Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

**EIRE** Subscriptions: c/o 33 Ceide na Grianóige, Ráth Cúil, Co. Atha Cliath.

**KERNOW** Martyn Miller, 10 Trewartha Court, Pound Street, Liskeard.

**MANNIN** Cristl Jerry, 6 Glenfaba Road, Peel.

**ENGLAND BRANCH** Florence Kenna, 72 Compton Street, London, EC1V 0BN.

**USA** Stephen Paul de Villo, 313 East 201 Street, Bronx, New York 10458.

**INTERNATIONAL BRANCH** Alan Heusaff, Seana Gharráin, An Spidéal, Co. na Gaillimhe, Éire.

**CEAP BREATAINN** Frangag Nic Eachainn, Box 179, Mabou, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Canada BOE 2W0.

The **General Secretary** and **P.R.O.** of the Celtic League is **Bernard Moffatt**, 11 Hilltop View, Farmhill, Braddan, Mannin.

Tel - UK (0) 1624 627128

The **Editor** is **Ms P. Bridson**, 33 Ceide na Grianóige, Ráth Cúil, Co. Atha Cliath, Éire.

Articles for *Carn* may be sent on disk in Apple/IBM for Microsoft Word/Works or Word Perfect along with hard copy, faxed to 00 353 31 - 458 9795, or e-mailed to: oman@tinet.ie  
Original photographs must be forwarded.

Our next deadline for material for *Carn* is 1st February 1998. Articles sent for publication in *Carn* must relate to our aims, and should be typed. All materials copyright © *Carn* unless otherwise stated. The views expressed in *Carn* are not necessarily those of the editor nor of the Celtic League.

Leagan amach/Layout: Peantrónaic Teo., BÁC 16, Éire.

Printers: Elo Press, Dublin 8

ISSN 0257-7860