

CELTIC NEWS

The quarterly bulletin of the Celtic League

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SUMMER, 1964. No. 7.

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A L B A
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The Railways - Reprieve: after a great went up in the Highlands against the closure of certain railway (rather, life-) lines, west and north of Inverness, the Government decided that there should be no closures. Whether this is a political move, a sop of appeasement before the coming General Election, or not, it is too early to say. But some significance can be taken from the remarks of Gauleiter Beeching when he paid a visitation to Glasgow in May. He said that the decision to keep the railways in the Highlands open was solely that of the Minister of Transport. If he had his way, the railways would close; he stressed this point. So we shall have to see, keeping vigilant.

The Vililantes': The success of the Vililantes' Association in the North of Scotland has led other parts of Scotland to take up this form of organised protest. The Border area, just as much neglected as the Highlands, is now gearing up for vigorous action to revitalise its population-depleted Counties. Yet another body which has sprung up is "Scotjet", a body devoted to keeping a weather eye on developments which may very well reduce Prestwick, Britain's only fog-free international airport, to a local runway, while

Prestwick's normal traffic is transferred to London, that great pool of cess which is ever deepening.

That Bonny, Bonny Bank: The shouts of protest by Civil(?) Servants against the decision to send the Post Office Savings Bank to Glasgow have reached almost to the high heavens. While the Government may be said to have acted rashly in ignoring recommendations that the Tees-side area in England was the preferred area for the Bank, it must be said that Glasgow has a very strong claim, if only to hasten the necessary decentralisation of Government Departments. What makes the Civil Servants so small is the fact that they, only a few thousand people, are protesting about being sent to Glasgow, while tens of thousands each year are having, through force of economic circumstances, to leave Scotland for England and abroad. We hear nothing about this part of a very unbalanced two-way traffic. Why?

The S.N.P. The Scottish National Party is fielding anything up to 20, maybe more, candidates at the forthcoming General Election. This is a good sign, and one cannot but wish the Party all success in their efforts to project the image of Scotland in this way. They deserve success, but are Scots (Scottish Scots, that is, rather than emigré Scots) possessed of the necessary backbone to vote for the SNP candidates? It will remain to be seen in October, whether Scotland is really a country conquered by economic circumstances engineered deliberately by the larger, featherbedded England.

Bannockburn: On the 650th anniversary of this battle an equestrian statue in bronze of King Robert Bruce was unveiled on the site of the battlefield by the Queen of England. Although it is an admirable thing to remember the Bruce, the scene was melancholy. With its blessing by the Establishment, the statue might better have been to Edward I of England. The only real way to honour Bruce is to endeavour like him to achieve freedom for Scotland. In to-day's circumstances the statue must be seen rather as a monument to

Scottish stupidity (if hypocrisy is too strong a word).

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B R E I Z H
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The Breton organisation, M.O.B. presented candidates at the local elections in Brittany. Their relative success, under the French electoral system is very encouraging; in some districts they had as much as 20% or more of the votes, ahead of communist and socialist candidates.

With the worsening in the situation of Breton Agriculture one notices the hardening of the policy of the farmers' organisations in their demand for fair play, in spite of police repression. Such methods as the cutting down of telegraph poles are now a common occurrence in this campaign. At St. Nazaire, 30,000 people demonstrated against the recent dismissal of 1,500 workers from the Penhoet Shipyards. At Rennes, Gwened, Kemper, St. Brieg and Nantes a total of 14,000 farmers took part in similar demonstrations. At Pont-E-Kroaz, police had to clear farmers from a slaughter-house, closed during a meat-delivery strike, as a protest against rough treatment from the police. The mayor of the town resigned. His example was followed by 7 other mayors and 57 municipal councillors. At Pont'N Abad, farmers broke into a slaughter-house and poured petrol over carcasses; 13 farmers were arrested and brought to trial during the night; 5 received severe prison sentences. The same day 28 other farmers were tried at Montroulez for earlier demonstrations against the acquisition of land by non-farmers. These trials were accompanied by displays of police strength, designed to intimidate the farmers' unions. At Brest 3,000 farmers held an unauthorised meeting, in the middle of the night despite a strong force of police.

The Trade Unions and Student organisations joined the farmers in their protest. In these demonstrations the needs of Brittany as a separate entity were affirmed.

The Breton Branch of the French Communist Party has just published a well documented pamphlet on the Breton

problem, considered by responsible Bretons as a serious and valuable contribution. Its figures need no comment: 1896 - 201,000 employed in industry, 1962 - 128,000; Housing - 40% over 100 yrs. old - 13% without W.C. - Bathroom 7%; Radio - 1 to every 10 people (France 1 to 5); Car 1 in 30 (France 1 in 18); Doctors - 1 ever 1,500 (France 1 ever 1,000).

Cultural Activities: Interceltic camp at St. Renan near Brest (29th of July - 15th of August).

In July a Breton cultural centre was opened at Menez Kamp. The owner has put a beautiful woodland country residence at the disposal of the organiser, President: M.Glanndou, poet.

Breton Tourist Bureau "Ker Arvor", 10 Rue Heromière, Nantes, offers its services to all those interested in knowing the true character of Brittany. Visit the centre for information!

+++++++ Cornwall and Reality This Summer, from
K E R N O W + 21st August to 3rd September the school for
+++++++ the Cornish language was held in Truro. The
school was started last year by Miss J. E. Petchey and was continued by her this year. That it has been possible for this initiative to have been taken is almost certainly a reflection of the improved level of national consciousness. Great credit is due to Miss Petchey. It appears that other people are responding to this circumstance: "Cornwall is being consistently neglected and insulted" (a Parliamentary candidate). In a social survey at Redruth Grammar School "The West Briton" states, "Two out of three lads among 250 questioned had no wish to go east, south or north either...", all but 1.2% having been outside Cornwall. The editorial of the "West Briton" stated in April that "the gradual banishment of the native population ... causes some doubt in Cornish minds." In Falmouth an officer of the Amalgamated Engineering Union told the Trades Council that "The A.E.U. had stopped taking

apprentices because the position in the shipyard was so bad". In this context it seems a pity that the chairman of the County Council, Alderman Foster, should clash with the opinion of a sub-committee that there is "a special case for the retention of a number of holdings of comparatively small acreage". He thought that "The sooner a number of them were merged to make bigger farms the better it would be." One can only conclude that this would add to emigration because technical progress continues to increase the number of unemployed farm-workers, to which number displaced small farmers would be added.

** Irish readers should note that this term does not have an opprobrious sense in a Cornish as distinct from an Irish setting.

+++++++ The Report by the Government Commission on
E I R E + the Revival of Irish was published early
+++++++ this year. It analysed the steps necessary
to re-integrate the language into the life of the country. The government's forthcoming White Paper on its language policy, if it implements the recommendations of the Report, will mark the turn of the tide for Irish Gaelic. A Provisional Committee has been formed to demonstrate to the government that public opinion is favourable to Irish and expects all necessary steps to safeguard it to be taken. Every type of body, from Dublin Corporation downwards has passed resolutions in favour of the language. Individuals have also written to Mr. Lemass, while signatures are now being collected. The West Britons (apologies to Welsh and Cornish readers but this term has long been applied to those striving for England's cultural absorption of Ireland) have become hysterically abusive as the campaign has progressed. This abuse is a sign of dismay that the language is now a living issue instead of a sacred cow. Abroad: Interest has not been confined to Ireland. Resolutions from Irish societies and personal letters

have poured in from Britain, The U.S.A. and the Southern Hemisphere.

In the Celtic context, Ireland is unique in that She can ensure her own cultural survival. (Heavy English emigration to Man of course complicates the Manx cultural struggle). Resolutions, expressing sympathetic interest in the future of Irish, which will greatly influence the fight for the other Celtic languages and their hope that government policy will guarantee that future have been sent by a number of bodies. To date, these include the Celtic League (Central Council and London Branch), An Comunn Gaidhealach (Scottish, Central Council & London Branch), Mebyon Kernow, London Branch of Plaid Cymru and the London Branch of Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg. Similar motions/Requests from the national secretaries, or from other associations, as well as from individuals outside Ireland should be addressed to an T-Aire Gn thi Eachtracha, 80 Faiche Stiabhna, Baile Atha Cliath, 2. They should indicate the reasons for supporting or welcoming an effective and comprehensive plan. Since Celtic News No. 6, events in Ireland have not been confined to this campaign. Yet because of its important bearing on our language, the most important element of our national ethos, the omission of other topics calls for no apology.

+++++ National Spirit Growing: particularly
C Y M R U among the young, but also among the middle
+++++ aged; above all among leaders of Welsh life,
+++++ industrial, social and educational, who realise that the English regime is inimical to true Welsh prosperity. There is a growing quiet determination to serve and save Wales among Welsh people generally and even among many English men and women who have come to live in Wales. Plaid Cymru recently announced that it will probably have 24 candidates for the General Election (Total Welsh constituencies: 36). The English political parties are blathering about rescinding the Ban on Plaid political programmes on radio and television; they know that this

example of injustice and oppression is driving many people into the Welsh party; yet to allow the Blaid its fair share of time would be dangerous to themselves if the Welsh people were to hear the case for self-government.

University of Wales to remain united! The University Court quashed the effort to divide the federation into 4 Universities, by 103 votes to 33. It was a victory for Welsh nationality and unity against the English staff of the University Colleges.

"Mr. Robert Griffith spotlighted the unsatisfactory organisation of education in Wales, at a degree-conferring ceremony of University College, Bangor, when he refused his B.A. degree, as a protest against the prevailing English orientated system."

Rural depopulation in Wales continued according to another Report published in June. This brain-drain will not stop all the time; Wales and her fellow sufferers Scotland and Brittany are "governed" from London and Paris respectively. Many Welshmen, however, in spite of London, are doing much to increase prosperity and amenities in the rural areas.

Immense Cultural Activities: Llanuwchllyn, a Welsh-speaking village of some 1,000 people, in Merioneth, staged a 3-night Drama Festival. Each of the 9 companies presenting a short play was from that village of which Drama is only one of its many cultural activities. The Urdd (Guild of Youth) National Eisteddfod was held at Portmadoc recently. The 3,000 young people competing on the stage in singing, reciting, dancing, etc. etc. had been "thinned out" at previous tests from a total of some 200,000 who had learnt their parts for the area or local Eisteddfodau. The immense cultural activity, which all this suggests, in all corners of Wales, almost baffles the imagination. The famous International Eisteddfod was held again at Llangollen from July 10-12. The well-known National Eisteddfod was held at Abertawe (Swansea) for the full week

of August 3-8. Another great attraction will be the Plaid Cymru Summer School, at Abergwaun (Fishguard) July 31 - August 4.

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M A N N I N
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MEC VANNIN is becoming known as an organisation which is always ready to take a stand on public questions which it believes important. It opposed the General Developments Bill which was recently before the Keys because it gave almost unlimited powers to the Lieut.-Governor to introduce new commercial enterprises and this was felt to be wrong in principle. Largely as a result of this opposition the Bill was considerably modified before being passed. At present Mec Vannin is opposing a new Bill, which among other things would install a new entertainment centre, a large car park, a children's playground and a spectacular zoo, none of which would fit in with a reserve for native flora and fauna. This campaign has the enthusiastic support of the Isle of Man Natural History and Antiquarian Society and the Manx Field Club. The project for rebuilding our national cathedral has the full support of Mec Vannin. In accordance with its principle of "Shinene son shinenene", Mec Vannin is putting forward a plan to organise voluntary skill and labour in the rebuilding of this national shrine and is receiving support from many quarters.

YN CHESHAGHT GHAILACKAGH is forging ahead with its campaign for a speeding-up of the language revival. New classes are being formed both in the Island and abroad; more church services are being planned; and a weekly article in Manx has been established in the "Isle of Man Times" with the co-operation of its editor.

ELLYNYN NY GAEL is preparing for its annual Festival of Traditional Arts (Music, dancing, plays, ballet, handicrafts, visual arts, etc.) for the week beginning September the 7th. The Mananan Trophy this year goes to Prof. Carl H. S. Marlstrader of Oslo for his outstanding contribution to

Manx culture in history, archaeology and philology.

LIBRARY LIST

"A Constitution for Scotland, should have the effect of interesting readers in the government of Scotland by the Scots. Other readers will find the book stimulating and with some relevance to their own countries. (Scottish Secretariat, 28 Elmbank Crescent, Glasgow, 7/6d.)

Irish Revival: The Commission's Report (see Irish section) (Oifig Dhiolta Foilseachán Rialtais, Ard-Oifig an Phoist, Baile Atha Cliath, 1. 15/-; Summary in English, 6/6d.).

"This is Ellan Vannin": Miscellany of Manx life and lore, with chapters on Manx history, traditions, national figures the language revival, etc. Of considerable interest to all Celts. (Times Press Ltd., Athol Street, Douglas, 10/6d.).

The 1964 Annual of the League "Celtic Nations" will be sent to all members in the Autumn. It will contain detailed statements of the Breton, Scottish and Welsh cases for self-government, on which will be based a memorandum to the United Nations. The annual provides the best means of gaining new members. Members are invited to help in selling extra copies directly and the national secretaries would welcome addresses of potential members to whom leaflets about the book and the C.L. in general could be addressed.

THE CELTIC LEAGUE EXHIBITION will take place later than first envisaged. From some countries a good variety of material has been received and more is being gathered. On this basis the exhibition secretary can play the displays and suggest how various contributions can be increased so as to give a balanced picture of the Celtic countries. Rather than produce something skimpy and unattractive though punctual it has been decided to delay the exhibition. The request for material (Celtic News

No. 6, Page 9) still applies. Material from Ireland and Scotland can be sent directly to Yann Goulet, Koatkeo, Herbert Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

F.U.E.N. Congress, Regensburg, Bavaria, June 11-14, Dr. Paul Laurent attended as Celtic League observer. He referred, in his talk to the help given to the Bretons, after the war, in Ireland and Wales, to "An Aimsir Cheilteach", the Celtic Congress and the Brythonic Society" (for the comparative study of the Breton Cornish and Welsh languages). "Celtic News" aroused no little interest. Mr. Skadegard, Gen.-Secretary had corresponded with the French school authorities in Rennes and they had admitted the desirability of incorporating the teaching of Breton in primary school education. Further they would not go... A letter sent by Prof. Somerfelt (Oslo) to the Gen.-Secretary of UNESCO on behalf of threatened linguistic groups elicited the well-known reply: "Internal matters... nothing to be done against the wishes of our patrons". So the Club remains closed to the Have-Nots! Spain had proved less intransigent than France in allowing FUEN to carry out an enquiry on the situation of the Basques, Catalans and Galicians. In this context, the Congress adopted a resolution requesting official international organisations to grant unofficial ones the right to open discussions with them.

Stonehenge: The Celtic League does not live in the past. However, according to most archaeologists, we had virtually no past, prior to being 'Civilised' by the Romans. Neven Henaff in the Breton review "Al Liamm" demonstrated that the calendar of Coligny (Lyons Museum), known to be Celtic, is a miniature of the Stonehenge structure, so that Celtic residence in these islands antedates the Christian era by 2,000 odd years.

Malawi: Yet another colonial territory, the former Nyasaland, has achieved national status. Dr. Banda is a graduate of Edinburgh University, while Scottish missionaries have played a valuable part in the area. Is Malawi more fitted to govern itself than Scotland (or Wales)?

In view of the prevailing resignation to the status quo, in Scotland and Wales, we can only conclude that it is!

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Commemoration Ceremony: On Sunday the 23rd of August members of the S.N.P. and others held a modest commemoration ceremony at Smithfield, where William Wallace was beheaded. While the occasion lacked the pomp and circumstance of the Bruce statue inauguration, loyalty to the aim of Wallace - a free Scotland, was pledged".

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RENEWALS:

Your annual subscription (10/-) covers the quarterly issues of "Celtic News" as well as the valuable annual volume "Celtic Nations". If 12 months has elapsed since your last payment please send your current payment to your national secretary:

- Alba: G. H. Thompson, Kirkland Street, Dalry, Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire.
- Breizh: Charles Le Goff, 6 Rue de la France, Combattante, Brest.
- Cymru: J. E. Jones, Melin-y-Wig, 1 Heol Esgyn, Cyncoed, Cardiff.
- Eire: Alan Heussaff (Also Gen.-Secretary) 9 Bothar Cnoc Sion, Dromchonrach, Baile Atha Cliath, 9.

Kernow: Royston Green,
Travellers Rest, Illogan Downs,
Redruth.

Mannin: Miss Mona Douglas, Thie-ny-Garee,
Laxey.

or to the Treasurer:

Dr. Noelle Davies, Coolagad,
Greystones, Co. Wicklow, E.

Celtic News Readers are reminded that it is assumed that they will be au fait with events in their own country. Thus each national contribution is rather for the benefit of readers from the other countries. Those who wish to make any criticism, observation or suggestion should write to the national sub-editor concerned. In the case of Cornwall, Man and Wales, the national secretary (see above) combines both functions. For the other countries the sub-editors are:

Alba: F.G.Thompson, 17 Viewfield Road, Culcabock,
Inverness.

Breizh: Jouan le Noac'h, 18 Vesey Place,
Dún Laoire Co. Dublin, Ireland.

Eire: (and Gen. editor), Pádraig O Conchúir,
82 St. Alban's Ave., Bedford Park,
London, W.4.

Corrigenda: Page 1 line 1 omis. word 'shout' after
'went'. Page 12 line 15 'sub'-editor. Page 4 line 6
for 'ever' read 'every'.