

Askol ha Brug Pipe Band

1977-2016

40 years of Scottish music in Brittany



1977-1983

"Thistle and Heather" or "Askol ha Brug" (In Breton language, *askol* means thistle for Scotland, and *brug* means heather for Brittany) is an association which was initiated in 1974 on impulse by five founding members: René Guilbaud, Patrick Pouchard, André Jutier, Jean-Luc Pouvreau, Patrick Jutier. The creation of the association was officialised in Saint Herblain near Nantes on April 28th 1977. André Jutier was elected chairman.

The goal of the association is to promote in South of Brittany the Scottish pipes and drums without forgetting Celtic music in general. The group's coat-of-arms represents a stoat and a lion.

In 1979, Thistle & Heather pipe band participated in the meeting of St Herblain's twin towns Sankt Ingbert (Germany) and Waterford (Ireland).



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In beginning of the 1980s, family Bellanger, François Jutier and Daniel Pesche joined the five founding members, so that the formation included seven bapipers and four drummers. Below from left to right: Olivier Thoraval, André Jutier, Yann Bellanger, Erwan Bellanger, Patrick Jutier, Patrick Pouchard, René Guilbaud, Daniel Pesche, Gilbert Bellanger, François Jutier.



In 1983, Thistle & Heather pipe band became a member of the RSPBA.

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1984-1991

In 1984, for the first time, Thistle & Heather Pipe Band welcome Scots from Saltcoast region, thanks to Yves Bocquel and a Breton dance group who was already making exchanges with them.



In 1985, Olivier Thoraval (who joined the group in 1978) became Pipe Major. The same year, the pipe band and the dance group (43 people) was in turn welcomed in Scotland during 12 days by the band from Ardneil. The Pipe band participated to contests of Bridge of Allan and Stirling. These exchanges continued and became more and more important.

The pipe band adopted the Royal Stuart tartan whose origins go back to a Breton governor of Dol. The wearing of that particular tartan is permitted to Breton and French by the Stuarts.



Since 1978, the training was taking place on a weekly basis at school Le Hérault. In 1985, the band was allowed to store its equipment (drums, uniforms...) in its own premises located in the industrial area of Saint Herblain (Street La Dutée).

New members joined the group (Family Tripon, family Bocquel, family Saltel, Grégor Mengant, Roland Leray, Jean-Pierre Viavant) so that the Pipe Band comprised nine pipers and six drummers in 1990.

Below, from left to right: Jean-Pierre Viavant (Drum Major), Hélène Bocquel, Daniel Pesche, André Jutier, Roland Leray, Yves Tripon, Yves Bocquel,



In 1990 was created the first web site <http://www.askolhabrug.free.fr> in three languages: English, French, Breton.



In 1990, Thistle and Heather PB participated in the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Lancasteria disaster in La Bernerie en Retz.

In 1991, for the second time, the pipe band travelled to Scotland and participated in contests in Dundonald and Gourrock (grade 4).



During these seven years, the number of members remained stable. Each year, Thistle & Heather Pipe Band participated at least in one contest, one concert and five parades, weddings or other events.

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1992-1998

The association saw the arrival of new members from other bands with the goal of reaching the third grade in piping and drumming: Pierre Blanchet and his two sons Eric and Hervé (as pipers), Jean-Pierre Diné (as drum major). Then, the formation remained very stable during six years.

Below, from left to right:

Pipe section Daniel Pesche, Olivier Thoraval, Hervé Blanchet, Pierre Blanchet, Grégor Mengant, Yves Bocquel, Jean-Pierre Viavant, Roland Leray, André Jutier, Yves Tripon

Drum section: Steven Tripon (tenor), Claude Tripon (snare drum), Gilbert Bellanger (bass drum), Jean-Pierre Diné (Drum major), Hélène Bocquel (snare drum).



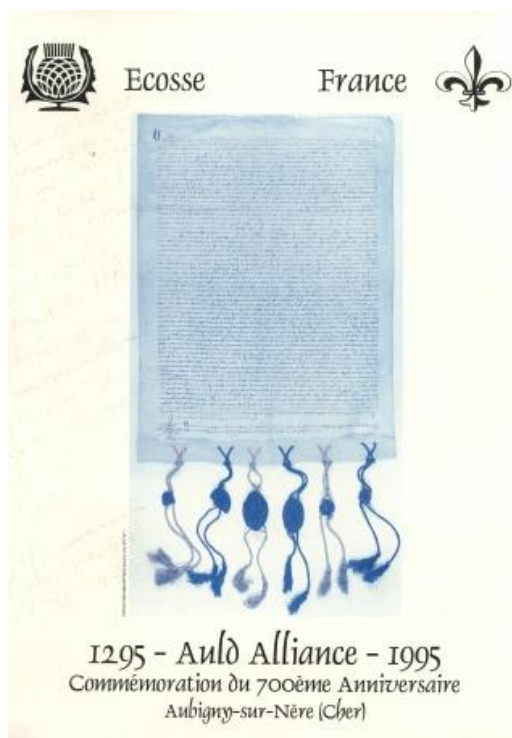
Among other tasks, Pierre Blanchet was responsible for improving the bagpipes: All the previous chanters were replaced by new Sheperd® chanters. The association bought three new snare drums, two tenor drums and one bass drum (brand Premier®).

On impulse by Pierre Blanchet and Olivier Thoraval, new tunes were played: MSR, Jigs/horn pipes and Medleys. Special training sessions were organized, for example at Ti Kendalc'h (St Vincent sur oust).

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On Friday 23rd of September 1994, thanks to the musical trainings given by our Scottish friends, a concert was held in Onyx (cultural complex of St Herblain), with the Ardneil PB and the Harbour Band (Jazz and Fiddle band from Saltcoast), uniting more than 500 people.

Below, from left to right: Olivier Thoraval, André Jutier, Daniel Pesche, Grégor Mengant, François Jutier (Snare drum), Hélène Bocquel (snare drum), P. Bellanger (bass drum), Yann Bellanger (snare drum), Claude Tripon (tenor drum), Roland Leray, Yves Bocquel, Hervé Blanchet, Pierre Blanchet, Yves Tripon. These members received the "voluntary service medal".



In 1995, Thistle and Heather PB took part in the commemoration of the 700th anniversary of the "Auld Alliance" in Aubigny sur Nère with the new created Aubigny & district Pipe Band.

In 1995, Thistle & Heather Pipe Band participated in the European championship of Alden Bielsen in grade 4 and grade 3.



Between 1991 and 1998, Thistle and Heather PB participated in five contests in the 4th and 3th grade, in six concerts (Church Saint Hermeland...) and in many commemorations and parades.

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1999-2005

In 1999, when a majority refused to have more trainings and to be obliged to participate in more events, eight members left the Pipe Band to join other breton bands or pipe bands, including the chairman André Jutier and the Pipe Major Olivier Thoraval. Therefore, Thistle & Heather pipe band was reduced to six pipers and five drummers. During these difficult times, Bright Normandy PB helped Thistle & Heather in various occasions (see below Philippe Caillet).



In accordance with the statutes and the original aim of the association, and in order to become a larger and more friendly association, the remaining members took important resolutions such as to focus on a limited number of Celtic events, foster the relations with Scotland, put in place training courses for beginners in piping and in drumming to reach a 4th grade.

Thierry Connan was elected chairman of the association and was reelected each year until 2014.

The association decided also to improve the uniforms and to move to black Stuart tartan.



André Mabit trained the snare drum section. Below, from left to right: Sullivan Tripon, Thomas Cingarlini, François Creuzet, Benjamin Leray, Harold Herrou and André Mabit.



In the meantime, Loïc Réhel and Frédéric Lastennet trained the pipers in order to reach a good 4b level.

New pipers joined the group: Yvon Pouliquen, Serge Athénour, Hermann Urvoas, Laurent Lagrange, Sandrine Pasquet, Luc Pouteau, Valérie Lauzivis, Daniel Durand...

The band improved a lot, especially the snare drum section. In 2003, Askol ha Brug comprised 10 pipers, 5 snare drummers, 2 tenor drums, 1 bass drum, 1 pipe major and more than 10 beginners.

2000 Edinburgh: 6 members of Thistle & Heather PB participated in the pipefest parade. Five years later, eight other members came to Edinburgh.

2002 New-York: Thistle and Heather Pipe Band participated in the “Tunes of Glory Parade”, which saw 10,000 pipers and drummers march through the streets of New York. Tartan Day derives from the US Senate Resolution 155, passed in March 1998, to recognize the contribution that Scottish Americans played in the founding and shaping of the United States.

2003 Bressuire Highland games. Bressuieres, a town near Nantes twinned with Fraserburgh, organizes heavy events every two years in June. Highland games are events held throughout the year in Scotland and other countries as a way of celebrating Scottish and Celtic culture and heritage, especially that of the Scottish Highlands. Certain aspects of the games are so well known as to have become emblematic of Scotland, such as bagpipe contests, dancing contests, tug of war, and the heavy events: Caber toss, stone put, Scottish hammer throw, weight throw, weight over the bar, sheaf toss.

2004 Juno Beach: Thistle & Heather PB participated to the commemoration of D-Day in Normandy. Yannick and Harold Herrou, Serge Athénour, Hermann Urvoas.



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2004 Tro ar Bed St Hernin. From Left to Right: Matthias (Sankt Brieg & district PB), Juliane Pouliquen, Sandrine Pasquet, Noémie Connan, Serge Athénour, Yannick Herrou, Hermann Urvoas, Laurent Lagrange, Benjamin Leray, Luce Cuvelliez, Roland Leray, Sullivan Tripon, Gerard & Thierry (Bright Normandy), Harold Herrou, Thierry Connan, Morgane Bocquel, Daniel Durand, Jean Lefoll(Bright Normandy), Jack Dransard, Yves Tripon, Jean-Pierre Diné.



2005 Montmartre: Thomas Cingarlini, Jean-Pierre Diné, Serge Athénour, Yvon Pouliquen, Yves Tripon, Claude Tripon, Laurent Lagrange, Harold Herrou, Thierry Connan, Morgane Bocquel, Roland Leray, Noémie Connan, Yannick Herrou, Juliane Pouliquen, Benjamin Leray



2006 Le Loroux Bottereaux:

Standing up: Juliane Pouliquen, Laurent Lagrange, Thierry (Bright Normandy), Claude Tripon, Noémie Connan, Morgane Bocquel, Jean-Pierre Diné Jean Lefoll(Bright Normandy), Serge Athénour, Yvon Pouliquen, Yannick Herrou, Luce Cuvelliez, Roland Leray, Gérard, Yves Tripon

Drummers: Harold Herrou, Sullivan Tripon, Thierry Connan, François Creuzet, Benjamin Leray.



Several teenagers joined the group, like for example Julien Grellier as piper (son of the famous talabarder Philippe Grellier) or Chloé Connan as drummer (daughter of Thierry Connan). Therefore, the training sessions were divided in three levels and occurred in two different places (Saint Herblain and Château-Thébaud).

In 2007, the group comprised more than 40 members, including the beginners, and the management became unstable. Eight members decided to create a new pipe band: the “Naoned & District pipe band” or to join the new created Breton band “bagad Orvez”.

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2007-2013

On more time, Thistle and Heather PB was reduced to only seven pipers and five drummers. However, it was still enough to participate in contests, like the European Championship in Scotland in 2008.



The set for the contests was: The Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering / Rantin Rovin Robin / The 25th KOSB's Farewell to Meerut / The piper's cave

A new website was put in place with some videos. Thistle and Heather opened a Facebook page as well. Sullivan Tripon became Drum Sergeant.

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The association decided to equip each of its 30 members with the same uniform: sporrans, socks, glengarries, ties and shirts.

The very good cooperation commenced in 2003 with Siller Tassie (two Scottish musicians living in France: Bob Hounslow from Lorient & Gavin Anderson from Bressuire) has continued with one concert per year: “Celtics nights” of Caussade (2005) with more than 5000 spectators, Le Loroux-Botteraux (2006), Vay (2006), Puceul (2007), Bressuire (2009), Rennes Liberté (2012) with 3000 spectators...



In 2007, for its 20th anniversary, Thistle & Heather 2007 held a new concert with Ardneil Pipe Band Milport pipe band and dancers in Celtomania St Herblain Onyx.

2009 Bressuire. Thistle and Heather welcomed again to the Scottish friends.



Next page : pipers -Yves Tripon, Alan, Claude Tripon, Serge Ponnvoy, Christophe Le Bris, Marie Tripon, Gweltas Beauto, Roland Leray ; drummers Daniel Durand, Benjamin Leray, Thierry Connan, Sullivan Tripon, Noémie Connan, Jean-Pierre Diné

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On 29th April 2012, Thistle and Heather pipe band played at Pornichet near Saint Nazaire for the exhibition of the tapestry of Prestonpans. This 105m long tapestry were presented by Baron Gordon Prestoungrange, owner of lands near Prestonpans in Scotland.

2013 Contest « élégance » in Eu - Le Tréport. The winner is...



New members joined the drum section. The association and some drummers bought five new snare drums, three tenor drums and one bass drum from Andante®. Below, the “drums team”: Yffig Seigneur, Chloé Connan, Phiippine Fromy, Justine Fromy, Sullivan Tripon, Jonathan Renaud, Thierr Connan, Noémie Connan, Reun Jezegou, Didier Bodin.



In the meantime, new pipers joined the group: Fabien Pavageau, Gerald Arduin, Jean-Paul Jumel from Saint Malo, family Colin from Saint Nazaire...



In 2013, Thistle & Heather Pipe band comprised 15 pipers and 10 drummers.

2014-2016

Due to lack of training rooms in Saint Herblain, a partnership was set up with Gaëlic pipe band of Sautron and its chairman Patrick Pilard (below with green tartan).

Yffig Seigneur proposed to chair the association for two mandates, aiming especially to improve the financial situation of the association.



A new website was designed by Gregory Le Tertre and is still in use today: <http://www.askolhabrugpipeband.fr/>. Several videos were published on Youtube and other websites.

The drum section was trained by Christophe Declercq in Sainte Luce.

The pipe section was trained by André Pechard.

Yves Tripon and Daniel Pesche were in charge of training the beginners: Billy Grimault, Erwan Renaudin, Nicolas Dupré, Aymeric Hemon, Anne-Marie Le Coz, François Xavier Loubet, Gabriel Navarre, Jean-Yves Burel, Titouan Le Bars and the grandson of Daniel Pesche.

A new nice black sporran is adopted and it is also proposed to the members to buy black socks and shirts and flashes / ties of silver color.



Two pipers from Saint Nazaire (Roland Colin and Emmanuel Regny) and three pipers from Rennes (Serge Ponnvoy, André Péchard and Gilbert Poignant) kept on supporting Thistle and Heather PB, so that the pipe band comprised rapidly more than 15 pipers and 10 drummers.



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2014 La Baule. Gathering of various bands from five countries



2014 & 2015 Nantes. At the occasion of Saint Patrick day, Thistle and Heather Pipe Band participated in two fantastic concerts uniting more than 3000 people.



Unfortunately, as the former chairman Thierry Connan and the board of the association disagreed on several points, the whole Family Connan left the band: That event finished the relation with our Scottish friends of Saltcoast. Daniel Pesche, the elder of the group, opted for the retirement. After a long illness, Drum Major Jean-Pierre Diné passed away. A page has been turned.

In 2016, Thistle and Heather Pipe Band participated in a grade 4b contest in Strasbourg. The set of 2/4 marches for the contest was: King Georges V's Army, The Liberton Pipe Band, Campbell Farewell to Redcastle, Corrichollie's 43rd Welcome to the Northern Meeting.



Below, standing up : Yves Tripon, Maxence and Christophe Le Bris, Roland Colin, Emmanuel Regny, Jean-Paul Jumel, Roland Leray, André Péchard, Gilbert Poignant, Gabriel Navarre, Erwan Renaudin, Serge Colin, Philippe Caillet, Billy Grimault. At the forefront: Louis Ryo, Reun Jezegou, Pierre Grimault, Benjamin Leray, Youenn Ryo.



As forecasted, Iffig Seigneur ended his two mandates and left the association with a very good financial situation.

Philippe Caillet was elected chairman. For various reasons, the partnership with the Gaelic ended. Emmanuel Regny and Roland Colin stopped their participation. Claude and Marie Tripon left Thistle and Heather Pipe Band in order to join the Gaëlic Club.

Regarding the drum section, it was decided that Christophe Declercq will continue to provide training course in Sainte Luce. Two new beginners in snare drumming joined the group: Benjamin Philippe and Alexandre Péchard. The training for pipers (except beginners) were transferred to the castle of Blain (see below) even if the association's head office remained in Saint Herblain.

Pipers: Yves Tripon, Gabriel Navarre, Gérard, Philippe Caillet, Serge Colin, Billy Grimault, Christian and André Péchard, Christophe Le Bris.

Drummers : Maxence Le Bris, Reun Jezegou, Pierre Grimault, Didier Bodin, Louis Ryo, Youenn Ryo.



In 2016, Thistle & Heather Pipe Band comprised twelve pipers, six snare drummers, three tenor drummers, one bass drum, seven beginners in piping and three beginners in drumming. The financial situation is excellent. Year 2017 will see the 40th anniversary of the association. It is planned to resume the exchange with Scotland and to organize a huge concert in Nantes District.

A brief history of the relations between Scotland and Brittany

Armorica is the name given in ancient times to the part of Gaul that includes the Brittany peninsula. Trade between Armorica and Britain, described by Diodorus Siculus and implied by Pliny was long-established. Because, even after the campaign of Crassus in 57 BC, continued resistance to Roman rule in Armorica was still being supported by Celtic aristocrats in Britain, Julius Caesar led two invasions of Britain in 55 and 54 in response. Some hint of the complicated cultural web that bound Armorica and the Britanniae (the "Britains" of Pliny) is given by Caesar when he describes Diviciacus of the Suessiones, as "the most powerful ruler in the whole of Gaul, who had control not only over a large area of this region but also of Britain (De Bello Gallico ii.4). Archaeological sites along the south coast of England, notably at Hengistbury Head, show connections with Armorica as far east as the Solent. This 'prehistoric' connection of Cornwall and Brittany set the stage for the link that continued into the medieval era.

In the 380s a large number of British troops in the Roman army may have been stationed in Armorica. The ninth century *Historia Brittonum* states that the emperor Magnus Maximus, who withdrew Roman forces from Britain, settled the troops there. Other British authors (Nennius, Gildas) mention a second wave of Britons settling in Armorica in the following century to escape the invading Anglo-Saxons and Scoti. Modern archaeology supports a two-wave migration. These Britons gave the region its current name and contributed the Breton language, a sister language to Welsh and Cornish. The earliest text in the Breton language, a botanical treatise, dates from 590. Brittany used to be known in English as Little Britain to distinguish it from Great Britain - the street in London called Little Britain was the location of the embassy of the Duchy of Brittany. There are numerous records of missionaries migrating from Britain during the second wave, especially the seven founder-saints of Brittany and Saint Gildas. Many Breton towns are named for these early saints. The Irish Saint, Columbanus also evangelised Brittany, commemorated at Saint-Columban in Carnac.

As the Normans encroached upon Wales, Bretons would simultaneously be influential in Scotland: The pro-Bruce Randolph and pro-Balliol Alan families were illegitimate lines of the counts and dukes of Penthièvre and Dukes of Brittany were also Earls of Richmond in York. The Breton War of Succession formed an integral part of the early Hundred Years War due to the involvement of the French and English governments in the conflict; The conflict was between the Houses of Blois and Montfort for control of the Duchy of Brittany. The French supported Blois whilst the English backed Montfort. Montfort was ultimately successful following the Battle of Auray and the treaty of Guérande near Nantes. Henry Tudor spent quite some time living in Brittany (1471 – 1485). The treaty between Brittany and England ended when the duchy were incorporated into the Kingdom of France in 1532 through the Edict of Union between Brittany and France.

The Auld Alliance refers to a series of treaties between Scotland and France aimed specifically against England. The first such agreement was signed in Paris on 23 October 1295 – subsequently ratified at Dunfermline the following February.

In 1415, Henry V destroyed the main French army at Azincourt. This was to be followed by the systematic conquest of Normandy and much of northern France. France's greatest need was for soldiers, and for these France looked to Scotland. In the period from 1419 to 1424 it is estimated that as many as 15000 came to France; and by the summer of 1420 the 'Army of Scotland' was a distinct element in the French royal service. They were quick to make a difference, defeating an English force at the Battle of Baugé in the spring of 1421. As it marked the turning point of the Hundred Years War, the significance of this battle was great, and apparently caused Pope Martin V to describe the Scots as the "antidote to the English." The Scots in France were no more popular than the French had been in Scotland in 1385.

Mary I, popularly known in the English-speaking world as Mary, Queen of Scots and, in France, as Marie Stuart, was born on 8 December 1542 and became Queen of Scots 6 days after. On 10 September 1547, known as "Black Saturday", the Scots suffered a bitter defeat at the Battle of Pinkie Cleugh. Scotland turned to the French ambassador Monsieur D'Oysel. The French, remaining true to the Auld Alliance, came to the aid of the Scots. The new French King, Henry II, was now proposing to unite France and Scotland by marrying the little Queen to his three-year old son, the Dauphin François. In February 1548, hearing that the English were on their way back, Mary of Guise moved Mary to Dumbarton Castle. The English left a trail of devastation behind once more and seized the strategically located town of Haddington. By June, the much awaited French help had arrived. On 7 July, the French Marriage Treaty was signed at a nunnery near Haddington. On 7 August 1548, the French fleet sent by Henry II sailed back to Brittany from Dumbarton carrying the five-year-old Queen of Scots on board. Mary arrived in Roscoff near the Saint Ninien chapel, then moved to Morlaix and stayed in Blain and Nantes. In June 1998 in Roscoff, Thistle and Heather PB took part in the commemoration of Mary Stuart's voyage in Brittany.

On the 22nd of June 1745 Bonnie Prince Charlie and 700 soldiers left Saint Nazaire with two ships (Du Teillay and Elizabeth). The famous battle of Prestonpans took place on 17th September between Bonnie Prince Charlie with 1000 highlanders and Sir John Cope with the Army of England.

Aubigny sur Nère is the location by which the Duke of Gordon gets his honorific title, as the Duke of Aubigny. Aubigny is a common tourist destination for Scots. It is the only one city in France that still celebrates the French-Scottish friendship, each year during the Bastille Day.

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The origin of the Scottish bagpipes in Brittany

In the early part of the second millennium, bagpipes began to appear with frequency in European art and iconography. They make it clear that bagpipes varied hugely throughout Europe. In Brittany, It is essential to mention the existence of two ancient bagpipes since the middle age: The biniou in lower Brittany and the Veuze in upper Brittany.

The biniou is very high-pitched. Its lowest note is the same pitch as the highest on the great Highland bagpipe. Traditionally it is played in duet with the bombarde.

The veuze looks like the Great Highland bagpipe: In the magazine *Ar Soner* N°5& n°6 October 1949, Mr Pollig Montjarret wrote that « comparing the instruments discovered in La Brière and the drawing from the 15th century, the old Veuze was similar to the Scottish bagpipe ». On the same subject, in the magazine *Breizh* Aug 1982, Jakez Pincet wrote that in the Nantes region, especially on the Guerande peninsular, the bagpipe practised there had a chanter as long as a bombard with only one drone. Finally, Comparing with the great highland bagpipe, Emile Allain adds : « It was practically identical instruments regarding sound volume » .

In 1895, Charles Le Goffic may have been the first to have bought the " great highland bag pipe" from Scotland (*Breizh* magazine n°260 august 1982).



It is also recorded that the “cantors of Trégor” presented a “Scottish bagpipe”, a larger instrument than the biniou, to Jean-Vincent Guillerme of Belle-isle-en-terre. In *ArMen* n°167, Pierre-Yves Jouyaux gives information on the Le Guillerme's bagpipe (see photo -1918).

In the 20's, it is the early beginning of exchanges between Brittany and celtic countries (Wales, Ireland, Scotland): Many celtic groups are created in Brittany. The Celtic group of Nantes dates back to 1926. At this time, the presence of at least five scottish bagpipes can be traced in the Brittany region.

Comprising the main Allied attack on the Western Front during 1916, the Battle of the Somme is famous chiefly on account of the loss of 58,000 British (including Scottish and Irish troops) on the first day of the battle, 1 July 1916, which to this day remains a one-day record. Val de Somme Pipe Band, Somme Battlefield Pipe Band, the piper's memorial of Longueval and several military tunes commemorate this battle.



Between the two wars, in 1932, H. Le Menn, D. le Voyer and R. Audic founded the Kenvreuriez ar Vinioerien or K.A.V. in Paris, consisting in 1937 of 4 bagpipes, 2 biniou, 3 bombardes and 1 drum (source : musique bretonne, histoire des sonneurs de tradition, collection Ar Men / Le Chasse-marée). K.A.V. published a set of tunes for Biniou and Bombard, the musical notation being exactly the same as that in practice at present scottish notation.

In 1940, Scottish military stayed in Loire-Atlantique, particularly in Saint-Nazaire and in the « British camp of la Maillardais, Le Gâvre ». They embarked on the Lancastria in Saint Nazaire by the mid-afternoon of 17 June. The ship was bombed at 15:48 and sunk immediately, with the loss of an estimated 4,000 plus lives. It is the worst single loss of life in British maritime history, claiming more lives than the combined losses on Titanic and Lusitania. British government banned any public announcements of the disaster, but the story was broken by The Scotsman newspaper. In 2005 the Lancastria Association of Scotland began a campaign to secure greater recognition for the loss of life aboard. On 12 June 2008, at a historic ceremony at the Scottish Parliament, First Minister of Scotland presented the first batch of medals to survivors and relatives of victims and survivors. The Lancastria Association of Scotland has build a memorial to the victims on the site where the ship was built, the former Dalmuir shipyard on the Clyde.



On 28 March 1942, an operation was undertaken in Saint Nazaire near Nantes by Royal Navy and Army Commando units. Despite the heavy casualties suffered by the British raiders, the raid was judged to be highly successful: the dock was severely damaged and remained unusable until 1947. (Photo: Private Tommy Mac Cormarck is loaded on a truck)

During the war, a lot of Britons joined the resistance and the « free France » in England, so that the government of Vichy France detached the Loire-Atlantique département from Brittany, and placed it within a region based around the city of Angers.

During the battle of Normandy on June 1944, Lord Lovat instructed his personal piper, Bill Millin, to pipe the commandos ashore, in defiance of specific orders not to allow such an action in battle. The commando marched across Pegasus Bridge to the sound of Bill Millin's bagpipe. Askol ha Brug Pipe Band has commemorated several times this famous event, with two pipe bands of Normandy: The bright Normandy PB and the Normandy Highlands PB.

1946 saw the creation of the first «band of biniou» at the 71ème BI in Dinan : This consisted of 5 bagpipers, 5 bombards, 5 drums, and was integrated into the military band (source : correspondance from Emile Allain in Ar Men magazine n° 112, may 2000). In 1947, the members of the Briton bagpipers association B.A.S. (founded in 1943) were invited to play at a congress of the "Force Françaises Libres" in 1947, along side the Glasgow City Police Pipe Band. The first civil Briton band, the "kevrenn SNCF Karaez" dates back to 1948 and from 1950, these kinds of musical groups bringing together 3 instruments (highland bagpipe, bombard, drums) multiplied thanks to efforts by the « BAS ». Now, one hundred bagadous exist uniting more than two thousands bagpipers, bombard players and drummers.

The first true pipe band appeared in Brittany around 1965: The Gaelic Pipe Band by JF Allain in Nantes and An Ere Pipe Band by Jakez Pincet in Rennes. The Gaelic PB was a section of the Nantes Kevrenn, transformed in 1991 into « Nantes Gaelic Club » association. An Ere for its part quickly reunited 8 bagpipers and 6 drummers (including our present drum major) and for more than 20 years has been promoting Scottish music in Brittany. This PB participated in competitions every 2 years in Scotland and even in Canada. An Ere halted its activities in 1989, but recently the « Brittany PB » were created in Gourin (Center of Brittany) aiming to gather pipers and drummers from various Britton bands who want to play Scottish music.



In the meantime, the Celtic group of Nantes began exchanges with Scottish group in 1962 (see photos) and with Kiscaldy in 1976. It organised numerous times the Nantes Celtic Fortnight with the participation of Scottish groups such as "Red Hackle Whiskey Pipes and Drums" on June 17th 1978.