

## AIKB Radio Project: Yann Rivallain

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### The Magazine

Interviewer	<p>Today I'm delighted, on behalf of Spotlight on Brittany, to have with me here in the studio Yann Rivallain, Editor in Chief of Ar Men magazine.</p> <p>For English listeners who aren't familiar, could you explain the significance of the title and its meaning?</p>
Yann	<p>Ar Men, The Stone in Breton, Ar Men, and it's also the name of a famous lighthouse near the Isle of Sein, off the Cap Sizun which is the other one. Anyway, Ar Men was set up 22 years ago.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And what are the guiding principles behind Ar Men and what's the readership that it's aimed at?</p>
Yann	<p>Basically Ar Men was set up to publish a lot of work that had been done by academics in the '70s and early '80s on Breton civilization. It's a big word but a lot of aspects of life in Brittany from dances to the way you build houses, from fine arts to economy, language of course, archaeology, all those topics have been researched in universities, but the general public didn't have any access to that because in the schools we didn't learn anything, we still are not learning anything, about original heritage or differences. So people who were sort of doing this research in the '70s thought it would be good to have a magazine to do that. In the '80s there was a company called Le Chasse Marée who had been set up to do pretty much the same thing but with the maritime traditions, wooden boats and things like that, and that was quite successful. Their magazine was doing well so, in 1986, they decided to do the same thing for Brittany to talk more about rural life, the countryside, tradition, music, things like that. But beyond that I think there was a need at the time for a lot of Breton people to reconnect with roots and a civilization that they had felt and seen in their childhood, but which, to a large extent had, not disappeared but gone away, perhaps</p>

	<p>because some of those people had left Brittany or gone to live in cities. But they had the smells, they had the memory of traditional dances, even seen the Breton calendar of festivals, things like that. They had all that in their mind but it was sort of getting thinner and thinner. I think a lot of Bretons had the need in the '80s to reconnect to that.</p>
Interviewer	<p>So you're publishing a magazine for a Breton audience in many ways and yet the articles you publish are in French. Is there something of a compromise in that?</p>
Yann	<p>Well, it's mainly because the number of people who can read Breton is not enough to support a private magazine like ours. We don't get any public funding so we have to actually compete with things that are very, very commercial. Our articles can be up to 10, 12 pages long. We have a lot of photographs. Maybe in a hundred years time we can have an Ar Men in Breton, hopefully.</p>
Interviewer	<p>And why is it so important for you that people understand Breton culture?</p>
Yann	<p>In Brittany in general, in France also as a whole, a lot of people are suffering, or have been suffering, of a culture where you are asked from a young age to sort of forget where you came from, what language your grandparents spoke, what costumes you wore, to become something new, something very futuristic, something a bit abstract, which was being French. A sort of an abstract culture that would make you happy, we would be all equal and then you will feel very happy. I think that, sadly, a lot of immigrants to France, a lot of people in France, French regions have done that voluntarily, so they could talk to the others better, but that actually didn't make them happy because there has been a lot of suffering through language loss. Strangers become French and actually you are never recognised fully as being French so you suffer, and if you don't deal with that problem your children will suffer, and that sort of effect, I think, lasts over generations of people. Like me in Brittany, for example, we are suffering to some extent of the</p>

	choice that has been made by other people before us to forget our language, give up our culture.
Interviewer	OK. Well on that passionate note, thank you very much for talking to us today.