

In Memory And Tribute To The Late Honorable Henri-Xavier Guélou

By: R.L. Dalrymple and C. Frederick Overby

Authors' Note:

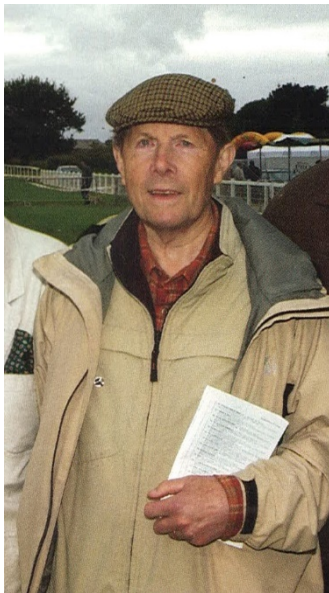
Henri-Xavier Guélou was a former President of CEB-France from 1988-1992. He was an esteemed French field trial judge and judge of the Natural Abilities Test (TAN), and an Expert Confirmateur for the Epagneul Breton, qualified by the CEB-France. He was also a loyal and devoted Honorary Member of CEB-US from 2000 until his death on June 22, 2020. He also served as an Advisor and Honorary Trustee to The Epagneul Breton Foundation, Inc. from its founding, until his passing. Henri was a mentor, advisor, teacher, friend and advocate for the CEB-US, from the earliest days of the U.S. club until his death. He was the first Frenchman to come to the USA to assist the club. It was Henri's support and endorsement that played a huge role in expanding international relations for breed fanciers in the United States. Those improved relations quickly led to drastic improvement in the Epagneul Breton breed in the United States. After he came to judge in the USA in 2006, other FCI Judges from France and other European countries then followed in his footsteps.

The initial draft of this article was penned by R. L. Dalrymple, who requested that Fred Overby edit and assist in finalizing the article. Both shared close and enduring friendships with Henri and his lovely wife, Marie Therese, who predeceased him by several years.

IN TRIBUTE TO Henri-Xavier Guélou

Henri-Xavier Guélou passed away on June 22, 2020. He was born in the village of Pongrieux in his native Bretagne 84 years ago, but lived much of his life in the town of Ploumagoar, a small community outside of the larger coastal town of Guingamp.

Henri's life extended for a majority of the history of the Epagneul Breton breed, which was first formally organized as a French breed in Bretagne in 1907. Henri's father, an avid hunter, was involved in the breed from the outset and in the decades before Henri was born. Thus, Henri's association with the breed was lifelong, as the breed was born only a few kilometers away in the village of Callac. The Epagneul Breton breed and its sponsoring club in the country of origin, the CEB-France, was organized in nearby Loudeac, a few kilometers down the road. Callac and Loudeac are located in Henri's native Bretagne within a few kilometers of Henri's home and birthplace.



**At the 2007
Centenaire Celebration in**

During visits of American friends to Bretagne, Henri and his lovely wife, Marie Therese served as gracious hosts. They would indoctrinate visitors to all things associated with the breed in their region. They would drive around the countryside and show American friends the coverts and bottoms around the area, where Henri hunted the becasse (woodcock) from boyhood with his beloved Epagneul Bretons, which were produced within a few miles from his home. Their kennel was named "du Grioux," named after the

river flowing through Pongrieux. Beyond interests in the Epagneul Breton, the Guélous would also share other historical sites, cultural resources, and the food and hospitality of the region. A stranger from the outside could not have been greeted more warmly in Bretagne.

Henri Guélou was a professional educator and taught English in the local schools there in Bretagne in the larger coastal town of Guingamp. His command of the English language as spoken and written was flawless. He preferred to correspond with friends by formal letter-- penned neatly and perfectly in his own handwriting. He was not very fond of computers, and in his later years critically observed, "There is too much modern breeding of the Epagneul Breton based on the computer and pedigrees, and not enough breeding decisions are made based on actual feeling about the qualities of the dogs themselves from hunting them."

His association with the Epagneul Breton in the US was an outgrowth of his long time personal friendship with R.L. and Pat Dalrymple, which began in 1989. R.L.'s career in agriculture began as a farmboy from Oklahoma, and continued from the time he graduated from Oklahoma State University in 1964, through his formal retirement in 1999. R.L. Dalrymple assisted farmers and ranchers in the production of forage for livestock and developed and patented several specific varieties of crabgrass. In the fall of 1989, there was a worldwide agricultural conference in Nice, France. R.L.'s employer encouraged him to attend the two week-long meeting. He had previously gotten involved with the "French Brittany", acquiring his first Epagneul Breton, which was bred in the US in 1984, and soon thereafter acquiring his first true French-bred EB from Pierre Terran of Elevage du Bussion de Choisel of Paris in 1987. Mr. Terran informed R. L. of the bulletin published by the CEB-France at that time; R.L. subsequently became a member of the CEB-France and began to follow the French club's magazine. It so happened that Henri Guélou was the President of the CEB-France at that time. On a whim, R.L. wrote to Mr. Guleou about his planned trip to the 1989 agricultural conference in Nice, France and asked if it was possible to meet and learn more about the Epagneul Breton there in Bretagne while he would be visiting in France. Luckily, Henri's chosen profession of teaching English to the French children in the schools of Guingamp came in handy when he received R.L.'s letter. Due to his affable, friendly nature and his natural desire to promote the EB around the world, Henri immediately wrote back and invited R.L. and Pat Dalrymple to come to his hometown for a visit. They arranged to meet at the Town Centre, and arrived in a rental car. R.L. had offered to give him a physical description of he and his wife, but Henri declined and simply said, "No, I will know who you are." When the Dalrymples arrived at the Town Centre, Henri and his wife Marie Therese walked straight up to them! Thus, began a lifetime friendship between the Dalrymples and the Guleous spanning thirty-one years. Although the two couples lived thousands of miles apart, this personal friendship would eventually pay huge dividends for CEB-US years down the road.

After they met in 1989, Marie Therese, who only spoke her native French, asked Henri to teach her English, so that she could more easily communicate with Pat Dalrymple. This kind gesture on the part of both Henri and Marie Therese proved to be of substantial value, when Marie Therese eventually made other friends in CEB-US a few

years later. Marie Therese eagerly took on the role of hostess when the Dalrymples and other Americans would come to France to visit. During the first few visits of EB club members from the United States, Marie Therese Guélou doted like a mother hen upon visiting American friends; always making sure they were always warmly welcomed, comfortable, well-fed and well-informed of all plans.



Treasures Exhibited at Henri's Funeral (including an Oklahoma red cedar vase - a gift from R. L. Dalrymple)

Henri field-trialed his own dogs as an amateur (non-professional) handler and acquired several Championship titles, including the titles earned by Itrick de l'Argoat, a female French Field Trial Champion of both the spring and fall French field trials. He raised a few litters from his personal line of dogs as a breeder which went back to the bloodlines of the Keranlouan dogs of Guy Morin and a few other early EB bloodlines lines developed there in Bretagne. In his later years as a small breeder, Henri finally convinced the French Kennel Club to transfer his father's kennel name "du Grioux" to him so that he could register his pups under the family kennel affix. He served on the committee (board) of the CEB-France for many years, before becoming president of that club from 1988 to 1992. He was also a qualified Expert Confirmateur for the CEB-France, and was a revered and respected FCI field trial Judge in France and Europe by the entire trialing community until his health prevented him from continuing to judge as he approached his eighties.

After becoming friends with R.L. and Pat Dalrymple in 1989, Henri and R.L. maintained ongoing contact by a stream of correspondence. Shortly after the formation of CEB-US (then known as the French Brittany Gun Dog Association or "FBGDA") in 1997, R.L. Dalrymple and Bill Dillon visited Mr. Guélou in France to attend some French field trials in 1999. They consulted and counseled with Henri and informed him about the efforts to advance the Epagneul Breton club in the United States, which would keep the Epagneul Breton authentic, as the dogs existed in France. They also impressed upon him that CEB-US was formed with the central goal to maintain separation of the Epagneul Breton from the Americanized Brittany and the American Brittany Club. Henri first actually visited the United States in 2001 and supervised the first UKC sanctioned Natural Ability Test (TAN) at the club's annual meeting in Three Forks, Montana which was hosted by Butch Nelson and Karen Paugh. He returned back to the US in the spring of 2006 to judge the field trials in Georgia at the National Conclave and was the first French Judge, credentialed by the Federation Cynologique Internationale ("FCI") to formally evaluate and judge the Epagneul Breton in sanctioned field trials in the US. He shared judging duties with his friend, Butch Nelson, with whom he felt a special kinship in the manner in which they evaluated dogs in the field. The two mutually respected each other and worked together seamlessly.

As Henri was an educator by profession, at heart, he took special joy at sharing his knowledge of the Epagneul Breton with members of our club in the United States. He was the keynote speaker at the 2006 National Conclave but gave numerous informal instructional pointers to individuals and in groups when he visited. Having led the French-breed club himself, he advised and encouraged the burgeoning CEB-US club with his wise counsel on many policy matters from the formation of the club until his death. Henri eagerly welcomed aspiring judges in training from the US to apprentice with him when they visited France, or when he came to the US to judge. In the early years of the club, quite a few US judges and handlers in the CEB-US club were heavily influenced by his tutelage. His command of the English language, as well as his in-depth knowledge of the Epagneul Breton proved invaluable to the fledging US club. In the early years of our club, every CEB-US president consulted him and accepted his sage advice. He became an Honorary Member of CEB-US in 2001 at the invitation of the club, and remained so until his death. He also accepted a position as an Honorary Trustee and Advisor to the Epagneul Breton Foundation, Inc. In 2007, when a delegation from CEB-US attended the Centennial Celebration of the Epagneul Breton in Loudeac, Bretagne, France, Henri and Marie Therese Guélou eagerly welcomed and made a special point of hosting the CEB-US members attending the celebration and making them all feel welcome.

In the earliest days after formation of CEB-US, modern forms of international communication via the internet and social media had not yet become commonplace. Communications between French enthusiasts of the Epagneul Breton and Americans more recently interested in the breed were largely based on personal relationships and conducted by letter or occasionally by telephone. In France, and in the French CEB there was considerable skepticism about what Americans would do with the breed, based on the well-founded observations of the manner in which the American Brittany had evolved in the United States during the period of the 1930s to the 1990s. Henri made his own independent judgement about the intentions of early promoters of the breed in our club based on his continuing interactions with R.L. Dalrymple, Peter Ward, Bill Dillon, Fred Overby, and others. He decided in 2001 to attend the club's annual meeting conclave in Montana to help supervise a TAN, and thereafter took the bold step of accepting a judging assignment in the USA at the 2006 National Conclave in Georgia. He then decided to not only help with judging, but he went back to France and vouched for our fledging club with the CEB-France club leadership, along with other French and European Judges of the breed, whom he encouraged to judge in the United States. Because of the great respect and persuasion which Henri commanded, other French judges decided to follow his example and to accept invitations to come to the United States to judge and otherwise evaluate the dogs and to serve as teachers and mentors for CEB-US. This was a huge breakthrough for the club in terms of international relations among the breed French breed constituency as well in the education and development of our own club members in the United States. As a direct outgrowth of improved relations and communication and after visits from a number of French Judges who saw what was happening with the breed in the USA in terms of hits development, the importations of quality Epagneul Bretons soon greatly increased in the years subsequent to 2001. Henri Guélou's support and assistance was a catalyst in



At a 2017 visit to Keranlouan

this regard. In his later years, Henri made a point to proudly wear his FBGDA cap to French field trials and other meetings of the CEB-France, in order to visibly show his support for our club. He remained a loyal member of CEB-US until his death and even made occasional donations to the club for his membership.

In 2017, Fred Overby and Butch Nelson last visited Henri Guélou in Bretagne, during a visit abroad to attend French Spring field trials. They made a special point of going to see their dear friend. Henri welcomed them and took them on a tour to visit Keranlouan kennel in Callac, and to have lunch and visit the Museum of the Epagneul Breton in Callac, of which he was so very proud. He inquired about and spoke fondly of all his other friends in the United States, to especially include the Dalrymples and Bruwelheides. At that time, he expressed that he had seen consistent and substantial improvement of the Epagneul Breton in the United

States from the time of his initial visit in 2001. Always outspoken and calling things as he saw them, he said that he felt the breed constituency was going too far in France and around the world to produce too many dogs of color within the breed --- merely because they were popular in the marketplace. He also felt that too much emphasis was being placed on beauty and exhibitions, and that he was concerned that the hunting qualities of the dogs would diminish over time. He said that he felt that field trial titles were being handed out much too easily in France, as well as in other countries and that judges needed to be stricter in separating the excellent dogs from the average ones in order to keep the working qualities of the breed at a high level. He also remarked that he actually enjoyed the club magazine of CEB-US, because he felt that it often had more useful information than the magazine published by the CEB-France. Being in his presence was during the visit was, as always, an educational, informative and memorable experience.

Henri was a truly a unique individual. He was a true, authentic Frenchman and unique product of the region of Bretagne, which has a very distinct heritage and culture among the provinces of France. At the same time, he also was a master of the English language and had a very positive outlook towards America because of the assistance provided by our



The Guélou Family

government to France in World War II. He was soft-spoken, but authoritative and resolute in his beliefs, when necessary. While his presence was warm and affable, he was an imposing figure with a commanding presence. He naturally enjoyed a sharp wit, and a great sense of humor and could say a great deal, -- in English or French -- by employing a very few words. Professional handlers and amateur students of the breed alike hung on his words. He was unquestionably one of the great men of France, who helped develop and steward the Epagneul Breton breed for his whole life. In his own country, as well as faraway places to include the United States. All of those in the US who had the opportunity to know him, to be judged by him in field trials, and to be instructed and mentored by him as students of the breed, are blessed to have encountered him during his life's productive journey. In his role as a teacher and educator, Henri Guélou had a large impact on the lives of all those who knew him. Henri Guélou was a wonderful friend and supporter of CEB-US and a true enthusiast of the Epagneul Breton breed. The same Bretagne province in France produced both him and his beloved Epagneul Breton breed and imbued both with wonderful characteristics. He will be greatly missed. May he rest in peace.