

Mari-Lor explaining her Breton roots

I was brought up by my great grandmother and she's the one who inspired me. And I was brought up in the suburb of Rennes, so this is where I was brought up. And the two important, because 'who' is like the food I ate and 'where' is the ground, um the substrate where I was brought up, the roots. Erm, the roots are in the suburb of Rennes so it is the Haute Bretagne, the Upper Brittany, and the languages are French and the dialect le Gallo. But as I was brought up by my great grandmother there is an important different part of Brittany, La Basse Bretagne, Lower Brittany. And here the languages are different because it's French also but it's Breton. Erm the two are intricate. I can't do with any of them.

So Cesson-Sévigné, the suburb of Rennes is very important to me and used to be very important. But it doesn't look like it used to be like before and my guts are really in Plouguernevel. And Plouguernevel as you really know is just near Gouarec. So this is why my roots are in Brittany really. But what made me realise that this was so important for me is that first of all I went to school at 5 years old and my great grandmother she, she left. She went to go to live with my grandparents at the farm again so I was left without her at home. She was my nanny, but I used to live the whole day with her and even to sleep in the same room. So it was a loss.

And afterwards er when I was 15 years old my mother decided that we should go to Morocco to live there. And that was so - oh it was a want, really want, I was too wound up at that time. And I think that I became numb at that time. I didn't realise it at the time of course, and was really really difficult. For many many years I had nightmares of my home, my house in Cesson-Sévigné because it kind of haunted me.

Afterwards I went to Paris for my studies and I got married there, but my husband is a Parisian so he doesn't know anything about Breton culture. And when I got pregnant and I had my daughter and she's 26 now, I realised that really there was lack in me and I needed – I do have to reconnect to my Breton culture. So I entered an association, a Breton association and I learned dancing. It is what we call a Cercle Celtique. So I did er Breton dancing for 20 years er and a special 10 years erm as competition.

But we only went to Brittany for the holidays and it wasn't enough for me. And I just couldn't make with erm the suburb of Paris, the pollution, the noise, the planes, the trains, the cars, the highways, and even the people, because er I just couldn't speak properly with them. It was very difficult. I realised that I was not at my place. Er I became very ill and er I had to save me.

So it was really a matter of life or death. And I came back four years ago to Brittany. And now that I've come where my roots are really, each day I do so many things that make me alive again. And er you asked me about so um a a people persons. And my great grandmother she inspired me a lot with her gowns. Each time we went to the farm she would unfold her em gowns and I would look and touch her black silk velvet camisole and her skirts and her white laced er headdress and erm the collars and even oh the black, the deep black fur waistcoat . And I thought she was a princess. She was dressed as a princess. I couldn't think that she was only a farmer. And even the furniture we had at home. That was so beautiful. There was, we had the

old bed, the closed bed where my mother and my grandmother were born. And we had it at home. And we had dressers, old dressers, and a very very old chest, which was carved and I could see, I was a child, but I could see those people carved on it with bragoù braz, it's a very old kind of trousers, and I think it's a chest er which was erm made in Léon. The very far end, upper end of Brittany. They're very typical of er this part of Brittany. So this is for the clothes and for the furniture and we come to the language.

When I used to go to the farm in Plouguernevel I loved that we had two languages and at that time I really felt rich. And I had that feeling that my father who could only speak French he was a kind of half of – and now I realise that I am too because I can't speak my Breton language. But at that time and still now I have it in my ears and in my head. But hopefully I fou... I have found coming here lots of people still speaking that language and it makes me so happy.

So it is out of a lack of the want and through resilience that just like those two it is a pearl and that's why nearly every day when I go out I put on my Breton costume, my old embroidered Breton costume and it a bru.. beauty that has come out of this feeling I've formed.