



Elaine speaking to Mari-Laure and Pierre about their Breton culture

Pierre: Well thank you first Elaine for inviting us again to your programme and greetings to your audience. My roots are in Bretagne in Brittany from my Mum's side. My mother, my grandmother, my great grandmother and actually I did my family tree and I could go up to 1649 in the village I live now which is Berrien which is a village near Huelgoat. So my roots, my roots are deeply you know from from the the Finistere. From from Berrien. From my Mother's side. But I grew up in the suburbs of Paris. My Mum, she was a nurse, and you know she had to find a job in the Hôpital de **Garches** and so I grew up in around Paris and we used to come on holiday here when I was a kid at my grandmother's house in in Berrien. So you know it's like this old souvenirs you know from the the child I was. So we were coming here on holiday and then, you know, well I grew up and and I travelled the world and now I'm back. And it's a real blessing to be back because when we talk about roots you know I'm thinking about my ancestors which are so important to me. I have the greatest respect about the people who have lived before us. You know? Especially when I think about my family. So ah these roots, these ancestors, are I feel they are with me still today you know. My grandmother she send me signs you know. But also when we talk about roots we're talking about trees and I I have the chance to have inherited er a field from my Mum and in that field there are amazing trees and and and these trees have roots you know so it's also linked to the nature. So my roots are yes from my family and from the nature that I find here and that that nourishes me. Yeah? That feeds me.

Elaine: Excellent. So er why do you think it's so important to inform other people, people living here in Brittany both French, English and other nationalities, um of the er culture and of the Breton way of life? Why is that so important do you think Mari-Laure?

Mari-Laure: Er. In fact it is not important really for me to inform - it's not inform people - it is to find for myself really. It's very selfish. Er it's um a need a deep need and the more I learn, the more I discover, the more I find that it's really important to go deep backwards and find who were the people who who came here, who were the people who lived here. I am very invested in the church and er there is a priest er **Jobinarian?????** er who writes a lot about the saints, the Breton saints, but the Irish saints. And er the Breton migrations to Brittany around the ninth century. And he writes that all the saints they they are with us. Just I can link to to what er Pierre has told us. They are with us every day. Their lives and they are kind of around us. Yes. they espy us. So I have to do a lot of research. I read a lot of history books about all this and I I feel more and more whole erm the more I read.

Elaine: So Pierre, would you er agree with what Mari-Laure has said? Or do you have also some other thoughts about that?

Pierre: Yes I I relate to what you say Mari-Laure. Eh, also I mean as for me it's also the fact that this passion I have, you know, in in sharing this culture that is important to



me, is the very fact that I travelled the world actually for 20 years and I lived in Ireland, I lived in Africa for 8 years, I lived in the Caribbeans and it's that very fact that makes me appreciate so much to be back home you know. And that they this culture to see it with a different eye, a different angle and to realise how rich it is. But all those travels I I did in the world make me who I am today and and now I love to share, you know. I love to share what I love through my my work and through my way of being and and to meet people. So yeah, this is, you know some people may not - we say that some people may not be interested in this Breton culture. I mean, to me that's OK, You can't force people if they're not interested. It's a shame, but we're all different. And what can you do? But when you put your your heart you know in in in what you say, especially in what you do, and why I love here is this this simplicity as much as the the richness, how rich this heritage is. So, yeah, it's a it's a passion of sharing yeah what's all around me basically.

Elaine: So could you tell me your current er occupation job is is a guide I believe is that in Huelgoat?

Pierre: Yes, I'm I'm a tour guide. In in French it's Guide Conférencier. So I I'm a a tour guide during the you know during the er summer time but also I give conferences in er nursing home, yeah, to elderly. I love doing that. Er, also to schools, but also I'm actually a French teacher to the British community living around here. So, I love, you know it's nice for me to to meet these people from er from Ireland, from from England, from Scotland, because yes I I share with them also what I love about Bretagne. I do them quiz, you know. So I'm happy with what I do because it's er I feel I am at the right place at the right time.

Elaine: Excellent, well it's you see, we say in England or in English rather that you have many fingers in many pies. Well, you are doing many different jobs but with a common, one common cause. And Mari-Laure, I believe you're involved with the choirs and the church.

Mari-Laure: Yes. Er, in fact, um, every day, every day I kind of practice my Breton culture in many ways. The language, the dancing, the music, the history, anything. And especially the Pardon. Er, And the Pardon, they are religious and profane er feasts around saints. So we honour the saints er of a local chapel, a local church. So it is every day, nearly every day, every day I speak er Breton. Even if it's only bits of Breton. But every day that I can er express this Breton culture. I just would like to underline that I'm I don't really realise when I put on my Breton costume. It's just like Sunday clothes. And I don't even make the difference um er between when I put them on or when I have my old joggings on. But it is the eh in the eyes of the people around me. And they look at me. And their smiles, wow I tell er, oh, this is important. So it is important to them. So it might be important for me as well. And just like Pierre, I travelled a lot as a child. I went to the USSR, I was er I was 6, I went to Japan, I went to Hong Kong, to Hong Kong. So I lived in Morocco, I went to Germany, Yugoslavia, and yes, we had the same er in common that um that we



have been able to see the specificities of all the countries and so we have been able to see what are our specificities in Brittany.

Elaine: Oh. You've almost actually answered my my last question question, which is where did you learn such a competent grasp of English and the fact that both of you have travelled so wide and far um almost explains that. Would you agree with that?

Mari-Laure: Yes, in fact um Great Britain was my second home as a child and my very far first memories as a child were when I er spent a month at 5 years old in Cambridge because my my father was a a researcher and er we had to go to Cambridge during the summer holidays because he was working with one of his colleagues and at that time, I can still remember, I went to see a Shakespeare play in Stratford upon Avon and I had the deep feeling that I could understand even if I didn't understand a word. And I think children have that gift, special gift, and so there is no er barrier between French and English for me. Eh I can feel with my body, and it has always been a pleasure for me to go to Great Britain, to Wales, to Scotland any part of England. And I have become used to the sweets, to the cakes, to the biscuits too. Well I loved it so much that it became natural for me. And my first toys here on the shelves are the first toys. I had only two words of English when I was small. Piggy bank er because I had it as a present and puppet because I had an old puppet made in England. So yes, they are my best memories as a child.

Elaine: Excellent. And Pierre, you again. You've travelled, I mean I don't know which countries you haven't been to, but er was this how you er acquired such a competent level of English, of spoken English?

Pierre: Well thank you. It's not perfect anyway, but er er yeah it's been a while actually I lived in Ireland and in Liberia as well. I worked for humanitarian organis... organisations for years so I had to interact with English speakers from all around the world, all sorts of accents you know. Indian, Australian, American. And you know I feel French is my mother tongue, yeah, the language of my mother. My mother tongue. But I'm used to say that English is the language of my heart. It really is. I mean when I'm sad, when I pray, when I'm upset it's funny because English comes first, you know into into my mouth, but also er as as well as um Mari-Laure does, I learn Breton and I and I try to grasp that, you know, challenging language and and I'm happy to do that because it's part of the culture here, but yeah all and all it's it's wonderful to to give space, you know, to give space to the local culture and and the the local from the cultures from from abroad and I think Brittany, Bretagne is is wonderful for that. And I really feel it's er it's it's open you know, it's open to other people.

Elaine: Absolutely. Well thank you both very much for your time and your all your fascinating facts that you've come up with today.