

Van Hamel Lecture

RHYME AND SCANSION IN CORNISH

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1. Most Cornish speakers in modern times have been raised on English nursery rhymes, which are notable for their rhythmic stress, making them easy for small children to learn and remember.

(a) They may be stressed on the last syllable only, on every other line³:

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as **snow**;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to **go**.⁴

Maria, hi a's tevo oen
Mar wynn avel an **ergh**,
Hag yn pub le may kerdhi hi
An oen eth war hy **lergh**.⁵

(b) ... or indeed on every other line:

Twinkle, twinkle, little **star**,
How I wonder what you **are**;
Up above the world so **high**,
Like a diamond in the **sky**.⁶

Splann, ty sterenn vyghan, **splann**,
Piw os, eus mar bell a-**vann** ?
Marth yw dhymm ahanas **sy**
Avel gemm ow kolowi.⁷

(c) ... other rhymes may consist of two syllables, stressed followed by unstressed:

Little Jack **Horner**
sat in a **corner**
eating his Christmas **pie**;
he put in his **thumb**
and pulled out a **plum**
and said "What a good boy am **I!**"⁸

Note the unequal number of syllables in the third and sixth lines; the rhythm in English is stress-timed, and not syllable-timed.

2. In Middle Cornish, most verse was in lines of seven (or occasionally four) syllables; stressed syllables were rhymed freely with unstressed syllables:

Ena crist sur as gasas
hag eth arta e besy
war ben gleyn e worth y **das**
del lavarsa ragon **ny**
y beynys o cref ha **bras**
warnozo heb y dylly
reson o rag ol an **wlas**
ef a wozye y verwy⁹

Then Christ surely left them
and went again to pray
on his knees to His Father,
as He had said, for us.
His pains were strong and great
upon Him without being deserved.
(The) reason was that for all the land
He knew that He would die.

It was also common to rhyme closed syllables ending in fortis consonants (i.e. unvoiced or double) with closed syllables ending in the corresponding lenis consonants (i.e. voiced or single).

³ In the quoted extracts, rhymes are in **bold**, and underlining (not always shown) indicates stressed syllables.

⁴ Traditional English nursery rhyme.

⁵ Free translation, apparently by A.S.D.Smith, in *Kemysk Kernewek*, p.51 (re-spelled).

⁶ Traditional English nursery rhyme.

⁷ Free translation, apparently by A.S.D.Smith, in *Kemysk Kernewek*, p.50 (re-spelled).

⁸ 16th century English nursery rhyme.

⁹ *Pascon Agan Arluth*, stanza 56.

3. Occasionally, **double** rhymes were used, in which the last two syllables in a line were rhymed:

ke ha dus pan vy plesyes	go and come when thou mayest be pleased
myns may hallen sur esy es ¹⁰	all we can, surely eased ...

Such rhymes are much commoner in *Bywnans Ke.*

4. This style, and the rhyming scheme ABABABAB, have been imitated in recent times:

Sygh ha meynek o an plas	Dry and stony was the place
y'n bluw henwys Pluwgernow.	in the parish named Plougerne.
Yth esa'n dus ow hwilas	The people were seeking,
heb y gavoës dowr y'n pow ;	without finding it, water in the country;
skwith, y's tevo own yn fras	tired, they took great fright
may teffens ha bos marow,	that they might become dead
ha'ga syghes o mar vr as	and their thirst was so great
may hwrens dhe Bowl pysadow. ¹¹	that they petitioned Paul.

5. Another common rhyming scheme was ABABCDDC:

iesu crist gvyth vy pup prys	A	Jesus Christ, keep me always
lel zeth serve om dyy ow	B	loyally to serve thee in my days;
ihesu ov corfe ham spy rys	A	Jesus, my body and my spirit,
ol ov nerth ham cowgegy ow	B	all my strength and my thoughts
rof zeth gorthy e	C	I give to worship thee;
hag ath peys vvel ha clour	D	and I pray thee, humble and pure,
nefra na veua yn nor	D	that I never be on Earth
trelyes ze lust an bys me ¹²	C	turned to the lust of this world.

Note the 4-syllable line, and the rhyming of stressed and unstressed syllables.

6. This pattern has also been used in modern times:

Mester Tony Blair ov vy ,	A	Mr Tony Blair am I,
Kynsa menyter y'n pow ;	B	Prime Minister in the country,
Aswonny's 'vel den a vri	A	recognized as a man of renown,
Gans konnykter bras heb wow ;	B	with great cleverness, no kidding,
Arethor heb par yth ov ,	C	an unparalleled orator,
Keffrys deboner ha teg ,	D	also debonair and handsome,
Milweyth gwell es Wella Hague ,	D	1000-fold better than William Hague,
Trestyewgh ynnov, my a'n prov . ¹³	C	Trust me, I shall prove it.

¹⁰ *Bywnans Meryasek*, ll. 139, 140.

¹¹ from *Devedhyans Sen Powl yn Bro Leon*, by K.J.G.

¹² *Bywnans Meryasek*, ll. 146-153.

¹³ Stanza from a poem by K.J.G, 1999.

7. In Late Cornish, much of the poetry took the form of rhyming couplets:

Puha vedn Kavas an gwel skians ol ,	He that will the Chiefest wisdom finde
Gwith compas do benegas Egliz Paul .	Keep right the holy Church of Paule in minde
Gazow do gerriow zans gus Arleth Deu ,	To the pure word of God yr Lord give ear ,
Gen Kolon, Brez, ha Ena guir es D'ew ,	In heart, in minde & Soul, be you sincere ¹⁴
Diskeutha Trueth do Deez guadn Pleu ma ,	Shew mercy to the weak men of this parish
Ha senzhia ol guz dethiow Bownans da . ¹⁵	and hold all your dayes, a Good life. ¹⁶

Note that the rhythm is the same in Cornish and English.

8. Edward Lhuyd, however, experimented with the Welsh englyn in Cornish:

An lavar coth yu lavar guîr	What's said of old, will always stand :
bedh darn rê ver, dhan tavaz rê hîr	Too long a tongue, too short a hand ,
Mes dêh heb dawaz a gallaz i dîr	But he that had no tongue, lost his land . ¹⁷

9. In the twentieth century, writers in Cornish have tried English metrical styles, such as the sonnet, a form with fourteen 10-syllable lines and various rhyme-schemes.

(a)

Gwainten en Kernow ! Ma Miz Me ow tos ,	Spring in Cornwall ! May is coming,
Floures agor, edhyn bian a gan	open flowers, small birds sing,
Gwerdh yu an gwedh, ridhek en blejyow glan	the trees are green, a robin in fresh flowers
Avalow yu en jarnow, war peb ros	apples in the gardens, on every heath
Savor an eithin melen ol an nos	the scent of yellow gorse all night long
A lenw an ayr, warlergh houlsedhas splan ,	fills the air, after a splendid sunset,
A wrig golowa'n don las avel tan ;	which lit up the blue wave like fire;
Ha son an mor a wortheb lef an cos .	and the sea-song replies to the wood's voice.
Re wrellen bos en Kernow ! Lowenek	That we might be in Cornwall ! Joyfully
Clewav lev ton, ha gwainten devedhes,	I hear the wave's voice, and spring is come,
Gwelav gun las Mor Havren, gwils ha hwek ,	I see the Severn Sea, wild and sweet,
Gwelav blejyow, 'vel henros beniges -	I see flowers, as in a blessed dream.
Govi ! ni dhre dhemmo 'gan gwainten tek	Woe is me ! Our fair spring brings to me,
Divres a'm bro, neb whekter en Londres. ¹⁸	exiled in London, no sweetness.

Note the mixture of stressed and unstressed syllables.

¹⁴ John Boson's own verse translation of the first four lines.

¹⁵ Six lines of moral advice, by John Boson, c.1720.

¹⁶ William Gwavas' prose translation of the last two lines.

¹⁷ Englyn by Edward Lhuyd, in *Archaeologia Britannica*, 1707.

¹⁸ Sonnet by Henry Jenner.

(b)

Pur doemm, re doemm, re beu an jydh hedhyw,
ha lemmyn, y'n gorthugher, nyns yw gwell:
Pup-prys y tyv an myns a gommol du
a dheu a Vreten Vyghan der a-bell.
Yn-hons dhe'n gorwel mor, war-tu ha'n Soth
y tewynn yn unn wari lughes Hav;
Kyns pell y tiwedh sur an gewer boeth,
y hwra gorfenna agan dydhyow brav.
Ny yll na den na lodhen bos attes;
pup penn yw poesys der an ayr a-vann:
Awel nyns eus, an mor yw spavenhes;
Puptra yw parys rag an tardh tedan.
Mes, krakk ! An kynsa taran 'derr an taw
Ha res yw hwilas skovva 'mes an glaw.¹⁹

Very hot, too hot, has been the day today,
and now, in the evening, it is no better:
all the time grows the amount of black cloud
which comes from Brittany afar off.
Yonder on the sea-horizon, southward,
summer lightning flickers playfully,
the heat-wave will surely end before long,
our fine days will finish.
neither man nor beast can be at ease;
the air aloft weighs on every head:
there is no wind, the sea is glassy calm;
all is ready for the electric explosion.
but crack, the 1st thunder breaks the silence
and one must seek shelter from the rain.

10. Other English verse-patterns have been tried in Cornish, e.g. the limerick:

Yth esa dew dhen a Lannergh
a grysens i aga bos mergh,
ha wosa gryghias
mes kyns es ewhias
y typsons kelornas a gergh!²⁰

There were two men from Landrake
who believed themselves to be horses,
and after neighing
but before riding out
they ate a bucketful of oats!

We now turn to Welsh and Breton, to see whether the same rules apply.

11. In the earliest Welsh poetry, stressed and unstressed syllables were freely rhymed with each other, but with no discernible pattern; from about the twelfth century onwards, there was a tendency to alternate them ...

(a) in the *englyn*:

Englyn *a thelyn a thant* - ar gwleddoedd
*Ar*glwyddawl *ddarffuant*
Lle *bu bonedd Gwynedd gant*
Adar nos *a deyrnasant*²¹

Both englyn, harp and string, and the
lordly feasts have come to an end;
where the nobility of Gwynedd used to be
by the hundred, now night birds reign.

Note the elaborate internal rhyme and assonance, known as *cynganedd*, shown here in *bold italics*.

(b) and *cywydd* forms:

Wedi cysgu, tru tremyn,
O bawb eithr myfi a bun,
Profais yn hyfedr fedru
Ar wely'r ferch; alar fu.²²

When everyone was sleeping but myself
and her - it was a desperate journey -
I summoned all my skill to reach
the maiden's bed: disastrous was [the attempt].

¹⁹ Sonnet by K.J.G.

²⁰ Limerick by K.J.G.

²¹ By one of the Gogynfeirdd poets, c.1200.

²² From the 14th century poem *Trafferth mewn tafarn*, by Dafydd ap Gwilym.

12. More modern nursery rhymes in Welsh seem to have a stress pattern which is much more like English:

Dacw Mam yn dwad	There's Mam coming
Dros y gamfa wen ,	over the white stile;
Rhywbeth yn ei ffedog,	something in her apron
A phiser ar ei phen . ²³	and a pitcher on her head.

13. In Middle Breton, the system of internal rhymes was important, but scansion was of no importance:

Un sterenn wenn o c'hellenne	A white star taught them
Da von't da'n plac , dre c'hraç Doue,	to go the place, by God's grace,
Ma voa Jesus; eürus voe	where Jesus was; happy were
Oz kavout Mari an tri roue. ²⁴	the three kings to find Mary.

14. In Modern Breton, these complex rhyming schemes have been largely replaced by rhyming couplets:

Un alar'ch, un alarc'h, tramor,	A swan, a swan, across the sea,
War lein tour moal kastell Arvor!	atop the slim tower of Arvor castle
Dinn, dinn daon! da'n emgann! da'n emgann!.....	to the fight, to the fight,
O! dinn, dinn, daon! da'n emgann ez an! ²⁵	to the fight I go!

This verse is not meant to be recited with the natural stress pattern, but sung to a tune whose rhythm suppresses the natural stress pattern.

15. In the following extreme case, [-t] is the only rhyme used:

E pardon Spezed e oan bet ,	I had gone to the pardon at Spezed,
Ur plac'h yaouank am boa kavet, ²⁶	I had found a young girl,

followed by 9 other lines, some obscene, with a predictable outcome.

16. Breton *Kan ha Diskan* has been imitated in Cornish:

Souder yowynk eth dhe vresel	A young soldier went to war,
ny vynna holya bywnans kosel. ²⁷	he did not wish to follow a quiet life.

This song uses rhyming couplets with a large number of double rhymes.

²³ Part of a traditional Welsh nursery rhyme, kindly supplied by Andrew Hawke.

²⁴ Again, internal rhymes are shown in *bold italics*.

²⁵ From the 19th century collection of Breton verse, *Barzhaz Breizh*.

²⁶ Full text found in *Kanomp Uhel*, published by Co-op Breizh.

²⁷ First stanza of a song by Graham Sandercock.

17. In most Breton songs, the natural stress is ignored²⁸.

- (a) Kalz amzer am eus kollet o furchal er c'hoajou.
- (b) Much time have I lost wandering in the woods.
- (c) Kalz amzer am eus kollet o furchal er c'hoajou.
- (d) **Kalz** amzer eus kollet o furchal er c'hoajou
- (e) **Kalz** amzer am eus kollet o furchal er c'hoajou²⁹

18. This applies to some nursery rhymes, too ...

Kavet 'peus da saout 'ta, Yannig,

Have you found your cows, then, Johnny,

Kavet 'peus da saout 'ta?

Have you found your cows ?

N'em eus ket, n'em eus **ket**,

I have not, I have not,

Gwell' 'geto am eus kav**et**.³⁰

I have found (something) better than they.

19. ...even to those with a strong rhythm, for bouncing a baby on the lap:

Marc'h Solena 'ya da **Vrest**
dishouarn ha digabestr
dreist an drein, dreist ar **vein**,
gant Solena war e **gein**,
hag un all war e **chouk**,
hag un all war e **lost**,
da gas ul lizher d'ar **post**.³¹

Solena's horse goes to Brest
unshod and unbridled,
over the briars, over the stones,
with Solena on its back,
and another on its neck,
and another on its tail,
to put a letter in the post.

20. It applies when Breton words are written to existing tunes from other countries:

(a) W: Mae hen wlad fy nhadau yn annwyl i **mi**,
Gwlad beirdd a chantorion, enwogion o **fri**.³²

C: Bro goth agan tasow, dha fleghes a'th **kar**,
Gwlas ker an howlsedhes, pan vro yw dha **bar**?³³

B: Ni Breizhiz a galon, karomp hor gwir vro,
Brud**et** eo an Arvor dre ar bed tro-**dro**.³⁴

²⁸ Syllables which are unstressed in natural speech, but stressed in the verse, are in red.

²⁹ First line of the traditional Breton song *An Durzhunell*.

³⁰ First stanza of a Breton nursery rhyme, used in the *tamm kreiz* of a gavotte.

³¹ Personalized Breton nursery rhyme.

³² First two lines of the Welsh national anthem, words and music composed in 1856.

³³ Words written by Henry Jenner, and edited by Morton Nance.

³⁴ The Breton version dates from 1904.

(b) W: Henffych i'n Prifardd ar fuddugol **hynt**,
Seiniwch ei enw i'r pedwar **gwynt**.³⁵

C. Mir, A Gernow, arta war dha **dir**,
Wosa deg kansblydhen **hir**,³⁶

B. Gwir Vretoned, tud A galon, war **sav**!
da ganañ gloar da **Vreizh**, hor **bro**.³⁷

21. It applies even when the words and the music are composed by the same person:

Na pa'm boa klevet ar c'heleier
e ranke mont kuit va mestrez,
da vezhinañ d'an enezeier
betek Trielen ha Molenez.³⁸

Na pa'm boa klevet **ar** c'heleier
e ranke **mont** kuit va mestrez,
da **vezhinañ** d'an enezeier
betek Trielen **ha** Molenez.

22. What happens when the metre is stricter, as in hymns ? The most frequently used metre in English hymns is 8.6.8.6 (common metre):

(a) The rhyming lines may be just the second and fourth:

Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,
in every part with **praise**,
that my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy **ways**.³⁹

Leunha gans prays, ow Arloedh Duw,
pub rann ow bywnans **vy**,
may fo ow horf ha'm enev **bos**
argemmyn ragos **sy**.⁴⁰

(b) ... or there may be two sets of rhymes:

God moves in a mysterious **way**
His wonders to **perform**;
He plants His footsteps in the **sea**
and rides upon the **storm**.⁴¹

Yn fordh kevrynyek yma **Duw**
ow kul marthusyon **splann**;
an tonnow bras y gerdhva **yw**,
y vargh, an gwyns a-**vann**.⁴²

³⁵ Sung to *Captain Morgan's March*, to honour the winner of the Chair at the Eisteddfod.

³⁶ Words by Morton Nance, written to welcome a party of visiting Bretons.

³⁷ A Breton national song, dating from at least 1930.

³⁸ First stanza of the Breton song *Gwerz ar Vezhinerien*, by Denez Prigent.

³⁹ First verse of a hymn by Horatius Bonar, 1866.

⁴⁰ Translation into Cornish by K.J.G.

⁴¹ First verse of a hymn by William Cowper, 1774.

⁴² Translation into Cornish by K.J.G.

24. There are plenty of examples of Welsh hymns having been written to metres commonly used in English hymnody, e.g. the following two hymns (8.7.8.7.D), one English, one Welsh are commonly sung to the Welsh tune *Hyfrydol*:

<u>Love</u> <u>Divine</u> , all <u>loves</u> <u>ex</u> celling ,	<u>Cefnfor</u> <u>mawr</u> <u>uwchlaw</u> <u>gwybodaeth</u> ,
<u>Joy</u> of <u>Heav'n</u> , to <u>Earth</u> come <u>down</u> ,	<u>Ydyw</u> <u>cariad</u> <u>Iesu</u> Grist ,
<u>Fix</u> in <u>us</u> Thy <u>humble</u> dwelling ,	<u>Ffynnon</u> <u>fywiol</u> <u>Iachawdwriaeth</u>
All Thy <u>faithful</u> <u>mercies</u> crow <u>n</u> .	<u>I adloni</u> <u>enaid</u> trist !
<u>Jesu</u> , <u>Thou</u> art <u>all</u> <u>compassion</u> ,	<u>Marw</u> <u>drosom</u> , <u>bechaduriaid</u> !
<u>Pure</u> <u>unbounded</u> <u>love</u> <u>Thou</u> art ,	<u>Tra</u> <u>rhagorol</u> <u>gariad</u> yw ;
<u>Visit</u> <u>us</u> with <u>Thy</u> <u>salvation</u> ,	<u>Golwg</u> <u>arno</u> <u>wna</u> <u>i'm</u> <u>henaid</u>
<u>Enter</u> <u>every</u> <u>trembling</u> heart . ⁴³	<u>Lawenhau</u> <u>mewn</u> <u>ffydd</u> a byw . ⁴⁴

Note that the Welsh hymn scans correctly, but only the last syllables rhyme.

25. In Breton hymnody, not only are there no double rhymes, but the verse does not scan either. Here a Breton hymn to the metre 7.6.7.6.D. is compared with an English hymn to the same metre:

Patronez <u>dous</u> ar <u>Folgoad</u> ,	In <u>heav'nly</u> <u>love</u> <u>abiding</u> ,
hor <u>mamm</u> hag hon <u>Itron</u> ,	no <u>change</u> my <u>heart</u> shall fear ,
an <u>dour</u> en hon <u>daoulagad</u> ,	and <u>safe</u> is <u>such</u> <u>confiding</u> ,
ni ho ped a galon,	for <u>nothing</u> <u>changes</u> here ;
harpit d'an <u>iliz</u> <u>santel</u> :	the <u>storm</u> may <u>roar</u> <u>without</u> me ,
avel <u>diroll</u> a ra ,	my <u>heart</u> may <u>low</u> be laid ,
tenn ha hir eo ar <u>vresel</u> ;	but <u>God</u> is <u>round</u> <u>about</u> me ,
ar <u>peoc'h</u> , O <u>Maria</u> . ⁴⁵	and <u>can</u> I <u>be</u> <u>dismayed</u> . ⁴⁶

26. Occasionally, however, the Middle Breton pattern has been imitated:

<u>Gloar</u> <u>da</u> <u>Vari</u> <u>ha</u> <u>meuleudi</u>	ar	a	ar	i	a	eu	eu	i
<u>Pebezh</u> <u>burzhud</u> <u>eürus</u>	ur		ur			us		
<u>Mari</u> <u>gwerc'hez</u> <u>ha</u> <u>mamm</u> <u>ivez</u>			ez		ez			
<u>Gwerc'hez</u> <u>ha</u> <u>mamm</u> <u>da</u> <u>Jezus</u> ⁴⁷			ez		ez		us	

⁴³ First verse of a hymn by Charles Wesley.

⁴⁴ Hymn 210 in *Tonau ac Emynau*, 1904.

⁴⁵ First verse of a well-known Breton hymn.

⁴⁶ First verse of a hymn by Anna Laetitia Waring.

⁴⁷ Published in *Cantiques bretons* in 1983, but it is very much older than that.

27. When translating hymns from English, it is important to preserve the English stress-pattern, otherwise they become unsingable:

O <u>worship</u> the King	An myghtern gordhyn	Gordhyn an myghtern
All <u>glorious</u> above ,	a <u>ughon</u> y'th clos ,	yn <u>golow</u> a- vann ,
O <u>gratefully</u> sing	Gans <u>grassyans</u> kenyn,	a'y <u>nerth</u> ha'y vern
His <u>pow'r</u> and His love ;	a'y <u>gufter</u> , gallos	a <u>vydh</u> agan kan ;
Our <u>shield</u> and defender ,	Dhyn <u>Scos</u> ha Mentener	dhyn <u>scoes</u> ha mentener
The <u>Ancient</u> of days ,	bys <u>nefra</u> a bys ,	bys <u>nevra</u> a bys
<u>Pavilioned</u> in splendour	Trygys yw yn <u>splander</u>	annedhys yn <u>splanner</u>
And <u>girded</u> with praise . ⁴⁸	ha <u>gordhyans</u> ke frvs . ⁴⁹	ha <u>gordhyans</u> ke ffrvs . ⁵⁰

28. (a) This is especially the case with well-known Christmas carols:

Good King Wenceslas looked out	Myghtern Wenseslas yth o
on the feast of Stephen ,	Neb dhe dhy' goel Stefan
when the snow lay round about ,	ergh a weli a-der- dro ,
deep, and crisp, and even :	down, ha gwyrgh, ha leven ;
brightly shone the Moon that night	golow loer o splann y'n nos ,
though the frost was cruel ,	rewi tynn kyn hwrussa ,
when a poor man came in sight	pan wrug den boghosek dos
gath'ring winter fuel . ⁵¹	esa ow keunyssa. ⁵²

(b) A Breton carol to the same tune (not a translation) scans beautifully, but does not rhyme properly:

Da Nedeleg, gant o mamm,	pevar a <u>vugale</u> ,
'barzh an iliz, ouzh ar C'hraou	laouen-holl, a <u>selle</u> .
Met, o welout reuz ha doan	an tiegezh <u>santel</u> ,
Setu souden en o c'hreiz	anken vras o <u>sevel</u> . ⁵³

29. Why should Breton, a language with a very strong natural stress, ignore this natural pattern in songs and hymns? The answer may be to do with the influence of French, a language in which rhyme appears less important than in English:

Il était un petit navire	There was a little ship
qui n'avait jamais navigué,	which had never sailed.
ohé, ohé!	Hey, hey!
Ohé, ohé, matelot,	Hey, hey, sailor,
matelot navigue sur les flots . ⁵⁴	sailor sails on the waves.

⁴⁸ First verse of a hymn by Robert Grant.

⁴⁹ Translation into Unified Cornish, from *Hymns ha Salmow*.

⁵⁰ Revised translation by K.J.G., reducing to one the number of incorrectly stressed syllables.

⁵¹ First verse of a carol by John Neale, published in 1853.

⁵² Translation into Cornish by K.J.G., 1978.

⁵³ Words by Roparz Hemon.

⁵⁴ First verse and refrain of a French nursery rhyme.

30. There is, nevertheless, a set of rules for composing rhyme in French; twelve-syllable lines are common, and as in Celtic, only the last syllable rhymes:

Regarde-moi, mon cher, et dis quelle espérance	Look and tell me what ex <u>uberance</u>
Pourrait bien me laisser cette protrubance !	I have with this pro <u>trubance</u> ;
Oh ! je ne me fais pas d'illusion ! Parbleu !	I'm under no illusion. <u>True</u>
Oui, quelquefois, je m'attendris, dans le soir bleu;	Sometimes, bemused by the <u>night</u> ,
J'entre en quelque jardin où l'heure se parfume;	I see far off in the silver <u>light</u>
Avec mon pauvre grand diable de nez je hume	a lady on the arm of her <u>knight</u> :
L'avril - je suis des yeux, sous un rayon d'argent,	I dream of walking in the silver <u>glow</u>
Au bras d'un cavalier, quelque femme, en songeant	with a lady <u>so</u>
Que pour marcher, à petits pas, dans de la lune,	I get carried <u>away</u> ,
Aussi moi j'aimerais au bras en avoir une;	I <u>pray</u> ;
Je m'exalte, j'oublie et j'aperçois soudain	I forget <u>all</u>
L'ombre de mon profil sur le mur du jardin! ⁵⁵	and then see my shadow on the <u>wall</u> . ⁵⁶

31. The great difference between French and English is that French is syllable-timed, whereas English is stress-timed, as is shown by this distortion of a limerick:

There was a young man from Japan
 whose poetry never would scan;
 when he was asked why,
 he said, with a sigh,

I always try to put as many words in the last line as I can!⁵⁷

32. It is also of interest to see whether the metrical rules of English apply to other languages. The following hymn (metre 8.7.8.7.D) is normally sung to the tune *Austria*, i.e. the air of the German national anthem, which suggests that the rules apply also in German:

Glorious things of thee are <u>spoken</u> ,	Splannder yw ahanas <u>kewsys</u> ,
Zion, city of our <u>God</u> ;	Sion, sita agan <u>Duw</u> ,
He, whose word cannot be <u>broken</u>	formys es kyns gans an <u>Duwses</u> ,
formed thee for His own <u>abode</u> .	rag y drigva ev a'th <u>piw</u> .
On the Rock of Ages <u>founded</u> ,	War an Garrek Oesow <u>grondys</u> ,
what can shake thy sure <u>repose</u> ?	Dha omhweles piw a <u>yll</u> ?
With salvation's wall <u>surrounded</u> ,	Fos selwyans a-dro dhys <u>fondys</u> ,
thou may'st smile at all thy <u>foes</u> . ⁵⁸	Pub eskar a'y dowl a <u>fyll</u> . ⁵⁹

⁵⁵ From *Cyrano de Bergerac*, by Edmond Rostand, 1897.

⁵⁶ From a free translation of Rostand's work.

⁵⁷ Quoted in many collections of limericks, but who wrote it?

⁵⁸ First verse of a hymn by John Newton.

⁵⁹ From Lyver Hymnys ha Salmow, no. 67, respelled from Unified Cornish.

33. The rules for rhyming in English certainly appear to apply in this German nursery rhyme:

Auf der <u>Mauer</u> ,	On the wall,
auf der <u>Lauer</u> ,	lying in wait,
Sitz <i>eine kleine Wanze</i> ;	sits a little bug
Auf der <u>Mauer</u> ,	
auf der <u>Lauer</u> ,	
Sitz <i>eine kleine Wanze</i> ;	
Seht doch mal die Wanze <u>an</u>	look at the bug
Wie die <i>Wanze tanzen kann</i> :	how the bug can dance
Auf der <u>Mauer</u> ,	
auf der <u>Lauer</u> ,	
Sitz <i>eine kleine Wanze</i> .	

34. and also to this well-known song:

Der Vogelfänger bin ich <u>ja</u> ,	An ydhnor heudhik ov yn <u>hwir</u> ,
stets lustig heisa hops <u>sa</u> !	ha gwiskys ov menowgh yn <u>gwyr</u> ;
ich Vogelfänger bin be <u>kannt</u>	aswonnys ov a-ves a'm <u>koes</u>
bei alt und jung im ganzen <u>Land</u> .	yn pub gwlas oll, gans yo'nk ha <u>loes</u> .
Weiß mit dem Lokken umz <u>ugehn</u> ,	Y hwisk antylli avel <u>neyth</u> ;
und mich aufs Pfeifen zu ver <u>stehn</u> !	hwibana 'allav 'vel ow <u>freydh</u> ;
Drum kann ich froh und lustig <u>sein</u> ,	ha hwi a wel: pur lowen <u>ov</u>
denn alle Vögel sind ja <u>mein</u> . ⁶⁰	bos dhymm an ydhyn, gwyls ha <u>doy</u> . ⁶¹

35. Like English and German, Dutch is a Germanic language. The rules for English should also therefore apply to Dutch⁶²:

Wat heeft het Geld Ver <u>mogen</u> !	Ass yw krev an nerth argh <u>ansek</u> !
Het maakt de Gekken <u>wijs</u> :	Gwel dhe'n dhellyon ev a <u>ro</u> :
Het geeft de Blinden <u>ogen</u> :	Ev a wra tus foll skian <u>sek</u> :
Het strijkt alom de <u>prijs</u> :	Ev a gyv pup pris a <u>vo</u> :
Het maakt van Bloodards <u>Helden</u> :	Der y nerth pub own yw <u>karthys</u> ,
Het geeft de Liefde <u>Kracht</u> .	Ev a wra kerensa <u>krev</u> .
Wat Voorrecht kan men <u>melden</u> ,	Tus a lever nag eus <u>marthus</u>
Dat men van 't Geld niet <u>wacht</u> . ⁶³	Na vo gwruthys dredho <u>ev</u> . ⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Papageno's opening song from *Die Zauberflöte*, by Mozart, 1791; words by E. Schikaneder.

⁶¹ Translation into Cornish by K.J.G., 2000.

⁶² Since this lecture was delivered in the Netherlands, an example in Dutch was appropriate.

⁶³ Dutch poem about the attractions of money.

⁶⁴ Translation into Cornish (using a different metre) by K.J.G., 1999.

Summary

In the Germanic system of rhyming, the syllables which count as rhyming at the end of a line are the last syllable which is stressed plus any subsequent syllables. One, two, and occasionally three are thus used for rhyming.

In the Brittonic system of rhyming, rhymes are usually single and occasionally double. In single rhymes, only the last syllable in each line is rhymed, and this syllable may be stressed or unstressed. In double rhymes, the last two syllables in each line are rhymed; usually they consist of a stressed followed by an unstressed syllable.

The Brittonic system is used in hymns composed in Welsh, even when they are sung to tunes by English composers.

In Breton songs and hymns, the Brittonic system applies, but in addition the natural stress of the words is ignored.

When composing rhyme in Cornish, it is advisable to stick to either the Brittonic system or the Germanic system. When translating songs and hymns from English, it is recommended that the Germanic system be used.