



Discovery booklet

Saint Benoit sur Loire

Discover the village of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire and its many hidden richness's.

Thanks to the booklet «Treasure hunting» for children's, they can share with their parents a rich walk to discover the history of the town.



COMMUNAUTÉ
DE COMMUNES
DU VAL DE SULLY



INTRODUCTION

Situated in the lowland of the Val d'Or and built on a little hill, little mound to be protected of the floods of the Loire, Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire is called by the relics of Saint Benoit de Nursie maintained in the abbey since the second part of the VIIth century.

The origin of the village came from the Gallo-Roman era and the creation of a villa (big agricultural holding) called Floriacium. To host the farm workers, a village is founded and takes the name of Fleury, according to its villa.

On the nearby hill, some monks who came from Saint-Aignan d'Orléans founded a monastery in the VIIth century and they gave it the name «Fleury». The monks leaved to search the relics of Saint-Benoit de Nursie in Italia at the Mont Cassin. Thanks to the presence of these relics, the abbey will know an important development, and a new village will be built around it.

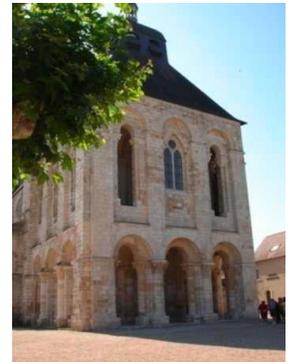
This new village will take the name of the saint of whom the relics are in the abbey: «Saint Benoit sur Loire». The village will have more and more importance and will take with it the village of Fleury to form one village. So today Fleury is a part of Saint Benoit sur Loire.

1. ABBEY OF FLEURY

Founded in the VIIth century, the abbey knows an intense intellectual activity in the VIII and IXth centuries, particularly during the abbot of Théodulfe from 798.

At the X and XIth centuries, 3 abbots of exception will contribute to the new brilliance of the abbey:

- Odon (930 – 942) restored the observance of the rule of Saint-Benoit and a crypt to place the relics of Saint-Benoit.
- Abbon (930 – 1004) is a man of letters, a lawyer and a mathematician. Most of his important manuscripts from the Xth century that we have were copied in Fleury under his abbot.
- Gauzlin (1004 – 1030) ordered to build the famous Porch-tower of the abbey, intended to be «a work like this must be an example for all the country». He also made the beautiful polychromatic stony floor of chorus.



Since 1026 a new era of big construction works starts until the end of the XVth century:

- Chorus, crypt and transept are finished in 1108. Philippe Ist, king of France will be buried there soon after 1108.
- Beginning of the construction of the nave, which represents a transition between Roman art and gothic art.
- Dedication of the church in 1218



2. MAX JACOB

Max Jacob (1876-1944) was born in a Jewish family of Quimper. He was a poet, a writer, a painter and a letter-man. After a revelation, he convert himself to the Catholicism. It's a friend from Paris, the abbot Weill who has got his authority request, who advised Max Jacob to take refuge in Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire to lead a life corresponding to his new faith. Max Jacob will stay two times in Saint-Benoit, from 1921 to 1928 and from 1936 to 1944.

During his first stay, he will at first be hosted by Abbot Albert Fleureau, and then he will stay in a disused cell at the monastery. During his second stay he stayed for a while at the hotel Robert (current church hall Saint-Marie), then he will be a lodger of Mme Persillard. It's in this house that he is arrested on 24 February 1944, transferred to the prison in Orléans and then to a camp in Drancy where he will die the day before he must have been transferred to the German concentration camp.

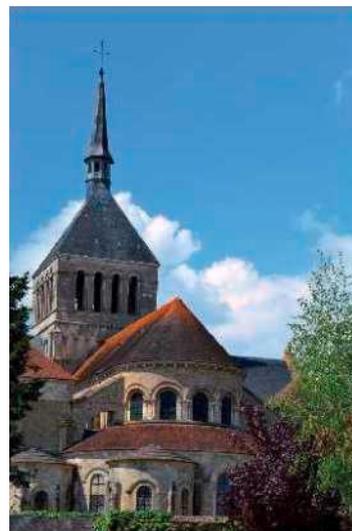
According to is wishes, he was buried at the cemetery of Saint-Benoit in 1949.

3. AVENUE CELESTIN CHATEIGNIER (1845-1916)

Son of a draper, assistant of the mayor, Celestin Chateigner, after he created a company of carpentry in Paris, he came back in his village of origin, of whom he became a generous donor. He gave to the village streetlights with kerosene lamps, street and place plates, grounds for the purification of ditches on the North side of the abbey and less ordinary, a hearse.

This «avenue», build on the old gaps, passed along old rampart of the abbey. At the end of the avenue, old house from the XVIIIth century, with spikes of ridge and framework.

4. VIEW ON THE BEDHEAD OF THE ABBEY



5. GIRLS SCHOOL

The old girls school was built at the beginning of the XXth century and is still used today.

The village of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire has a long tradition of teaching because Théodulfe, abbot of Fleury and close counsellor of Charlemagne, had already introduced a school at the monastery.

Today, Saint-Benoit has a public primary scholar group and a private one, also a private college. All this for a bit more than 2000 inhabitants.

The place where is situated the school is La Place de Grand Arcis, this place is where the cattle market was located until the XX century. The name «Arcis» comes from the Latin word «Acisterium», It significate the lands that belonged to the abbey and which are near the abbey.

6. RUE DU FOUR BANAL

The common oven belonged in the middle-age and until the revolution to the «Banalities». This term signifies a different thing today. In fact, the banalities were technical installations that the lord must maintain and put as disposal to every inhabitant of the lordship, who had the obligation to use this paying seigneurial facilities.

There were 4 of these: the oven, the mill, the press and the wine market.

Another seigneurial banality: «Tor et de ver» gives the right to the lord only to possess a bull or a boar. Therefore, the animal breeding could also be paying. This seigneurial privileges are abolished in 1793.



This street owes its name to the oven which was here and was at disposal to the inhabitants by the abbey, the abbot was the lord of Saint-Benoit.

At the corner of this street and the corner of the rue Orléanaise is one of the oldest houses in Saint-Benoit (1635 or 1637) according to the inscription situated on the lintel above the main door. We can notice a Romanic geminated bay on the front of the building, probably a re-employment. This house never had sudden important restorations.

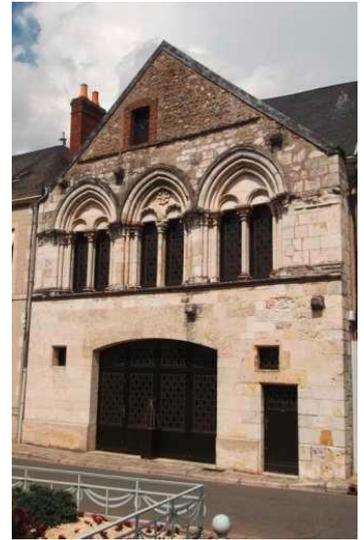
7. OLD TOWNHOUSE WITH THE BOYS SCHOOL

The first stone of the building was placed on 31 July 1955. The town Hal will move to a larger local in 1970. Behind the town hall was the boy's school. The school was used for classes of CM1 and CM2 (children's from 10 to 11/12 years old) until 2008.

8. HOUSE CALLED «UNIVERSITY HOUSE» OF «ROY»

This house from the XII and XVIth centuries is known in Saint-Benoit under several names: «Maison du Roy» or «Maison de l'université». We don't really know why this house is built like this, but is reason of its proximity with the abbey we can suppose that:

- It can have been part of the middle-school of the noble persons. School children's came from the all country to study in Saint-Benoit. This school children's, according to some sources were about 5000, needed to be housed. The monastery and the home of the noble persons weren't enough, some of them may have been lodged in this house, that may explain why it's called «maison de l'université» (house of university).
- Or, it was built to host the kings of France when they came to the abbey. In fact, the abbey is a royal abbey so the kings of France had the right to stay there because they can't stay at the abbey with all their court, this house is built to host them. Actually, it's the privileged hypothesis.



9. THE GAPS OF THE TOWN

Since the XIth century, a hydraulic network which drained the waters of «la Grande Rouge» and of «La Bonnée» is mentioned. The actual gaps were re-drilled and extended in the XVIth century, when François Ist, according to the inhabitants of Saint-Benoit, settled up Saint-Benoit into a town, it gives the inhabitants of the town the right to be equipped with fortifications...



The picturesque little bridges, originally made of wood with safeguards in wrought iron, are still there to step over the gaps and give access to the gardens. Lots of the houses had a covered wash houses, it permits the women's to stay out of the wind and rain. At the beginning of the XXth century, 4 wash houses were created in the town to permit the inhabitants who hasn't got their own wash house to wash their laundry. (Pont de Fleury, Planchette, Abreuvoir and Pont Saint-Clément).

10. MAISON LA MOTHE-LE-ROY

This house was probably a property of Philippe Ist, this building permits him to install there his horses and the people who take care of these horses.

The tower, except the openings, has a medieval aspect. On the tower are still tracks of fixation on the old lift-bridge. It's referred in the acts notarized in the XVIIIth century. At that time, the tower was used as dovecote. The arrow slit consolidate the hypothesis of a medieval construction.



11. RUE MAX JACOB

It's in this street where was located the post office where Max Jacob came a lot. That's why this street got he's name.

12. PLACE DE MARTROI

La Place du Martroi used to be called "Place du Marché au Bled", because it's here where the grain market was since the middle of the XIX century until the middle of the XX century a cheese market was here every Thursday. At that time the farmers around the town made a cheese called «Le petit Saint-Benoit». A dairy in Bray-en-Val produced a cheese called «Val d'Or».

13. L'HOTEL DE VILLE

Since the time of Charles le Chauve, a hospice designated to receive the poor and sick people was located at this place. The actual building was built in the XIX century to host the hospice, which became later a nursing home. When the nursing home moved into modern locals, the town house came in this building.

14. MAISON MOUCHARABIEH

This house has on its front some architectural elements inspired from the Muslim art.

This house belonged to Celestin Chateignier and was built on his demand to show to his daughter and his son-in-law that he approved their marriage (Moucharabeh: fence made off little turned and assembled bis, it permits to see without being seen. It was used in the Islamic world).



15. RUE ORLÉANAISE, IN DIRECTION OF THE ABBEY

In this street, 2 things mattered to Max Jacob: the number 61, at Mme Persillard's where he lived; and the hotel-restaurant "La Madeleine". A memorial plaque reminds his passage.

You can finish your visit by passing by the exhibition dedicated to Max Jacob on the second floor at the tourism office.



The Tourism Office of the Val de Sully,
3 offices to provide you with information's,
wherever you are !



GERMIGNY-DES-PRES

6 routes de Saint Martin
45110 Germigny-des-Prés
02 38 58 27 97



SAINT-BENOIT-SUR-LOIRE

44 rue Orléanaise
45730 Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire
02 38 35 79 00



SULLY SUR LOIRE

Place de Gaulle
45600 Sully-sur-Loire
02 38 36 23 70

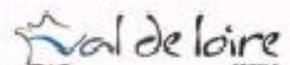
www.sully-loire-soologne.fr

www.tourisme-loire-foret.com

tourisme@valdesully.fr



Offices de
Tourisme
de France



Office de tourisme classé catégorie II.