

# Cheminade historique

SULLY SUR LOIRE : HISTORY TRAIL



COMMUNAUTÉ DE COMMUNES DU VAL DE SULLY



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SULLY SUR LOIRE

The Tourist Office of Val de Sully welcomes you in 3 cities, to give you information wherever you go !

## 1. Le pont aux Prêtres (the priests' bridge)

This footbridge was formerly made of stone. In the 16th and 17th centuries, it was used by a college of canons who walked from Saint-Ythier church, which was situated in the forecourt of the castle until 1608, to Notre-Dame-de-Pitié chapel, which preceded the present parish church.

This footbridge is a link between the town and the castle. It was destroyed and rebuilt several times. Its most recent wooden version dates back from 1992. It collapsed again, under the weight of a swamp cypress that fell into the castle moat during a terrible storm on August 7th, 2008.

Cross the footbridge and turn right to follow the moat walk.

## 2. Les douves du château (the castle moat)

The river which feeds the moat and surrounds the castle is called la Sange. It is a tributary of the Loire and a highly-rated fishing place. Each year, hunters, anglers and nature lovers meet on its banks on the occasion of Fête de la Sange in September, and of the many international fishing competitions.

## Les cyprès chauves (the swamp cypresses)

The tall trees which line the moat walk can reach 30 to 50 metres in height and their trunk averages 2 metres in diameter. They can live for 300 to 600 years. They come from the southeast of the U.S. and they are supposed to have been brought back by General Lafayette. The swamp cypresses that line the moat walk are 200 years old.

They are sometimes called bald cypresses because they characteristically shed their needles each year. Their roots possess pneumatophores which are aerial roots to catch the air.

Take the moat walk on your right, walk up the steps, go on walking until you come to the rue du Grand Sully on your left. Walk up to the post office.

## 3. L'ancienne Halle aux grains

Formerly, the corn exchange stood here. Then, the town hall moved here temporarily after the Second World War, until 1958.

The bridge on the Loire, then called the roman bridge extended to the foot of the corn exchange. It was made of stone and destroyed by the 1363 flood. It was only in 1836 that Sully became linked to the northern bank of the Loire again, by a suspension bridge which suffered many setbacks. A little further on, you will find la rue Porte des Sables, sand gate street, where the northern gate of Sully used to be situated.

## La Porte des Sables

It was formerly the northern gate, also called wicket gate or drawbridge gate or Béthune gate. This gate led to the castle over a bridge on the river Sange. It was destroyed in 1822. Opposite the post office, at number 8 rue du Grand Sully, behind you, you will find the Renaissance House, also called Henry IV's house.

Cross the street.

## 4. Maison Renaissance (also called Henry IV's house)

Classified as a Historical Monument in 1924.

The house was built in 1565. It used to be the home of the Café Henry IV that welcomed commercial travellers coming to Sully in order to sell their corn and their hay. This building is a testimony of Sully's prosperity in the 16th century. It is one of the very few buildings that were spared by the Second World War bombings. The sculpted medallions are original.

La rue de la Vieille Prison, to your right. At the end of this street, you will discover the building that used to house Sully jail. It was constructed between the 15th and the 16th centuries, and it was also spared by the destructive wars and floods.

Following the narrow street, you will be able to admire the back of the Renaissance House. If you continue, you will find yourself in rue du Grand Sully again.

Walk up rue du Grand Sully, then take the first street on your right, la rue des écoles and the first on your left again boulevard Jeanne d'Arc. Stop at number 17 : remains of the town fortifications then, continue as far as the tourist office.

## 5- Le boulevard Jeanne d'Arc

There used to be 3 to 4 metre deep moats in place of boulevard Jeanne d'Arc and boulevard du Champ de Foire a little further up. These moats, which existed until 1700 and were filled with water, were 15 to 20 meters wide. They were reinforced by a wall 10 metre high and 2 metre thick that defended the town. You may have discovered a little piece of this wall at number 17 boulevard Jeanne d'Arc.

Cross over place de Gaulle in front of you. You arrive at rue Porte de Sologne.



## 6. La Porte de Sologne

Towards 1300, Philippe Le Bel built fortifications around the town of Sully. Three gates and small bridges then allowed for crossing the moats that surrounded them and entering the town.

Nowadays, one of these ancient gates, the Sologne gate remains, but only the right hand side tower is left. It was converted into a dwelling in early times. Its twin tower was destroyed in 1840. The moat was filled in, and as centuries went by, this gave birth to boulevard du Champ de Foire (fair ground boulevard).

Turn left into Pont de Sologne street and go straight on until you reach the town hall.

## 7. L'Hôtel de Ville (the town hall)

Until the Second World War when it was bombed, the town hall was situated at 13, Porte de Sologne street which is now the Kuypers' chemist's shop. Then, it was provisionally transferred to the corn exchange (sign number 3) and it was finally rebuilt there in 1958.

After the 1940 defeat, Sully was far more damaged than during the previous war. The north of France had been severely hit, but the Loire Valley was also seriously damaged, and it was the object of many reconstruction plans during the war. It is estimated that the German and Italian bombings of 1940, followed by the American ones in 1944 destroyed or seriously damaged 70% of the town, which is the highest figure in Loiret.

The Vichy administration recommended respecting local architecture, and a modernisation as discreet as possible; this can be seen in the studies for the reconstruction of Orléans, Blois, Gien and Sully sur Loire. Some elements of this architectural doctrine remained after 1944.

Turn left again into rue du Grand Sully and take the first street on your left : rue des Huilliers.

## 8. La rue des Huilliers

This is the oldest trading street in the town. In the old times, a "huilier" was a tank vessel used for the transportation of oil, mostly vegetable oil for human consumption. The oil was carried in bulk and unloaded with the help of pumps.

The oil came from the south of France and was taken to its destination by boat along the Loire which remained an important means of navigation and transportation of goods until the mid 1900s.

Follow straight on, cross over rue Porte de Sologne and walk into rue du Grenier à Sel.

### 9. L'ancienne Porte de Berry (a few steps on your right)

You are now standing on the spot of the third gate that opened to the east in the direction of Gien. Its two towers were destroyed around 1784. The shape of the gate can be guessed thanks to the two façade walls that have taken the place of the towers. This gate led to the salt warehouse.

As Sully had the benefit of a port, salt could be unloaded here. From 1390 onwards, salt warehouses were built, one of them in the rue du Grenier à Sel, and remained there until the Revolution. A special tax called a *gabelle* was levied on salt and disliked by the peasants who used salt to preserve their meats.

Go left in the direction of Saint-Ythier collegiate church.

### 10. La collégiale Saint-Ythier

Originally situated in the forecourt of the castle, Saint-Ythier collegiate church used to belong to it. It was ministered to by the monks of Saint Benoît sur Loire, then given to them in 1137 and made into a collegiate church in 1193.

In 1608, Sully, who was a protestant, had it demolished and rebuilt on its present site in place of Notre-Dame-de-Pitié chapel. Its name, Saint-Ythier, is related to the miraculous rescue of Saint-Ythier's corpse, which was placed in a light boat that was launched onto the river and landed at Dampierre en Burlu.

You are recommended to enter the church which contains two superb 16th century stained glass windows, as well as a fine organ and unspoilt 18th century furniture.

### Maurice de Sully

The sculpture situated above the porch was carved by Jacques Bourdet and represents Maurice de Sully. This churchman was born at Sully around the year 1120. He was the son of peasants. His name is due to the fact that in those days, when people did not have a name, they were given the name of their town of origin. He was made a canon, then, an archdeacon. In 1160, he became the Bishop of Paris. He decided to build Notre-Dame-de-Paris, and its construction began in 1163.

Cross over the church square and turn into rue des Déportés on your right. A few metres further on, stop in front of Centre Françoise Kuypers.

### 11. Centre Françoise Kuypers

This building was constructed by the Lords of Sully and the Canons of Saint-Ythier in the 12th century, in order to give charity to their fellow-beings. It was then a home for the poor, the homeless, the sick, passing travellers and pilgrims.

In 1439, Pope Eugene 4th granted permission for a church to be built at the alms-house. In 1730, a girls' school was created and directed by the nuns of Saint-Vincent-de-Paul ; therefore, the alms-house also became a centre of education. In the 18th century, thanks to gifts, the left wing of the building was added. Offices were made there, as well as dwellings for the sisters. As for the spire which replaced the old belfry, it was built in 1780.

In 1965, the hospice and its services were transferred to the town hospital. The building was then bought by the town of Sully sur Loire, in order to welcome meetings and social organisations.

The centre was called Françoise Kuypers as a tribute to a lady who was both a doctor and a chemist. She was a benefactress and exerted herself in the service of the inhabitants of Sully sur Loire and the surrounding villages during the Second World War.

### 12. Maximilien de Béthune

The statue of Maximilien de Béthune The most famous owner of the castle was Maximilien de Béthune. He was the Baron and then the Marquess of Rosny ; he was the first duke of Sully, and a great minister of King Henry IVth who converted the lands of Sully and La Chapelle d'Angillon into a hereditary duchy-peerage for his benefit.

Sully is the emblem of Sully-sur-Loire. It is the town of Sully that gave its name to Maximilien. Born at Rosny-sur-Seine in 1559 from a protestant family of slender means, he was François de Béthune and Charlotte Dauvet's second son. His elder brother's death, in 1575 caused him to inherit the title of Baron of Rosny. He married Anne de Courtenay in 1583 and had 2 children with her ; then, Rachel Cocheffet became his second wife and he had 10 children with her.

At the age of 12, he was attached to the service of Henry de Navarre. He managed to escape from the Massacre of St Barthelémy. In 1580, he became an ordinary chamberlain, and later on, a member of the council of Navarre.

On august 1st 1589, Henry III was assassinated and Henry de Navarre became the King of France under the name of Henry IV.

In 1593, Sully advised the king to convert to catholicism so as to pacify the kingdom.

In 1596, he became the king's financial counsellor and in 1598 the superintendent of finances.

In 1599, he was the great master of the artillery and superintendent of buildings and fortifications, as well as grand surveyor of french roads and waterways.

In 1602, he bought the castle of Sully from Claude de la Tremoille, his companion at arms during the wars of religion. Henry IV made him duke of Sully and peer of France in 1606. Sully attached a great importance to agriculture : "ploughing and grazing are the two udders that will feed France, the real mines and treasures of Peru".

He created roads and canals, among others the Briare canal, which linked the Seine to the Loire (1604-1642).

In 1611, he resigned from his function of superintendent of the finances, because he disagreed with Marie de Medicis, and in 1616, he abandoned most of his functions. From 1622, Sully started living in his Sully castle in the springtime and in the autumn.

In 1962, the castle was sold to the Département of Loiret by the Béthune-Sully family, a side branch of Sully's family that had owned the castle since the beginning of the 19th century when there were no direct heirs any longer.

The statue which represents Maximilien de Béthune was carved by sculptor Beauvallet and dates from the 19th century. It is 3 metres high and it weighs nearly 7 tons.

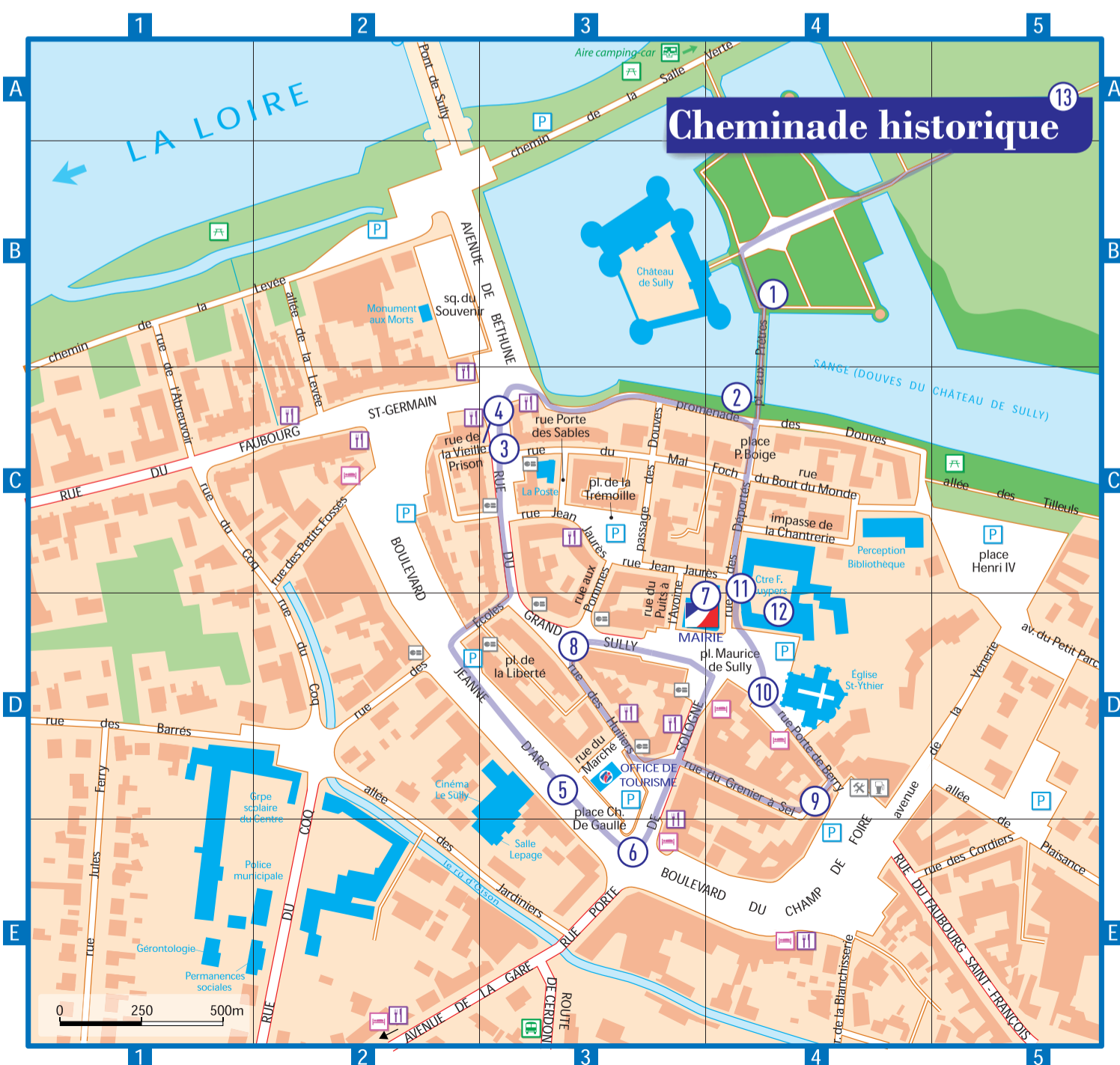
It was presented by Palais Bourbon in Paris to the town of Sully sur Loire in 1988.

Back to the castle.

### 13. La réplique de la Grotte de Lourdes

This grotto was built in the 19th century at the request of the Béthune-Sully family, with stones that supposedly came from the Lourdes area. It was the cause for great celebrations on may 19th, 1883.

This religious site, at the far end of the park of Sully castle ought to have made the countess very happy. Unfortunately, she did not reap the benefit of it, as she died on the evening of the day of its blessing. The statue of the Virgin Mary watches over and protects the Lourdes grotto.



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