

A-Z of the Communes of the Deux-Sèvres.

by Sue Burgess

Bagneux

Bagneux is a small village surrounded by the neighbouring communes of Saint-Martin-de-Sanzay, Puy-Notre-Dame and Bouillé-Loretz. The commune is situated close to the Loire-Anjou-Touraine National Park.

À VOIR / MUST SEE:

- le Pont de Taizon

This Roman bridge crosses the Thouet river at Taizon. It has been listed as a historic monument since 1943. To cross the bridge a tax had to be paid. The toll the peasants had to pay was a certain quantity of rye which was grown at Sault. It had to be paid to the charitable order of Saint John of Jerusalem at Prailles.



La Bataille

La Bataille is a commune in the canton of Chef Boutonne. There are approximately 79 inhabitants. The commune gets its name from the battle for Saintes between the son of Geoffroy, the Count of Anjou and the son of William VII of Poitiers, the Duke of Aquitaine, in 1061.

Beaulieu sous Bressuire

In 1973 Beaulieu sous Bressuire was one of the nine communes which became associated with Bressuire.

À VOIR / MUST SEE:

- The Arboretum de la Croix Verte.

This privately owned garden is open to guided visits two Sundays a month from April to October. The garden has over 1500 different trees and bushes including many different species of rare trees and an old oak with seven trunks.



Beaulieu sous Parthenay

The commune of Beaulieu sous Parthenay is situated on the old road from Parthenay to Saint Maixent l'Ecole. Outside the market town centre itself, the commune is made up of over 60 separate groups of houses or hamlets. This is essentially because of the number of springs that can be found here. About 60% of the perimeter limits of the commune are marked out by streams. There are many ponds which were formed in the Jurassic age and there is a lot of clay. Granite and mine wastes mean the fields are sometimes punctuated by large stones.

À VOIR / MUST SEE:

- Le Château de la Guyonnière dating from the XIVth Century with its pigeon loft. The remarkable gardens which can be visited from the 1st June to the 14th July and from the 20th August to the 30th September are reached by crossing a drawbridge over the deep ditches.



- A large part of Beaulieu sous Parthenay church dates from the 12th century. Le château de la Meilleraye, is an ancient residence where Charles de la Porte, the Marshal of France stayed. It was built in the XVIIth century on the site of an old castle. Its romantic ruins can only give an idea of the sumptuous dwelling that the chateau once was.



Beaussais

Beaussais is part of the canton of Celles-sur-Belle. There are about 400 inhabitants.

À VOIR / MUST SEE:

- Beaussais is the home of the Poitou Protestant Museum (Musée du Poitou Protestant). In the 12th Century Romanesque church which became a protestant temple, you can discover the history of the protestants of Poitou. The museum is open from April to November.

Beauvoir sur Niort

The commune of Beauvoir sur Niort existed in 1224 as the Villa of Bello-Visu. The commune's name has evolved through Belveer to Beauvais sur Niort, then from Beauvoir to Beauvoir sur Niort in 1893.

In 1340 the seigneurie of Beauvoir belonged to the Count of Eu and Guines, who owned most of the county and Chizé forest. In 1350, after the execution of the Count, Beauvoir became part of the royal domain. The church of Beauvoir is the church of Saint Jacques. It is a Romanesque church on the road to Compostelle. Partly destroyed during the Wars of Religion and then during the revolution, the church has been rebuilt several times. The spire collapsed onto the church in 1852 and the church had to be closed. A new bell tower was built and a stone spire added in 1900. Two of the buildings on the commune are a witness to the town's former economic activity. The cooperative dairy closed in 1986. The shoe factory operated from 1928 to 1996.

À VOIR / MUST SEE:

- The Moulin de Rimbault was built in 1682. The windmill, with its working sails and millstones, dominates the plain at the entrance to Chizé forest.



- The church of Le Cormenier.

The church dates from the XIIth to the XVth century. Even though it was damaged during the Wars of Religion, the building conserves a choir with a byzantine style cupola and a semicircular apse in Saintongeais Romanesque style.



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