



A-Z of the Communes in the Deux-Sèvres

MOUTIERS-SOUS-ARGENTON

by Sue Burgess

Moutiers-sous-Argenton is an old commune of Deux-Sèvres. On the 1st January 2016 it became a member of the new commune of Argentonnay. The commune is spread over an area of 36 km² and includes numerous villages like Migaudon, Vrillé and Mirémont.

The inhabitants of Moutiers-sous-Argenton are known as the Moutierais and the Moutieraises. The name «Moutiers» being derived from an old word for monastery (see Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle), we can only assume that there has been a priory or monastery here in the past.

The site of Grifféus is situated on the banks of the Argenton river. Its name probably came from «gris ferreux» (ferrous grey). The heart of the site is noticeable for a steep sided valley with a remarkable panorama from the top of the granite rocks and for the rare species of flora and fauna that can be found there.

The site is recognised for rock climbing and canoeing.

MOUTIERS-SOUS-CHANTEMERLE

Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle is part of the group of communes forming 'Terres de Sèvres'. The 616 inhabitants of the village of Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle live on a total surface area of 26 km². There are about 600 inhabitants.

The commune's name, Moutiers, comes from a priory of Benedictine monks (monasterium gives «moutier», an old form of «monastère»). During the Roman era, the priory depended on the large Clunisian priory at Loge-Fougereuse. The oratory of the priory La Couldre was too small and so the church of Saint-Maurice was built. The parish priest was nominated, until the revolution, by the Clunisian Prior of Saint-Paul-en-Gâtine. The chatellany of Chantemerle (Canta Merula), mentioned in texts dating from 1150, was found on the parish. The name of Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle can be found from the 18th century. History mixes with legend to tell the story of Saint Maurice who was the leader of the Thebean legion, recruited in upper Egypt. In Agaune en Valais (Switzerland), he refused to make sacrifices to the pagan gods and so the Emperor Maximilien had them killed.

Pescalis is an international fishing site at the edge of the Sèvre Nantaise river which can be found on the commune.

An open air music festival «Les Festiv'été Musicales» used to be held every year in Moutiers-sous-Chantemerle between 1997 and 2012.

The tower of Puy Cadoré, on the road from Chantemerle to Moncoutant, is round on one side and triangular on the other. The doorway which was quite high up above the moat, led to the ground floor where there was a well and a washhouse. The other floors with square windows both had appartments. The smaller one is in the angle of the tower above the machicolation.

In the 16th century, the Lord of Picadore, leading a band of adventurers who ransacked the area, tried to buy back favours by allegiance with the Lord of Bressuire and then the Lord of Parthenay. Legend says that the tower was a fortress and observatory built by the Lord of Picadore to ensure his own defence as he had no friends.



More A-Z of the Communes of Deux-Sèvres next month...