



A-Z of the Communes in the Deux-Sèvres

PRAHECQ

by Sue Burgess

The 2169 inhabitants of Prahecq are the Prahequois and the Prahequoises. Prahecq is about 15 km from Niort.

There are several shops and businesses in Prahecq – 2 bakers, 2 florists, a butcher and a clothes shop. There are also numerous services – post office, public treasury, retirement home, two hairdressers and restaurants. The most important factory on the commune is La Fiée des Lois which draws and bottles water from the spring that runs under Prahecq.

The name Prahecq means **pré humide** (wet field).

A voir / must see

- **Fosse de Paix** (artisan well)



Above: Fosse de Paix © www.communes.com

- **Château de la Voûte**

The château is today owned by the commune. The rooms can be rented for meetings and so on and the commune organises different events in the château's park. In 1382 the fiefdom of Prahecq belonged to the Trémoille family following the marriage of Guy de la Tremoille with Marie de Sully. The first owner of the château was Pierre Baudouin who bequeathed it to his son. In 1565 the Lord of la Voûte was Jacques Berloin, mayor of Niort. The château consisted of a rectangular dwelling flanked by two towers at the north-east and the south-east. Until 1943 a north-west wing completed the building. It was unfortunately destroyed in a fire along with the north-west tower. The building has kept the three floors of its Renaissance origins, its rectangular shape and most of its windows.

- **Fiée des Lois** – a natural spring

- **Butte du Peu** (The highest point of the commune. 78 m above sea-level). Legend has it that the hillock was created by Gargantuan excrements.

- **L'église Saint-Maixent**

The Romanesque church, which has been a listed building since 1911, is dedicated to Saint Maixent. The church was burned by the protestants in 1568 and then rebuilt in 1593. During the revolution it was a storage place for straw and hay. Inside there are columns with sculpted faces and the face of Mélusine can be seen. There are also two tombs under the church. It would have been possible in the past to reach the château and the fort through underground passages leading from the church but the passages have now collapsed and are no longer usable.

PRAILLES

Prailles is part of the Communauté de communes 'Cantonale de Celles-sur-Belle'. The 675 inhabitants of the commune of Prailles are called les Praillais and les Prailaises.

There is a little corner shop on the commune and the neighbouring towns are Romans, Aigonnay, Vitré, Thorigné and Souvigné.

Niort is 18.83 km south of Prailles.

A voir / must see

- **The monastery at Pié Foulard, Prailles**
The monastery of the Annonciation is a Benedictine convent. The Benedictine community was formed in Poitiers, after the reform of the Royal Abbey of Fontevault on the 25th October 1617. The Catholic convent moved to Prailles in 1999 and is housed in an ancient Huguenot dwelling in this protestant area marked by the Wars of Religion. The convent shop sells objects made from olive wood, greetings cards, paper and invitations.
- On Sundays the convent church becomes the Catholic parish church. The village also has a protestant Lutheran temple.

PRESSIGNY

Pressigny is a small commune which is part of the Communauté de communes 'du Pays Thénézéen'. There are 196 inhabitants in the village of Pressigny. The nearest towns and villages are Aubigny, Le Chillou, Lhoumois, Oroux and Assais-les-Jumeaux.

The nearest big town is Poitiers which is 37,84 km north as the crow flies. The name of Pressigny (Pristiniacum) first appeared in texts when Pope Pascal II confirmed the names of the churches that came under the abbey of Airvault in 1113.

The spelling of the name of Pressigny has changed. In 1793 it was Pressigni and then in 1801 Pressigny.

A voir/ must see

- The lovely **stone priory** is now privately owned and can be rented out.
- **The church** is dedicated to Saint Madeleine. Until the revolution, the priest was nominated by the abbey of Airvault. There was a priory there. The priory still exists today (see below) at the south-east of the church. The 16th century dwelling has kept its old tower and other ancient parts. After the Concordat of 1801, Pressigny and Aubigny were attached to Lhoumois. In 1828 the church of de Pressigny was attached to Aubigny and then became independant on the 26th March 1840. There has not been a priest in Pressigny for some time and the church is part of the parish of Saint Jacques de Gâtine.



Above: Saint Madeleine Church Pressigny © www.communes.com

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