

AN ANCIENT History

The tradition dates back to the 6th century the establishment at Nancray of a young priest, Saint Posen, who gathered together the inhabitants until then scattered through the countryside.

At the start of the 9th century, the King makes donation of the land of Nancray to the monks of Fleury Abbey (Saint Benoît); a small monastery is founded. During the next century, a small fortress – a “castellio”, (hence Châtillon) - is established on the hill where is located the nowadays church. From the Middle Ages, we have two descriptions of the town location. The monk André de Fleury describes “a gentle plain bordered with small valleys [...], sounding with numerous charming springs, verdant with affable meadows, with a healthy air, woody, which has an overabundance of vineyards”. In the 13th century, Guillaume le Breton, Philippe August's historian, describes Chatillon as a town “highly flourishing amidst a fertile country, while on one side the river brings it a charming character, on the other side vineyards crown it everywhere else”.

This bucolic setting has met with an eventful history. Until the 13th century, it was at the centre of struggles between rival powers: Fleury Abbey, the Lords of Sully and the Earls of Sancerre. The wars of religion make up the second important part in the history of Chatillon. As a protestant fortified town, it was attacked or besieged seven times between 1560 and 1590. A first protestant church was erected in “rue de Chambon” and the church partly destroyed by the Protestants. The ideological struggle went on during the 17th century.

Richelieu partly financed the rebuilding of the church – 1627 - whereas “affairs” between Catholics and Protestants unleashed passions. The first temple was destroyed by an order coming from Versailles, in 1684, a year before the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Until 1786, the Protestants can only celebrate their worship in secret.

On March 1st, 1789, the inhabitants of Chatillon wrote up their “journal of complaints”. They mostly complain to have to pay for the maintenance of the Royal Road (D 2007), road they never used since the Loire separated them from it, whereas the bad condition of the paths leading to the neighbouring villages hindered local trade. In 1819, the Protestant Consistory buys the tithe barn, “rue Franche”, which is consecrated Protestant church on July 8th, 1821. The 19th century was characterized by achievements accounting for the opening up of Chatillon: opening of “the old canal” in 1838, inauguration of the first bridge over the Loire in 1841, arrival of the railway in 1861, opening of “the new canal” in 1896.

From the installation of the monks in Nancray valley up to the first half of the 20th century, Chatillon can be considered as a country where vineyards provided an important income for its population.



Vivez la Loire avec passion
en Pays du Giennois

OFFICE DE TOURISME

Station Verte

CHÂTILLON-SUR-LOIRE

Tourist Information Center

47, rue Franche
45360 Châtillon-sur-Loire
Phone : 00 33 (0)2 38 31 42 88
otsi.chatillonsurloire@wanadoo.fr
www.chatillon-sur-loire.com

Opening Hours :

- From September until June
From Tuesday til Saturday :
9:30 am to 12:00 am and 1:30 pm to 5:30 pm
- in July and August
From Monday til Saturday :
9:30 am to 12:30 pm and 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm
10:00 am to 12:30 pm on Sundays

ICE - 18300 SANCERRE IMPRIM'VERT
PHOTOS : Pierre MÉRAT - Christophe LÖRSCH
Ne pas jeter sur la voie publique.

Châtillon-sur-Loire

Châtillon-sur-Loire
Posez le pied !



Enter History



DISCOVERING THE architectural Heritage

Start from the Tourist Information Centre (0). Pass in front of the town hall and walk up **rue du Cormier** at your left hand. At the top, turn right towards **the Protestant cemetery (1)** that can be visited; it testifies of the importance of Chatillon's reformed

community from the 16th to the 19th century. Then follow the **chemin des Murailles (2)** which corresponds to the layout of the old walls protecting Chatillon during its largest expansion, in Renaissance period. Beautiful view over the town, notice particularly the roofs' architecture.

Coming out of **chemin des Murailles**, turn right into **rue de Chambon**, then turn left into the **venelle du Vivier** which owes its name to one of the millraces supplying the watermills of the town and wherein the monks bred fish.

After crossing the stream of Courcelles and the fishpond itself, take the flight of stairs leading to one of the oldest parts of Chatillon. At the top, walk towards the church and turn left into **Rue de Château-Gaillard**. At n°1 of this street, on the lintel of the door, decipher the inscription "AL BIZOT G - 1728". The Bizot family was one of Chatillon's most influential Protestant families during the 18th century. In the middle of the street, at your right, go up the stairs leading to the ruins of **Chateau-Gaillard (12th century) (3)**.

At the top of the lane, enter the church (end of the 19th century). At the left of the entry, the Latin inscription engraved in the stone testifies of the action of Cardinal de Richelieu, Abbot of Fleury Abbey, who inaugurated the church in 1627 - it had been partially demolished by the Protestants during the 16th century. Notice the gold-coloured wooden tabernacle (18th century), a polychrome wooden Virgin (1628) and beautiful stained-glass windows.

When coming out, make your way to **rue du Cimetière**, have a look at **Place du Puits** and walk on to n° 14:



the house located at the far end of the yard housed secret meetings held by the Protestants in the middle of the 16th century (4). After this house, further in the lane, on the right: a beautiful 15th century tower at your left hand. Turn around and walk back towards the church; admire, on the right, the cellar's inclines of the wine growers' houses.

Head towards **rue Gelée** and, before walking down, admire the house on your right (5): part of it dates from the Middle Ages, the other part from the Renaissance period. At the bottom of **rue Gelée** go on by **rue St Posen**

until the **bridge of Nancray**, across the river Ethelin. On the left, cooper's house of the beginning of the 19th century with its sign engraved in the stone. Cross the bridge and notice the lintel of the house on your right (basket and grapes - 1909). Go forwards to the well and turn left into **rue St Vincent**, entirely lined with wine growers' houses (6). Beautiful timber houses at n°30 and n°32. The date 1604 is engraved in the stone of the steps of house n°38. At n°21 is a 16th century house with typical regional vineyards architecture: the living quarters aren't on the ground floor, an outdoor flight of stairs leads to them, with the cellar underneath. At the end of **rue St Vincent** turn around to join

At the foot of the footbridge crossing the Ethelin flows **St Posen's spring (8)** which gushed forth, according to the legend, under the hooves of the oxen carrying the Saint's body.

At **Place du Champ de Foire**, notice, on the left side of the bridge, a late 19th century rebuild washhouse.

Place de la Victoire, walk up the flight of stairs of **la Montée aux Pêches (9)**. At the top, turn left to walk down **Rue Haute**. Notice the architecture of some very



- 0 - Office de Tourisme
- 1 - Cimetière protestant
- 2 - Chemin des Murailles
- 3 - Château-Gaillard
- 4 - Maison n°14, rue du Cimetière
- 5 - Maison n°6, rue Gelée (Renaissance)
- 6 - Maisons de Vignerons (XVI^e - XVII^e siècles)
- 7 - Chemin du Pâtis
- 8 - Fontaine Saint-Posen
- 9 - La Montée aux Pêches
- 10 - Tour en pans de bois, rue Haute
- 11 - Maison n°4, rue des prés (Renaissance)
- 12 - Hôtel Renaissance, au 45, Grande rue
- 13 - Temple protestant

→ **chemin du Patis (7)**, on the left side before the bridge. Notice at n°16 and 14 the uprights of the door and the window frames.

old houses at n° 25, 17, 14 as well as the timber tower (10). On the lintel of house n° 11, the owner's name Bizot, already met, along with a date: 1720.

Arriving on the square, notice the beautiful Italian Renaissance façade (11) listed by the Historical Buildings, and its two medallions.

Go on through **Grande Rue** were remain scattered fragments of different period's architecture, (from the 15th to the 18th centuries) from n° 46 to n° 36 (12). Walk along to **Place Ste Anne**, cross the square and turn right, into **Rue Franche**. At n° 31, if looking up, one can admire a beautiful "guitarde" (dormer window with level ridgepole dated from 1855).

Opposite the Tourist Information Centre: the Protestant Church (13). This building was, during the 12th century, the tithe barn of the monks of Fleury Abbey (Saint Benoît), whose Abbot was lord of Chatillon.

Turn right to cross **Place Clemenceau** in its length. On the left, enter the yard located behind house n° 11 and admire the building most certainly known as the "Maison Dieu" (hospice) in the Middle Ages. Then come back to the square.

A little further, notice the timber façade of n°13.

At the entrance of **Ruelle du Ferton**, notice, at the base of the walls, the hollowing out made for the passing through of the carts' naves. The heights of these hollowing out shows us the level of the ground has changed.

End of the visit.

