

Blaison-Gohier

historical heritage itinerary

Starting point: the church of St-Aubin* 1. All that remains of the Romanesque building dating from 1020 and reconstructed at the end of the 11th century, is the lower part of the transept and the two passages that link them to the nave. The transept's upper parts are from the middle of the 12th century while the nave, in the local Gothic style, dates from the beginning of the 13th. In the choir, whose ceiling was reworked in the 15th century, are forty stalls formerly reserved for the *chapter**. Carved in oak and dating from the 15th century, these have been designated '*monuments historiques*'. Outside is the so-called, 13th century 'door of the dead' which opens onto a porch joined to the tower. The façade to the west was built in the 19th century while high up on both north and south walls the narrow slits of arrow holes can be seen. Used in the building of the church, **tufa** 2, a faintly yellowish stone, was quarried at Raindron to the south of the commune (see photo below). Over the centuries the chapter enjoyed a privileged position.

RAINDRON QUARRY



Originally it comprised four canons and ten chaplains who celebrated mass for the souls of the founders. In return they received a house, lands and rent

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Raindron quarry
COUTURES
LES ALLEUDS
BRISSAC-QUINCE
ANGERS

in the form of both money and produce. There remain in the centre of Blaison a number of the houses given to members of the chapter: preserved as they were or transformed, often in the 19th century, many of them stand along the route of the trail. Almost adjoining the church to the south, a **canon's residence** 3 has preserved some mediaeval features with a mullioned window and accolade on the lintel visible to the rear. The first storey in tufa is a later addition. Opposite, to the other side of the garden, is **the Fauconnerie** 4, a bourgeois house built at the end of the 15th century which became a presbytery in 1823. Cross the garden, turn right up the Montee Saint-Saveur and turn right again into the Rue de la Fauconnerie and you will find this building once more with its mediaeval features: octagonal tower, tufa gables and steep roof with overhanging coyaux*. **Les Humeaux** 5, opposite, was a chaplain's house: it dates from the 16th century and has a number of 18th century additions. At the crossroads with the Allée de la Motte Féodale, turn left. The chaplain who lived at **the Aumonerie** 6 was responsible for welcoming pilgrims and distributing alms. Continue up the path as far as the **medieval motte and bailey** 7: around the year 1000 it would have had a wooden defensive structure, long since disappeared. Returning down the path the south face of the 15th century castle is visible with its tower, its mediaeval lucarnes, its neo-gothic restorations and its ancient ditches, now dry, to the side of the path. The lord was the head of the chapter, a role assigned at its

foundation as a means to maintain the balance between local powers. Lower down the path, to the right, is **the Chanterie** 8, the cantor's house, rebuilt after 1800. On the Square, turn



left. It was at **the Tribunal** 9, a building from the 16th century, that matters of local justice were dealt with. Opposite the Information Office **the chateau*** 10 is again visible, here from the north side. Thibaut IV, Lord of Blaison and renowned poet of courtly love, lived here at the beginning of the 13th century. The fortress was burnt down many times and laid waste by the English before being rebuilt in the 15th century and restored in the 20th. To the right of the chateau, the mediaeval **Grange aux dimes** 11 was where the clergy's tithes were received. It too was restored in modern times. The walkway would



have been a crowded place when the grain sales were held. Further down the road, in contrast with the mediaeval and renaissance homes of the clergy, is an elegant 19th century residence. Before turning to the left down the Ruelle-aux-Loups, if the gate happens to be open, glance into the courtyard of **the former inn** 12 with its Angevine balcony. Please note this is

itinerary (cont.)



where the chaplain responsible for reading the epistle lived. The garden shelters a notable large-flowered magnolia. The majority of the houses belonging to the chapter incorporated a partially sunken lower room which remained cool in summer and was easy to heat in winter by means of a stone oven adjacent to the chimney. Including grain store, courtyard well, out houses and - for those who were better off - heated upper room, these earth-floored houses, being humid, were favoured by weavers. Several of the houses possessed cellars, examples being **the Blanchardiere 15**, **Voitu 16** which, in the 18th century housed the first school, **Bel-Arbre 17** and **Chemant 18**, on the corner with the Impasse de La Favaudiere. Turning down here, you will see a mediaeval canonical house with an Angevine balcony and, at the bottom, **the Favaudiere 19**, a small manor, with its lucarne bearing the date 1649. Returning to the road



Thibaut de Blaison, **the Louvetiere 20**, of 16th and 17th century origin, can be seen and, around the adjacent miniature square, some distinctive local **roof-tiling 21**. Opposite, Bel-Echo was the principal canonical house, named after **Saint-Aubin 22**.



THE LOIRE RIVER IN BLAISON

private property. At the end of the Ruelle, turn right and then left at the junction in order to visit the former **wash-house 13**. Returning along the Rue Thibaut de Blaison you will see a number of the often modest houses attributed to the clergy. The part to the rear of **the Epistolerie 14** was



issues onto the Square you will see the **chapellenie de Sainte-Croix 25** and, opposite, **the Presbytere 26** from the Ancien Regime with its 18th century reworkings. The Revolution abolished the chapter. During the 18th century it had already grown less important due to the complacency of its members and the burden of its duties. By 1793 few clergy remained. The priest chose exile while the canons and chaplains were imprisoned in Angers. Briefly liberated by a party of Vendéens, they were recaptured and either executed or abandoned in prison-ships. Arriving at the church once



more you pass by **the Ecurie sans garantie**, a staging post where horses could be stalled; forage however was not provided, responsibility remaining with the horses' owners.

* Further explanatory leaflets available in the church or at the Information Office.

Continue down the Rue de la Dolerie and turn into the Ruelle de Moncontant where you will find **the Dolerie 23**, a thick-walled chaplain's residence, with still-surviving mediaeval features. Follow the Rue de la Dolerie once more as far as **the Perchardiere 24**, where a giant sequoia towers over the entry. This bourgeois house comprises a number of differently-sized rooms from different periods. Turning into the twisting Allée aux Prêtres, where it

Historical background

The history of the village begins with the Roman conquest. Lands, that's to say, a 'villa', belonging at one time to a certain Blazius, were given to the abbey at Saint Maur around 540. A church was built on the summit of the slopes and in 874 the lands became the property of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste chapter in Angers. Towards the year 1000 the village began to take shape a little lower, around the chateau. Foulques Nerra, Count of Anjou, a violent, determined yet profoundly religious man, ordered a new church to be built and invested it with a chapter that formed the lifeblood of the village for nearly eight centuries. Chaplaincies, canonical houses, just as much as the church and chateau, all bear witness to this long period. In the 19th century the chapter's properties came into secular hands and were either transformed or preserved. Other properties, larger and more comfortable, were built to order. In 1974, Blaison and Gohier were joined to make a single commune.



Information/ visits

Mairie (Town Hall)
Place Saint-Aubin ~ 49 250 Blaison-Gohier
Tel. 02 41 57 17 57
mairie@blaison-gohier.fr
www.blaison-gohier.fr

Information Office
Rue de la Grange aux Dimes
(opposite the château)
Open all year
Interactive screen 24h/24
Tel. 02 41 47 44 05

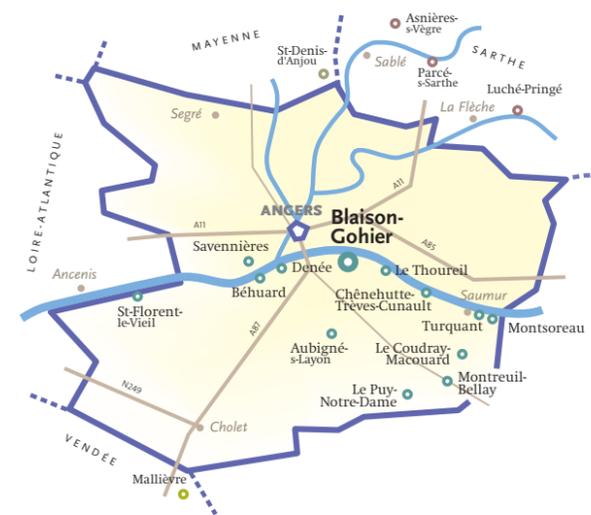
Guided visits of the church and village
Information from the Mairie
Tel. 02 41 57 17 57



The "Petites Cités de Caractère" distinction is awarded to the little towns and villages in our region that have a remarkable architectural and natural heritage, and meet the essential criteria when it comes to welcoming their visitors. As a guarantee for quality, this label urges the communes belonging to the network to keep on improving the emphasis placed on their attractions through restoration, promotion and activities. The Petites Cités de Caractère of the Pays de la Loire present a wide range of historical authenticity and are a reflection of the geographical territory to which they belong.

Petites Cités de Caractère
des Pays de la Loire

Les Petites Cités de Caractère en Maine-et-Loire



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Loire Aubance



PAYS DE LA LOIRE

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Blaison-Gohier

Petite Cité de Caractère en Maine-et-Loire



WITH ITS CHURCH AND CANONICAL HOUSES, ITS
REMARKABLE CHATEAUX, ITS DISTINCTIVE WINDMILLS
AND OUTSTANDING VIEWS OVER THE LOIRE VALLEY,
BLAISON-GOHIER OFFERS THE VISITOR NUMEROUS
OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCOVER ITS CHARM.