

**Circuit from Ahun : (yellow)  
Abbey's, Knight Templars and  
Parishioners**

As the central element of the town or the village, the church maybe an Abbey, templière, or fortified commanderie, or even underground... that is Romanesque, Gothic or Baroque, it remains, the major building of our heritage. Let us go and discover some of these buildings which mark out our countryside.

**Ahun – D2**

The crypt was the first church of Ahun and over the course of time has become underground, It is now one building , and today is protecting a typically baroque altar. A remarkable pieta(1) of five people has retained it's colours and charm of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

To understand better the rich history of the town, the garden of Jacques Lagrange gives us a fabulous voyage across time !

To Chantemille: a small chateau, dominating the Creuse, the footbridge and the village. Open on Tuesdays in summer.

*(1) A statue or picture representing the Virgin Mary with the dead body of Jesus Christ accross her knees*

**Moutier d'Ahun – D2**

The name of this commune means, in old French "monastery of Ahun". Benedictines Monks lived on this site from 997 up to the revolution. The church preserves different parts from different periods: Gothic porch and Romanic choir in which there is an exceptional woodwork carving (1673 -

1681) giving life to animals or fantastic characters. The village has retained traces of the nave which is missing today: numerous objects have been re-used and mark the village houses which spread out to the bridge. Named wrongly "Romain", the Romanesque bridge allows us to cross the sometimes fast flowing river Creuse and discover a beautiful panoramic view of the village.

Each year on the 16<sup>th</sup> August, a procession is organised to celebrate the day of « Saint Roch », the statue is carried from the abbey to the river where the feet are placed on a stone in the river, with the belief that when the weather is very dry it will help to produce rain.

Visit freely, either by guided tour or with audio tapes in French or English.

**Opening hours for the church:**

- from March 22<sup>nd</sup> until June 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am until 12:00 am and from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm.

Closed on Tuesdays except holidays.

- From June 14<sup>th</sup> until September 14<sup>th</sup> every day from 10:00 am until 12:30 am and 2:00 pm until 7:00 pm.

From September 15<sup>th</sup> until November 11<sup>th</sup>. Holidays and school holidays of All Saints' Day, from 10:00 am until 12:00 am and from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm. Closed on Tuesdays except bank holidays.

- From November 12<sup>th</sup> until December 31<sup>st</sup>, from 2:00 pm until 5:00 pm. Closed on Monday and Tuesdays, except bank holidays.

**Busseau-sur-creuse (commune d'Ahun) – D1**

The viaduct of Busseau-sur-Creuse is the

first completely metallic railway viaduct built in France. To export the coal from the mines of Lavaveix-les-Mines, it was necessary to cross the Creuse (hollow) valley, which carries its name well ! And so the viaduct of 337 metres long and 56 metres high was born. It was not Gustave Eiffel, but two French engineers, Llyold and Nordling, who managed the construction site from January, 1864 until 1865.

**Mazeirat – C1**

The small village of Mazeirat is a welcoming place for numerous varieties of plants : rose bushes in front of the church and even the «chemin des Brandes» is bordered with local or imported species of plants and shrubs. On the outside walls and floor of the Church, unexplained sculptured stones are reused.

**Saint-Hilaire-la-Plaine – C3**

The Norman church of the village has retained important elements of it's 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century fortifications. In the angles of the chevet, the two turrets start at ground level. The rectangular bell tower is flanked by over-hanging turrets . Machicolations(2) with a circular pathway allowed the church to be defended. Some Gallo-Romans artifacts are still visible around the church. *(2) a balcony at the top the defensive walls or towers of fortified castles.*

**St-Yrieix-les-Bois – C2**

Pretty flowered Creusois village with granite houses. The 12<sup>th</sup> century church with it's kind of sculptured roof, is the central point, near the fountain which dominates the

square. Numerous granite stones, surrounded by legends, are to be discovered in the woods surrounding the village : flat stones, big stones and a fairy's table.

### **Lépinas – C2**

The church was rebuilt in the centre of the village in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Gartempe passes through Lépinas, fed by several brooks coming from Peyrabout.

### **Maisonnières – C2**

Maisonnières was an ancient commanderie. A funeral statue of a recumbent effigy was found in a field by a ploughman. It was taken back to its original place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century church. A visit of the crypt is imperative, it is necessary to go past the church and to cross the courtyard. Watch out for the bats that shelter there! In the woods of Thouraud there is a commemorative monument of the first creusois resistance movement, it depicts the more recent and painful history of the second world war. It is there that 7 young resistance fighters were massacred, the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1943.

### **Chamberaud – D2**

This ancient commanderie has preserved a remarkable Church of which the vaults are of ribbed construction in oak (18<sup>th</sup> century). Some artifacts have been re-used in the walls of the building: sundials and keystones etc. On the road to Saint-Sulpice-Les-Champs, the magnificent lake in a verdant setting of

16 ha is reserved for fishermen.

### **Saint-Martial-Le-Mont**

Dominating the valley of the Creuse, the ancient fortified church keeps watch. At the front of its door a gallo-roman column can be found. The houses of Saint-Martial-Le-Mont are typical village houses and worthy of the stone masons of the Creuse : cut stones, cornices and ledges... In the village of Chantaud, a chapel dedicated to Marie Madeleine and gallo-roman artifacts "pierre des mesures", an ancient funeral chest. In the church, we can find a leather antependium of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Italian made.

Return to Ahun

### **Circuit from Saint-Sulpice-Les-Champs : (blue) Characters, legends and unusual villages (61km)**

Upon meeting the men who marked our land and history, by shaping, cutting, discovering and creating... Who could imagine that a creusois doctor fought the illness of insomnia or that contemporary paintings in primary colours would adorn the walls of a very classic church !

### **Saint-Sulpice-Les-Champs – D3**

This administrative centre of the canton is associated with the memory of Doctor Jamot. Born in La Borie, Eugène Jamot dedicated a part of his life to work out a method of fighting against the illness of " insomnia "

in Cameroun, and put in place the "method Jamot". A museographic place has been dedicated to the life of the Doctor Jamot.

### **Le Donzeil – D3**

Until the revolution, the name of the village was "Saint-Sulpice-Le-Donzeil". Two roman milestones gives witness to the Gallo-Roman period : The Pierre du Marteau, which can be found near the old road, and a re-used milestone, to commemorate the centenary and the bicentenary of the revolution in the court yard of the former school. The verdant setting of the «étang du Moulin» is open to fishermen.

### **Sous-Parsat - C2**

The church reconstructed in 1868 shelters paintings and stained glass windows created by Gabriel Chabrat from 1986 until 1995. He has represented the old and the new testaments by using vivid primary colours and exaggerated forms. Besides the religious subjects, the human behavior, the passions, the exodus of the people, the persecutions are addressed. A visitors book is available at the Auberge de Camille and at the tourist office in Ahun. The artists studio is open in season. Gallo-Roman artifacts : two tombstones at the entrance of the Church and a funeral chest in the village.

At the lower part of the village there are interesting features, a fountain, the washhouse and a drinking trough. In December (Christmas time), the village becomes the home of Father Christmas, decorated in fairy tale style.

### **Mareilles (Commune de Sous-Parsat) – C2**

This ancient parish is one of villages in the Commune of Sous-Parsat and whose chapel is in ruin. An attractive cylindrical fountain waits for the visitor by the roadside.

### **Masgot (commune de Fransèches) – D3**

The picturesque village is completely dedicated to stone. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, François Michaud, an inhabitant of the village, created numerous characteristic sculptures of popular art to embellish his properties. He was inspired by his environment, to conceive a personal world, where there is an eagle, a dog, a badger, a crusader, a mermaid, Marianne and even a picture puzzle...

A small road leads to the stone «Tournadouère» passing by a very special alter of repose and some dry stone works. In the summer, the furnished house of François Michaud is open. Free visits all year long. Visits commented from May until September by "des amis de la pierre" (The Friends of stone). Visits by audio guide in French and English.

### **Fransèches - D3**

A Marianne in granite, work of the sculptor of Masgot, rests in front of the village Mairie. At the bottom of the village, there is small Wash-house directly over the brook and the fountain of Saint Denis allowed easy use of the water and protects it.

### **Saint-Avit-Le-Pauvre – D3**

Small traditional and picturesque village.

### **La Borne (Commune de St-Michel-De-Veisse) – D3**

The Chapel Notre-Dame de la Borne is dedicated to the worship of the Virgin Mary who helped Charles d' Aubusson, Seigneur de la Borne, to get out of a swamp. The flamboyant gothic structure was finished in 1524. It is decorated with an exceptional stained glass window called "the Tree of Jessé" (1522), genealogy of Jesus. There is also in the village a 14<sup>th</sup> century cross and a wishing well.

### **Saint-Michel-De-Veisse – D3**

In the village of Chasselines, the «la maison du geste et de l'outil» gives appreciation to the rural world. In an old agricultural building, there are numerous tools on display, allowing us to retrace the steps of our ancestors. Numerous original animations are offered for children (labyrinth H<sub>2</sub>O, toddlers workshop and the garden of the optical illusions). Open in July and August, and also during small vacations.

### **Banize – D4**

Situated at the confluence of the rivers Thaurion and Banize, the village possesses a Prussian cannon sited on the village green, it was given by President Doumergue ! The church of "austere" type (simple plan) possesses some internal paintings.

### **Chavanat – C4**

In the church, a restored old Romanesque building, there is a remarkable group of limestone statues. It represents Saint Anne, her three daughters and her grand children. The representation of the "Sainte Parenté" is a subject little used in French sculpture. The wooden altar piece with pillars is typically baroque.

Return to Saint-Sulpice-les-Champs.

### ***Circuit from Pontarion : (green) the water and the stone in the country of the macons of the Creuse (82km)***

An opportunity to discover the two essential elements of our countryside, that has always been used by man. Random granite stones, dolmens, stone houses , fast flowing rivers, and unspoilt lakes are present along our roads and paths. Let us go and discover them...

### **Pontarion – B3**

In a leafy setting and below the 15<sup>th</sup> century castle, l'Espace Pêche and Nature (4 ha) offers good walks along the banks of the river Thaurion ; there is an arboretum with local apple tree's, ponds and wells... In this country of fishermen, we are invited to settle down on a pontoon bridge situated along the river. Exhibitions and fishing activities take place in the summer. In the church, 32 gravestones form a tiled floor and are decorated as a cross, set

squares, hammers, signs of Lords, knights, masons or stone-cutters.

One kilometre away, the funeral chests of the necropolis of "les Sagnes", reveal the ancient funeral customs.

#### **Vidaillat – C4**

The classified church shelters decorative paintings from the 15<sup>th</sup> century and depict small characters, of which one is sticking out it's tongue. Under the roof, the sculptured and varied modillons representing faces, animals or objects seem to support the granite ledge. In the lower part of the village, the brook "Moulinier" allowed a number mills to work.

#### **Saint-Hilaire-le-Château – C3**

The village church touches a cross and the fountain of Saint-Gervais. The Commune is situated at the confluence of the rivers Thaurion and Gosne. The latter one is crossed by a Bridge of Gallo-Roman construction and is known as "The Bridge of the fairies "...

#### **La Pouge – C3**

The name indicates its distant origins, stemming from an old crest.

The 12<sup>th</sup> century church is the former barn of the commanderie of Chamberaud.

#### **Saint-Georges-La-Pouge – C3**

In front of the church, the Gallo-Roman medieval artifacts and the granite lion watch over the village. There are pleasant walks around Commune :

- the dolmen of Ponsat, supported by 7

large stones ;

- at the site of the medieval bridge of "Puy Chalard", which is a copy of the bridge Péri at St-Hilaire-le-Château.

- at the village of Nouallaguet, there is a natural and unspoilt environment with an imposing lime tree called "Sully".

#### **La Chapelle Saint-Martial – C3**

The granite lion in front of the church is the twin of that at Saint-Georges-La-Pouge.

The Commune was given its name by the first bishop of Limoges who evangelized the Limousin. The Church was rebuilt in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

There is a beautiful lake of 50 hectares, established in 1319.

#### **Sardent – B2**

By the church, the name of Sardent is displayed in letters from local granite.

Behind, there is an inscription dedicated to the doctor of the poor men, Doctor Vincent.

The 12<sup>th</sup> century church has some sculptured modillons under the ledges.

Saint Pardoux was born in Mont and he was the founder of Guéret. He lived as a recluse on the site which carries his name and which is decorated with unusual statues. There is a chapel (built in 1870) which is dedicated to him.

in the village of Mont there are granite stones called "les pierre boutelines".

#### **Peyrabout – C2**

The name of the Commune signifies "upright stones", in the village centre there was a granite stone which was cut in paving

stones around 1938. There are numerous piles present in the large forest of Chabrières.

#### **Saint-Eloi – B2**

Here, only the bell tower of the church is classified ! Near the village of Drouilles there is a mound, the remains to an ancient castle.

#### **Janailat – A2**

Jean-Baptist de Vauselle, better known under the name of Tristan L' Hermite was born in the village of Souliers in 1601. This poet left important work.

The monument consisted of granite statues of Combeauvert (crossroads D10 and D940A), a reminder of the massacre of June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1944 by the SS Division "Das Reich" of 31 young resistance fighters.

#### **Thauron – B3**

The village is at the top of a hill more than 480 metres in altitude, the church being 525 metres.

The «chapeau des Anglais» (the English hat), situated behind the church, is a monument in three parts, the oldest of which date back to Gallo-Roman times. The legend says that it was erected by the English at the end of the One hundred years war.

There are beautiful walks along the gorges of the river Thaurion.

Return to Pontarion.

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[www.ahun-creuse-tourisme.com](http://www.ahun-creuse-tourisme.com)

I.P.N.S.