



# Usson-du-Poitou

## Through the passage of time

1

The itinerary tracks the route from the heart of the village of Usson-du-Poitou.

Discover the history of the medieval church, the conventional style of its buildings and properties. Find the older areas with its little alleyways, through to the gardens of the river Clouere, where you will find a restful, developed, eco-friendly nature park.



Usson-du-Poitou has kept a quality of housing, notably lovely homes for the population and workforce.

The public washhouse can be found on the banks of the Clouere.

Many thanks for the initiative of the commune, and residents, for the upkeep of this charming development.

2,5 km circuit, without particular difficulty

Rules and recommendations.

- Supervision of children is the responsibility of parents
- Fires are prohibited
- Please respect flora and fauna
- Dogs must be kept on a lead
- Walking shoes are advised.



2



# Church and priory

Usson-du-Poitou is the seat of a very old parish, with numerous Merovingian sarcophagus.(Galle Germanic), found around the church dating from VI and VII centuries.

Saint Peters church, mentioned in the year 1080, coming from the Abbey saint Cyprien of Poitiers. A priory was then constituted which coexisted with the home of the parish priest until the Revolution.

The church dates from Roman period, the facade having many sculptures, griffons, lions, and above the portal, scene of the crucifixion. Inside at the South branch of the church, gothic arches from the XV century. The statue of saint Roch reminds us of his important devotion against the plague.

From XVII and XVIII centuries, we can see the statues in painted wood Saint Roch, Virgin Mary, the tabernacle, and numerous other decorative elements, worthy of a visit.



1. Church of Saint Pierre  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



2



3



4



5



7



6

7. The war memorial from the 1870 war, rare for our region, was inaugurated on August 2, 1896.  
Photo Ecomusée M. Roulet-Caire

- 2. Tabernacle from the XVII<sup>e</sup> or XVIII<sup>e</sup> c.
- 3. Virgin and Child from the XVIII<sup>e</sup> c.
- 4. Statuette of Saint Roch.
- 5. The Crucifixion in front western, dated XI<sup>e</sup> c.

Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou

- 6. Some monk cells have been restored north of the church, but the tithe barn which hid the traffic was destroyed in 1958
- Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou

Why is Saint Rich well thought of in the countryside? He is patron of?

- 1. Shepherd's
- 2. Pilgrims and plague victims.
- 3. Hunters

2 - Summoned against the plague, Saint Roch is the patron saint of pilgrims and plague victims





# Courtyard of miracles

Be reassured you can visit this area without breaking your bank. The courtyard of miracles, was designed by the residents, with its small roads, and later the placement of a well, evoking a medieval development.

The courtyard came about by way of baggars, alleged cripples, asking for charity, coming back later showing their disabilities to have disappeared, like a miracle had occurred.

The commune values this area, with small houses tiled rooves, looking after the upkeep. Renovated in the XIX century, show the interesting architectural detail. Sink stone, overflow, unloading arch, the well found in the recess of the yard, is no longer in use.



1. Extract from a painting by Brueghel l'Ancien (1525-1569)  
La cour des miracles - Wikipedia



2



3

2. 3. 4. Engravings-  
by Jacques Callot  
(1592-1635)  
Les mendiants  
Wikipedia



4

5. A sink stone and its  
small skylight on the  
first floor of a house  
Photo Municipality  
of Usson-du-Poitou



5

7. To the right of the courtyard, a deep recess  
housed a well with a quadrangular coping  
in limestone rubble, which has now  
disappeared.  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou

8. This well comes from the village of  
Usson-du-Poitou. We will notice his turn  
and the chain which allowed the descent and  
ascent of the bucket  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



8



6

6. General view  
of the courtyard  
of miracles  
Photo Ecomusée,  
M. Rouillet-Caire



7

## What is a maree'?

- 1- A fishmonger
- 2- A big flood from the river Clouere, that waters Usson
- 3- A stone sink and overflow, situated on the outside of the houses



3. A stone sink and overflow, situated on the outside of the houses

# Housing development of Pluvillière

4

It is quite exceptional to find a working class housing development in the middle of a rural village, founded in 1873, it was the fruits of the imagination and initiative of a local Joseph Blondet of Pluvillière. This gentleman planned out the the layout, and sold off parcels of land for building, to local craftsmen and labourers from Usson-du-Poitou. In exchange, the purchasers had to respect the rules of the development.

The houses being in straight lines for the length of the road. The openings and corners of the buildings had to be from cut shaped stone. Proprietors had to agree to the upkeep of half of the road the width of the building.

When finished, the area comprised of seventeen houses, Joseph Blondet informed the commune that they had to respect the style, and maintain the upkeep of the architectural history.

The best craftsmen were retained by the commune, proposing good conditions for a better life, housing with a small garden.



1. The entrance porch of the Cité Pluvillière  
Photo Ecomusée, Monique Roulet-Caire



2. A detail architectural well preserved: a boulite and its sink stone for evacuation some water  
Photo Ecomusée, Monique Roulet-Caire



3. The housing development street  
Cliché Ecomusée, Monique Roulet-Caire



4. A restored house.  
The limestone frames of the openings, the angle chaining, the boulite have been preserved.  
The flowers add to the charm of this house  
Photo Ecomusée, Monique Roulet-Caire



# Two victims of a time of Terror

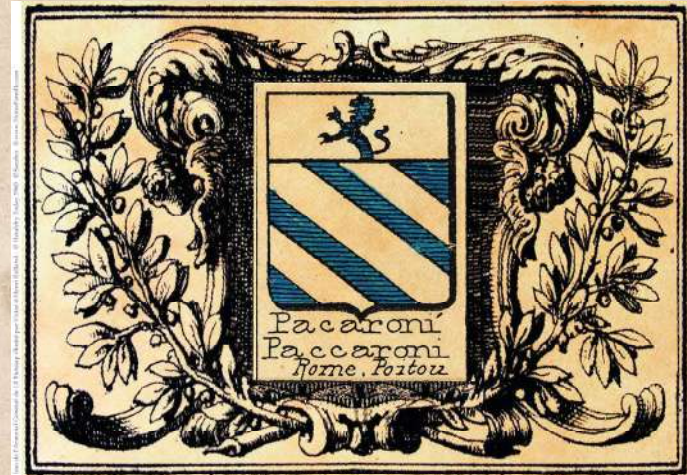
The French National convention of March 1793 decreed that, the levy of 300,000 men to be taken and trained for the uprising. In Usson, 24 men were deemed suitable, aged between 25 and 40, unmarried or widowed, without children, they were ordered to make a list and to draw lots to see who would be conscripted.

Jean Baptiste Cuirblanc and his brother were on the list, but had charge of their younger brothers, and refused to take part in the drawing of lots.

This type of exemption was not foreseen by the revolutionaries, Jean Baptiste encouraged others on the list not to take part in the selection procedure of the drawing of lots.

George Pasqueron from Fontmervault also refused, but he accepted to be enlisted, on condition that the chiefs of the national guard also did the same, the request bought to light unfairness as, exemption was granted to the officers of the national guard. Everywhere else others were refused excepting family commitments.

The Revolution roared louder, authorities reinforced the need to bring to heel the ringleaders of the objectors. Republican troops proceeded with the arrest of 13 young men. Jean Baptiste Cuirblanc, and George Pasqueron, were condemned to death. They were executed in Poitiers, On the 29th March 1793.



Coat of arms of the Pasqueron de Fommervault family  
Site Généalogie



Laissez-vous conter Usson-du-Poitou, Pays d'Art et d'Histoire  
Béatrice Guyonnet, Animatrice de l'architecture et du patrimoine



5

# The use of water in the past

From the middle ages the power of hydraulics was used. In Usson-du-Poitou, there were eight mills in the parish set up by secular and religious lords, up until the Revolution.

Elsewhere in the region, the most important communities installed shower baths. On 30th June 1946, the municipal council of Usson-du-Poitou announced that, "these commodities that are known by the young people who live in the towns, will not encourage them to come back to the villages where they were born" hence the villages became de-populated more and more. Therefore the project was realised on the edge of the river Clouere in 1957.

The water supply did not become widespread in the countryside until the middle of the 20th century, up until then water was fetched from wells with buckets, for use in cooking, but for washing and laundry the communes built more and more washhouses.

We can see the washhouses rebuilt on the bank of the Clouere in 1872, from the bridge constructed in 1924.



1. The Pont mill was installed on a banks of the Clouère, filled in 1967 leading to the disappearance from the mill  
Old postcard - Private collection



4. The Pont mill and the banks  
Old postcard - Private collection

3. The dimensions of the wash house, testify to an important frequentation by the women of the village  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



2. The bridge and the shower-baths, lean-to covered with red tiles  
Old postcard - Private collection



3. An area where we can take baths or showers

What are bains-douches?

- 1- A village hall
- 2- A night club
- 3- An area where we can take baths or showers





# Towards the Pré des Isles

Don't miss out a visit to the Pré des Isles, an important layout the commune has built. The narrow wooden walkways, allow us to safely cross the humid zone, to discover the marshy area between the two arms of the Clouere, permitting us to observe the conservation of vegetation and the wildlife, there is also an observation hut, complete with signs that give an explanation about the area's flora and fauna.

The gardens of the Clouere are laid out for families to enjoy a restful time out, with playground, children's bicycle track, obstacle course, fishing, picnic tables, an attractive pastoral area to just enjoy the pleasure of being with and listening to nature.



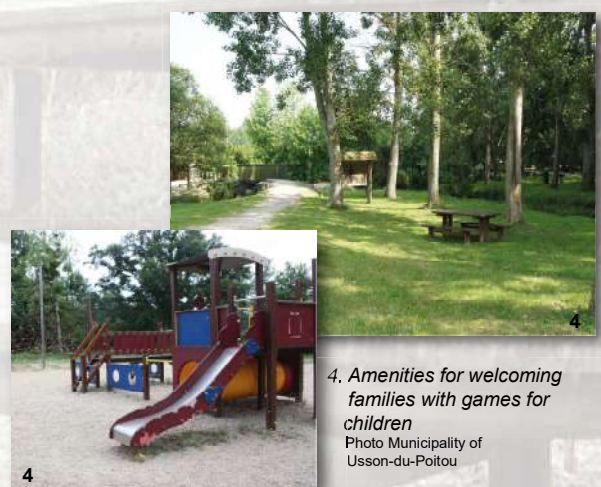
1. The pontoons allow the movement of visitors without carrying damage to the humid zone  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



2. Towards the observatory  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



3. The landscaped banks of the Clouère  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



4. Amenities for welcoming families with games for children  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou

What is the advantage of the zone humide?

1. Purify and conserve water
2. Allows the breeding of a snail farm
3. Area for swimming



1. Purify and conserve water.



7

# The rue de l'Épicerie

Before committing to walk along the "rue de l'Épicerie", take a minute to recall the memory of the old market halls, built in 1878, as a shelter for the market traders, by 1921 the halls were demolished to establish a war memorial, inaugurated 14th September 1922.

It is another aspect of the old medieval development of Usson-du-Poitou that you are invited to discover, at the same time a little local anecdote.

We had counted up to eleven bars/cafes in Usson, many of which we're installed at close proximity to each other, in this peaceful little road many toilets were frequented after so much drinking, the toilets were known as "pisseries", they were destroyed around 1990, but the memory of those toilets still exists, under the cajoling name, the rue de l'Épicerie.

The inhabitants enjoy and take care of this calm charming road in the village centre, a little away from the noise of the main road.



1. A country corner in the city  
Photo Municipality of Usson-du-Poitou



2. The old halls which have now disappeared  
Old postcard - Private collection



3. Inauguration of the war memorial  
from the 1914-1918 war  
Old postcard - Private collection



4. A well-flowered facade  
Photo Ecomusée Monique Rouillet-Caire

What were les anciennes halls used for?

- 1. Picnics
- 2. Shelter for market traders
- 3. To listen to music

2. Shelter for market traders

