

## *A-Z of the Communes of the Deux-Sèvres.*

by Sue Burgess

### **Ardin**

Ardin with its 1236 inhabitants is situated in the Canton of Coulonges sur l'Autize. Around the historic market town over 70 hamlets can be found. Ardin gets its name from Gallic and from Latin. The prefix «Ar» means «on» and the Gallic word «dunum» meant first «the hill» and then was later used to refer to a fortified village on a hill. The inhabitants of Ardin are known as Ardinois or Ardinoises.

#### **À VOIR / MUST SEE:**

- The view from the river Autize
- The old shop



### **Argenton Les Vallées**

The commune of Argenton Les Vallées was created on the 1st September 2006 from the reunification of the villages of Argenton Château, Boësse and Sanzay.

The remains of the château where Philippe de Comynes (the author of King Louis XI's memoirs) lived and where King Louis XI stayed, can still be seen. The commune has many other notable buildings.

#### **À VOIR / MUST SEE:**

- The ruins of the XIIIth century château of Sanzay – the castle is a listed historic monument.
- The ancient Cadoret bridge – a listed monument
- Saint Gilles church whose door is a listed monument.
- The chapel of the Château of Argenton château has been a listed building since 1929.
- There is also a notable windmill on the D759.
- The Pont Cadoret

### **Argenton l'église**

Before the revolution, Argenton-les-Deux-Églises was dependent on the royal officer of Saumur. The village was present on the markets of Anjou and Poitou. Known as Argentum during the Gallic Roman period, the commune appeared in the archives for the first time as Argenton-les-deux-Églises.

In the XVth century the manor of Argenton-l'église was attached to the viscountship of Thouars which belonged to the Amboise family.



At the time of the French Revolution the village was also called Argenton-les-deux-Rivières because it is crossed by the Argenton and the Thouet. Argenton-l'Église is built on a limestone plain in which the rivers have dug out deep valleys.

In 1973, the former commune of Bagneux joined Argenton-l'Église. However, Bagneux remains attached to the canton of Thouars whereas Argenton-l'Église is part of the canton of Argenton-les-Vallées. There were 1588 inhabitants in 2007.

### **Asnières en Poitou**

The small village of Asnières, which is part of the canton of Brioux-sur-Boutonne, lies along the river Boutonne in the heart of Aulnay Forest. The village borders the Charente Maritime. The commune is unusual in that it has no church. Asnières became known as Asnières-en-Poitou in 1937 to mark its geographical situation. On the road to Compostelle, the village was at one time quite important with its commandery of the Knights Templars. After the revolution Asnières was the main town of the canton.

### **Assais les Jumeaux**

The commune of Assais les Jumeaux came into existence on the 1st February 1973, the date at which the two communes of ASSAIS and Les JUMEAUX joined together to form one single commune.

Assais les Jumeaux is a predominantly rural commune made up of plains and woods. The commune was the site of the battle of Moncontour. The tumulus of the Motte de Puytaillé is the proof of a Gallic Roman site. The 17th century presbytery has a pretty well. The bell tower of the church dates from the 15th century. A roman monument – a lantern of the dead – can be seen. The Chauvière wood is situated on the commune and there are pathways for walking and rambling. At the time of the last census the population of the commune was 761.

#### **À VOIR / MUST SEE:**

- During the second world war, a French soldier was shot down from the top of the bell tower of the church at Jumeaux. His helmet, with a bullet hole in it, can still be seen today, hanging above the door of the church.

### **Aubigné**

Aubigné is part of the canton of Chef Boutonne and is situated in the area between the Limousin and the Gâtine vendéenne at the South edge of Poitou. The Sandre flows through the commune.

The name of Aubigné appears for the first time in an act in which, in 1081, Cadelon, the viscount of Aulnay, donated the church, the priory and pasture rights to the Clunisien abbey of Montierneuf in Poitiers. But the village is in fact probably a lot older since we know that the battle between Guillaume IV, the Duke of Poitiers and Aquitaine and Foulques le Réchin, the Angevin, led to the destruction of the town which used to be found at Bourg-Sanglant.

This village had certainly been implanted around a former roman villa. At this period, the area was covered by the Great Forest of Argenson which covered the area from Benon to Tussion and Boixe in Charente. Marie de Montbron, the lady of Chef Boutonne ordered the beginning of the clearing of the forest in 1455.



Please return to this section next month to see the continuation of 'A-Z of the Communes of the Deux-Sèvres.'

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