

A-Z of the Communes in the Deux-Sèvres

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by Sue Burgess

CLUSSAIS LA POMMERAIE

Situated in the heart of the Poitou-Charentes, in the canton of Sauzé-Vaussais, the commune of Clussais la Pommeraie is half way between Poitiers, Niort and Angoulême. There were 600 inhabitants in 2010.

The church is situated in Clussais and there was certainly a first church here in the Xth century. The first church was certainly built by the monks of the abbey of St Junier de Nouaillé-Maupertius. The present church dates from the XIIth or XIIIth century and legend has it that this church was built by the Fairy Melusine during the night. According to the legend, the inhabitants of la Pommeraie had begun to build a church but Melusine preferred Clussais. Every night she took the stones from the Pommeraie in her apron and left them at Clussais. One night her apron tore and she dropped the stones which formed 'le Montail', a mound of red earth still visible near Clussais.

After the revolution, the church was in a pitiful state. Some restoration work was done in the 19th century and the bell tower was made safe in 1841.

The edifice is notable because of its strange proportions. The bell tower porch, with its two bells, dominates the long nave with its large buttresses.

The rows of seats are not all of the same length. They get shorter as you go towards the choir and this gives you the impression that the nave is even longer.

The marsh of Clussais-la-Pommeraie is a remarkable ensemble of wet fields and prairies which are situated in a dip where ditches drain water towards the Bouleure, a tributary of the river Dive. The marsh is rich with flora and fauna and many endangered species can be found here (tree frog, crested newt, the copper-coloured butterfly of the marshes, the Gentian and the shrike).

A VOIR / MUST SEE

- **Notre-Dame de Clussais church.** The long nave and the round apse.



Right: The nave
(photo by JP Berthonneau)

- On the edge of the commune practically in Caunay, the miraculous fountain of Fontadam



COMBRAND

Combrand is situated in the North East of the Deux-Sèvres, near to the towns of Cerizay (5km), Mauleon (10km) and Bressuire (18km). Combrand has a very dynamic economy with more than 250 jobs particularly in the wood industry. There were 1141 inhabitants in 2010.

The first traces of human life in Combrand go back to the Paleolithic and Neolithic eras. Hunting tools and everyday articles have been found in the area and particularly in the village of Puy Gazard.

The name Combrand appears in a series of XIIth century charters. The first church of which some ruins remain, was built at this period. The chateau of la Patellière dates from the XVth century. In 1794, during the first Vendée war, General Marigny, one of the Vendée leaders, was shot to death in the Logis de la Girardière of Combrand. His grave can be seen in the cemetery of the commune today.

The chateau of Soulier was owned by Charles le Roux, artist and MP for the Deux-Sèvres during the XIXth century.

A VOIR / MUST SEE

- The **Church of Saint-Jean**
- The **Château de La Pastellière**, (XVth century), listed historical monument. It was used as a military hospital for the wounded Vendéens during the first Vendée war in 1793.



- The **Château de La Girardière** where Marigny was shot. He is buried in the cemetery where there is a monument.

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