

## ENGLISH

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### Mayors of Pont-sur-Yonne (from 1827 to nowadays)

1827 à 1831 : M.HEMON

1821 à 1837: M.HURE Isidore

1837 à 1840: M. MOU Prudent

1840 à 1846: M. MOU Pierre

1846 à 1858: M. MOU Pierre

1858 à 1878: M. LAMY Félix

1878 à 1880: M. MALLIARY Jean

1880 à 1914: Dr PETIT Eugène

1914 à 1922: M. ROUIF Paul

1922 à 1929: M.BANRY Pierre

1929 à 1940: M. ROUIF Paul (deceased, relieved from his duties by the authorities occupying France during WWII)

1940 à 1944: M. LOIRAT Fernand

1944 à 1974: M. BRISSON Maurice

1974 à 2005: M. LASSALE Roger

2005 à 2008: M. BRIERE Christian

2008 à nos jours: Mme DOMAT Jeanine



### **Famous people who stopped by at Pont-sur-Yonne**

5 July 1169: consecration of the church by King Louis

16 April 1234: King Saint Louis spent the night there before his wedding with Marguerite de Provence at the Cathedral Saint-Etienne de Sens.

18 September 1303: Duke Philippe de Hardi, future King of France

13 June 1420: King Henry V of England

14 March 1564: King Charles IX, during his journey around France

2 May 1576: King Henri de Navarre, the future king of France

15 April 1596: The new Henry IV

11 January 1653: Cardinal Mazarin

18 May 1814: Emperor Napoleon Ier back from the Isle of Elbe

### **It is rumored that...**

“It is not up to me to voice an opinion about the character of my fellow citizens: that’s why I will only repeat the unbiased opinion of the foreigners: they think the Pontois are a little shrill-gorged but warm-hearted, light-spirited and straight concerning the way they speak and look. The Protestants, their enemies, in 1567, considered them as brave and qualified them as “energetic and determined people”. (...) The Pontois have a knack for giving mocking nicknames and they use them nicely. Each person has one, often very well given and suggestive; I’ll only mention these: Malcommode (Grumpy), Ventre-de-Paille (Straw-Belly), Baille-en-L’Air (Yawner), Dort-Debout (Standing Sleeper), Soupe-tout-seul (Dine-Alone), Nez-Plat (Flat-Nose), Nez Rouge (Red Nose), Dentfine (Smalltooth).

Excerpt from “Recherches Archéologiques sur Pont sur Yonne de P.-V. Horson”)

In 1954 a part of the bridge in the middle of the river was removed: so the bridge only led to l’Ile d’Amour, very attractive for the fishermen. These beautiful remains disturbed the services of the highways department and of the navigation, whose importance was getting less important though: it was fully demolished during a tough winter. Only the arches above the left bank remained; a useless and damaged stump of a beautiful piece of work ordered by Louis XIV. Nevertheless some people still thought that these remains disturbed the traffic of heavy trucks. But in 1991 the town council, thanks to its efforts, succeeded in registering it into the inventory of Historical Monuments., which protected it from future blows.

What’s left to do now is to repair the part of the bridge that is damaged thanks to an idea worthy of this piece of work.

### **Pont-sur-Yonne and its history...**

A very old village whose suggestive name is the consequence of its situation along the river Yonne

“Pont-sur-Yonne is situated on the left bank of the river Yonne at the feet of two hillsides separated by a ravine and along which the river flows. In the city center the streets are generally narrow, stiff and irregular, but when one looks as it from the right embankment, the city offers a pittoresque sight.” (Written by l’Abbé Horson)

Pont-sur-Yonne is a privileged passageway: boats, ferries, wood bridges. The stone bridge dates back to 1684 and two arches still remain. Finally, the construction of the current metal bridge was launched in 1940; it’s a very original prototype.

In 1876 1900 inhabitants were living in Pont-sur-Yonne, nowadays 3200 are. The city spread from all sides even to the right bank of the river. The ravine was filled in and the main street was opened up on the site. Pont-sur-Yonne has kept this aspect of “very good taste” without changing too much.

### **The bridge**

The city of Pont-sur-Yonne owes its name to its famous bridge

The first bridge was built in 1175 at the own expense of the chapter of the Cathedral in Sens who shared the control of this territory with the king.

Around 1684, the wood bridge was replaced by the stone bridge.

In 1840, the bridge underwent some important modifications: it was widened and the old staircase which led to the Isle was removed.

A new arch was built and under the 8<sup>th</sup> side a towpath and a port were built, appropriate for the transport of bricks and tiles toward Paris, a modification which led to the height of the navigation on the river.

In 1870, a few days before the Prussian invasion, it was decided that the big arch would be demolished to stop the invaders from going on.

During the first years of the century, despite some modifications and additions, the stone bridge was for the most part as Louis XIV and Libéral Bruand wanted it to be. In 1935, the project to improve the crossing of the bridge by the A-road, established and ordered by the government departments, actually sacrificed the old stone bridge.

In June 1940, the air raids that targeted the bridge spared it. Nevertheless, at the same time, an arch was blown up by the French military engineering to prevent the invaders from going. It was done with so much passion and dynamite that some rocks fall back on a part of the city, causing damage to several roofs. In the emergency, the engineering built a framing arch that was quickly replaced by a wood arch of better quality.

Finally, the construction of the current metal bridge was launched in 1940 - it is a very original prototype – but it caused in 1941 the demolition of the biggest part (five arches) of the stone bridge.

Only three arches remain on the left bank.



### **The Church: Notre-Dame de Pont-sur-Yonne**

Near the remains of the «Old Bridge», very close to the bank of the river Yonne stands the church. It was classified Historical Monument on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 by the Secretary for Education and Art Mr. Bruand.

Fortunately, it has been preserved over the years and is still designed according to the plans of the first architect. Its features show that the beginning of its construction dates back to approximately 1140.

In 1162, the church of Pont-sur-Yonne was under the patronage of the chapter of the Cathedral of Sens.

In 1420, the English devastated the city by setting fire to several buildings and only spared the church. Little by little the British became the masters of Sens. Then Captain Duplessy decided to reinforce the church to prevent the enemies from plundering.

At that time, even if the building constituted a place for meditation, it was mainly used to protect a part of the population against the massacres, even though it was in vain.

On 11<sup>th</sup> September 1740, the prosecutor – in the presence of the population – allowed the works in the church.

Unfortunately these were disturbed because the contractor wasn't paid and so he stopped working.

Nevertheless, significant improvements were made inside the church following a violent thunderstorm that had beaten down on the city.

These remains display numerous sculptures including the Virgin holding the child Jesus in front of the faithful who are praying.

This church was shaped as a Roman cross, which gives it a true originality. It can welcome approximately one thousand people. The bell tower was built in 1240. A bell was built in 1567 and the other in 1721. The little 2350-pound bell, cracked in 1975, and then recast, was replaced in September 1976 and the big 4000-pound bell, whose swing door is broken, is currently being repaired.

From its construction to nowadays, it has resisted and has become the “protégée” of the inhabitants.

### **The Aqueduct of the Vanne**

The elaboration of the final layout was done in 1865. It ends on the heights of Montsouris at 71 yards. The works began in 1867, were stopped in 1870-71 during the siege and the Commune of Paris. But the gigantic works under the earth to harness the sources called “d'Armentières” in the village of Saint-Benoît-sur-Vanne, were finished in 1871. The aqueduct and the reservoir were only over in 1874.

The main aqueduct starts at Armentières and Bouillade, it follows the left bank of the river to the village of Chigy. At Flacy, it joins the secondary aqueduct coming from Cerilly. A second piece of work conducts the water harnessed at the valley from the fields to the factory in Theil sur Vanne and beyond to that of Malay le Petit. There, a paddle wheel set in motion by the Vanne and that has been working for 130 years, makes the lifting of the water toward the main aqueduct thanks to four piston pumps.

The second aqueduct coming from the source of Cochepie joins that of the Vanne between Malay-le-Grand and Sens; the lifting is made by the factory of Maillot.

Upstream to the route of the aqueduct, one can admire some important pieces of work: the siphon of Soucy – 600 yards – the wonderful arcades of Cuy – 339 yards – the siphon and the arcades of the river Yonne – 4067 yards – which enable the people to cross the valley, the A-road 6, the railways and the river.

The two-story arcades of Pont-sur-Yonne – 295 yards – are also a Roman construction. The main aqueduct goes for 97 miles in a very weak slope; the level difference between the sources d'Armentières and the Montsouris reservoir is only 34 yards.

The aqueduct of the Vanne was built by Eugène Belgrand along with the engineers Eugène Vallée, Charles Huet, Edmond Humblot and Louis Buffet. Five big firms took part of it. The most difficult parts to build were the ones which are in the Fontainebleau forest; the presence of unstable sables and huge sandstone blocs made the works difficult and delicate.

