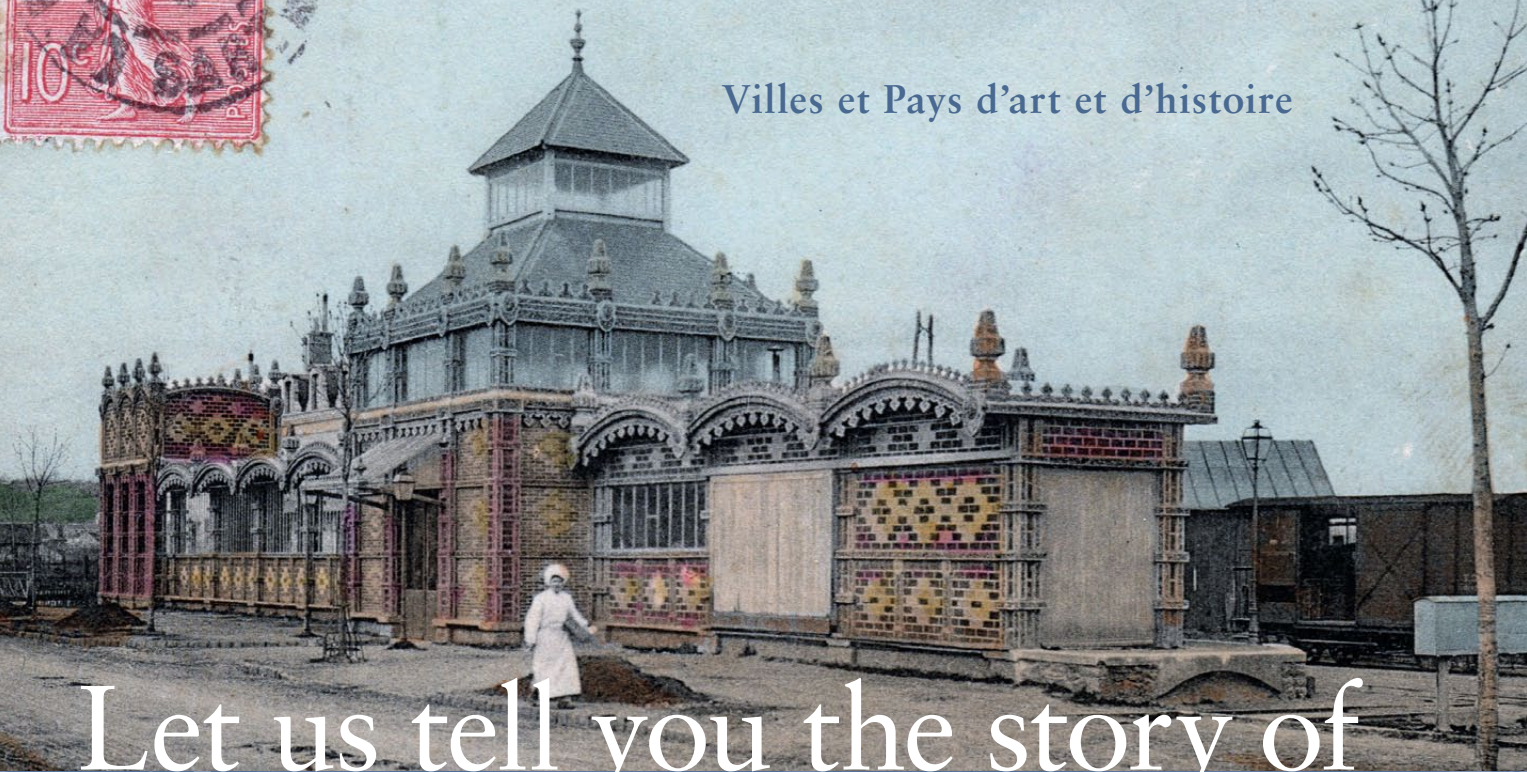


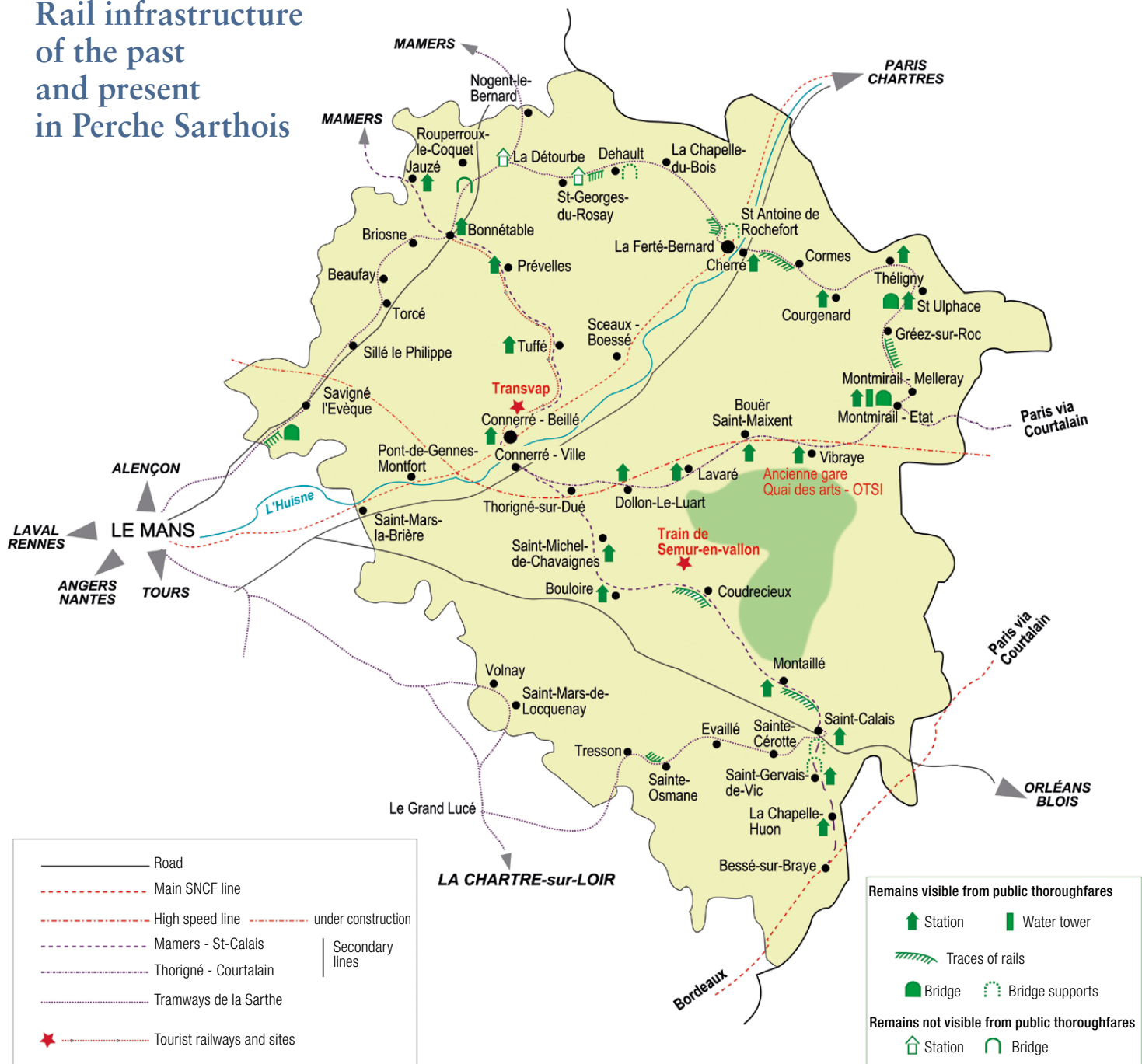


Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire



Let us tell you the story of
the train in Perche Sarthois

Rail infrastructure of the past and present in Perche Sarthois

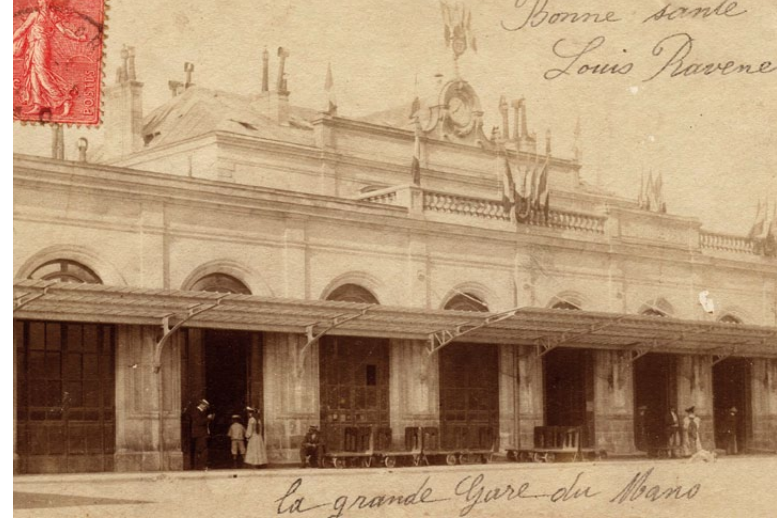


The railway

Origins and development

Today, it is difficult to imagine the immense economic and social change brought about by the growth of the railways in the 19th century. Until then, for transport, man had to rely only on his own force combined with that of an animal. In the space of a few decades, James Watt's steam machine invention (1769) combined with the first attempts to set up railways, initially horse powered, led to the first steam locomotive in 1804 in a factory in Wales. This first conclusive test rapidly made the railway the major element in the industrial evolution in England and throughout Europe. In France, the first railway line was set up to transport coal between Saint-Etienne and Andrezieux in

1827. The state encouraged the development of rail transport to stimulate economic growth in rural areas and combat their isolation. However, it was not until the July Monarchy that a rail network with Paris as a hub officially became an objective. Partnerships were set up between the state, landowners and private companies to build the infrastructure and run the network. From then on, the rail network became nationwide. The *Compagnie de l'Ouest* brought the railway to Sarthe in 1854 when it opened the line between Paris and Brest. The Le Mans-Alençon line joined it the following year and the link between Le Mans and Angers was opened in 1863.



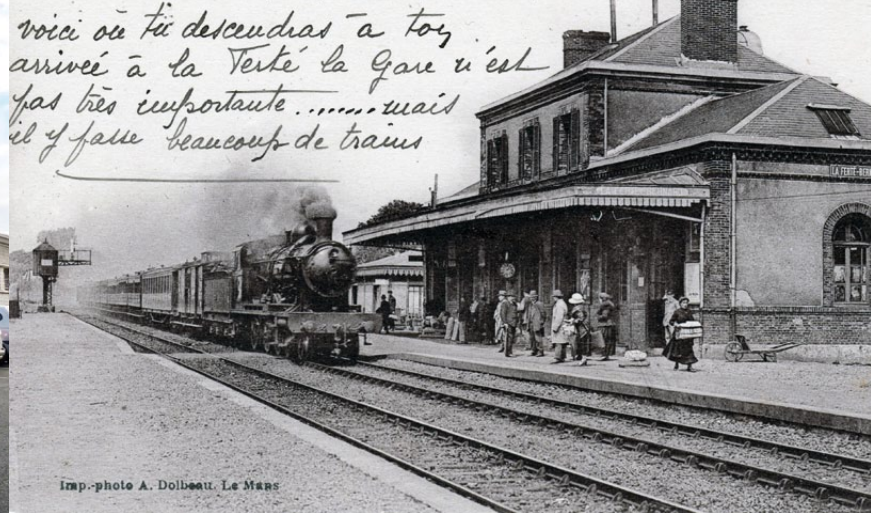
In the meantime, in 1858, the Compagnie Paris-Orléans opened a line between Le Mans and Tours. Sarthe being the doorway to the west, Le Mans rapidly became a major rail junction. Although the main lines in Sarthe were open, three important towns, Mamers, La Flèche and Saint-Calais did not have a railway line. In 1862, the Sarthe council decided to add its sub-prefectures to the national network and to link them to each other in order to form a network within the department. Work began in 1867. But it was in the wake of war in 1870, that the Mamers to Saint-Calais line was built, thanks to a private initiative, with support from the local nobility. The line is known

locally as *ligne des ducs* (duke's line) in reference to the duke Sosthène II de la Rochefoucauld. Owner of the Bonnétable estate, mayor and councillor of Sarthe, the duke was one of the railways line's most ardent supporters. Later on, a tramway network was set up to make travel easier for all country dwellers. There were in fact three tramway networks set up under the laws of 1865 and 1880, which provided for railways with local interest. For economic reasons and in order to adapt to the terrain, these tramways ran on narrow rails set a metre apart and built on the road or on the shoulder.

Continued on page 2



Connerré-Beillé station, rebuilt after the Second World War



La Ferté-Bernard station

Continued from page 1

The tram lines in Sarthe were built between 1882 and 1922 and covered a total of 430km. The first network was the shortest, best designed and most profitable. The other two were often the object of political one-upmanship and every village wanted its own station. This rapid expansion was soon a disaster. Some lines were in deficit and ceased to operate, while others never saw the light of day. Despite being short-lived, the Sarthe tramways opened up the cultural and economic horizons of country-dwellers such as those who used the La Ferté-Bernard-Montmirail line and were therefore able to leave Sarthe and go to Paris via the

Paris to La Ferté-Bernard line or the Connerré - Courtalain to Montmirail line. Transport of agricultural and industrial products was also easier. Convoys of cider apples were shipped to the cider factories by tramway and industrial products such as those made at the Pierre glassworks in Coudrecieux were transported on the Mamers to Saint-Calais line. The tramways changed the face of rural Sarthe and helped retain local crafts such as ceramics in Prévelles. But, even at that time, rural exodus was already a reality and the promising beginnings of the motor car announced the supremacy of the roads.

History of trains and tramways in Perche Sarthois

Paris - La Ferté-Bernard* - Le Mans line

(State/SNCF - general interest, normal track)

The line from Paris to Brittany brought the railway to the Perche Sarthois in 1854/1855. The Compagnie de l'Ouest hesitated between Le Mans and Alençon for the Paris to Brest line, but Le Mans won the battle thanks to the influence of the mayor, artist Jacques Trouvé-Chauvel. Purchased by the state in 1908 and then the SNCF in 1938, electrified in 1937, the line is the only one that is still working of all those that criss-crossed the Perche Sarthois. It enters the area via



Edit. Kaszel, journaux, et papeter, tabacs, à Bonnétable

Bonnétable, tramway station, now part of a housing estate



Viaduct in Savigné l'Évêque

La Ferté-Bernard, goes through Sceaux-Boëssé and Connerré-Beillé, where there was once a junction with the Mamers-Calais and Montfort-le-Gesnois lines (formerly Pont de Gennes-Montfort) and branches off at Saint-Mars-la-Brière towards Le Mans. Just after Connerré it joins the high speed line that later goes to Brittany.

Le Mans - Savigné-L'Évêque* - La Détourbe - La Ferté-Bernard

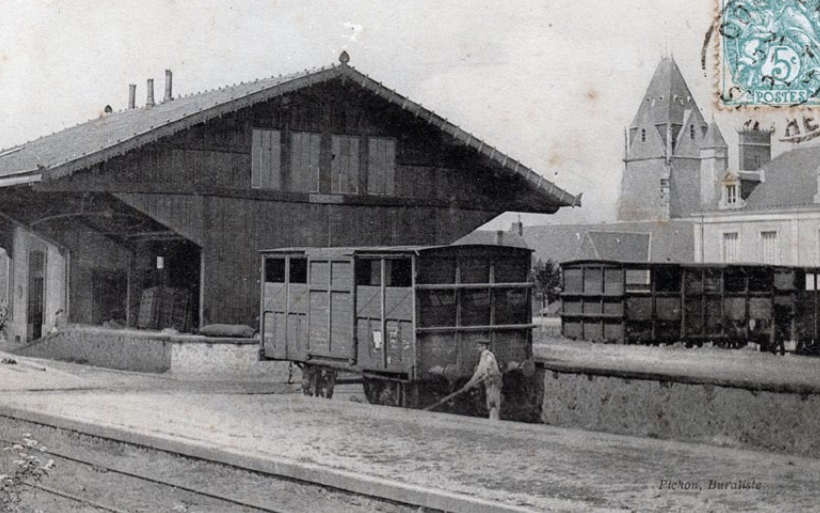
(Tramway de la Sarthe - metric gauge)

This line was part of the second steam tramway network in Sarthe, designed and built by the engineer Harel de la Noë. The section up to Bonnétable opened on 6 May 1897 and the section Bonnétable - La Détourbe - La Ferté-Bernard opened on 15 June 1898. The line closed on 1st February 1947. The steam tramways in Sarthe formed a secondary rail network and ran mostly on the shoulder of the road. The network covered the whole of the Sarth department.

Entering the Perche Sarthois at Savigné l'Évêque, the line served Sillé le Philippe, Torcé en Vallée, Beaufay, Briosne and Bonnétable where there was a junction with the Mamers-Saint-Calais and Ruperroux-Le Coquet lines. At La Détourbe, where the left fork went to Mamers, it continued to the right towards La Ferté-Bernard via Saint-Georges-du-Rosay, Dehault, the viaduct, La Chapelle du Bois and Saint-Antoine-de-Rochefort. It entered La Ferté-Bernard via the boulevard de la République (currently avenue de la République).

It was in Dehault that the most serious accident involving the Tramways de la Sarthe took place, on 20 January 1910. Two people died when the tram derailed due to an embankment subsiding. The only remains of this line are a viaduct and a bridge in Savigné l'Évêque, the pillars of the viaduct in Dehault and the stations¹ in Bonnétable, Saint-Georges-du-Rosay and La Détourbe.

¹private property not visible from public thoroughfares



Warehouse at Connerré station, located on the site of Quai des Sports

Coudrecieux station

La Ferté-Bernard - Montmirail line

(Tramway de la Sarthe - metric gauge)

This *Tramways de la Sarthe* line was part of the third network, which was built later, during WWI and opened on 16 March 1916. German prisoners helped build the line, in several different places. The line was never very busy and it closed down fairly quickly, on 1 January 1933, the service having already been suspended between 1 July 1921 and 1 May 1924. It went through Cherré, Cormes, Courgenard, Théligny, Saint-Ulphace, Gréez-sur-Roc and up to Montmirail-Melleray,

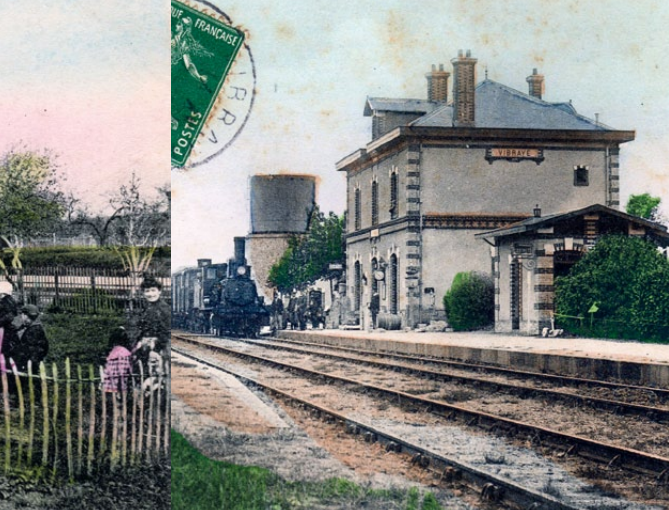
then Montmirail-Etat, via the Thorigné-sur-Dués line in Courtalain. In the Perche Sarthois, the Tramways de la Sarthe line has the most remains still visible today.

Mamers - Jauzé* - Saint-Calais Line (Mamers-Saint-Calais - local interest, normal gauge)

With the Migneret law of 1865, designed to encourage rail networks to serve prefecture and sub-prefecture towns, the Mamers to Saint-Calais normal gauge was opened. The first stage from Connerré to Mamers opened on 21 September 1872. The Connerré to Saint-Calais line opened on 20 February 1873 and was the first line of local interest in Sarthe. The line remained in service until 31 December 1977. Located mainly in the Perche Sarthois, which it entered at Jauzé stop,

it went through Bonnétable, Prévelles, Tuffé, Connerré-Beillé (junction with the Le Mans-Paris line), Connerré-ville, Thorigné-sur-Dués (junction with the line towards Courtalain), Saint-Michel-de-Chavaignes, Bouloire, Coudrecieux, Montaillé and finally Saint-Calais. Nearly all the stations still exist, although they are privately owned, except Tuffé. The Connerré-ville station was on the site currently occupied by the town's multi-purpose hall where there is a monument in memory of the Mamers-Saint-Calais, Thorigné-sur-Doués and Coudrecieux railway.

*first station in Perche Sarthois



Vibraye station



Saint-Calais station

The section from Connerré-Beillé to Bonnétable has come to life again thanks to the Transvap, which runs a service for tourists. The Transvap began running in Conneré on 3 July 1977, then from Conneré to Bonnétable on 11 July 1978 and the first tourist service from Conneré to Tuffé lake ran on 14 July 1979. The Transvap has kept the Mamers to Saint-Calais alive and well, season after season, ever since.

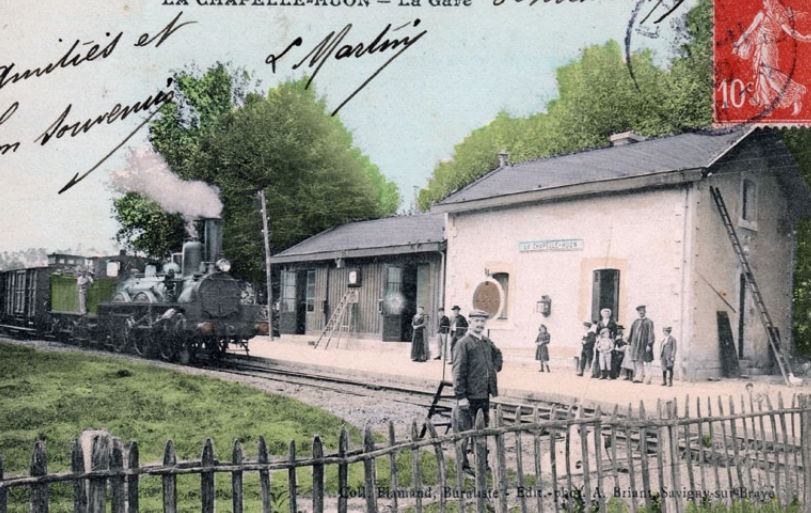
Thorigné-sur-Dué - Montmirail - Courtalain line

(State/SNCF - general interest, normal gauge)

The Thorigné-sur-Dué to Courtalain line was opened in two stages: first from Thorigné-sur-Dué to Montmirail-Melleray on 2 January 1898 and then Montmirail-Melleray to Courtalain on 12 July 1900. It was operated by the state railway company (and later the SNCF) as the Connerré-Courtalain line, using the Connerré-Thorigné-sur-Dué section of the Mamers-Saint-Calais line. From 1955 onwards, the department acted as operator for the Mamers-

Saint-Calais line for goods transport as far as Montmirail. The goods were mostly farm produce. The line closed completely on 31 December 1977. It served the stations of Dollon, Le Luart, Lavaré, Bouër Saint-Maixent, Vibraye et Montmirail, the last of the Perche Sarthois stations. The western branch (towards Le Mans) of the Atlantic high speed line was built on part of the old line, and therefore covered its tracks. However, the stations remain and some have been remarkably restored. It is the case in Dollon and particularly in Vibraye, where the old

station now houses the tourist office. The town of Vibraye not only renovated the station but also its surroundings. On the square there is a signal post and a locomotive and the warehouse has been turned into a cultural venue called Quai des Arts. There is also a lovely stone bridge (known as Jouan stone) that stands around ten metres high between Dollon and Lavaré where it spans the Longuève stream.



La Chapelle-Huon station



Tresson before the station was built

Saint-Calais - Bessé-sur-Braye Line

(Etat/SNCF - intérêt général, voie normale)

This short line, declared of public utility on 11 April 1874 was first granted to the Compagnie du Paris-Orléans as a local interest line, but it only opened on 31 March 1879. Four years later, it was considered to be of general interest and the state took over the management from 20 November 1883. It remained in operation for passengers until 15 May 1938 and for goods until 1942. The passenger service was temporarily reinstated from 5 May 1942

for a few weeks until the line was abandoned. There were two stations between Saint-Calais and Bessé-sur-Braye: Saint-Gervais-de-Vic and La Chapelle-Huon, both of which are still in a good state of repair. There are also some maisonnettes at level crossings and some striking remains between Saint-Calais and Saint-Gervais-de-Vic: the supports of a bridge are still visible but the roadway is missing.

Le Mans - Le Grand-Lucé - Tresson*- Saint-Calais Line

(Tramway de la Sarthe - metric gauge)

The Le Mans - Le Grand-Lucé - La Chartre - Saint-Calais line enters the Perche Sarthois in two places: briefly in Volnay and Saint-Mars-de-Locquenay, then again from Tresson to the terminus in Saint-Calais. The first line of the first network, the Le Mans - Le Grand-Lucé line was opened on 25 May 1882. The diversion that opened on 10 December 1910 brought the tram to the Perche Sarthois, with the stations in Volnay and Saint-Mars-de-Locquenay. The Grand-Lucé - Saint-Calais

section did not open until 6 September 1913 (as part of the third network). The line closed on 1st March 1947. As well as the aforementioned stations, the tram also went through Sainte-Osmane, Evaillic and Sainte-Cérotte. Along the tracks, which are still visible, there are still some remains. On the approach to Saint-Calais, there are retaining walls and the supports of a metal bridge that crossed the Saint-Calais to Bessé-sur-Braye line.



Tourist event at the Petit Train de Semur



Use of the Decauville train in works involving diverting the river Braye, before the Pont-de-Braye to Blois line was built

The Decauville railway

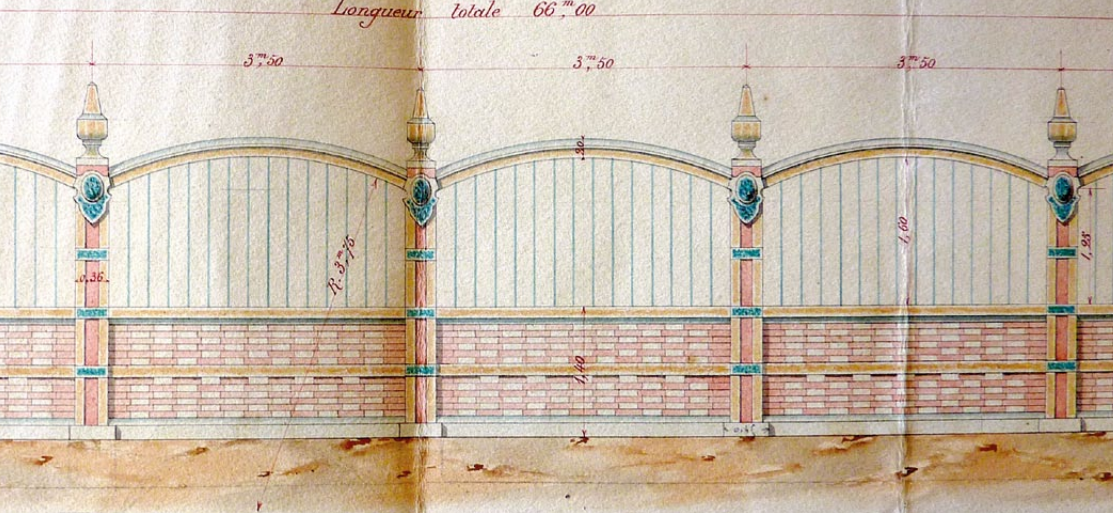
The train that travelled the world

In 1875 the young Paul Decauville invented the portable railway on his father's farm in Petit-Bourg in the suburbs of Paris (Evry). It is a narrow gauge railway (40 cm, 50 cm and later 60 cm wide) that can be moved around. From 1880 onwards and practically up until now, this method has been used on building sites. The Decauville factory in Corbeil sold thousands of kilometres of track and rolling stock throughout the world. The most widespread use was no doubt industry, which uses the invention in quarries, sawmills,

factories and mines, to this day. During WWI, the army used the system to deliver supplies to the battle fields. Nearer to home, it was used to bore the tunnel under the old town in Le Mans and to build the tram and railway tracks such as the one between Pont-de-Braye and Blois in 1912. Recently, in 2001, it was used in Le Mans when a tunnel was bored for sewerage near the dual carriage way on boulevard Lefauchaux. Although it was not their primary function, Decauville trains were also used for passengers,

especially within the Calvados department and on the Pithiviers to Toury network in Loiret, where there is still a tourist train. Today, these little railways have practically all disappeared. A local association, **La Compagnie du Chemin de Fer de Semur-en-Vallon**, strives to keep their memory alive. Founded in 1968 in Semur-en-Vallon, its main aim is to sustain the use of Decauville trains. The *Petit train de Semur* has retrieved an impressive amount of track and rolling stock from all over France. Locally, they

salvaged materials from the Lego foundry in Boëssé-le-Sec, the brick factory in Soultré and the quarries in Thiron-Gardais and La Flèche. The Semur-en-Vallon association owns seven hectares on which it has set up a proper Decauville rail network with tracks, switches, a station with all accompanying facilities and a warehouse with shunting tracks and a garage. The Muséeotrain was set up in 1990. A new 800 m² museum about Decauville is currently being set up. It can only be reached by Decauville train.



Tramway infrastructure in La Ferté-Bernard: Hospice gate, elevation on the boulevard side (avenue de la République). (Sarthe departmental archives 5 S 631)

Dehault viaduct

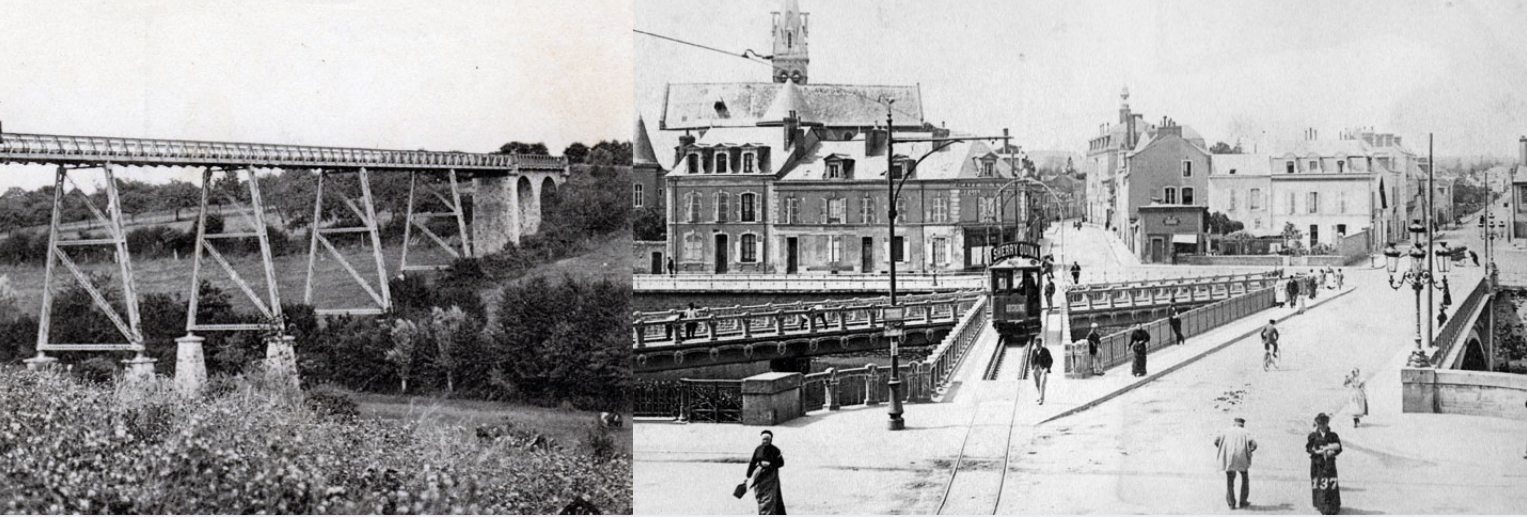
Louis Harel de la Noë (1852-1931) an engineer who promoted rail travel in Sarthe



Born in Saint-Brieuc in 1852, Louis Harel de la Noë studied at Ecole Polytechnique and graduated as an engineer. In the course of his career he worked on maritime, fluvial, road and rail projects across France, from Aveyron to Finistère. He spent much time in the west, mainly in Sarthe, where he was posted twice and in northern Brittany, from 1901 until he retired in 1918. In Brittany, from 1901 to 1906, he contributed to promoting tourism by building a 209km rail network and the pink granite route that was originally to be accompanied by a railway, which

never actually came into being. Having already spent almost seven years in Sarthe from 1884 onwards, he returned from 1893 to 1901. During his first stay, Harel de la Noë finished the tramway between Le Mans and Chartres, built the one from Le Mans to Saint-Denis-d'Orques and began working on the normal gauge line from Angers to La Flèche via Durtal. Before he left the department, he set up the project to build a new central tramway station in Le Mans and came back to build it ten years later. When he returned to Sarthe as engineer in chief he set

about improving navigation on the Sarthe and Loir rivers, built a normal gauge line between Thorigné-sur-Dué and Courtalain, planned the route for the tram lines between Le Mans and Mayet, Le Mans and Saint-Cosme-de-Vair and Mamers and La Ferté-Bernard. His various projects included several works of art such as the Louis-Blanc and Denfert Rochereau bridges that are still in place today, the metal Saint-Georges bridge, which has been removed, and identical bridges in Allonnes and Fillé. The one in Fillé still remains. He built the viaducts in Loué and



The famous X bridge in Le Mans

Dehault, both now demolished, the tramway central station and the X-shaped bridge in Le Mans. The latter work was probably the most striking, not from a technical point of view, but by the originality of its shape. It made de la Noë famous all over the world. Built between 1897 and 1898, the X bridge was demolished during the liberation of France in 1944, ten years before the central tramway station was destroyed. In all these projects, Louis Harel de la Noë demonstrated technical skill and never ceased to innovate and show

audacity in his works, making full use of the progress in metalwork and the availability of new materials such as reinforced concrete. As an accomplished engineer, Louis Harel de la Noë won many accolades during his lifetime, but did not attain the highest level within the hierarchy of the Ponts-et-Chaussées school of engineering. Harel de la Noë took care to build solid works with minimum expense yet there was no question of sacrificing aesthetics. He invented a style that combined lightness and simplicity in the implementation of standardised

materials. The characteristic polychrome brick lacework on the station in La Ferté-Bernard is a good example of this quest for beauty. Harel de la Noë also became known as an architect although he was not qualified as such. However, his status and the originality of many of his constructions explains the controversy that his architectural work provoked at the time. He was adulated by some, who found him elegant and original and despised by others, who described his projects as “academic” or, on the contrary “rococo”, or even “nougat”. Louis

Harel de la Noë was conscious of the transport revolution that was under way and declared that his constructions were to last fifty years. He was right. Before long, the motor car was to impose its supremacy. Many works were destroyed when the tramway was dismantled. At the time there was no notion of heritage with regard to recent utilitarian constructions. Yet some works still remain in place, especially in Sarthe and in his homeland of Côtes d’Armor in Brittany.



La Ferté-Bernard, tramway station with locomotive sheds on the left of the picture

(Photograph of Joseph Guittet in 1898 - Coll. Pierre-Yves Bourneuf)

Entrance to Cherré

Follow the route

Let us take you along the tram line from

① Start Km 0 - La Ferté-Bernard

N 48.18771 E 0.65046 / 48° 11'15.756" 0° 39'1.6554"

The striking tram station was on Avenue de la République where there is a open-air swimming pool today. The white and red brick building with a geometrical pattern is the work of engineer Louis Auguste Harel de la Noë. Opened on 4 September 1898, it linked up with the western railway line whose station was smaller at the time, and from 1916, it also served Montmirail. The building was demolished in 1949 apart from two of the bridge's railings that can be seen near the swimming pool.

→ Go in the direction of Cherré via the town's historical centre, the church Notre-Dame-de-Marais and the market hall opposite the tourist office. On the roundabout near the new library, turn left, cross the D323 and turn towards Cherré.

② Km 1,9 - Cherré station

N 48.17558 E 0.65540 / 48° 10'32.0874" 0° 39'19.4394"

At n°17 rue Alice de Monaco, on private property, the station is clearly visible. Just like the infrastructure for the Tramways de la Sarthe, it is the work of Harel de la Noë. The work has been turned into a garage but remains in good state of repair. All the stations were the same, built in two different coloured bricks with a very distinctive lozenge-shaped pattern. The roof was covered with tiles and the building comprised a waiting room and a ticket office which was only open when a train was due, twice a day.

→ Go through Cherré towards Cormes on the D274.



Polychrome brick decoration, typical of Harel de la Noë's buildings



Théligny station

La Ferté-Bernard to Montmirail

③ Km 4 à 6 - The line between Cherré and Cormes.

As you leave Cherré and until you enter Cormes, on the side of the road to the right there is an area in the fields where the metre gauge was set up (a normal gauge is 1.435m). The line followed the road to keep construction costs to a minimum and was therefore called a tramway.

→ From the monument at the church in Cormes, follow signs to Courgenard Montmirail.

④ Km 8,2

→ Just after the bridge over the A11 motorway, in the hamlet called La petite Maçonnière, you can see the guardrails where the line went under the bridge to the right of the road.

⑤ Km 9,2 - Courgenard station

N 48.15758 E 0.73266 / 48° 9'27.288" 0° 43' 57.576"

In the hamlet of Patureaux, 300 m from the entrance to Courgenard, on the left, one can see the station which has also been turned into a garage on private property. The line crossed the road and the building faces the hills of Perche.

→ Go through Courgenard via Saint-Ulphace on the D7.

At the crossroads with La Victoire, go towards Théligny on the D225.

⑥ Km 16,5 - Théligny station

N 48.16909 E 0.76440 / 48° 10'8.7234" 0° 45'51.8394"

As you enter the village, to the right of the road, a slate-tiled bard has been built around the station, but the latter remains perfectly recognisable. There is still a plate with the name of the station.

→ In Théligny, turn right towards Saint-Ulphace on the D94. Go through Saint-Ulphace after the church towards Courgenard on the D7.



Photo Huguel, Château-de-Loir - Hais, éditeur

Saint-Ulphace station



Cordin bridge in Saint-Ulphace (Photograph by Alain Gossart)

⑦ Km 20 - Saint-Ulphace station and the bridges in Cordin

N 48.15269 E 0.80943 / 48° 9'9.6834" 0°48'33.9474"

As you come out of the village, to the left, near a private road leading to the moulin de Cordin guesthouse, you can see the Saint-Ulphace station near a group of trees. It is one of the best-preserved stations. The line from Théligny crossed the road on a high embankment which was built by German prisoners of war during WWI, from 1914 to 1916. To enable carts to cross the river Bray, the engineer Harel de la Noë built two bridges of impressive proportions in Cordin that are in excellent state despite being a hundred years old. When the vegetation is not too dense, you can take in at a glance an array of works that are typical of the 3rd tram network.

On the other side of the embankment the stretches of fields lead to the château de Gémasse. The tram line went through the estate on the edge of the woods, behind the chapel and towards Grééz-sur-Roc.

→ Follow signs to Grééz-sur-Roc on the D14, go through the village, whose station was demolished and head towards Montmirail.

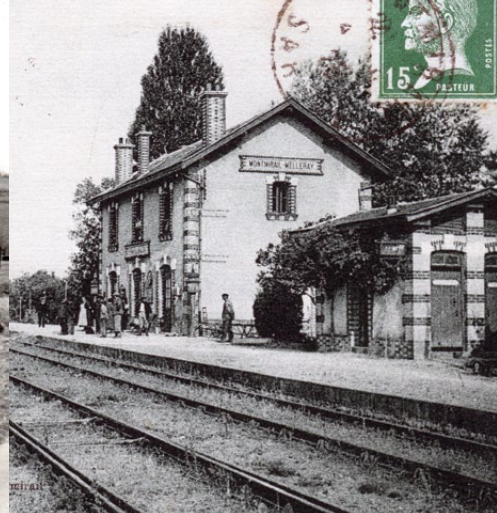
⑧ Km 23 à 25 - Location of the line between Grééz-sur-Roc and Montmirail

As you exit Grééz-sur-Roc, after the bridge, the road goes up. The railway used to run alongside it, on the left and was lined with trees. This hilly part needed to be levelled for the tram which is why there are embankments in the dips and trenches on top of the hills. The climb was always troublesome and the train often had to halt while sand was placed on for the tracks to help it get over the hill.

→ Take the D14 towards Montmirail.



Montmirail-Etat terminus station with the water tower to provide steam



Montmirail-Melleray station

⑨ Km 27 - Footpath to Melleray bridge

N 48.10085 E 0.79043 / **48° 6'3.06"** **0°47'25.5474"**

Between the police station and the retirement home, there is a car-park. The path that leaves the fire station (Montmirail emergency services) goes down to the left towards the village of Melleray and leads to a large bridge, the same as the one in Saint-Ulphace. The twenty or so prisoners of war who carried out the work were lodged in the market hall in Montmirail (now the community centre).

→ Take the Châteaudun road to Melleray and continue on towards Vibraye.

⑩ Km 30 - Montmirail Etat station: terminus

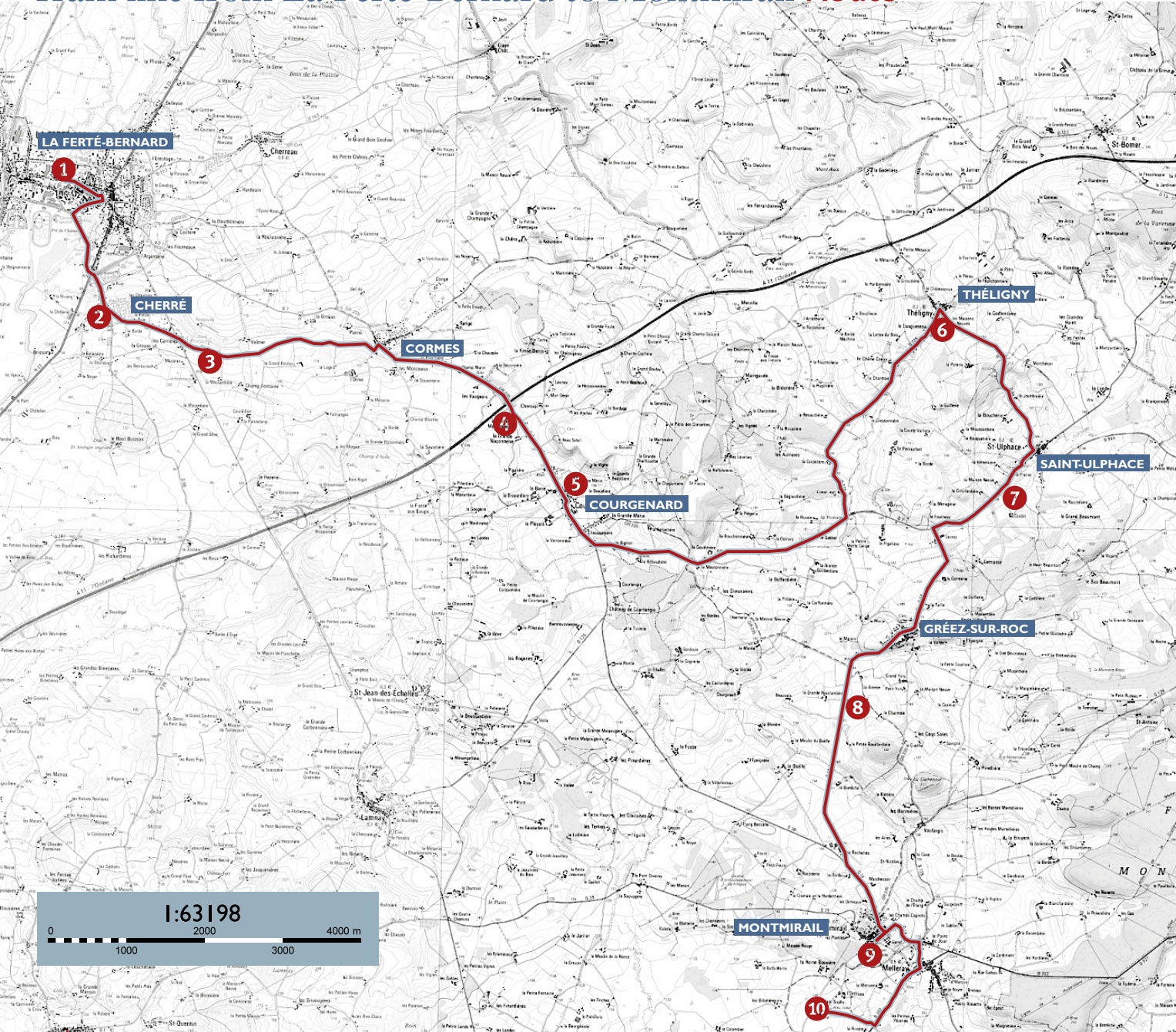
N 48.09397 E 0.78316 / **48° 5' 38.2914"** **0° 46' 59.3754"**

On the road to Vibraye, as you come out of Melleray, follow the sign Route de la Gare, which leads to the end of the tramway line. The terminus included a water tower to supply the machine. The one in Montmirail is the only one of its kind remaining. On the right, a little further one, there is a pile of bricks behind the brambles. In the early 2000s, a driver lost the control of his vehicle and destroyed

Montmirail station. It got its name from the link with the station on the other side of the road, known as Montmirail-Melleray on the line from Courtalain to Thorigné-sur-Du . The "tramvoie" as the local people called it, enabled them to link up to the national network from Paris to the south west in Courtalain and from Paris to the west in Thorigné-sur-Du  and Connerr . Opened in March 1916, the tramway overcome by the competition from road transport ceased to operate in 1933 and was dismantled in 1950.

Decimal degree GPS coordinates / Sexagesimal degree GPS coordinates

Tram line from La Ferté-Bernard to Montmirail Route



Let us tell you the story of **Le Pays du Perche sarthois**, Pays d'art et d'histoire...

To help you explore your surroundings, the Perche Sarthois tourist office offers walks and guided tours, some with specific themes in the towns or villages of the region, from Spring to Autumn, for individuals or groups.

The pays d'art et d'histoire network also offers educational services for pupils, from junior school to sixth form. The education department offers tours, workshops and outings designed to appreciate heritage, architecture, town planning and landscape.

The Perche Sarthois is part of the **national network** of Pays d'art et d'histoire

The ministry of culture and communication, department of architecture and heritage bestows the label on areas that make the most of their heritage. It ensures that local guides and architecture and heritage experts have the necessary skills and oversees the events offered. The network currently covers 179 towns and areas across France. Of the 88 communes in Perche Sarthois, 62 are part of the network. The Bilurien, Brières and Gesnois tourist areas and the town of Beaufay are not part of the network but we are working hard to ensure they join it soon.



Nearby

Le Mans, the Vallée du Loir area, Vendôme, Laval, the Coëvrons-Mayenne area, Angers, Tours, Nantes, Guérande, Fontenay-le-Comte, Saumur and the vineyards around Nantes are all *villes et pays d'art et d'histoire*.

For information

Pays d'art et d'histoire du Perche Sarthois

24 Avenue de Verdun, BP 90 100,

72404 La Ferté Bernard cedex

+33 (0)2 43 60 72 77

perche-sarthois@orange.fr

www.perche-sarthois.fr



Let us tell you the story of the train in Perche Sarthois

This document was written by the Pays du Perche Sarthois for the summer 2014 exhibition in La Ferté-Bernard on railways in Sarthe, entitled *L'aventure du rail en Sarthe, des origines à la régionalisation* and produced by the Sarthe departmental archives and SNCF archives.

The first part of this brochure presents the train lines that once crossed Perche Sarthois. The second part of the document proposes a 30km route between La Ferté-Bernard and Montmirail designed to show you the remains of the tram line between the La Ferté-Bernard and Montmirail.

We have indicated the remains visible from public thoroughfares but many are on private property. Please do not disturb property owners and keep to public thoroughfares. The proposed route uses local roads and lanes that sometimes have limited visibility. Please take care when driving and parking.

Texts

Alain Gossart Fondation Jean Jousse

Sylvie Lemercier Pays du Perche Sarthois

Daniel Mumbru Club des modélistes ferroviaires du Maine

Christian Pottier Petit train de Semur-en-Vallon

Maps / Proofreading

Martine de Anta Présidente de l'Office de Tourisme du Val de Braye

Raymond Cadiou Guide conférencier du Pah du Perche Sarthois

Jean-Pierre Maupay Amis de l'abbaye de Tuffé

To find out more about the train in Perche Sarthois

The rail sites that support the exhibition entitled *L'aventure du rail en Sarthe, des origines à la régionalisation*



Beillé

La Transvap

Open on Wednesdays, Sundays and bank holidays in July and August and all year round for groups, by appointment
Information and prices **+33 (0)2 43 89 00 37** and www.transvap.fr

Semur-en-Vallon

Le Muséotrain

Open from 1 June to 28 September, on Sundays and bank holidays and every day from 7 July to 31 August from 2.30 pm to 6.30 pm
Information and prices **+33 (0)2 43 93 67 86**
www.lepetittraindesemur.com and facebook page

Vibraye

The old station on the Thorigné-Courtalain line

It is home to the tourist office and a permanent exhibition on the history of the line. Open Tuesday to Saturday 2.30 pm to 6 pm and in July and August Tuesday to Friday from 2.30 pm to 6.30 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 12.30 pm and 2.30pm to 6.30 pm
Information **+33 (0)2 43 60 76 89** and www.tourisme-valdebraye.fr



Download the English version →



We would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this brochure.

Translation: Emma Paulay / Layout: CemjikaPao - Le Mans / Printer: Impri'Ouest.
Photograph credits: Perche Sarthois collection (except when mentioned otherwise).
Postcards: except where stated otherwise, Daniel Mumbru
Published and registered in June 2014.