

From Pont-Scorff to Bas Pont-Scorff

A whole story

Starting point : Pont Saint-Jean

The history of Pont-Scorff and Bas-Pont-Scorff is closely linked to the Scorff River. It is here that an ancient communication route was established. Over the centuries, on this passage, people and buildings appeared and various economic activities developed. During the walk, discovering monuments and sites, listen to its history in a playful journey along the Scorff river and in the old streets.

1 Le Scorff

After the commentary, turn left towards the remains of the chapel.

Taking its source in the Côtes-d'Armor department, the Scorff river runs 75 km before flowing into the sea. Its estuary stretches over 12 km, from Bas Pont-Scorff to Lorient. Here, at the tidal limit, a communication route, perhaps Celtic, or at least Roman, was established, crossing the river by ford. In the Middle Ages, the increase in traffic on the royal road from Nantes to Quimper made it a strategic site where religious and political powers settled; the Knights Templar from 1160, then the jurisdiction of the seigneurie of La Roche Moisan in the 13th century.

The Pont Saint-Jean, also known as the Roman or Old Bridge, in contrast to the Pont Neuf built

upstream in 1855, is the first bridge crossing the Scorff from the sea. It remained so until 1822, when a bridge was built between Lorient and Lanester. It is composed of four arches and three piers, reinforced by spur-shaped forebeaks. The piers date from the 16th and 17th centuries, the arches from the 18th century and the parapet from the 19th century.

2 Saint John's Hospitallers

After the commentary, turn right to join the Scorff

On this bank, you are in the commune of Pont-Scorff. Formerly called the parish of Lesbin, it owes its name to the river and its bridge. These arcades are the remains of the Saint-Jean chapel, built in the 16th century by the Saint-John's Hospitallers. In the 14th century, they took over an establishment founded by the Knights Templar around 1160. In its extension, a hospital was built at the beginning of the 17th century.

During the Revolution, the property of the Maltese community was sold to the tanner Michau. Various activities follow one another: a tannery with a tanning mill and a port called "du Salut", only operational at high tide, a brewery, already there in 1857, and even a cheese dairy. These activities, but also two fires, changed the site completely. On the foundations of the hospital that burned down in 1889, a house, a craft building and a hangar were built using

reused stones. The site of the chapel housed the brewery's cellar. This activity ceased around 1930.

3 Washerwomen

After the comment, pass under the Pont Neuf

From the 19th century until about 1970, the women of the lower Pont-Scorff worked as professional washerwomen. The quality of their work was appreciated by the Lorient bourgeoisie. They worked in groups along the river, marking the landscape with their silhouette and their laundry drying on the banks. To take their minds off the hard work, they chatted, told stories and sang in Breton "Les filles de Pont-Scorff". Things sometimes got heated, and arguments and fights were not uncommon. Woe to anyone who stole the place of an old one!

Consisting of a single segmental arch, the Pont Neuf, inaugurated in 1855, is built of carved granite. Crossed by the main road linking Hennebont to Quimperlé and Lorient, it was built upstream of the Roman Bridge, which became too narrow and fragile for the growing transit of goods.

4 The Mills

After the commentary, turn left and walk up the steps to the garden.

After 1850, in full industrial expansion, three mills were operating on this site. On the Cléguer side, the Maria mill, with two wheels, was used for milling cereal. On the Pont-Scorff side, the Princes' mill, named after the powerful Princes of Rohan-Guémené, was already active in the 17th century. It was associated with a fishery, a stone device consisting of passes used to catch fish. Bought in 1827 by the tanner Michau, it was rebuilt before burning in 1894, and then restored to be used as a hotel. Between 1998 and 2017, it housed the Odysseum, a Wild Salmon Discovery Area, and is currently being converted into a nature and environment leisure centre.

Between 1850 and 1856, the tanner Michau destroyed the fishery to build a dam to supply a tanning mill built on the islet. It is easily recognizable by its square floor and hipped roof. Oak bark was crushed to obtain "tan" powder which, macerated for several months with skins and water in wooden vats, gave flexibility and resistance to the leather.

This activity ceased in the 20th century and, in 1977, the site was acquired by the Fédération de Pêche du Morbihan. A collective project, involving the buyer, local fishing associations, the National Institute of Agronomic Research and the Higher Council for Fisheries, enabled a station to control migratory salmonids and an aquatic ecology laboratory to be set up. Since 1994, this collective has been working to study and preserve the Scorff, unique in France and

recognised at European level. Activities and visits are regularly organised there.

5 The Salmon Festival

After the commentary, exit the garden on the road side.

The environmental centre gave birth to the Salmon Festival in 1995. It takes place at the beginning of July, offering events related to the preservation of the river. Supported by the Pont-Scorff Animation association and its partners, it is also renowned for its musical and festive program, which takes place partly downstream at the Saint-Urchaut manor house. Before leaving the Adol garden, named after a wood merchant from the Bas Pont-Scorff, do not miss the small washhouse, hidden in the vegetation near the magnificent ornamental purple beech.

Above, the private wood of Leslé was part of a seigneurie identified in the 15th century with a manor and tenant farm. The recreational castle and its outbuildings, built around 1750, were badly damaged during the Revolution. The estate, acquired by the de Polignac family prior to 1900, preserves part of the farm buildings and the chapel from 1787. Behind the perimeter wall of the Adol garden, a private path, once a road, leads upstream to the Leslé mills. As here, in around 1859 there were two grain mills, a tan mill and a fishery.

6 The Casse-Cou

After the commentary, go up the Casse-Cou.

On either side of the rue du Vieux Pont, the number of houses grew over the centuries. The oldest date back to the 18th century, and were redesigned in the 20th century. In the past, crossing the deep Scorff Valley was not an easy task. On the Pont-Scorff side, it was necessary to go up a steep hill, aptly named "Casse-Cou" (breakneck), nowadays equipped with steps. It is said that heavy hitches were helped up by pulling the animals with a rope. Before 1818, a parallel, less steep track was created. It goes directly to Quimperlé without going through the town hall square. The debate was reopened in 1847 with the construction of the road leading to the Pont Neuf. But, the Prefect refused the commune: the communication axis would avoid the town centre.

7 The square and the schools

After the comment, cross the square to the right.

In the Middle Ages, religious and seigneurial powers on the Scorff crossing gave rise to a village on this plateau. The Casse-Cou path splits into two paths around a triangular square. One, on the left, leads to Quimperlé, the other, on the right, to Arzano. On either side, buildings, dwellings and businesses flourished. Around 1830, the municipality bordered the square with a low wall and planted trees.

Around 1835, it also built a school and town hall topped by a clock.

Built on T-shaped plan to fit the narrow plot, it includes a town hall on the ground floor and apartments on the first floor. At the back, in the perpendicular building, the school, with classrooms and playgrounds, could accommodate 130 students. It remained a boys' school until 1969. Restored with the support of the Heritage Foundation, it has been home since 2012 to the works of the Dutch artist Pierre de Grauw, which you can also admire in the city's various public spaces. Just next door, the private school Notre-Dame du Rosaire, now the Maison des Associations, was built in 1898 to accommodate girls. It combines, on the street side, the teacher's house and classrooms, at the rear, in the return wing, other classrooms and the courtyard.

8 La Maison des Princes

After the comment, leave the square on the right.

The Maison des Princes, built in two campaigns between 1565 and 1577, is the former court of justice of the jurisdiction of Roche Moisan, which depends on the Princes of Rohan Guémené. In the Second Renaissance style, this two-storey granite and tufa house is the oldest structural element in the square. Its door, surmounted by a triangular pediment, its dormers decorated with fire pots and a shell engraved with a human head, its inclines carved with fabulous animals and dogs, its

oculus and corner windows, very popular in the 16th century, all underline the social importance of the building where the Seigneur's justice was doled out.

This power is also recalled in the humanistic Latin inscriptions engraved on the window lintels: "Know thyself", "Just for humanity", "perfect contentment". After the Revolution, the building became a residential building: two rooms were used for the "new" justice of the peace and for meetings of the Municipal Council. Over the years, there has been an inn, the gendarmerie, a carpentry workshop, a tobacco shop... The municipality purchased it in 1920, moving the town hall to it in 1925. The building was beautifully restored in 1993.

9 Around the Square

Along the square, a series of houses from the 18th to the first quarter of the 20th century sit alongside each another. They are characteristic of a new distribution of living space, which started in the cities in the 17th century. Recognizable from their facade with symmetrical bay windows, already copied from the Maison des Princes and especially the neighbouring house, dated 1738, they were generally comprised of three vertical sections, sometimes more.

The bay windows, arched or with a straight lintel, were sometimes inserted in stone block walls, sometimes projecting in uneven blocks at the base to be rendered. Corner chains, cornices and carved stone bands complete

these refined decorations. Two of these houses were built set back with a garden, one of which was built in 1911 on a square plan. Aligned and terraced, the others preserve vestiges of previous buildings, fireplaces, wall cupboards....

10 Rue terrien

After the comment, immediately turn left into the alleyway

The rue Terrien bears the name of the Abbot Terrien. Once called Rue de l'Église, it led to Arzano, but also 1½km away to the "village of Lesbin", the parish headquarters. Its church, already known in the 14th century, has become a chapel and still has a cemetery surrounded by walls. On your right was the small church of Notre-Dame. It became too small and risked falling down, so it was sold in 1896 and destroyed to build houses.

Along this alleyway, there are houses similar to the ones in the square, with symmetrical windows, of the ternary type or with a storey under the roof. Built in the 19th and 20th centuries, they blend with regular block facades, preserving here and there older architectural details, a 16th century curved lintel, a 17th century arched door.

No. 1 rue Terrien, on your left, an old merchant's house, dating from the 17th century, offers a glimpse of what this commercial district was like at that time. Built on a narrow medieval plot, it has a stone gable on the street. The ground floor was reserved for the shop,

indicated outside by the projecting window display. A spiral staircase, housed in the turret on the south wall, leads to the first floor and the attic. A dwelling of the same type is still visible at the top of the street.

11 L'Atelier d'Estienne

After the commentary, turn left.

Rich in heritage, the municipality of Pont-Scorff has been promoting the tourist and cultural development of its city for 30 years. With its Ville des Métiers d'art label, it combines tradition in its projects, restoration that respects the identity of old buildings, and modernity, calling on artists and craftsmen to design the spaces. Don't miss the water garden and its fountains on your right.

The former 17th century merchant's house contains the Atelier d'Estienne, a space for contemporary art. With a policy supporting the creation and dissemination of contemporary art in Brittany, L'Atelier helps the public discover art and welcomes visual artists in residence. Artists create and sell their work: paintings, sculptures, videos, photos, installations. For more than 20 years, the highlight of the program has been the "L'art chemin Faisant" route, presenting installations throughout the town every summer and up to the Saint-Urchaut manor house on the banks of the Scorff.

12 A former court

After the commentary, take the alley on the right.

From the back, the Maison des Princes, built in a U-shape, reveals its function as courthouse, with the Gabelle on the left and the prison on the right. The gabelle, whose north window bears the date 1565, is surprising since Brittany was exempt from this royal salt tax, but perhaps disputes related to this tax were judged here. The single-cell prison can be identified by its barred window and its north gable topped with a crescent moon.

In the corner, the tower with its hipped roof, houses a beautiful wooden staircase. Inside, most of the rooms, including the prison, have fireplaces. Combining granite and tufa, of Renaissance inspiration, they are particularly well preserved and decorated in the vast reception rooms. This is where conflicts and offences, thefts, but also successions and crimes were judged. Part of the building was also used as accommodation for officers in charge of applying justice.

13 The Church of the Sacred Heart

After the commentary, turn right into the alleyway after the church.

In 1894, Mr. Donald Le Court de Béru, owner of the Saint-Urchaut manor house, donated a piece of land purchased in 1886 on the square to the town, on condition that a church be built

there. It replaced the ruined chapel and the church of Lesbin, too far from the village. Essentially made of granite, the église Sacré-Cœur de Jésus was built between 1892 and 1897 on a Latin cross floor plan. Large and bright, it is composed of three naves. Its brickwork pointed vaults are covered with a plaster coating with a stone-style decoration. The nave, aisles, transept, choir and side chapels house furniture and statuary contemporary to the construction.

A small peculiarity, due to lack of financial resources, the main elevation remained unfinished and a wooden bell tower was built behind the side chapels. At first temporary, it became permanent. It is said that a donor proposed to fund it, as long as his coat of arms was inscribed on the construction. His proposal, considered unfashionable, was not accepted. It is said that the town of Pont-Scorff was spared Allied bombardments between 1939 and 1945 because it didn't have a high bell tower.

14 La rue Langle de Cary

After the commentary, turn left and go up the rue de Lorient.

At the crossroads of two departmental roads, this street, created to avoid the steep casse-cou, owes its name to a French military officer in the First World War, Fernand de Langle de Cary, born in Lorient in 1849 who died in Pont-Scorff in 1927. After 1818, houses and businesses characteristic of the ternary type sprung up here. Only the house at number 23,

with five spans and stone pediment dormers, now coated in cement, dates from 1787. At the intersection and on your left up rue de Lorient, new buildings have recently been built in this style.

15 La Cour des métiers d'art

After the commentary, cross the courtyard and exit to the right through the gate

The town of Pont-Scorff is labelled a city of craft thanks to the traditional know-how of its craftsmen, gathered around the Cour des Métiers d'Art. Arranged on three levels separated into a shop and an exhibition area, the Cour des Métiers d'Art invites visitors to admire the creations of selected craftsmen from all over France throughout the year. Tradition and modernity are intertwined in the works to make you discover contemporary and original creations, available for sale.

The courtyard is housed in a set of old dwellings from the 16th to the 19th century, completely restored in 1993. The backyard has been refurbished, combining green spaces and paving, long stretches of roofing and drip walls with bay windows lighting the workshops. It also preserves two outbuildings built after 1818, one made of granite blocks and the other of wood. A massive well made of octagonal carved granite completes this ensemble.

16 Rue Prince de Polignac

After the comment, go to the square and continue straight ahead.

The rue Prince Henri de Polignac, on the old route of the road from Brest to Paris, preserves some old houses among the mainly ternary houses of the end of the 19th century. At number 8, the corner house was converted in the 19th century to have three spans. Built in the first half of the 18th century, it has kept its side entrance serving the Craft Centre shop. In its extension, rue Théophile Guyomar, a dwelling, of windows aligned in sections, also created in the 19th century, preserves its original dormers. On top of a moulded pediment, decorated with pilasters, you can see a decoration of leaves and the date of their construction, 1564, followed by a name "Fouillezen Ian".

Opposite, there was once a hand pump that served to supply water to the population. It was replaced about fifteen years ago by a 19th century well from another commune. Its truncated coping and removable field stone made it easier to draw water from the lifting mechanism, which was once integrated into the lintel on pedestals carved with human masks. Returning to the square, at number 11, you will notice a house from the second half of the 18th century whose layout was adapted to its narrowing plot. It has one room per floor: the stacked chimneys are arranged in the drip wall at the back while the staircase is housed in the narrowest end, facing the door.

17 Timbered house

After the commentary, walk along the square and continue to the right.

A last testimony of the timber-framed urban houses of Pont-Scorff, number 30 provides a glimpse of how the square was configured in the 16th and 17th centuries. The wooden gable, with a simple assembly of posts and swivel posts, is protected by the projecting roof canopy. Built on a narrow plot, this 17th century house is organized according to a double depth layout with a room on the street, and a second one on the courtyard at the back.

It is accessed through the side entrance opening onto a long corridor that runs through the entire length of the building. Access to the floors is via a staircase located between the two rooms. On the left, the house at number 32, with five sections, was built around 1830 on the site of a timber-framed house. Only the curved carriage entrance and part of the basement remain. From 1668 to 1719, the Le Puillon family, seneschals in Pont-Scorff, lived there. Under the Ancien Régime, these officers performed administrative and judicial functions.

18 La Montagne

After the commentary, continue along the path to the right

This vast esplanade, called La Montagne, offers a bird's eye view of Bas Pont-Scorff, which was immortalized on postcards many

times between 1900 and 1950. A place to walk, it has had various functions from one century to the next. During the 1939-1945 war, the Germans built barracks there to serve as a hospital. The underground bunker, to shelter the sick during the bombardments, is still visible. In 1829, when the town hall square was developed, the municipality decided to reserve "la Montagne" as a fairground.

In 1818, the site was sadly named "mount chagrin". Does this have to do with the justice exercised in Pont-Scorff by the Princes of Rohan Guémené? While offences led to fines or light corporal punishment, the same did not apply to the most serious crimes. The officers of the law used stocks to expose the condemned to public humiliation and gallows for hanging. Placed high and prominent, the latter, visible from the road crossing the Scorff, set an example and denoted the seat of high justice.

19 The La Montagne Washhouse

After the commentary, go down to the left, be careful of the steep and irregular path.

From 1851 onwards, the State subsidised the construction of communal laundries, which multiplied in the villages and then in the countryside. In Pont-Scorff, washerwomen, who protected themselves from draughts by braiding broom barriers, used to go to the washhouse in winter. The washhouse at La Montagne, fed by a spring and associated with a second washhouse below, consists of a shallow

rectangular basin surrounded by cut stones. Later, it was covered with a wooden roof.

Handwashing laundry was a difficult job. Carried in a wheelbarrow or bucket, the laundry was boiled in a cauldron placed on the tripod over a wood fire. Before soap became widespread, gorse or apple ash, rich in potassium carbonate, was added. The washerwomen continued their task at the edge of the pool, kneeling in a carrosse, a kind of crate lined with straw to protect the knees, soaping, scrubbing, washing, rinsing and wringing, using the beater and the brush. Once dried, the laundry was also ironed on demand.

20 Îlot Saint Jean

After the commentary, continue to the right

On the left, you can see the îlot Saint-Jean. In 1820, on this arm of the Scorff, on a piece of land called Pouloraz adjoining the former site of the Hospitallers, Sieur Michau established his tannery. He installed tanks to macerate the leather, which was then rinsed in the Scorff and dried on racks in a shed. In 1827, he completed his installation with the construction of a tan mill. A board on its edge was placed in the Scorff to direct some of its water into the mill. The irregularity of the flow led the tanner to abandon it in favour of the new tanning mill built upstream in 1851.

On the other bank of the Scorff, an industrial laundry, created by Mr. Desard, was set up in the post-war period. Modernized, it became the

"Blanchisserie Clairette" in 1957, providing a washing, dyeing and dry-cleaning service. The last laundresses and the industrial laundry were in operation together until around 1970. While the former disappeared, the laundry continued to develop. Now a subsidiary of a worldwide group, the company specializes in the rental and servicing of professional clothing. It employs some seventy people.

21 Scorff Estuary

After the commentary, continue along the Scorff.

From Bas Pont-Scorff to Lorient, the Scorff estuary stretches over 12 kilometres. Twice a day, the fresh waters of the river and the saltwater of the sea mingle, gradually transforming the landscape, giving rise to reed beds and salt meadows as you approach Quéven. The banks of Bas Pont-Scorff, although flooded during high tides, are better for the freshwater plants characteristic of wetlands: irises, rushes, water hemlock.

On the rocky slopes and in the undergrowth, local species, oak, chestnut, country maple, willow and ash trees, mix with those brought by man over the centuries, pines, firs... There are also some very old box trees here, introduced by the Romans. They are currently competing with plants and shrubs that have escaped from gardens: bamboo, bay, Himalayan balsam, recognizable by its pink flowers, and cherry laurel, both classified as invasive species. Growing from seeds deposited by the birds

feasting on its fruit, the cherry laurel has colonized the banks in less than thirty years.

22 Fishing in the estuary

This footbridge, built in 2010, allows staff to walk to the dairy located on the wooded heights of Pont-Scorff. Since the 1970s, milk and cheese produced by farmers in the sector have been packaged there. Taking advantage of the panoramic view of the river, you may catch a glimpse of some estuary fish. They have been an important food resource for the local population.

In the 20th century, about twenty registered fishermen fished for plaice between here and Quéven. Their boat was equipped with a net supported by long poles. With the help of the tides, they were allowed to set their traps across two thirds of the river to catch salmon that came back in spring and summer for breeding. The depletion of the fish put an end to this type of fishing around 1970. Until then, fishing was everyone's business; children and adults alike, because it brought food and income to the modest population of Bas Pont-Scorff: salmon, trout, eel, mullet, plaice, sea bass, shrimp... Everyone had their own technique: nets or sticks blocking the river, pike poles, harpoon, bottom lines, sieves, socks and even forks.

23 The Marine City

After the commentary, continue straight on.

The Scorff Valley has been recognised as a "European site of natural interest" since 2008. The biodiversity in this valley is remarkable, with 15 animal and plant species and 12 natural habitats of European interest. Here, before the Second World War, the Scorff was bordered by natural wet meadows. Subject to tides and regularly flooded by brackish water, the marshes, planted with apple trees, were used to graze cows.

On the Cléguer side, the site, reclassified as a natural area in 2014, was industrialized between 1939 and 1945. The German army built a complex there for washing the troops' laundry. The main building, called "Cité Marine", was equipped with bays and crossed by a wide corridor to facilitate the passage of trucks. Thanks to a dam on the river and a system of sluice gates, the water, diverted at rising tide, was stored in an underground reservoir. It fed the laundry machines. After the war, the activity ceased, but the buildings were reused to house the workers of the reconstruction of Lorient, then a little later, returnees from Algeria. The site regained its industrial vocation, but the buildings were gradually abandoned and destroyed to restore the former marshes.

24 Bas Pont-Scorff slipway

After the commentary, cross the square and turn left.

The Scorff, navigable in the estuary, facilitated the movement of people and goods between

Pont-Scorff and the emerging city of Lorient. A first port with quays and a shipyard was mentioned in around 1650, 1 km downstream in a place called Saint-Urchaut. In Bas Pont-Scorff, the "du Salut" port, established around 1820 near the Pont Saint-Jean, remained dependent on the tides. However, between 1890 and 1910, the circulation of flat-bottomed barges improved thanks to the removal of the rock known as Puce-Houarn, which was dangerous for navigation.

Wharves and a slipway, partly financed by the population, were built on this site. They allow four barges to dock at the same time. Mr. Adol, a timber merchant, stored and loaded wood from the hinterland here. Fishermen used the slipway to land their boats. The whole population benefited from the comings and goings from Lorient. Food was transported, such as the famous Pont-Scorff bread, and the laundresses used barges to deliver freshly washed laundry. However, this mode of transport was soon competing with road and rail. It disappeared with the rise of military activities on the Scorff, which prohibited any navigation across Lorient.

But the slipway remains a place of leisure. Families and children meet there to fish, once to learn to swim and sail on makeshift rafts, and now to swim and picnic. Local associations organize events such as the "Fête du Scorff et de la Bruyère" in the 1970s. The Scorff Canoe Kayak club set up its headquarters there around 1990. Further upstream, football or

boules were played in the grounds of the old school. Its prefabricated canteen was used for a long time to host events and meetings before being demolished.

25 Rue du Pont Romain

The street leading to the marshes changed completely in the 20th century. In the past, travellers stopped for the night at the "Hostellerie du Relais", a stagecoach station at the corner of the street. Its entrance, with stones cut to make it easier for barrels to pass through, is a reminder of it. It was also a butcher's shop before becoming the Maison du Scorff in 2004, the headquarters of the Syndicat du Bassin du Scorff, working to preserve the quality of the water in the watershed.

On the route of the old road from Vannes to Quimperlé, rue du Pont Romain still has houses from the end of the 16th and 17th century, such as the former post office and its neighbour further up at number 14. Many were converted and plaster-coated in the following centuries. At the crossroads with the rue des Moulins, an 18th century cross was raised on an older base. After the war, a row of timber-framed houses, from the Maison du Scorff to the bridge, were razed to the ground when the laundry was built.

Each house was inhabited by several families, each threshold housed a craftsman, a food business or a liquor store. The street, which was very busy, brought together the modest population of the lower Pont-Scorff in the

evening. Working in various jobs, living from fishing, laundry, seasonal work on farms, many had a garden in which to grow vegetables, a few poultry, sometimes roaming free in the street, and one or two cows. Needless to say, the neighbourhood was busy on weekends. Boys and girls wandered around in groups singing..... The "Bas-Pont-Scorff boys" had a reputation for being party-goers and fighters, especially against those from Haut Pont-Scorff.

26 Notre-Dame de Bonne Nouvelle Chapel

The chapel is open during the day, cross to visit. After the commentary, turn left towards the bridge.

Founded in 1235 by Eudon, Lord of Hennebont, Notre-Dame de Bonne Nouvelle chapel was restored in the 16th century and rebuilt in 1878 as indicated by the date on the west portal above the bell tower. It still has traces of Gothic architecture, including a flamed window from the 13th century to the south and a large flamboyant window from the 16th century in the choir.

Annexed by the Dukes of Brittany who owned the seigneurie of Tronscorff en Cléguer, the building houses the tombs of the ducal family as can be seen by a 13th century recumbent known as "the lady of Tronchâteau". It also contains some furniture, a 17th century altarpiece, statues from the 18th and 19th centuries, an ex-voto boat, Saint-Pierre, a reminder that Bas-Pont-Scorff was once a fishing village. They came to seek protection in

this sacred place, especially during the pardon of August 15, when the Virgin and the banners were led in procession.

27 Rue Charles Renaud

After the commentary, turn left after the square.

Around 1850, some houses were destroyed to build the road over the Pont Neuf. They were quickly replaced by tall houses built along the track. At the corner of the rue du pont Romain, is the Hôtel du Commerce, then the vast and comfortable Hôtel de Bretagne, which had a stable in the backyard, accessible via a paved corridor.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the wealthy population came here on holiday during the summer months. The banks of the Scorff River attracted the first tourists who strolled through the streets, wearing suits and hats for men, dresses and parasols for women. Some preferred the Hostellerie du Moulin des Princes, on a terrace by the river, boating or angling.

The most beautiful houses belonged to the local notables. It is also where the painter Charles Renaud regularly came to stay. Passionate about fishing, in 1958 he published the book "Histoire du pont et de la rivière", narrating life and fishing around the river. This magnificent family home with gardens was razed to the ground after it burnt down, to create a car park.

The rest of the street is a combination of houses and shops, still numerous after the war: the bakery, the bar restaurant run by "Louissette", then Madame Mentec's old haberdashery. It was a bar, a grocer and sold some clothes. In the basement, she set up a TV room for games and crepes. Near the chapel, was the bar run by "Fine" and ECONOMIC, whose old sign is still visible above the flea market. Its window made the children of Bas-Pont-Scorff dream at Christmas. It was mainly a grocery store associated with a mobile shop in the countryside.

28 Between the two bridges

Angling, already practiced by peasant fishermen using worms or insects, developed after 1900, in contact with the English aristocrats who came to catch Breton fish with flies. This technique seduced the locals who created a Scorff fly, with colours adapted to its morphology. At the water's edge, they found the pleasure and excitement of children's games. Fishing competitions were very popular and allowed the most skilled to show their intimate knowledge of the watercourse.

Until after the war, salmon, sold at a very high price to restaurants, was coveted by poorer families who found an essential, and unique income supplement. There are many stories of poaching. From the top of both bridges, teams, sometimes rivals, kept an eye out for the return of the fish. The alert was given by whistling or singing: they would go down with a net or seine to encircle the fish, a pike pole or a pole with a line on which a grapple was attached, to catch the fish. Others, under cover of darkness, stretched nets under the arches of the Old Bridge. The fish wardens had to be smart to surprise these "poachers", who were sentenced to heavy fines when they were caught.

29 The Malting House

After the commentary, return to your starting point.

As part of the brewery established on the other bank, the Malting plant, with the architecture characteristic of breweries built in the 19th century, is built on the foundations of a building that was already there in 1818. Its name comes from malt, germinated and dried barley, an

essential ingredient in the production of beer. Hops were also added, which, once harvested on the spot, still grows on the banks of the Bas Pont-Scorff.

The fermentation tanks, in which the must converted the sugar into alcohol thanks to yeast, were probably located in this high building with high ceilings. After a period of rest in glass barrels, the beer was sold in litres and engraved cans. The brewery was operated by the Boys and Hays families between 1857 and 1930. Around 1950, the Malterie housed the restaurant "Le Pont Vieux", then an annex of the Blanchisserie Clairette. It became the headquarters of the Syndicat du Scorff in 1992, with a tourism information point and an exhibition area. It has recently been used as an entertainment venue for the Odysaum.

Document réalisé par Lorient Agglomération
Textes Jacqueline Le Calvé

