

# Villebois Lavalette

*The town of Villebois Lavalette* is close to the border between Angoulême and Brantôme. It is perched on a hillside, surrounded by vast, undulating countryside which is dominated by its imposing, medieval castle. The town is full of charm and character and a serene and pleasant place in which to pass some time

## *The Castle :*

The castle was built in the 10th century on the site of a former Roman settlement, it was modified and fortified in the 12th. and 13th centuries by the Lusignan family. It was established as a Duchy in 1622 and the Duke of Navailles rebuilt a large part of it in the Renaissance style but kept the ramparts and the six watch-towers. The 12th century Romanesque chapel is noted for its two levels : the ground floor for the pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostella while the upper floor which, communicated directly with the seigneurial appartments, was reserved for the family. In 1822 the castle was sadly devastated by fire since when it has been at the centre of a grand campaign of restoration to restore it to its former glory.



## *The House of François de Corlieu:*

This very old house situated close to the church probably dates from the 15th or 16th century. The lintel over the door is decorated with a magnificent ogee arch surmounting a knightly escutcheon. François de Corlieu was born during the first half of the 16th century at Angoulême. A celebrated historian, he had acted as counsellor to both the King and the Duke of Orléans since 1544. He was then appointed to the position of King's Procurator at Angoulême in 1559. He drowned in the River Charente close to the Bridge de la Meure at Nersac in 1576.



## *The Church of Saint-Romain :*

On the 31st March, 1864, the commune of Villebois-Lavalette received a bequest contained in the will of the parish priest Vacher, originally from Rouillac. The careful economies of the priest together with the sale of his goods realised the sum of 30 000 francs, sufficient to pay for the enlargement and reconstruction of the church of Saint-Romain de Lavalette. The will included the proviso that a requiem mass be celebrated in perpetuity on the anniversary of the priest's death.



## *The cornuelles, a unique speciality of Villebois, are small Easter biscuits:*

They are instantly recognizable by their triangular shape with a hole through the centre, symbolising the Creation and the Holy Trinity. In days gone by, these little shortbread biscuits were threaded onto long sticks to be carried to market. They also decorated the branches of boxwood which were blessed by the priest on Palm Sunday.

The cornuelles are a treat for both children and adults.

## *The Covered Market:*

In 1665 the covering of the original market was replaced by the one we see today. In the 19th century the town hosted a large and renowned livestock fair, an event which established Villebois as an important administrative centre. The visitor to Villebois should on no account miss seeing the remarkable framework of this building with its tall timber posts resting on stone plinths and the stall surfaces worn and polished by time... Also of note is the 17th century sundial. Apart from the market which is held every Saturday morning, many other events including, suppers, concerts and shows take place at les halles (the market place).



## *The fountain of Font Trouvée :*

This water source is located on the edge of the road which bears its name. Formerly it was a washhouse but no trace remains. In the mid nineteenth century, the waters rising from this source were channelled into a reservoir sunk beneath the market place as well as supplying the drinking fountains installed in various streets of the town. The only remaining one can be found in the rue André Bouyer.



## *The alley of the Ursulines:*



This alley leads to a group of buildings which towards the end of the 19th century were an important centre of activity within Villebois Lavalette. They included the town hall, the Court of Justice, a school for girls and a nursery school. Legal cases were tried in a room on the ground floor, the

Judges' Bench was still in position during the 1960's. The mayoral secretariat was housed on the upper floor and reached by an outside stairway attached to the wall of the former Ursuline convent. The school classrooms were in a building adjoining the courtyard. All these activities were transferred to a new building close to the Place du Champ de Foire in 1904.

## Office de Tourisme du Pays Horte et Tardoire



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### GUIDED TOURS of the Château of VILLEBOIS-LAVALLETTE and of the Village

**During the Summer :** from July 1st to August 31st, Tuesdays to Sundays from 3 to 7 p.m.

**On Mondays:** guided tour of village and castle *in english* at 14.30 and *in french* at 16.30  
Wednesday, Friday : guided tour of village and castle *in english* at 11.00  
(departure at Tourist Office).

**Juin et septembre :** Monday, Wednesday, Friday : guided tour of village and castle *in english* at 14.30 and *in french* at 16.30, departure at Tourist Office. Booking only.

**For out of season guided tours :** Contact the Tourist Information Office to organize group visits (8 people mini) on request.

**Admission :** 3€ (2€ for under 18, unemployed, students) no charge for children under 12



[www.villebois-lavalette.com](http://www.villebois-lavalette.com)