Monumental *lavoirs* and *fontaines* in France
Rita Boogaart

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An abbreviated version of this article appeared in Journal 15, *Follies in France III*. We had to shorten it because a full version complete with pictures would have filled an entire journal of the usual size. Here on the internet we have enough space to elaborate on this area of expertise that not only is very close to, but sometimes even crosses the borders of the realm of follydom. Thanks for your patience!

Most of the accompanying photographs are our own. For some photos we have received special permission from a number of people and institutions, for which we are grateful. In a lot of cases this authorization came so late that I had already described the buildings in considerable detail. Where I show you the picture anyway in these instances, sometimes with hyperlinks, I would advise you not to take my descriptions too seriously: that should make the reading of the article a good deal easier and more enjoyable. The idea was and is that you get a good image in your head of what the buildings look like. There is no need to be too academic about it all.

In the latest Index of *Follies* magazine, the pink one for *Follies* 73-84, you may have noticed a number of photographs of French washhouses, *lavoirs*, 'in deference of a forthcoming publication'. The ones in **Villeneuve-sur-Allier** (03) and **Grignan** (26) had already been mentioned in the Fellowship's *Journals* 9 and 10 which are called *Follies in France I and II* (FiF), but pictures of them were only shown in the Addenda of the Appendix to FiF on the internet. Had we known what we know now, we would have included a chapter about *lavoirs* and *fontaines* in the introduction of FiF I, following the one on watertowers (FiF;16). Something like this:

LAVOIRS AND *FONTAINES*

Of course *lavoirs*, washhouses, are utilitarian structures, and they are very common in France; often there were several even in small villages. Most of them are plain, or picturesque at best. But some were part of

Above left: Saint-Sulpice-le-Verdon (85)   ©PRB,   right:Sampigny (55)   ©PRB

castle grounds, with an appropriate design for serving as *fabriques*, follies, like the temple-kiosk-*lavoir* at the arboretum of La Balaine in **Villeneuve-sur-Allier** (03) and the Gothic *lavoir* along an ornamental water of the castle at **St-Germain-Langot** (14). There is even a royal-size washhouse, the Lavoir de l'Ayrolle, erected in 1749 on demand of Louis XV himself in **Millau** (12). Unfortunately this turned out to be too grand a design to survive intact.

Left: Villeneuve-sur-Allier (03), La Balaine *lavoir*   ©PRB

In the 19thC France got new laws for procuring health and sanitation in every municipality. Particularly in the *départements* Côte-d'Or (21), Meuse (55) and Haute-Saône (70) many mayors tried to outdo each other by ordering capital buildings for *lavoirs*, the workspace of so humble a trade. There were even architects specialising in washhouse design; they not only applied new technical improvements like iron pipes and *éoliennes* (small windmills to pump up water) but also architectural details, particularly classical, derived from excavations in Greece and Italy, and architectural designs by Palladio and Serlio, to embellish the towns with 'temples for hygiene'. For instance in **Poncey-sur-l'Ignon** (21), a small village of 95 inhabitants, they still sport two identical large *lavoirs*, built not 200 metres apart between 1846 and 1849 to a design by Auguste Sirodot: cut stone, five round arches, cast-iron dolphin around trident with water-plants in relief on the fountain in the middle of the facade.

Above and left: Poncey-sur-l'Ignon (21)   ©PRB

Most new washhouses had a form of water supply called *fontaine*. This is seldom something you would call a fountain; it is more like a tap or a spout, albeit often in an ornate frame, providing for the washhouse as well as for drinking water for man and beast. In Franche-Comté the *fontaine* is sometimes not directly attached to its washhouse, but stands on its own inside a little stone shelter, *puisoir*, reminiscent of older well-houses, like in **Bouligny** (70). The embellishments of such fountain shelters was another field of competition. The word *puisard* is often used indiscriminately for *puisoir*, but it is actually more of a pumping system for supplying as well as draining (discarded) water, often encased in a nice little building.

Induced by law to provide clean drinking water too, some places excelled in extra *fontaines* in extravagant shapes. In **Lacroix-sur-Meuse** (55) we saw no fewer than four noteworthy *fontaines*, one attached to the splendid washhouse (picture in pink index, page 7), all dated 1836, and with inscriptions. For the water supply of com-

munities in general many reservoirs and watertowers were built with the added motive of promoting the benefactors. The best border on follydom by their extravagance in relation to their function, e.g. the Palais Longchamp in **Marseilles** (13), a exuberantly decorated complex of watertower, colonnades, cascades and two museums in a park, built 1862-69 to a design of Henry Espérandieu.

Right: Bouligny (70) *fontaine*   ©PRB

Finally there are ornamental fountains, private and public. The Elephants Fountain of **Chambéry** (73), erected in 1838 by grateful citizens, was spouting water, but that was just a by-product of this glorification monument for Général Benoît de Boigne. In **Besançon** (25) there are many monumental *fontaines*,

Left: Elephants Fountain, Chambéry (73)...©PRB
Top right: Besançon (25) Fountain...©PRB
Right: Montpellier (34), Mogère water buffet...©PRB

the later ones just ornamental, like the giant baroque one on the Place Jean Cornet, built in 1900 by E.B. Ginest, with the city motto UTINAM (interpreted as God Willing).

When such ornamental wall fountains become popular elements in private gardens, they border on the category nympheums (or nymphaea), and are counted as garden buildings, like several in **Montpellier** (34).

SOURCES

When I tried to find out more about the washhouses that I had seen during our *tours de France,* I discovered that the French have grown very fond of their *anciens lavoirs* in the last few decades. Numerous websites give pictures and information. Particularly www.lavoirs.org, a website of the charity Association Lavoirs de France, launched October 2011 at the initiative of Michel Allonneau. This website has over 14,000 entries, contributed by participants. Of course only a limited number of photos ask for further investigation for our purpose, and there are several major sources to explore further.

The website http://www.notre-passion-des-lavoirs.com/ was set up in 2008 by Rosy and Michel Hamelin to share their love of *lavoirs*. In winter they planned where to go for photographing, and in the other three seasons they made the trips - the subtitle of the website is *un petit tour du coté des lavoirs*. Remarkable is that they chose one picture only per *lavoir*, the best and most characteristic. They do not give much more info than the name usually, but you can search the internet yourself if you want details. Sadly Michel died in 2013, but Rosy is continuing their passion, and generously gave me permission to use some of her photos for this article, for which I am grateful.

www.petit-patrimoine.com/ has more detailed pictures and often more information but on fewer items, just like http://patrimoine-de-france.com. Many *départements* have their own *lavoirs* website. If it concerns listed buildings one can also explore www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/inventai/patrimoine/ under architecture. Because there are so many all over France, *lavoirs* are also popular with geocaching people, and on their website one can find exact locations of many.

Furthermore there are books about those laundry rooms, usually concentrating on the picturesqueness and atmosphere and not necessarily on the folly-worthiness. In English: Mireille Roddier, *Washhouses of Rural France*, 2003. In French: Christophe Lefébure, *La France des Lavoirs*, 2003. In Dutch: Alida van Slooten, *Frankrijk's Wasplaatsen*, 2012. Alida started photographing *lavoirs* in the early 1980s and hasn't stopped yet. Apart from publishing her book she also contributed photos to www.lavoirs.org and to my article; much appreciated.

When locating *lavoirs* in person, ask for an '*ancien lavoir*' or for the Rue du Lavoir. It often works.

There are a few specialised websites on related subjects to mention. Regarding watertowers and water reservoirs: there are over 7000 items to search on http://chateau.deau.free.fr/. Most photos are by Alain Lafabrie. This website was started in 2001; in 2007 the charity Association 'Les château d'eau de France' was founded to secure this website. Only a few watertowers are remarkable for folly lovers; I will include the best in the Gazetteer for France on the FF website.

Regarding wells, *fontaines* and taps I can recommend http://www.fontainesdefrance.info, set up by A. and C. Simonnet. One can search by placename or by region; every item of thousands has several enlargeable, but undownloadable thumbnail photos and often a short history in text. 'Anciennes Fontaines' (http://cfpphr.free.fr/fontaine.htm) by Francis Cahuzac and collaborators is another website on *fontaines*. This collection contains 99 placenames with all their *fontaines* in photos. It is part of the website of the charity Commission Française pour la Protection de Patrimoine Historique et Rural from 2002, where one can also find collections of (door-)knockers, brick kilns, watertowers, *lavoirs* and well-heads, triumphal arches, kiosks and gloriettes and more, but no *fabriques*, follies, yet. Interesting finds from these websites will be included in the Gazetteer too.

FRENCH LAUNDRY

Doing the laundry was women's work, a duty as well as an opportunity for social contacts outside the control of men. Today in France most people have access to a private washing machine and there are fewer and fewer launderettes around. On the internet the last washerwoman I could find using a *lavoir* regularly did so until 1995 in the one in **Thierville-sur-Meuse** (55), now used for pisciculture. So I was surprised when in 2015 I saw a woman leaving the *lavoir* in **Bernécourt** (54) with a wet piece of tapestry; she explained she wasn't on mains water, and even if she had been, a washing machine is no use for floormats and large covers or blankets; large pieces can be treated in the *lavoir* wherever it is still functioning.

Right: laundry in Pont-St-Esprit (30)   ©Alida van Slooten

One can still imagine the hard work of the women by reading Emile Zola's *L'Assommoir* (*The Dram Shop*), 1877, in which the main character Gervaise starts a laundry for herself in Paris. Some famous artists have depicted women carrying heavy laundry (Honoré Daumier, circa 1860), or washerwomen working on their knees along a canal (Vincent van Gogh, 1888). When visiting the numerous *lavoirs* one can envisage the labour, particularly in **Plombières-les-Bains** (88), where there is a permanent display of mannequins at work in the stone *lavoir* with warm

water source, and a private balcony on top. In some other villages wall-paintings show the trade, like in the washhouses of **Mijoux** (01), dated 1991, in **Le Tremblois** (70) and **Aiguines** (83), and in **Vernet-les-Bains** (66), done as recently as 2013. In summer you may even find a demonstration of the works for tourists in heritage programmes, for example in **Cruguel** (56) at the *fontaine-lavoir* Saint-Brieuc.

Above left: Plombières-les-Bains (88)　©Guus Seibert　　　above right: Mijoux (01)　©Agnes van Oort
Below left: Le Tremblois (70)　©Rosy Hamelin　　　 below right: Cruguel (56)　©Town of Cruguel

Below: *chabot* in Poncey-sur-l'Ignon　©PRB

For washing linen one needs clean, preferably running water, so the older *lavoirs* are to be found around wells or along streams. The linen was carried to the water's edge, often after pre-wash at home with soda, and scrubbed or beaten with a wooden bat on a flat stone or wooden planking by women kneeling, often in a wooden box, the *chabot*, and bending down to reach the water. Later the single stones were replaced by cut-stone sloping edges, and then concrete edges. Thorough rinsing was the idea, and then of course the wringing out and drying followed, usually all in the open (*découvert*) or sometimes with a bit of protection by a roof.

The wells and streams were often owned by the local nobility, and could be used only with their permission. Sometimes a good lord paid for better provisions for the washerwomen. In **Tonnerre** (89) there is a famous natural well, the Fosse Dionne, that the Romans used as a water source, and around which the present town was created. An average of 66 gallons per second flows from the blue-green 14m-wide basin, and the fathoming of its depth has already taken the lives of three divers; it has been searched until seventy metres deep so far. In 1758 Louis d'Éon, a local nobleman, wine-merchant and finally mayor of

Tonnerre, had it converted into a *lavoir* by providing a stone edge around the spring and canalising the flow in water-basins around it and further down. The women were also protected from the weather by a horseshoe-shaped roofing on pillars, against the butting wall.

If available running water was too far away, people used to dig a well or collect rainwater on the *usoir*, the narrow strip of land next to their house. As this strip was also used for animals and as dunghill, the water was often contaminated, and a source of diseases like typhus and cholera. By the end of the 18thC the link between foul water and disease was recognized. And then there was the French Revolution: nobility was abolished and 'liberty, equality and fraternity' for all was introduced by the new republic. In this case equality meant that the people wanted the same rights and access to water as the nobility had had. In 1789 it was decided by law that municipalities had to have their own local government with their own budget, but also the responsibility to install good hygiene for health's sake. With Napoleon and-all-that it took quite some time to get this implemented everywhere. And after several epidemics of contagious diseases a new law was passed in 1851 to encourage the building of *lavoirs* further, by promising grants for up to 30% of the total building cost. That turned out to be an incentive to order a lot of new washhouses.

When washing along a stream women kneeled and bent down to the stream with the linen. At the end of the 18thC better transport of running water through stoneware and later cast-iron pipes made it possible to build *lavoirs* away from the streams, preferably in the centre of the community if possible. Many got more than one basin in connection now, for washing and rinsing separately, and often also an *abreuvoir* (drinking trough) for animals and a *fontaine* for humans, as in **Bussières** (70). The bottoms

of these basins were now preferably stone, tiles or concrete, easier to clean, at no more than forty centimetres deep. These open-air affairs could be enhanced by a beautiful *fontaine*, a sculpture or iron railings to hang the laundry on and keep animals out, like the *fontaine-lavoir* du Chêne in **Breurey-lès-Faverney** (70) of 1867 and the one along the Rue Principale in **Fontenois-lès-Montbozon** (70).

The adding of a roof over an existing *lavoir* could become the pride of a village: in **Vers-Pont-du-Gard** (30) the circular Grand Font of 1847 was renovated and got a hexagonal roof on square pillars in 1883 according to the text on the keystone of its classical stone gate. More patriotic inscriptions read: Republic Française, Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité, Lavoir Public, and around the arch the warning: '*défense de laver aucune herbe*' (rinsing of all vegetables and herbs is prohibited).

Right: Vers-Pont-du-Gard (30)   ©Rosy Hamelin

The washhouses with roofs gradually acquired more sophisticated architecture. Though there was no need for built basins to be imbedded in the floor, many indeed were, like in **Adam-lès-Vercel** (25) of 1776, and in **Salives** (21) of 1842. Gradually the basins were raised, so that the deep

Left: Salives (21) *lavoir* ©PRB   right: Hattonchâtel (55)   ©PRB
Below left: Jouy-sous-Côtes (55), Geville   ©PRB

bending was no longer needed. Soap was expensive, worked best when used in boiling water and the benefits of it and the technical availability of boiling cauldrons were only realised in the course of the 19thC and then not many

roofed washhouses had a facility to boil cauldrons with laundry on the premises, like in **Hattonchâtel** (55), built and fitted out in 1921 by miss Skinner, the benefactrix of the village. The *bateaux-lavoirs*, laundry boats in rivers particularly in industrialised cities, had boiling facilities on the top floor and the rinsing was done below in the stream. By and by more auxiliary aids and appliances developed in the laundries, like water-pumps and drainage of the dirty water, stone benches along the sides to pile the laundry on, beams over the basin to support the dripping textiles, turnstiles to keep animals out and hydraulic floors where the water level wasn't constant.

There were also a few *lavoirs* with a first floor for drying the linen, for example the large ship-like one in **Ancerville** (55) of 1790, still with water, but out of order; the top floor was so large that later it was used by the civil guard. The 1886 classical washhouse with five arches in its ashlar facade in **Santigny** (89) even had a toilet. These improvements don't make the buildings more folly-like, but they are interesting to note when visiting anyway.

Building new washhouses or roofs over previously open *lavoirs* went on until far into the 20thC. In **Moimay** (70) en **Villafans (**70), just eight kilometres apart, the open-air 19thC basins were covered in 1913 and 1934 with an almost identical canopy of metal and wood, with a zinc roof designed by the architect Fournier. Though the painted metalwork is neo-Gothic in style, it is advanced technically, as the columns drain rainwater from the roof into the basins. **Caylus** (82) claims to have the only surviving Baltard-type structure in Tarn-et-Garonne: on a low wall around the basins the metal roof rests on iron columns with Corinthian capitals, all prefabricated, like in Baltard's Halles in Paris. Built in 1922 it is now disused and rusty, but the villagers want to keep it, and plans are made to insert translucent material to renovate the washhouse into a weather-protected multi-purpose space.

Though new concrete facilities sometimes have nice shapes, they are not folly-like. That said, the simple concrete ensemble Lavoir Public with watertower and fountain of 1934 in **Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines** (66) was recently renovated as a monument of local heritage. Another small *lavoir* under tiled wooden canopy in **Genay** (69) dates from 1951 and was renovated in 2007.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF *LAVOIRS*

All over France there are open-air *lavoirs* along rivers and wells or at a water-tap, from simple troughs (*auges*) to elaborate systems and shapes. Some developed a way of protecting the women from sun and rain with a little timbered roof, and elsewhere with walls for the wind. Particularly in the north-east, where there is less clement weather all year round, many washhouses have proper roofs, sometimes with a lantern or with an opening for rainwater, the *impluvium* to top up the basins. Those usually timber-with-tiles roofs can range from simple lean-to ones, to front-gabled, to hipped, pyramidal or circular, resting on walls, piers, pillars, columns or arches. Some washhouses are in caves or tunnel vaults, the so-called troglodyte type, as in **Fuans** (25) and **Dole** (39), others are vaulted like in **Salives** (21), page 9.

In *département* Yonne (89), Bourgogne, many completely walled-in round or octagonal washhouses with impluvium are to be found, often unadorned like fortresses, e.g. in **Brienon-sur-Armançon** of 1762, **Bligny-en-Othe** of 1834 by Alphonse Delacroix, **Paroy-en-Othe** of 1848, **Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye** (Lavoir de la Gerbaude, 1849), **Dissangis** of 1860 by Tircuit (with curious chalk formation in the basin) and **Esnon** of the 19thC. **La Tour-de-Scay** (25) was honoured in 2012 with the 'Rubans du Patrimoine' prize for the spendid restoration of the circular 'Lavoir du Beney', an early work of Alphonse Delacroix of 1824. They are remarkable and worth a visit, but they are not follies, unless perhaps where a new material is used that proved inappropriate for the task: in **Gy** (70) a 12-sided 'fortress' for hygiene was built in 1899 to a design by Maurice Sauterey, but is crumbling away because 'ciment de Grenoble' was used as building material.

Most *lavoirs* have a practical rectangular shape. Many large hipped-roofed laundry buildings are impressive for their size, but they are not follies unless they have architectural features that lift them out of the ordinary, above utility, to show the prowess of the principal and/or to please the beholder. These features are mostly outside on the facade, either a long or a narrow front, when three sides are closed. The position of the building may also allow two or more (half-)open sides. When free-standing, some *lavoirs* have interesting details all over, like the classical oval washhouse of **Loray** (25) by Alphonse Delacroix.

Apart from open round, oval or polygonal buildings there are also a number of semicircular or crescent-shape examples, particularly in Haute-Saône, e.g. in **Éhuns** (70), 1877, semicircular with the *fontaine* in a pedimented niche in the axis, and **Montbozon** (70), the crescent 'Fontaine-lavoir du Cygne' of 1829 by Louis Moreau, built as a *fabrique* for the castle park above it, for the benefit of the villagers. A little temple with the swan sits in the axis of the 6-columns gallery.

The materials used, the shapes and styles and the decorations all contribute to an interesting variety in laundry buildings. Some characteristics are typical for a region, for an architect or for a combination of the washhouse with other functions. In **Noidans-le-Ferroux** (70) the central 5-arched *lavoir* shows no fewer than seven different types of Meuse washhouses, painted inside by O. Stephane after the recent restoration.

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COMBINED FUNCTIONS

Fontaine-lavoir

Most laundry houses are combined with water for men (*fontaine*) and water for animals (*abreuvoir*), separated from the working space. They are often called a *fontaine-lavoir*.

In a few cases the *fontaine* is inside the building. In **Bouhans-lès-Lure** (70) it is in a round-headed niche flanked by pilasters under an entablature. In **Baudoncourt** (70) the large washhouse of 1883 has a kind of inside wind-screen of fantasy-classical shape with a fountain behind a large arch. A shield between two clumps of foliage proudly gives the date and the name of the mayor and his adjunct as the founders.


Above left and right: Baudoncourt (70)...©PRB
Right: Clairac (47)   ©Alida van Slooten
Bottom: Bouhans-et-Feurg (70)   ©Rosy Hamelin

Sometimes the fountain came first. The Fontaine Font'Grand, the main public water supply in **Clairac** (47) until the Revolution, was situated between the medieval walls and the early-17thC fortifications. Inside, partly cut into the rock, is the reservoir. The vaults and decoration date the inside to 16thC. But the outside, the facade in the shape of a classical triumphal arch with Ionic pilasters on a platform, is inscribed '1638 ET ANNI ET UNDAE 1909', meaning the years pass like the waves. First refurbishment 1638, second restoration and adding of the *lavoir* in front 1909. The *lavoir* was renovated in the 1990s, but only the *fontaine* is listed.
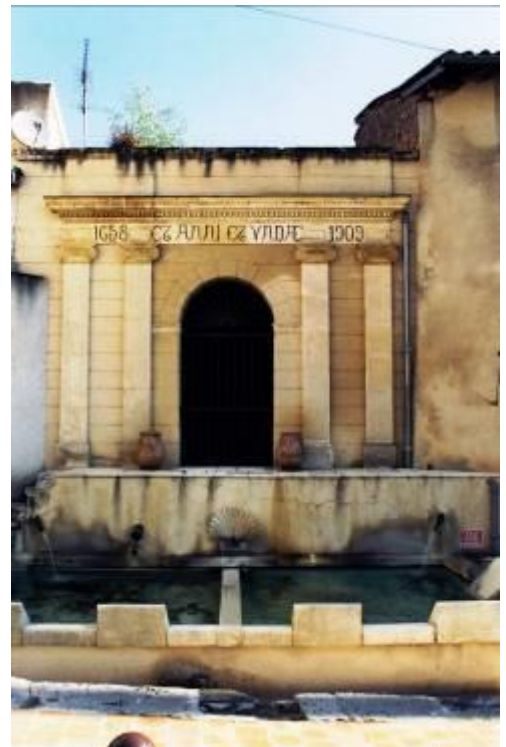
Égayoir

In some places there is also an adjacent bath for cooling and washing animals, particularly horses, the *aiguayoir*, *égayoir* or *gayoir*. When horses delivered the main horsepower, there must have been more horse baths, but most have disappeared. The one of 1811 in **Coligny** (01) along the old salt route was diminished to a covered cistern for watering plants already in 1922, but was excavated and reinstalled in 2006, with shows during the annual August regional fair.

Lavoirs with good *égayoirs* one can find in **Halles-sous-les-Côtes** (55), a 19thC large hipped roof on eighteen Doric columns, in **Bouhans-et-Feurg** (70) with square pil-

lars on two sides, and **Argenteuil-sur-Armaçon** (89) of 1834, with seven arches in the front. In **Maille-roncourt-St-Pancras** (70) architect Louis Well's *lavoir* of 1823 was inspired by Greek temples, with Doric pillars, two sets of basins, two *abreuvoirs* along the sides and a *fontaine* at the end. In 1838 architect Félix Grandmougin added a paved *égayoir* at the other end and finally in 1842 he topped the washhouse with a new town hall, with the ramp to the road over the *fontaine*; a sturdy ensemble, well kept.

Above left: Argenteuil-sur-Armaçon (89)...©Rosy Hamelin,   above right: Mailleroncourt-St-Pancras (70)   ©PRB
Below left: Bucey-lès-Gy (70)   ©PRB   below right: Dampièrre-sur-Salon (70)   ©PRB
Bottom left: Beaujeu-Saint-Vallier (70), plan   ©PRB   bottom right: Vassy-sous-Pisy (89)   ©Alida van Slooten

Mairie-lavoir

When mayors got in charge of public building in the 19thC, several chose to kill two birds with one stone: the *lavoir* was combined with the town hall in one building, women's place downstairs, men's world upstairs. Particularly in Bourgogne and Franche-Comté there are many 2-storey representative examples, often designed by specialists in the genre like Louis Moreau in Haute-Saône.

This Moreau (the father of more famous painter Gustave Moreau) was particularly inspired by Italian architecture with grandeur. His *marie-lavoir* in **Bucey-lès-Gy** (70) of 1827 as well as the one in **Dampièrre-sur-Salon** (70) of 1828 resemble a triumphal arch protruding from a taller building. The one in **Beaujeu-Saint-Vallier** (70) of 1823 is more like an Italian casino, with double monumental stairs to a balcony on the first floor. A similar but smaller version of this can be found in **Vassy-sous-Pisy** (89) of 1851 by Edme Tircuit.

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All of these ground-floor workspaces are stone-vaulted, some basins extend beyond the wall and may have a fountain. The town hall of **Bouligny** (70), of 1840 by M. Mougenot has double stairs on one side too, but the washroom is open along the square side, that was embellished with the clock Tarlabedan in *tricolore* drapery behind a windowpane on top of that facade in 1892. Napoleon is watching from the top of the classical fountain roof. Classy. In **Gézier** (70) and in **Cussey-sur-l'Ognon** (25) the passer-by of the *marie-lavoir* can identify the ground floor business by the dolphin relief under the classical arches.

In **Beurville** (52) the town hall has a classical Roman temple front with four Doric columns on a high plinth, hiding stairs to the subterranean *lavoir*.

Lavoir-mairie-école

Civry-sur-Serein (89) had only about 300 inhabitants when Edme Tircuit designed the *lavoir* and on top of it the town hall combined with the village school in 1864. For a whole century this worked, but now only the *lavoir* is occasionally used. Schools are more often combined with the town hall, but the combination with a *lavoir* is rare.

Château d'eau

If water wasn't provided by a stream or well, it had to be pumped up. Many *puisoirs* have a pump system. Some *lavoir*s have storage of water in their own watertower. A monumental combination is to be found in the simple concrete ensemble 'Lavoir Public' with watertower and fountain of 1934 in **Saint-Genis-des-Fontaines** (66); it was recently renovated as a monument of local heritage. Behind protective railings along the long open sides one can notice the raised basins as a novelty.

Pont-de-Poitte (39) had 680 inhabitants in 1906 when a new watertower was built in Poitte in the shape of a sturdy medieval tower with a coat-of-arms, sham loopholes, castellations and a tall hipped roof over it, in style with the nearby church tower. A small *lavoir* with *abreuvoir* and *fontaine* under the arches occupies the heavily buttressed ground floor. Monumental.

Pont de Poitte (39), Poitte watertower with *lavoir*   ©Agnes van Oort

With *Éolienne*

There have been many metal *éoliennes*, windmills, to power pumps to fill the watertowers in France. Only a few are still extant, and even fewer still connected to a washhouse. **Arthonnay** (89) had its *lavoir* in the basement of the 1894 town hall, but the water supply was insufficient. Therefore a large windmill on an 18m-high column, designed and produced by Auguste Bollée, was erected in 1897 to pump water up from subterranean layers. It worked until 1939, but the elegant construction with the winding stairs and the service 'crow's nest' is in an exceptionally good condition today; the pride of the village. The same design of windmill one can also admire at the *lavoir* in **Dolus-le-Sec** (37).

Right: Arthonnay (89), *marie-lavoir* with *éolienne.*
photo credit: microraptor, Wikimedia Commons, CC-AS A 3.0
Below: Marles-en-Brie (77)   ©Rosy Hamelin

Marles-en-Brie (77) has a curious end-19thC *lavoir* for 30 *laveuses* and an even 'curiouser' well-house, on top of which a large *éolienne* similar to the Eiffel tower pumped up 28m3 water per hour. The rectangular 'Lavoir Communal' has ten gabled buttresses with iron 'M's and cramp-irons; there used to be an impluvium, but the wooden roof awaits reinstalment when the money is found.

In **Pargues** (10) the *lavoir* turned into a *salle polyvalente* (multi-purpose hall), but its sturdy articulated brick-and-cut-stone watertower with platform of 1903 still carries a spire with the 4,5m-across *éolienne* of 1923, that powered no fewer than three pumps for all the water supply for the village. This complex by Ludovic Sot was listed in 2011.

Vignol (58) has a 19thC washhouse with one open side and one Serlian facade in stone, a round arch between two smaller rectangular openings. Its *éolienne* of 1910 is again Eiffel-tower-like, and very tall.

Potigny (14) became a miners' town in the early 1900s, developing red-brick miners' housing, nicely decorated with white, in the same style a large watertower was built in 1914. But in 1912 a smaller watertower had been constructed with an *éolienne* to power the pump, attached to the *lavoir* for the blue laundry, the miners' overalls. The latter probably provided the water for several fountains and a similar washhouse at the other side of the village, and has been listed, restored and illuminated since 2004.

Bains, douches, piscine

In **Les Herbiers** (85) mayor M. Robert decided in 1855 that the village needed a large bathhouse and a washhouse attached to the back, with its drying lofts on the second floor of the bathhouse. The *lavoir* escaped destruction when the combination was listed in 1980, when mains water was available throughout. The monumental 'Bains-Lavoirs Municipaux' in **Nantes** (44), designed by hygienist Henri-Théodore Dri-

ollet in 1855 were officially opened in 1860. A large stone building like a ship with a fountain on the sharp corner, the *lavoir* was closed in 1967, but the bathhouse still functions as such. In **Baume-les-Dames** (25) the tourist office was housed (in 2012) in the old bathhouse-cum-washhouse (that was a gift from a former deputy of the Doubs *département* Charles Louis Clément), established in 1864. That is a rather early case of combining hygienic benefits of water for both body and linen, though not in the same room. The association with Roman baths is still recognizable in the large Diocletian window and the clerestory lights.

As late as in 1935 the public washhouse in **Mijoux** (01) on the ground floor was established with the 'Bains-douches de la Rotonde' upstairs. The rounded corner building has pillars downstairs and above that: woodwork and coats of arms and then windows.

Dunkerque (59), an upcoming sea resort in 1890, needed an extravagant complex for hygiene. Louis Gilquin, G. Boidin and Albert Baert designed the splendid neo-Moresque 'Bains Dunkerquois', containing a public washhouse, baths and showers, and a swimming-bath, opening in 1897. In 1921 the interior was modernized, and the pool was used until 1960, when it became too small for the growing population and it was abondoned for a larger new pool. Today, still a mess inside, the outside walls are restored, but without the minarets that were lost in the second World War. Oriental splendour in shapes and colour, worth a detour. The Bains de la Prévalaye of 1880 in **Rennes** (35), now a house, also have Moresque details, thought appropriate for luxury bathing.

Another combination with swimming-pool was in **Armentières** (59). The large brick building of two wings with three floors has a taller, decorated entrance facade at the corner with the text 'École de Natation' (swim school) above the doors. Originally designed by the hygienist Edmont Philippe in 1890, it was reconstructed in 1923 after destruction in the Great War. Though it has fallen out of use, it was listed in 2003.

Dunkerque (59), Bains and detail facade   ©PRB

PRIVATE *LAVOIRS*

In our search for follies we encountered a few washhouses that doubled as landscape ornaments. Ever since we searched for *lavoirs,* we have found several more that are worth mentioning in this survey.

Sully (71) castle has its remarkable rustic wooden Polish washhouse in the park; on three sides it is covered in patterns of branches, twigs and bark. It is difficult to find a date for the washhouse; not even the present *châtelaine*, duchess Amélie de Magenta, could tell us, but she suggested that it may be 19thC, or built by prisoners of war in the first World War.

Below: Sully (71), Polish washhouse, details   ©PRB

Near **Potigny** (14) in **Soumont-Saint-Quentin** or **Falaise** the castle La Brèche au Diable had several interesting buildings in its grounds. Unfortunately the Lavoir de la Brèche or de Marie-Joly is reported here to have collapsed in the 1990s and all we have left is many old postcards. It was a square stone building with a pyramidal roof raised on intricate rustic woodwork (or perhaps rustic cement) above the walls. 6-sided windows, four dormer windows and a lantern; much more a landscape ornament than a workspace. Date probably 19thC. An other interesting private washhouse only lives on in pictures: the cute Moorish one in **Louviers** (27); the laundry was done in the river Eure, the drying upstairs in this little pavilion.

LOUVIERS — Lavoir sur l'Eure

Barbier, édit. Louviers

A gem similar to the Falaise one is out of bounds too: the old washhouse of the castle of **Saint-Germain-Langot** (14) is a proper folly, built second half 19thC: its arcade of Gothic tracery mirrors in the pond on private ground. A small red-and-white-striped washhouse with a dovecote nestling on its roof in **Menil-Hubert-sur-Orne** (61) is also private, but visible from the path to the mill. A rare combination, if only for the bird droppings. In **Saint-Maixent** (72) Auguste Taillefumyr started building a chapel for Saint Quentin on his estate, but just the front was standing when he left in the 1840s for Paris. Only after 1876 the new owner used the facade as back wall for a two-storey *lavoir*; the second floor is a drying loft. A peculiar amalgam.

Bresse-sur-Grosne (71), not more than a hamlet, has a *château* with vestiges of an orangery, an icehouse and a dovecote in the park, a model farm and three *lavoirs* outside. Count M.A.H. de Murard decided to enhance the water situation in Bresse by causing a stream in his grounds to make a longer detour, flow over an aqueduct and then to fountains and the three washhouses in three different styles at his expense in the 1860s. The plainest has semicircular windows, including one

over the entrance.

The Lavoir de la Source Crétu or Lavoir Public has two pointed arches between the two entrances and a long inscription about the founding in 1865. The third, the Lavoir du Château, is an eyecatcher for the castle: a cute little building of stone and red brick, with an arcade of three Romanesque arches in the front.

In **Merlieux-et-Fouquerolles** (02) the pedimented old *lavoir* of 1862, a gift of the lady of the castle, Mrs Lecartier to the neighbourhood, was in 1978 appropriately incorporated into a little park as a place for repose and meeting neighbours, with a fountain, and picnic tables in the old, now roofless washroom.

Also for the benefit of the village Stéphane Derville, a high official in train and bank businesses, in 1900 had a washhouse built in **Saint-Maurice-Mont-Couronne** (91), in remembrance of his pious mother. It is one of the few that was designed with glass in the large windows for comfort. Inside the walls are trimmed with wise texts to amuse the ladies, and on the edge of the curved pyramidal roof a giant stone frog with a mandolin raises its arms to the heavens in despair over the cackling below. Charming.

The oldest monumental washhouses were part of the property of the mighty, be it castle or abbey. **Septvaux** (02) claims its large stone *lavoir* dates from the 12thC, just as its church and castle. The size, the material and the shape of the two columns make it indeed logical to believe in warm connections at the time.

The castle of **Bierry-les-Belles-Fontaines** (89) has a remarkable vaulted *lavoir*, at the bottom of a tower. It is dated ca 1710, and has one single column seemingly supporting the keystone of the segmental arch.

The castle at **Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois** (91) was used as hunting lodge by Louis-Bénigne-François Berthier de Sauvigny, a public servant who lived in Paris most of the time. He had fruit and vegetables from his country retreat, and had his linen done in the renewed castle washhouse (with three arches opening towards the moat), every eight to ten days, until he was killed in the 1789 riots in Paris, one of the first victims of the French Revolution.

A very ambitious washhouse is the Lavoir de l'Ayrolle. In 1749, after a visit to **Millau** (12), king Louis XV demanded a royal-size washhouse to be built to embellish the town. Just outside the fortifications it would indicate the town's expansion, and the style and decoration the power of the royal patronage. Built in stone, probably reusing material from the torn-down fortifications, the front is classical; three round arches, pilasters, an architrave with balustrade, and a segmental pediment over the middle arch. The walls, opened by plain round arches, bend in a half-circle opposite the entrance. In August 1754 the building was so far ready that roof-tiles were ordered. But due to shortage of money the roof was already unstable in 1773 and so broken down as to leave the actual basins in the open. In 1793 the proud text in the pediment, glorifying the king, was defaced; it now shows the civic crest. The shell was declared a historical monument in 1931, but only in 1950 was a little roof built over the actual basins. Its size emphasizes the chasm between ambition and reality.

Right: Millau (12), Lavoir de l'Ayrolle   ©Alida van Slooten
Below: Bèze (21), Lavoir des Soeurs   ©PRB

According to the plaque at the 'Lavoir des Soeurs' in **Bèze** (21) the exact date of this lovely Tuscan-pillared pavilion is not known, but is probably end 17thC. It leans at the bottom of a defence tower, later dovecote. It is rumoured that the battering and chattering of the nuns laundering in the moat often disturbed the contemplation of the monks in the nearby monastery.

Chantecorps (79) sports the 'Lavoir de la Fontaine du Camelot'. It used to belong to the Cistercian abbey, marking the place where the hermit and founder Saint Giraud de Sales died in 1120. The open-air *lavoir* with its neo-Gothic canopy on top of the actual stone fountain house was rebuilt by the owner of the site in 1892. It was beautifully restored recently, a surprise in the landscape.

MAYORS WITH AMBITIONS

When mayors got in charge of hygiene they often wanted their efforts known. Even when in 1862 only an octagonal colour-tiled roof was added to the public *lavoir* in **Malaucène** (84) the central pillar was engraved with the date and the names of the mayor, his alderman, the architect (Geoffray) and the stone-mason

Right: Malaucène (84)   ©Alida van Slooten.

Above and right: Manciet (32)   ©Alida van Slooten

In **Thiré** (85) the open-air *lavoir communal* was repaired by 1864 and provided with a new well-house in Renaissance style, designed by architect Auguste Gamereau, as ordained in 1861 by mayor Isidore Bailly, his alderman and his municipal council members. Its marble plaque of the foundation mentions all their eleven names in full. And in **Manciet** (32) the open oval laundry basin of 1844 was upgraded with a zinc roof on slender iron supports in 1896. It has an impluvium hole in the middle, an elegant rim of meanders and hanging card-game spades all around and inscribed on it 'Darmitte maire, Nulhuste 1896, Fourcade arch=te'.

Right: Grignan (26), Lavoir du Mail   ©PRB
Below right and left: Bourg-Saint-Andéol (07),
Lavoir de Tourne   ©PRB

Many other *lavoirs* have similar political inscriptions. In the case of **Bagnols** (69) the plaque with the work's history (1873-1874) ends with 'VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE', 'par Huvet Architecte'.

In **Grignan** (26) the Lavoir du Mail was built by mayor Francois Auguste Ducros in 1840 to embellish the town. It has the shape of a neo-Classical round temple, inspired by Marie-Antoinette's Love Temple at the Petit Trianon gardens in Versailles.

Thirty kilometres further on in **Bourg-Saint-Andéol** (07) the mayor had the old washhouse replaced by the much more grand 'Lavoir de Tourne' of 1843 after a design by Joulie: a long temple with short Tuscan columns on half-high walls and a round arch breaking through the pediment on both ends; very appropriate in the neighbourhood of an ancient Mithras relief. The large ball on one end covers an old well that feeds the *abreuvoir*. Neatly restored, it is now just a monument.

PECULIAR LOCALITIES and LOCAL PECULIARITIES

At 76 Rue Vanoise in **Gray** (70) a large private house was built over the 'Fontaine Saint Laurent' in the 18thC. The subterranean *lavoir* may be older, and is still visible through five arches at ground floor level.
Below: Gray (70), Fontaine Saint Laurent, exterior and interior   ©PRB

Above left: Loisy-en-Brie (51)   ©Rosy Hamelin
Above right and right: Salives (21), *lavoir* and acroterion   ©PRB

Some washhouses are built under the platform for the village church, for example the simple 1861 one in **Bethainville** (55), and the one in **Loisy-en-Brie** (51) of 1866, behind a semicircular arch between the double stairs up. The neo-Gothic vaulted washhouse at the ancient well under the church of **Salives** (21), built in 1842, has strange acroteria over the arches. At **Nohic** (82) the free-standing red-brick 1865 *lavoir* is covered with a roof terrace and a Saint Mary on the edge of it.

In **Mirepoix-sur-Tarn** (31) the washhouse is under the bulwark along the river, with a balustrade along its roof. A similar situation is in **Mont-de-Marsan** (40), where the flat arches along the river seem to carry the belvedere of 1870, while in **Uzès** (30) the only surviving washhouse is tucked underneath the panoramic lookout area, promenade Racine of 1854; two stories high outside, with three round arches at ground floor level and several sturdy Tuscan columns above, favourites of the benefactors, the Castille family, but there is only one space inside.

Above: Uzès (30)   ©Alida van Slooten

And in **Labrughière** (81) the vaulted spaces under the three large round arches along the Thoré river look like part of an ancient sturdy bridge. A smaller version of this effect one can find in **Charbonnières** (28) along the Sainte-Suzanne stream. The 19thC washhouse beside the castle moat in **Sagonne** (18) seems to be a bridge itself with its large round middle arch and two smaller side arches on opposite sides under a shallow sloping roof.

In the village of **Chamesol** (25) we counted no fewer than three *lavoirs* with almost identical wooden roofs on metal poles. The elegant 'lace-edges' makes them frivolous. 15 kilometres further on in **Glère** (25) the wooden roof has three transepts, but only hammer-beams for decoration. But the one in **Ligueil** (37) not only has wooden balustrades and 'lace-edges' but also nice fretwork in the gable.

Champtonnay (70) has a stone washhouse of 1866 by Maillot, but its tiled wooden roof ends have fretwork decorations and acroteria on all corners. The stone fountain in the middle of the long *abreuvoir* spouts from an enraged Green Man's face with a classical palmette on his head, like Red Indian feathers. Palmettes are rare; **Dancevoir** (52) has four, crowning the pilasters round the three wide chamfered openings, done in 1844.

There are several places with twin washhouses side by side. In **Etuz** (70) the two neoclassical temples with Ionic columns under hipped roofs are on both sides of a stream, with a bridge over the sluice; in 1842 designed by Pierre Marnotte, who used several neo-styles in his work, most notably neo-Moresque (in his splendid synagoge in Besançon of 1869-70). In **Saint-Victor-la-Coste** (30) the 1849 twin washhouses, are in the village centre with a fountain in between; pillars in the long open sides, a large round arch, flanked by two niches, breaking through the pediment on the short sides. A third, Lavoir Palus outside the village, has an arcade of five ribbed round arches on pillars on the long side.

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In **Récicourt** (55), a village of about 160 inhabitants, two virtually identical washhouses with a Serlian front, large round arch with two rectangular windows under the front-gabled roof, are just 200 metres apart on both ends of the Rue de l'Orme. Only a bit further from each other as the crow flies are the almost identical Fontaine de l'Argillier and Fontaine du Gravier in **Levier** (25), designed by Alexandre Clerget in 1851: seven round arches on pillars under a hipped roof, large *abreuvoirs* over the full length of the front, with a round fountain in the centre, both recently restored (2013 and 2009). Two of the five washhouses in **Moffans-et-Vacheresse** (70) have the same design: three square openings between heavy piers on the two open sides, and a semicircular skylight in the short front under a tiled front-gabled roof.

In **Fresse** (70), a conglomerate of five hamlets, there are no fewer than three almost identical *lavoirs*; from pictures I get the impression that the piers and pillars are moulded concrete, one wide between two narrower bays under a hipped roof, and where you would find an entablement there is a kind of wooden decoration like an upside-down fence. *Abreuvoir* at full width of the middle bay, and a postbox-like fountain in the middle. One has a square watertower with decorative castellations halfway up extra.

Above: Récicourt (55)   both ©Rosy Hamelin

Above left and right: Bleurville (88)   ©Rosy Hamelin

In **Bleurville** (88) again two of the five 19thC washhouses have almost identical light stone round arches; one has an arcade of five, the other one one of four and one of three round the corner.

CLASSICAL INSPIRATION

We must realise that in the 19thC most architects were schooled in Paris, where the neo-styles came to thrive, so Classic became state-of-the-art modern. Very inspirational were the excavations in Greece and Italy, and particularly temples and Roman bathhouses. Already in 1776 the lintel of the open side of the washhouse in **Adam-lès-Vercel** (25) was supported by four sturdy Doric-Tuscan columns, and the 18thC one in **Renève-le-Château** (21) has three Roman arches under its cornice, and semicircular windows in the sides.

Above: Renève-le-Château (21)   ©Rosy Hamelin

A very similar one was built in 1883 in **Arc-lès-Gray** (70) by M. Delanne, but here the actual *fontaine* is under a separate canopy with four round arches on pillars.When details with classical inspiration count too, there are many more examples in France.

Windows

Typical for Roman windows in a basilica were diagonally crossed bars in squares, and radiating bars in semicircles. Several washhouses show them too, e.g. the recently restored basilica-type with clerestory windows in **Bernécourt** (54) of 1866, the one near the bridge in **Houdelaincourt** (55), designed by Alphonse Verneau in 1860; another large one in **Abainville** (55) of 1898 by Didier and also the renovated 19thC one of **Vignot** (55), with its classical putto riding a dolphin on the fountain.

Above left: Sauvigny-lès-Gray (70)   ©Rosy Hamelin   right: Lacroix-sur-Meuse (55)   ©PRB

A Diocletian window, a large semicircular window with two heavy mullions, is also known as Thermae window because it was used in the Diocletian baths in antiquity. Used in washhouses it certainly gives them class beyond utility. Good examples are in **Sauvigney-lès-Gray** (70), **Neuville-sur-Ornain** (55) and **Lacroix-sur-Meuse** (55).

Left and right: Haironville (55) ©PRB

Below left and right: Authoison (70)   ©PRB

Semicircular or segmental windows may be open, as all the way round the 19thC washhouse in **Haironville** (55) near the old bridge. In the tiny village of **Authoison** (70) a

late-19thC sizable washhouse is also still with streaming water; round arches along three sides (filled in until the springing point on two sides), and a fancy classical aedicule with peculiarly fluted pilasters over the entrance. The washhouse in **Flogny-la-Chapelle** (89) not only shows five large round-headed windows on each long side and one at the ends, but inside you can still see a fireplace in a corner. Even small *lavoirs* could have a classical touch with semicircular or segmental windows, e.g. in **Bonnet** (55) of 1836 and **Bovée-**

sur-Baboure (55) with sliding shutters, both by Thiébaut.

Above right: Flogny-la-Chapelle (89)   © Rosy Hamelin

Left: Bonnet (55)   ©PRB

Right: Bovée-sur-Baboure (55) ©PRB

Ornaments

P. Thiébaut, a versatile architect in the Meuse department, designed the washhouse in **Sauvigny** (55) of

1839 as a temple with open pediment and a round arch breaking it. In the glazed opening a half-figure in Greek *peplos* (a slim-falling garment) holds two urns from where the water flows into the *fontaine* and *abreuvoir* outside; the sides of the pediment are also sculpted, with a nymph and a water-god, each with a *battoir*, by the sculptor Arsène Monasse. The bronze spouts, the lion-heads and the urn on the top were reinstalled in 2009 with the restoration, and even the water is back. Thiébauts's washhouse in **Dainville-Bertheléville** (55) of 1842 is simpler, but has a beautiful sculpted fountain outside, a pedimented aedicule with pilasters, cornice, dolphins, birds, heads, swags and a river-god, all executed again by Arsène Monasse, signed. A similar focal point on a simple washhouse in **Laneuville-au-Rupt** (55) is an ornate niche, breaking through the roof edge with 'green men', winged dogs with fishtails and an urn. The water spouts are two bronze lion-heads and a large swan in the middle, all designed by Pierre-Augustin Lerouge in 1817.

Another *fontaine-lavoir* by Lerouge in the centre of **Houdelaincourt** (55), dated 1851, has a semicircular ground plan with the front cornice rising beyond the roof and carrying six large bronze vases. Two large reliefs of the well-known dolphin with trident and water-plants accentuate the coursed ashlar walls on both sides of the open middle section, where two columns carry an inscription band reading 'Hic Nimphae agrestes effundite civibus urnas', 'Come and fill here your jugs for the community, nymphs of the countryside'. Very posh for a village of under 600 inhabitants at the time.

Twenty years before, in 1831, the neighbouring village of **Mauvages** (55) had had a very similar 'Fontaine-lavoir du Deo' installed by the architect Théodore Oudet. Influenced by Napoleon's Egyptian explorations it was in Egyptian style; papyrus capitals, cavetto cornice and particularly the 'Déo', a water-carrier with two jugs in the middle of the fountain between the columns. The cornice has shells and inscriptions in Latin and French, topped with the usual vases.

Oudet designed another richly ornamented 'Grande Fontaine' in the main street in **Lacroix-sur-Meuse** (55) in 1836, executed in 1840; a long building with segmental windows in the sides, and a Diocletian one in the curved back. The facade with the fountain in front of a large round arch (now blocked), carried by Amphitrite and Neptune, is more in the baroque style. The walls on both sides and the arch are covered in Latin texts again, the cornice has shells. Lion-heads, huge dolphins as stone scrolls and frost-work spandrels under a clutter of seahorses, a crown, shields, armory and ship's details as trophies on a classical triumphal arch.

Oudet also had a hand in the smaller washplace Fontaine de la Source, with a tall fountain wall with petrified water from a hole and inscriptions of a French poem, and a series of contemporary classical fountains in the village: Fontaine de

Minerve with a helmed Minerva head and symbols for peace and art, the Fontaine Notre Dame with a seated Madonna and the simpler Fontaine du Moulin; political statements more than just utility.

Difficult to place is the style of the 19thC washhouse in the Rue de Paquis in **Viviers-le-Gras** (88). They call it Empire style, but only the lion-head spouts and the half rotunda, stuck as it were in the centre of the oblong building, seem to comply. What is in a name? It is beauty beyond utility.

Arches

Large open round arches abound. A cute little classical temple of 1829 in the centre of **Branne** (25) has round arches on all sides resting on imposts on piers. In **Boviolles** (55) and in **Brotte-lès-Ray** (70) there

is an arcade of five in the front, three on the sides. In **Ornans** (25) the early-19thC Fontaine du Seult has two on the sides and five in the front under a very shallow pediment, and large *abreuvoirs* with Saint Vernier, patron saint of viniculture on top of the fountain in the centre. The 'Lavoir de Cap-Vath' in **Azereix** (65) has five unarticulated arches in one long wall, and three on one short side, but most remarkable is its impluvium, surrounded by sturdy pillars to carry the roof. The best open arch is to be seen on an artificial island in the river in **Voutenay-sur-Cure** (89). Designed by Edme Tircuit in 1827 it has a door between two square windows on the long sides, and one large round arch on the short sides, all in coursed ashlar under a hipped roof.

Colonnades

There are many square washhouses with a classical colonnade on one long open side, e.g. the Fontaine Marianne (after the bronze bust in front) in **Bolandoz** (25) of 1875, with eight Tuscan columns, typical for the north of Franche Comté, designed by the architect Maurice Sauterey, specialist in water supplies.

Mollans (70) has no fewer than three interesting wash-houses. 'La grande fontaine-lavoir Buriot' has a rough Serlian gable with the *puisoir* in front, the 'Fontaine du Calot' has a remarkable fountain in a classical and finely detailed aedicule ingraved with the name of the mayor 'De Lapanouse, Maire 1838'; both designed by Louis-Nicolas Well in 1822. The beautifully restored 'fontaine-lavoir du centre' is the most refined, built 1849-50 by J-B. Colard; six slender columns on a stylobate between corner piers with Doric pilasters and entablature, two more columns in the short sides, and inside a free-standing row of pillars along the back wall, and a zinc-covered hipped roof. The *abreuvoir* curves around the corners, with in the centre a high Renaissance candlestick fountain head with a vase, all very classy for a village of less than 800 people at the time.

Top: Mollans (70), Fontaine du Calot   ©PRB

Right: Mollans (70), fontaine-lavoir du centre, ©PRB

Below: Anjeu (70) and detail   ©PRB

In **Anjeu** (70), a hamlet of 170 inhabitants, I was surprised to come across a large 19thC stone *lavoir* with no fewer than six moulded square pillars in the long open side between quoins and under the entablement. Turnstiles prevent

animals from going beyond the watering-trough, and a large, wide cast-iron vase crowns the fountain in the middle. With flowers.

The 'Lavoir-nord' in **Oyrières** (70) of 1845 by architects Delanne and Christophe Colard has a colonade of eight Tuscan columns on a low wall and one around both corners under an architrave and a large hipped roof. In the centre the entry to the workspace is not accentuated. A beautiful monopteral rectangular *lavoir*, four by eight Doric columns with Ionic fluting on a stylobate wall and classical entablature under the timbered roof, is in the centre of **Vignory** (52). During the cholera epidemic in 1832 the old one was broken down, and the present one built to a design by Chaussier. Though almost ready in 1833 it was only properly working from 1840 with the hydraulic pump installed. Inside the building a few mannikins recall the past use.

Above left: Oyrières (70), Lavoir Nord   ©Alida van Slooten

Right: Vignory (52)   ©Rosy Hamelin

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Combinations

Montureux-et-Prantigny (70) combines two styles in the long front of the 'Grande Fontaine': three round arches in the middle, string-coursed together with a lower round arch on both sides, more Renaissance style. But there is a Doric half-column on both sides of the middle arch, a pilaster at the corners and a entablature complete with triglyphs and guttae, designed by Alexandre Ringuelet in 1830. Perhaps the odd *fontaine* next to it is also by him: an aedicule with open pediment and a triglyph in the middle.

Above:Montureux-et-Prantigny (70), Grand Fontaine ©Rosy Hamelin

In a few cases arches are combined with aedicules, classical pedimented surrounds, for entrances. A minor case we find in **Fuans** (25), under a grass roof opposite the church. In **Chaux-la-Lotière** (70) the

Above left: Fuans (25)   ©PRB   right: Chaux-la-Lotière (70) ©Rosy Hamelin   left: Melincourt (70)   ©PRB

'Lavoir dit du Coq Sans Tête' has two rusticated aedicules and three large round arches in between, under a hipped roof, designed by Pierre Duret in 1830; its name derives from the head-less cock on top of the *fontaine* under the too low middle arch. **Melincourt** (70) has five neat arches between two aedicules on its *lavoir* of 1840 by architect Servas, **Billy-les-Chanceaux** (21) has a washhouse with six Doric columns and a beautiful bronze swan as spout of the fountain, just like the one in Montbozon. Built to a design by Auguste Sirodot, it was opened in 1854, with workspace for ten women. August Sirodot was a versatile architect in this department for religious as well as civic work. For washhouses he used arcades of five round arches in **Poncey-sur-l'Ignon** (21), 1849, and in **Bligney-le-Sec** (21), 1844). For **Barbirey-sur-Ouche** (21), or more precisely its hamlet **Jaugey** with 89 inhabitants at the time, Auguste designed the more articulate 'Fontaine-lavoir Saint-Fiacre' in 1836, and in 1847 an aqueduct for more constant supply to it. The actual *fontaine* is in a rounded niche surrounded by

an aedicule with Saint Fiacre in the pediment; on the roof is a small wooden bell-house that makes it look like an oratory. On both sides of this high middle-bay lower wings have two Doric columns to support the architrave that crosses the niche at the springing points. The hamlet is still very proud of its washhouse and it was with great effort and expense restored in 2009.

Above left: Billy-les-Chanceaux (21) ©Rosy Hamelin
Right: Barbirey-sur-Ouche, Jaugey (21) Saint-Fiacre ©Rosy Hamelin

Lamarche (88) has two of its four laundries in this shape; open 'temple' in the middle, but 'wings' without columns: Fontaine des Sources of 1835 and Fontaine du Rupt of 1837. (The same model but grander (three large windows with a segmental arch on either side of the frontespiece, similar windows in the side facades) was used for the new market hall in 1869. This is now all glazed and transformed into a cultural and party centre.) The Lavoir du Grisfontaine of 1838 is more classical: Tuscan colonnade of eight in the front, four at the sides under an architrave and a large hipped roof.

Crescents

Sirodot's early masterpiece of 1827 is the communal washhouse in **Fixin** (21) built in 1827 in a circular shape, surrounded on one side by a semicircular arcade gallery ending in pedimented arches. It proved a much-loved scheme.

Already in 1835 nearby **Blessey** (21) got a very similar *lavoir-abreuvoir*, now with semicircular basin and a Doric colonnade instead of Fixin's arcade. Henri Sirodot designed it for the hamlet where a bronze boat was found, thought a cult object for the goddess Sequana (Seine) whose source is nearby. Though the hamlet had only 40 inhabitants, an ambitious

restoration programme was executed in 1997-2007 under the direction of the Swiss artist Rémy Zaugg, who added a large pond at the back to enhance the landscape and make the redundant washhouse a folly, a cultural monument, for the hamlet and the world to enjoy. *Chapeau!* At the same time, about 30 kilometres to the east in **Soirans** (21) another one with a 6-stone-columns gallery was constructed by architect Phal Blando.

Épeugney (25) has a cheaper version of 1828 by Maximien Painchaux: rectangular *abreuvoir* in front and semicircular basin surrounded by a crescent roof on iron posts on the edge and stone pillars on the outside. The water enters from large rosettes in grey

stone aedicules on both sides, and from the pedestal of a column with an iron cross on top in the centre. The 'Fontaine-lavoir du Savourot' in **Héricourt** (70) of 1840 by architects Morel and Mabille looks similar, but has 25 stone Tuscan columns, four at each portico end under a wooden pediment, and an obelisk in the centre, adorned with the village arms, two Dionysian-mask water-spouts (picture on page 1, 63) and several bunches of waterplants round a trident.

The 1819 *lavoir* of **Boult** (70) is claimed to be the first crescent one: a closed square temple well-house in the centre of a segmental crescent roofed gallery with first wooden, later stone columns on the open side. In *département* Haute Saône there are several more of those, particularly designed by Louis Moreau, e.g. in **Ferrières-lès-Scey** (70) of 1827 in grey stone and timbered roof and in **Montbozon** (70) of 1829 in pink stone with a gallery of six Tuscan columns.

In **Bouleurs** (77) this plan is just the other way round: in 1863 M. Savard de-

signed a red and cream banded [wall] with eleven segmental blind arches and a wide apse in the middle, to protect and hide the washerwomen. Behind it is a crescent roof and the basins curve round the apse with space to work either under the roof or in the open. From the road you only see the ornamental wall, as a landscape ornament.

Circular examples

In the department Haute-Saône (70) there are several circular *lavoirs.* In **Fontenois-lès-Montbozon** the 'Fontaine-lavoir du centre' of 1828 was designed by Louis Well as an open rotunda of eight Tuscan columns, but above the Doric capitals there is nothing of an entablature. A second row of eight columns stands round the basin in the centre. The roof in the shape of a lady's sun hat with a one-metre-high spinning top on the apex, all wood but covered with zinc, is the icon and pride of the village.

At the crossroads in the next village **Bouhans-lès-Montbozon** sits a new type of building, a utilitarian and logical design by Théodore Lebeuffe and his associate Adrien Renahy that could be executed as cheap or as expensive as one could wish. The idea of these crossroads buildings is that a wall on the northern half gives shelter, while supports on a low wall make an open southern half possible. The water comes in through an integrated *fontaine* in the west, flows through the *abreuvoir* on the southern outside to a rinsing basin in the east and then into the round basin for washing in the centre. The larger ones may have a lantern. Any ironwork

is done by Jérôme Patret. This first *fontaine-lavoir* of 1835 has its fountain and rinsing basin in classical stone temple frames, but the supports and the glazed lantern with pine cone in top are metal.

In the neighbourhood **Breurey** of **Sorans-lès-Breurey** the probably cheapest of the series has no fancy fountain surround, just iron props under the conical roof with tiles, straight onto wooden rafters. The metal pinnacle on top is sadly sagging. In **Montigny-lès-Cherlieu** the roof with lantern is all metal on eight metal trusses, and in nearby **Preigney** the metal roof on six trusses seems pleated as an umbrella; very elegant and light.

The more expensive ones are in **Confracourt** and **Semmadon**. The first, of 1835, has a classical prostyle temple with Tuscan columns and pediments east and west, and heavy wooden beams to support the wooden roof with diagonally crossed bars in the lantern, pine cone on top. The second, of 1844, is the grandest: a stone classical aedicule with pilasters on both sides, and stone pillars with scroll brackets under the cornice. Patret delivered the *abreuvoir*, the supports inside for the wooden zinc-clad roof and fanciful grilles between the supports and in the lantern.

Grilles with the same design, rectangles and zig-zags, were used by the trio in 1847 for the listed square washhouse of **Purgerot**; Four iron columns in the open front, and eight on the edge of the elon-gated-octagonal basin under the lantern of the same shape.

The 'Fontaine ronde' in **Loray** (25) is a sepa-rate case. Designed by A. Delacroix in 1851 it sits in a village with rather large houses, probably wealthy enough to order something special and at the time accommodating 1000 animals. The en-trance gate protrudes from an elongated-circular plan, and on both sides a bronze lion-head spouts water into the fountain basins, overflowing in a drinking trough going all the way round the building. Ten fluted Doric columns with capitals support a heavy entablature under the zinc-covered roof with two finials (picture on page 12). Between the columns a low wall with stone benches on the inside protects the workers; it wouldn't be surprising if they were clad in *peplos*.

Facades

Though simple, the old washhouse opposite church and townhall of little **Jouy-sous-Côtes** (55), now part of **Geville**, attracts the attention of the passer-by through its Greco-Roman protruding cut-stone facade with blocked pillars and bronze lion-head spouts. Inside the beams to hold heavy linen over the ba-sins are still in working order, very educational.

The washhouse of **Orchamps** (39) was built in 1846 at an old canalised well. Inside it looks poorly with its rusting iron posts under the corru-gated iron roof, but the street side is a classical coursed-ashlar temple front with three round ar-ches, widened beyond the sides with double-pi-lastered triumphal arches leading nowhere but to side entrances of the workspace: a sham facade.

Auguste Sirodot's son Alfred continued his father's profession; his most ornate *lavoir* was built in **St-Seine-l'Abbaye** (21) on a trapezoid plan,

tucked in at a corner. Two taps outside, three round-arched windows, two doors with cornice under an architrave, and inside a fan-shaped basin. Dating from 1874 it was restored in 1991, but without the roof, doors and glazing, making it a sham facade or a sham ruin in the centre of the village.

In **Relanges** (88) two of its six (!) washhouses are worth mentioning. Both have a classical temple shape with pediments and an aedicule with the *fontaine* topped with an urn attached to the front. One has five pillars at the long open side, the other a 4-arches arcade.

Arcades

The recently renovated 1773 washhouse in **Vanvey** (21) must have the most bays, but the fifteen 'arches'

mirroring in the river Ource, are in fact wooden struts on stone plinths. Only 14 km from there in **Montigny-sur-Aube** a 19thC lavoir with eight similar wood-

en 'arches' has a curious protective lacework screen in the spandrels, with 'picot' arch edges.

The washhouse arcade with the most stone arches is in **Meurcourt** (70); designed by Félix Grandmougin in 1845, it counts no fewer than eleven, with *abreuvoir* over the full length of the front, and an *égayoir* at the back.

The disused washhouse of 1830 in the centre of **Gy** (70) has nine round arches in a row, **Noyers-sur-Serein** (89) (for thirty washerwomen), nine with a door in the middle one, and in **Ozouer-le-Voulgis** (77) there are nine brick arches in the front and three on the sides of the 1848 *lavoir*. **Rigny** (70) has eight in the front and three at each side of the 1840 washhouse. **Messigny-et-Vantoux** (21) has its 'Temple de la Médisance' of 1830: an arcade of eight stone-ashlar round arches un-

der a bare architrave, and inside square stone pillars around the basin under the impluvium. In **Bourbonne-les-Bains** (52) the 'Lavoir de Franrupt' has an arcade of seven with stringed course, just like **Pressigny** (52), **Tarsul** (21) of six and **Germay** (52) very similar of five.

Busson (52) sports six wide round arches between classical pilasters under the cornice, and **Marmeaux** (89) five with long voussoirs, the middle three partly blocked by a plinth (1855).

Sommedieue (55) has two 19thC classically inspired washhouses. The 'Lavoir Joseph' in the village has neat round arches all around, the 'Lavoir de la Ninade' just outside the village may have been open between heavy square pillars carrying an architrave, but all the openings are now blocked in, except at the front. A peculiarity is that both the front and back architraves are open to a low segmental arch, a Serlian scheme.

39

Serlian fronts

The Serlian or Palladian front with round arch in the centre is said to allow more light in the workspace but I suspect that in most cases it is foremost applied to enhance the village in a desirable style. There are several good examples in Haute-Saône, department 70. **Frasne-le-Château** has a grey stone *lavoir* with Serlian short sides and rectangular openings at the long sides between tapering Doric pillars on a low wall, rather austere. But the playful element is introduced by the octagonal *puisoir* in front of it, erected according to the inscription under 'Mr. I.C. Barret Maire' in 1833 to a design by Louis Well. Four round arches open into a tiny stone-vaulted room, nicely in line with the washhouse.

Oiselay-et-Grachaux has a much more refined version, recently restored. In this design of Cornuty in 1831 the roof rests on Tuscan columns on a low plinth, stylobate. The middle bay of the short sides is wider than the others, and the pediment is here opened by a shallow segmental arch.

The *lavoir-abreuvoir* of **Hugier** with the freestanding *puisoir* topped by the Holy Virgin is a design of Christophe Colard, just as the 'Fontaine aux 13 gouliches' (spouts) in **Citers** of 1879, both inspired by temples in Paestum. **Vaux-le-Moncelot** recently had its Serlian fronted *lavoir* of 1863 renovated and looks spic-and-span, though without water.

Fondremand had the dark stone 'Source de la Romaine' de-signed by Pierre Duret in 1841. The Serlian front is on the long side, with two rectangular openings on both sides of the arch. Six kilometres away Duret built a smaller version over the short side of the **Rioz** *lavoir*.

Outside Haute-Saône **Gillancourt** (52) has a laundry of 1866 by Dupuy: a rather plain Serli-an front and eight rectangular openings over a low side wall. Eighteen kilometres further **Roöcourt-la-Côte** (52) has at its northern end much more detailing in its Serlian *lavoir* facade.

Serlian fronts can make even smaller buildings look impressive. The 19thC 'La-voir des Charri-ères' in **Montmo-tier** (88), a vil-lage of about 150 inhabitants in the 19thC and now only 50, has a wide (two rectangular openings each side) Serlian pink stone front, but inside there is only a semicircular space with a brick wall. **Vantaux-et-Longevelle** (70) spreads its Longevelle 19thC Serlian facade impres-sively along the road, but the space inside is a crammed semicircle.

The southern washhouse in the Grande Rue in **Pin** (70) has the Serlian scheme of a round arch between two rectangular openings, but here there is no front ga-ble over it: the heavily moulded arch breaks through the edge of the hipped roof with pine cone finials in a more baroque way. Furthermore the massive round-headed fountain with lion-head spout obscures most of the space under the arch. Grandeur on a small scale.

Impluviums

The 'Lavoir sud' in **Oyrières** (70) has a large classical string-coursed well pavilion that serves a neoclas-sical washhouse with a double row of Tuscan pilars round an impluvium, reminiscent of a Roman villa atrium. It was built between 1827 and 1830 by Louis Moreau. In 1830 Moreau's design for the 'Fontaine-lavoir du Rondey' in **Breurey-lès-Faverney** (70) had also an impluvium with double peristyle: Tuscan stone columns outside, cast-iron supports along the basin.

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OTHER STYLES

The washhouse of **Hattonchâtel** (55) was built in 1921 as part of the rehabilitation of the village by

Mrs Belle Skinner. It was modern since it had heating for the cauldrons and raised basins, accommodating

even women of different length, but it was in an 'old style', neo-Romanesque. The fountain, the two double doors in the front and the three round arches on scrolled capitals at the back have funny heads, and 'dogtooths', chevrons, as thought fitting for a medieval castle village.

Peculiar flat ogee arches that aren't real arches but accolade shapes cut into a monolitic lintel can be seen in **Igny** (70) and **Neuvelle-lès la-Charité** (70). In Igny the 'Grande Fontaine' was designed by Christophe Colard and built from 1849 to 1852, restored 2000. The short facade with the fountain with lion-head spouts and the start of the long *abreuvoir* curving along the long side in front, has three 'accolades' supported by Tuscan columns and a lower moulded door surround adjoining on both sides, the wooden doors leaving an open space for light. The pediment-shaped gables on front and back have a 3-lobbed opening too. One long side has a colonnade of seven 'arches' on six Tuscan columns. **Neuvelle-lès-la-Charité** (70) has the same design for the long side, only square pillars instead of columns. Though no architect is mentioned, nor a date, I cannot but assume that these two buildings are 'family-related'.

The modest washhouse at the Place du Centre in **Mattaincourt** (52) is probably best described as neo-Renaissance in style. The front gable, corner pilasters and round arch surrounds are cream stone, the rest is stuccoed white. Unusual is that the middle arch over the door is wider than the ones of the adjoining windows, and therefore the apex is also higher. Then the niches for the two fountains are again narrower, and lower, rather unclassical. There are four decorative circles under the pediment, itself pierced by a small rose window. Much more stark neo-Renaissance is the coursed stone *lavoir* of **Montmédy** (55) of 1827.

Belverne (70) has a peculiar mix of styles in its 1868 pink sandstone 'temple dédié à la déesse d'eau': the architect Fixer donned it with a Serlian front under a gable, a kind of Moorish arches at one side and chamfered piers.

Courtefontaine (25) has a very unusual ashlar stone washhouse, an elongated octagon, more looking like a church than a *lavoir*. It was built in 1868 over a well-washplace that had the protection of Saint Laurent. His likeness is on top of the fountain, protected by a protruding arch with the date in a quatrefoil,

on very rare Corinthian capitals and columns. In the front there are two more of the latter with the city arms above them. The shape of the arches all around is even more rare: shouldered arches, that give the building the lightness of a market hall under its large hipped roof.

Velesmes-Échevanne (70) has three shouldered arches in the front of the *lavoir* with a round oculus above, but on the open long side only chamfered piers under a long wooden roof beam. It is a design of 1864 by Christophe Colard, another versatile architect of Haute-Saône. **Amanty** (55) has not only round arches but also three unusual shallow ashlar arches in the long side of the 1874 washhouse.

A wonderful example of Arts and Crafts style is very well preserved in **Narbief** (25). A gem in the landscape it is an elongated circle with two spikes on the metal roof with decorated trimmings. There is a stone gateway with the date 1872 between sinuous lines, and metal half-doors. A metal screen of lances and engraved panels surrounds the

actual washplace, while the *abreuvoir* encircles the whole, filled by spouts in the gateposts.

Villotte (88) has three monumental 19thC *lavoirs*: two with sturdy Tuscan columns and one with unusual partly cubic-chamfered windows and door openings, almost art deco.

Tignecourt (88) also has several *lavoirs*. One was destined to become the town hall in 2013, another one on the Rue du Docteur Guenot is too dark and gloomy, almost like an Egyptian tombe temple, to serve modern needs.

La Fontaine au Lion in **Azillanet** (34) must be unique: The water for the simple 19thC open-air *lavoir-abreuvoir* trickles over chalk crustations at the foot of a rough 2m grotto rockery. In a niche near the top a bare baby cuddles a sleeping lion, a sculpture by Jean Buckart. In any garden this fountain would be called a folly.

The round metal *lavoir* of 1878 in **Breuches** (70) with its ten supports under a now glazed-tiled conical roof with ribs looks very much like a band stand, and is referred to as 'kiosque'. Designed by F. Grandmougin it has an *abreuvoir* all

Azillanet (34) la fontaine au lion

the way round and a fountain with a statue of Ceres, goddess of harvest; in this case peculiarly in disguise as a boy with ears of corn in a short tunic.

PETIT PATRIMOINE, RESTORATION

Many *lavoirs* and *fontaines* have monument status, and all are part of French cultural heritage. Of course time has taken its toll of redundant washhouses, but lately the municipalities have taken an interest in protecting, restoring, even rebuilding their *petit patrimoine*. The listed ones can gain up to 50% of restoration expenses subsidised by the republic, unlisted ones a maximum of 10 to 15%. It means that the community needs to chip in for their heritage, and it has proudly done so. La Fondation du Patrimoine has been instrumental in organising expertise and funds.

Most restored *lavoirs* have lost their original function in this day and age, and therefore are just memorials of local history, the local way of life, important places for (female) prowess. In the more monumental ones the municipalities still show a desire to outshine the neighbours. In many cases the wash-houses are thus incorporated in the present day presentation of a place, often described as *fleuri*, decorated with flower displays in baskets or even in the basins, like in **Ilay** (39).

A wonderful example of care for heritage is to be found in **Échenay** (52). In 1857 a cut-stone washhouse was built with five round arches and quoins along the front and the central bay as a rusticated triumphal arch projecting forward and bey-

ond the edge of the hipped roof. But most original was that the middle bay had a transverse hipped roof, ending at the front in a pediment above the cornice, and in the middle of the main roof at a large metal-

clad wooden tower with clock faces and an octagonal bell lantern on top, with bell. It was the only washhouse in France with a clockwork (though **Cruzille** (71) has a sundial high in its 1848 washhouse gable); pure hubris for a village with fewer than 260 inhabitants at the time! It suited them well until in 1942 the tower collapsed. Around 1957, when Échenay had about 110 inhabitants, the *lavoir* was reconstructed without the pediment and the tower; it was decked instead with a boring tiled gabled roof. With the renewed enthusiasm for cultural heritage at the turn of the century Échenay decided to have its washhouse restored to its former glory by heritage-specialised architect Simon Buri, spending €340,000, of which €101,000 for the wooden

clock-tower alone. The original bell was rehung after 62 years, and the inauguration of the renovated monument was in 2004, when there were just under a hundred inhabitants. *Chapeau!*

An other splendidly restored building worth a detour is the Lavoir de l'Hôpital in **Pont-Saint-Esprit** (30). Dating from 1832-33, when the town had just under 5000 inhabitants, it has the grandeur of a Roman temple. Designed by M. Pralong it contains two sets of sunken basins with the public fountain in between under a protruding transept in Serlian style, that is decorated on both facades with two bearded heads of Neptune between tridents and swags, and a dolphin above the keystone. Both ends of the nave have blind round arches and pilasters framing the entrance. It was listed in 2005, and consequently restored in 2014 by SELE, the organisation of artisans specialising in preserving built heritage in France. It now sparkles in harmony with the classical front of the hospital chapel opposite. Visit SELE for after-restoration photos.

The village of **Berviller-en-Moselle** (57) lost its little 1862 *fontaine-lavoir* after one hundred years when mains water was installed and the village square renovated. But in 2004 the town council decided to reconstruct just the fountain and the facade of the washhouse there as a memorial to its heritage; a proper sham building, a folly.

Above: Pont-Saint-Esprit (30) *lavoir* and details before the restoration   ©Alida van Slooten

NEW FUNCTIONS

A new function that seems compatible with the old is the use of the washhouse for the equipment of the firebrigade, access to water being essential. This change of use happened for instance

in **Champs-sur-Yonne** (89), in itself not a monumental building, and in **Demange-aux-Eaux** (55), the large cut-stone 'Lavoir central' with half-circular windows, built 1855-59 to a design by Alexandre Guiot. In **Tucquegnieux** (54) the new *lavoir municipal* of 1912 was combined with the *pompe à incendie* according to the symmetrical facade with a gate for each; it now serves as a spacious bus shelter. A much smaller brick washhouse with stone quoins in **Brasseuse** (60) was, according to the inscription on the lintel, a gift to the

community from Mr and Mrs Viat in 1884, and is now used as a bus shelter too.

Above left and right: Demange-aux-Eaux (89) Lavoir central, firebrigade, 2015   ©PRB

Bottom right: Tucquegnieux (54), *lavoir* /fire station 1912, now bus shelter   ©PRB

In **(Vaux-et-)Chantegrue** (25) the disused *lavoir* was turned into a [museum](#) to house the works of amateur artist Félix Gresset from this village. Since his death in 1993 showcases and empty basins inside display his naive sculptures made of fallen branches, mainly animals and men; a wooden crocodile head rests effectively in the water of the *abreuvoir.*

Several washhouses were so large, and so much part of social life that they now serve as community centre or *salle des fêtes.* I was made aware of this by a prospective bride saying: 'I wouldn't mind getting married in the *lavoir'* (of **Neuville-sur-Ornain** (55)). And when we visited the place I saw her sense: in the meadow along the river lies a large cut-stone *lavoir public* of 1855, designed by the architect M. Demoge to accommodate no fewer than sixty washerwomen. It was in those days a model for wash-house design, with enough light through windows and a lantern over the central bay, and it even had its own wa-tertower. With its subtle sculptured details and Diocle-tian window over the entrance it is now indeed a worthy building for partying.

Above: Neuville-sur-Ornain (55) former washhouse, now *salle des fêtes*   ©PRB

But even less grand washhouses in Meuse have been turned into party halls: The one in **Montzéville** (55) of 1855, the one in **Foameix-Ornel** (55) and the one in **Grimaucourt-en-Woevre** (55) each had a

Left: Moloy (21) *lavoir*, right Renève-le-Château (21) washhouse, now both party hall, both ©Rosy Hamelin

large round-headed window in the short side, but are dark and nondescript buildings on the whole, while in the next village **Hermeville-en-Woevre** (55) the plain 1924 building has its brick-edged windows fil-led in so that it looks derelict. In Côte-d'Or the 6-arch *lavoir* of **Moloy** (21) was transformed into a *salle polyvalente* in 2014, as was the 8-arches one in **Renève-le-Château** (21); the similar 10-arches-4-basins one in **Fleurey-sur-Ouche** (21) was turned into a [par-ty hall](#). The classical washhouse in **Vignot** (55) re-cently became the village community centre.

Right: Vignot (55) village community centre   ©PRB
Below: Venère (70) *lavoir*, now town hall   ©Rosy Hamelin

In **Venère** (70) the neat washhouse was transfor-med into the town hall, and in the hamlets **Clux** (71) and **Barjon** (21) too.

In **Ainvelle** (88) the old *lavoir* was turned into the primary [school](#) for the small village (about 175 inhabitants), but often old washhouses are just used for storage. In **Fleury** (11) the low crow-step-gabled [building](#) is large enough to be the home of the local hunting-association; the only witness of its former use: the small lion-heads that were the spouts for the drinking troughs underneath. The [Lavoir La Vallée](#) in **Prety** (71) with its classical front of 1838 now provides practising room for the local brassband. The 'lavoir public' with an arched frontispiece in the Grande Rue of **Coussey** (88) is today a dining room of the adjacent Auberge du Lavoir, leaving the one of 1860 on the Place Jeanne d'Arc more authentic with

its eclectic cut-stone [front decoration](#) of pilasters, triglyphs, rosettes and a pediment with two dolphins and a trident.

The stone public washhouse of **Vedène** (84), a pitched roof over a row of round arches on piers, was built in 1866, by 1980 abandoned, but in 1989 glazed and renovated into a cultural centre and tourist office. But the tourist information centre of **Gray** (70) operates in a *lavoir* that was built in 1825 in the neighbouring village Mont-le-Franois, and in 1972 dis-

Top: Coussey (88) dining room   ©Alida van Slooten
Above left: Vedène (84) Tourist Information   ©Rosy Hamelin,   right: Gray (70) Tourist Information   ©PRB

mantled and transplanted to Gray as a showpiece for typical architecture of the area. The abandoned 'Fontaine de Marjonzin' of 1768 was rescued from a field in **Étroyes** and reerected in **Mercurey** (71) as an eyecatcher for the office of the mayor, the initiator, in 1988.

The most ambitious transformation I have seen so far was the George Brassens Theatre with 65 seats fitted into the stone-and-red-brick *lavoir* along the river in **Épinal** (88) of 1890.

Left: Mercurey (71) Fontaine de Marjonzin, now eyecatcher   ©PRB
Below: Épinal (88), George Brassens Theatre   ©PRB

Most laundry boats are lost by now, but Le [Bateau-Lavoir](#) Saint-Julien at the Quai Paul Boudet in **Laval** (53), constructed in 1904, was in function until 1970. And in 1985 it was reopened as a municipal museum with such success that in 1993 it was listed as historic monument, and restored.

FONTAINES

The department Haute-Saône (70) has the most washhouses and fountains of France, many of them note-worthy or monumental. The explanation is that there is much water there in sources and streams, and also woods for forestry. During the 19thC a quarter of the revenues of forestry was spent towards a healthy water-situation by many of the mayors, for the benefit of the people and their own popularity. In this area over 2500 *lavoirs* and *fontaines* were built in the 19th century and hundreds of them are still or again the pride of a municipality.

Fontaines in combination with washplaces.

In Haute-Saône (70) remarkably many well-houses are standing free from their washhouse, and they are often older than it. Many only served a roofless washplace, e.g. in **Abelcourt** (1824), **Amblans** (19thC), **Arbecey** (with an unusually high stone finial), **Borey** (Fontaine Saint-Maurice, 1863 by J-B. Colard),

Bussièrres (1819), **Fontenois-lès-Montbozon** (19thC), **Noroy-le-Bourg** (19thC), **Noroy-lès-Jussey** (Rue Nicouchot; with blocked pilasters and curved roof), and **Velorcey** (classical with four arches and two pediments).

Left: Abelcourt (70) ©Rosy Hamelin
Above right: Amblans (70) ©PRB
Right: Fontenois-lès-Montbozon (70) ©PRB
Below left: Autoreille (70) ,middle: Sauvigny-lès-Pesmes (70)
 both ©Rosy Hamelin

Most common is the square type: variations on a stone roof with or without a finial on top, on columns or on four piers connected by round arches over the well or the *fontaine*, like in **Autoreille** (1831), **Sauvigny-lès-Pesmes** (in front of the dark one-round-arch *lavoir*), **Blondefontaine** (with a stone vase

on top), **Nantilly** (at the west washhouse of 1841, blocked piers) and **Cresancey** (19thC, fine grilles on three sides). The well cover near the *grande fontaine-lavoir* in **Velotte**, **Amblans-et-Velotte**, dating from 1825, is a lovely cupola on a square slab on four columns.

Above: Nantilly (70) ©Rosy Hamelin
Left: Cresancey (70) ©Rosy Hamelin
Right: Velotte (70) ©PRB

Sometimes it is more like a small classical temple, like the 'Puisard Napoleon' of 1833 in **Bouligny**, classical with arches, pilasters, rich cornice, four pediments and Napoleon on top. Even a hamlet like **Cintrey** could protect its water tap by a stone well-house with an arch and pediment on three sides; however small in scale, it was the pride of the people. A similar small one with four arches is in **Pomoy**.

Cintrey's of a bigger size one finds in **Oyrières** of 1830 (already mentioned above, page 41), in **Hurecourt**, (an elegant classical pavilion for the separate *lavoir*), and in the 'Fontaine La Violette' at **Passavant-la-Rochère**, where the 'Lavoir de la Charrière' of 1842 has its fountain in a classical aedicule attached to the washhouse, like also at Lavoir Calot in **Mollans** (see page 32).

At the north washhouse of **Nantilly** the classical well-house is attached to the front and incorporated into the design of 1840: three round arches (now blocked to the coursed string all around with screens painted with village professions) in each side and a striking row of modillions all around the roof edge; well restored recently.

A special case is the 'Grande Fontaine' in **Gy** (70) built over a source. The first pavilion built by architect Ridoux, imposed on Gy by the prefect, collapsed at its inauguration. The present one was designed by César Convers and Alphonse Delacroix and erected between 1830 and 1836. A subterranean reservoir first collects the spring water, which is then stored in a watertower in the shape of a little temple with basins of an open air *lavoir* at its foot (in 1870 replaced by one basin with pedestal for a sculpture). The pavilion has four round arches, Doric pilasters, a Doric frieze of triglyphs and roundel metopes, crowned by a pediment with a baby Neptune and water symbols at the front. Particularly sweet are the clumsy giant salamanders crawling head down in each spandrel, as seen from above.

In **Morbihan** (56), Bretagne, I didn't find any monumental washhouses, only interesting well-houses with basins in the open. The best well-houses look much like chapels for the saint that protects the source, e.g. the pre-classic one of 1670 for Saint Brieuc in **Cruguel** (photo at page 7). Well worth seeing, but not follies.

Some well-pavilions elsewhere date from the 18thC, e.g. the red stone *puisoir* of **Fallon** (70) with its curved stone roof-sides, built in 1763-64 after a plan of 1758 by Jean-Charles Colombot, and the

'Source de l'Ermitage' in **Vezet** (70), a square box-like cover for the well with a high, tiled curved roof that the French call a *'toit à impériale'*, designed by architect Attiret end 18thC.

The same Attiret is responsible for the recently restored fountain pavilion of 1765 at the open-air *lavoir* in **Moissey** (39): four arches between corner piers with on the cornice a peculiar hollow roof of four concave sections with a stone cross on top. In old photographs one can see a bust of senator Lefranc on the top that sat there for a century until the cross was put back in 1989.

Étaules (21) has a shallow pyramidal roof over the square *puisoir* of 1774 opposite the 1843 *lavoir* by Auguste Sirodot; bands of rustication and a round-headed niche with an opening into the dark interior. **Sermange** (39) has two 18thC well-pavilions, not a hundred metres apart. La Fontenotte seems the oldest: a sturdy cubicle with heavy piers and a round arch for access north and east, decked with a square slab with a stone roof that resembles a pile of two pillows topped with a pinnacle. The other one, the Grande Fontaine, lost its *lavoir* long ago and is now more like a nympheum in the style of the Wideville (78) grotto; that is with four partly frost-work-rusticated columns under an entablature and segmental pediment in front of a semicircular space. The stone cross on top is often seen on wells and sources in this area; nothing to do with chapels, but with protection.

This rustication is also apparent in the 'Fontaine da la Platière' in **Mutigney** (39). As this well-house and its low 'wing walls' on both sides have bands of rustication, and particularly because there is also in both corners an opening from which stone 'frozen' water drips, similar to at the Royal Saltworks in **Arc-et-Senans** (27), it is assumed that its design might have come from Claude-Nicolas Ledoux himself, late 18thC. Another 18thC source pavilion with open-air wash-place is situated near the castle: just four straight piers with a square roof and a ball in top, but six fluted stone consoles at the corners give it just a bit extra for the washer-women.

Ambonville (52) has a *puisard* near its washhouse; coursed stone, round with four arches cut in and a conical stone roof. It looks venerably old, but is not on a monuments list. Another round one with only one large round-headed opening and a stone cupola topped with a pine cone in the south of the hamlet **Balleure** near **Etrigny** (71) looks just as old, but is only 19thC.

There are a few *fontaines* in unusual shapes. In **Cugney** (70) the source of the Ténise is capped by a wide-shouldered shallow building with two large holes for the water in the front. Its gable is crowned unorthodoxly with a classical aedicule with an empty niche, supported by brackets. Louis Moreau designed this *fontaine* in 1829; the 1835 *lavoir* is by A. Ringuelet.

Montagney (70) has a rotunda with six pillars and stone roof reminiscent of a French beret, designed by Christophe Colard in the 1840s. The '*fontaine* Virey' in **Hortes** (52) is a very slender version of a love temple: six columns carry an entablature with dentils and a high stone cupola topped with an urn, designed by Alphonse Durand and built by the entrepreneur François Loiselet in 1841.

Ornamental *fontaines*

Ornamental *fontaines* or well-houses without a *lavoir* can easier surpass the requirements of utility. It starts with the private *puits* (well, singular), a hole to access water, most commonly a hole with a *margelle*, a stone rim. The water is usually drawn with buckets, and there may be a hoisting beam over the well to make it easier. In the 16thC several Renaissance castles had their private *puits* in the court-yard, embellished with elaborate stone canopies. Particularly in Calvados (department 14) there are a few noteworthy noble well-heads. In **Colomby-sur-Thaon** a private well has a well-hook and a fleur-de-lis on top of the stone roof. In the courtyard of the castle in **Fontaine-Henry** there is an architectural gem of 1537. The French Renaissance well canopy has four Tuscan columns and a Doric entablature, topped with a stone cloister dome engraved with round tile motif and a fleur-de-lis on top. More modest is the well-head of 1632 at the Lecoq estate in **Biéville-Beuville**. The 30-metre-deep well is covered by a low platform, that carries a round canopy of four piers with peculiar scrolls as pilasters and capitals. Round arches and an entablement under the round cupola with a ball in top make it a slender rotunda temple.

Left: Colomby-sur-Thaon (14), photo credit: Pimprenel,   right: Fontaine Henry (14), photo credit: Pimprenel
Below left: Biéville-Beuville (14), photo credit: Pimprenel, right: Trémilly (52), puits de Moïse, photo credit: Brigitte Rebollar

In **St-Vougay** (29) Kerjean castle still prides itself on the 16thC well-head: three Corinthian columns carry a triangular entablature with urns on the corners and a round cupola, topped by a square lantern on four tiny columns. Triangular is rare. The Château de **Trémilly** (52) has several vestiges of the old 16thC Renaissance estate as follies in the park. Among them the peculiar 'puits de Moïse' (Moses), named after the now headless figure on top of the cupola. Three round arches on a triangular base with herms on the corners, all beautifully decorated, and visitable since recent restorations. The villagers of Trémilly had been in search of something that would give their village an authentic character for years. In 2007 they had a hexagonal cover for the old village well with pump erected after a rediscovered old plan: six columns, cornice and stone roof with an over-life-size putto riding a goose in foliage. Indeed an asset to go and admire in this day and age.

François I himself had a fountain built during his stay in **Ruelle-sur-Touvre** (16) in 1526; a round stone cupola on three arches with half-columns between them, a nice tempietto. It was moved several times and is since 1984 on the Place Montalembert.

The same idea, but much taller and more elaborately decorated, one can see in **Autun** (71). The Fontaine Saint-Lazare is designed by Jean Goujon, mannerist artist for King Henri II, in 1543. Three tall fluted Ionic columns between three round pedimented arches, and the same in smaller scale on top of the cupola. In the 1890s it was almost completely reconstructed on demand of the heritage inspector of Autun, the extravagance appreciated beyond the utility of the fountain.

In Gironde (department 33) two towns have a 'puits Henri IV', commemorating a visit of Henri during the battle of Coutras (1587), though the oldest one, at **Coutras** castle, dates of 1551 and was named Henri IV as it had 'witnessed' the battle. Six fluted columns carry a sculpted hexagonal entablature with urns at the corners, and a round cupola with a lantern of four columns and a small cupola on top. This fountain is all that is left of the castle and is now Coutras's main monument. The other one, square with four round arches, a pediment and a round cupola with urn, was in the Belle-Isle domain in **Guîtres** until it was sold to the community, broken down and rebuilt at the town centre in 1983.

In **Obernai** (67) one finds on the pavement in a main street a very elaborate well, the 'Puits aux Six Seaux' (buckets). Constructed in 1579 in the Renaissance-style by a team of craftsmen from Strasbourg to a design by Henri Ottmann, the well was originally painted. Three columns with Corinthian capitals support an octagonal canopy decorated with sculptures by Conrad Miller, inspired by the New Testament. In 1970 it was destroyed by a lorry, but in 1972 completely restored as a historical monument, without water. Nearby in **Boersch** (67) one can admire an other 'Puits aux Six Seaux' of three Corinthian columns with a triangular entablature, topped with little obelisks and three screens of spiral strapwork, dated 1617.

In **Bierry-les-Belles-Fontaines** (89) the village well-house sits in the centre since 1767 with the pump still working; four heavily moulded arches with four flying buttresses from the corners to a cross on top.

In **Villeneuve-lès-Avignon** (30) the former Chartreuse du Val-de-Bénédiction, now a conference centre, has a grand *fontaine* in the Saint-Jean-Baptiste cloister: a sturdy shallow early-18thC cupola, on round arches with Ionic pilasters in between, covers a wide basin of circa 1627.

The well of the Minorites in **Mirepoix** (09), now on private ground, was built in 1659 and adorned with a 14thC Gothic portal, rescued from somewhere else.

Already in Roman times the gift of access to water was a profitable way of political prowess or self-promotion. In France it was used first by abbeys and the nobility, but particularly after the French Revolution by leaders of communities and rich civilians.

In the Parc de la Garenne in **Nérac** (47), a summer retreat for king Henry IV, 'La Fontaine du Dauphin' was built in 1601 to celebrate the birth of Louis, the future Louis XIII. Though it is rather simple, the wall with a basin and three spouts in the middle and an empty niche on both sides, carries on its entablature a plaque with a long text, framed in what looks like a classical fireplace: the grateful villagers needed to know who was their benefactor!

Jean-Baptiste de Machault d'Arnouville, seigneur d'Ermenonville, invited the villagers near his castle to break down their houses and build an ideal new estate along straight lanes, **Arnouville-les-Gonesse** (95), and he paid for the fountain on the central square. This stone fountain of 1745 was designed by Claude Guillot-Aubray: triangular with pediments, swags, frost-work, volutes and a triangular dome with a pine cone, state of the art of the day.

Left: Anduze (30), pagoda fountain   ©Els Boerdijk

In the market-place of **Anduze** (30) there is a colourfully-glazed tiled pagoda roof over a fountain that might also have been used as open-air *lavoir* in the past. Although the tiles are manufactured in Anduze, the design was brought back home by an Anduzian traveller in search of silk worms on his voyage to China. Built at his expense too, in 1648, but the name of this benefactor is not recorded – or not found by Anduzian authorities, although they have a fondness of fountains. The most remarkable ones after the Pagoda fountain are the Fontaine Pradier, a composite column with waterplants and fish on four corners of the capital, as a candle on top of two basins, first half of 19thC, and the Fontaine du Bicentenaire, erected in 1989 to commemorate the French Revolution. The latter is a basin opposite the first French protestant church, with three broken columns, Doric, Ionic and Corinthian, on pedestals on its bottom, as if some archeological remains were exhibited on a plate.

Baulme-la-Roche (21) has a *fontaine* outside the priory grounds for the benefit of the villagers. In style with the 18thC priory gardens the trifling water spout is fitted with a grand canopy of four columns and a classical cornice, topped by a draped stone urn on top of a broken Ionic fluted column, to a design of 1822 by the architect Chauvreiche.

Right: Baulme-la-Roche (21)   ©PRB

M. de Saincy, a rich aristocrat in **Moulins** (03), had a fountain built in 1784 for the benefit of the village. The shape was a very tall fluted column with string bands, and a fleur-de-lis on top. The latter was later replaced by an urn, the length of the column was reduced several times, but on the Place d'Allier it is still a potent erection of over 10m after the latest renovation in 2013. A bronze column fountain of only 2m with an urn on top and a lion-head as spout was given by mayor Bronzac in 1832 to the thankful villagers of **L'Hay-les-Rozes** (94), as can still be read in gilded letters on green plaques besides the tap of this Fontaine Bronzac.

An obelisk as a piece de resistance for a fountain one can still see in **Mauriac** (15): a gift of Jean Baptiste Monthyon to embellish the new boulevard in the 18thC, it was inscribed with a eulogy: praise for saving the inhabitants by his town planning. A higher obelisk is in **Forcalquier** (04): the Four Queens fountain of 1832, not to be confused with the St Michel fountain nearby, a heavily restored pyamidal mount of sculpture of 1512, Gothic in shape and character. Another obelisk was erected already in 1676 by archbishop Mgr Pierre de Bonzy: the Fontaine Bistan in **Narbonne**

(11). This disappeared somewhere in the 19thC, but in 2004 a new Fontaine Bistan was erected as ornament in the square, only on a much larger scale than the original: an obelisk on stone balls on a high pedestal. With turn-taps instead of the constant flow from three stone dolphins in a wall fountain at the feet of the old Episcopal palace of Narbonne. Blond (87) has a pyramidal *fontaine* of 1820, with a cock as weathervane on top.

Libourne (33) is a *bastide*, a fortified town. Its central square has a tall round fountain. Mayor Raymond Fontémoing ordained it (to replace an older one) in 1830, to a design by M. Chayrou, engineer captain and member of the city council. It can be called austere: coursed stylobate with four rosette taps over small basins and a frieze of meander pattern. Above, as decoration, only a rotunda of five unadorned arches and a shallow cupola on a projecting cornice. Perhaps it was too military, as its removal was agreed by the municipality in 1874. But in 1975 it was reerected by mayor Robert Boulin. In relation to the upgrading of the centre the present mayor Philippe Buisson proposed in 2014 to remove the fountain again, but the people decided in a vote (75.2% for, 24.8% against) that the fountain is part of their treasured heritage, so had to stay put. How times are changing!

From top to bottom: Mauriac (15), Fontaine Monthyon   photo credit: Pymouss, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0
Forcalquier (04), Fontaine Saint-Michel   photo credit: Michele1x2, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0
Narbonne (11), wall fountain   photo credit: Franek N, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0
Libourne (33) fountain on central square   ©Pierete

The water quality of **Evreux** (27) was deplorable in the 19thC until in 1876 the rich widow Adélaïde Janin bequeathed a fortune to the town to set up a healthy water system for all Evreux; a water treatment building, clean running water, taps, and as visual testament of her donation in front of the town hall a large ornamental fountain in neo-Renaissance style by architect Charles Genuys, inaugurated in 1882 and recently restored. It carries her name, and those of her father and her husband, the sources of her wealth. The sculptures, water symbols and a female figure representing the river Eure, are by the best sculptor of the area, Emile Décorchemont. Top of the bill.

Triaucourt (55) erected in 1834 the 'Monument-fontaine' in memory of Nicolas Eloi Lemaire, Latinist, publisher and president of the Meuse General Counsel. And appropriate it was! On a square plinth with the taps is a pedestal with a white stone bust of Lemaire and the dedication, protected by a canopy of four columns and a complete Doric entablature and pediment, beautifully detailed, even on the underside. Two columns have a composite capital, the others are just block capitals, perhaps waiting to be finished. A very similar Doric temple on the Fontaine Royal in **Souvigny** (03) doesn't house

a bust, but a street lantern for the thirsty at all hours.

Chambéry (73) sports an Elephants Fountain, This was erected in 1838 by the grateful citizens of Chambéry in honour of their fellow citizen Général Benoît de Boigne who died in 1830. The water gushes into a basin from four bronze elephant's trunks. Above them we see memorial texts and sculptures, and lots of trophies around an Egyptian-style column. On top: Général de Boigne himself, who had made his fortune in India mainly, and left much of it to the city of Chambéry.

In **Bar-le-Duc** (55) a fountain, designed by the civil engineer Mr Montluisant, was erected in 1756 while Stanislas Duke of Bar was in power; the open pediment over the rounded fountain niche shows the duke's crowned arms with foliage. This tall fountain was out of use already in 1781, as its water, deriving from neighbouring Popey, was too faul to drink. According to detailed inscriptions on the building it was restored and enlarged in 1894 when Ch. Busselot was mayor, in cooperation with a Parisien committee under the direction of Mr Pierre Giffard, but not as a fountain, but a monument. The concave wall at the corner of Rue du Bourg and Rue André Maginot was articulated in a baroque way by pilasters in the composite order. By public subscription the disused pumphouse in the niche was turned into a high pedestal for a bronze putto leaning on a bike with pedals: to Pierre and Ernest Michaux, inventors [in 1861] and promotors of the (push)bike with foot-pedals by the grateful cyclists of France. For a while the Michauxs were also thanked for the motor cycle, but this 1970 anachronism was corrected in 2011.

Below: Langres (52), Blanchefontaine park and details ©PRB   Above: Bar-le-Duc (55), disused fountain   ©PRB

In **Langres** (52) the Blanchefontaine walk, a park avenue lined with quadruple rows of trees, was planted in 1657 and named after a new fountain at the end. In 1678 this Blanche Fontaine, housed in a grotto, was extended with a suite of a new fountain with an overflowing bowl, a basin with a jet and flights of steps down a slope. The architect Claude Forgeot and the sculptor Clément Jayet completely restructured the first grotto between 1755 and 1758; the large apse was covered in rocaille, stones and sculpture, the main feature being a frog that gave the fountain its new name, Fontaine de la Grenouille. At one of the stone benches down at the lowest basin Denis Diderot, famous son of Langres, is believed to have enjoyed this result of landscape enhancement so much that he wrote in a letter of 1759 to Sophie Volland that here he could admire 'the most beautiful landscape in the world'. It is all still there.

The Fontaine Napoléon in **Agde** (34) was built to impress Napoleon on his Spanish campaign in 1802: a grey stone block with Ionic columns on the corners under a heavy entablature, and in the centre a plaque with the date, and the names of the town's mayor, its councillors and of the architect Ph Cassas. Napoleon never came.

Self-promotion of **Limoges** (87) resulted in a sizable colourful fountain in the town hall gardens, constructed in 1893. Pink granite, bronze, porcelain and enamel were used to symbolise the main trade of Limoges in arts-and-crafts basins, vase, patterns and figures, all products of the Paris and Limoges schools of design.

Paris (75) also has some interesting fountains. One that every visitor must have seen is the Fontaine des Innocents near the Centre Pompidou, the oldest ornamental fountain erected in Paris, resembling a three-dimensional triumphal arch with a small pediment on all four sides, and a cupola with finial on top. The water flows from a bowl under the canopy down four flights of eight steps into a shallow basin at street level. The reliefs with water-carrying ladies by Jean Goujon between the double fluted pilasters on the corners are iconic for French Renaissance art. Few people know that this fountain started life round the corner as a VIP-stand, at the solemn royal entry of King Henry II into Paris in 1549. Artists were commissioned to construct elaborate monuments, mostly temporary, along his route, and this one by Pierre Lescot, originally called Fountain of the Nymphs, was built along the Saints Innocents Cemetery wall at the corner of Rue Saint-Denis. One bay at one side and two on the other, it had a high plinth with waterspouts at street level, and above that a covered loggia for local notables. It stayed after the procession, and was turned into a residence with windows and a chimney for a while. When in 1787 the cemeteries were moved to outside the cities for health reasons, the fountain lost its back wall, was saved by public demand and moved to the middle of the new market place on a high pedestal with spouting lion-heads and basins at all four sides. The fourth side for the now free-standing fountain was made to match by Augustin Pajou. Only in 1858 it was put in its present position in the Place Joachim-du-Bellay with the water-stairs instead of the basins, its name reminding us of its starting position, and not referring to the virginal status of Goujon's nymphs, as most people seem to think.

The Egyptian Fountan at 52 Rue de Sèvres is also known as Fontaine du Fellah after the Egyptian water-carrier, older brother of the one in Mauvages (70), by Pierre-Nicolas Beauvallet. It was built in 1806 as one of fifteen fountains constructed by Napoleon to provide fresh drinking water for the population of Paris, and to commemorate his military campaigns, here particularly his Egypian one. It was the work of architect François-Jean Bralle, the chief engineer of the water supply for the city of Paris, who was also responsible for reconstructing the Medici Fountain in the Jardin du Luxembourg in 1811.

This Medici Fountain was originally designed and built for Marie de Médici, widow of Henry IV, by her Italian fountain expert Tommaso Francini around 1630 in Mannerist style. It was more a grotto wall then: three niches and four columns in front, all heavily rusticated, with on top of the entablature the Medici arms under a segmental pediment, with on the shoulders of the grotto water-nymphs pouring frozen water from pots. When Haussmann transformed Paris in the 19thC, the grotto was moved out of the way, and sculptures added in 1866: cyclops Polyphemus, large in the middle grotto, looks down on Galathea and Acis making love. Another removed fountain, the neoclassical Fontaine de Léda of 1809 by Bralle, was attached to the back of the grotto in 1858.

Drinking water for Paris from public fountains has been a challenge for the court as well as for the city. In the 18thC no fewer than thirty fountains were built, the largest of them in the Rue de Grenelle (75, VII), south of the Seine. This 10m-high Four Seasons Fountain is an accolade-shaped building: a high plinth

with a protruding water-reservoir in the middle, and a curved wing with emblematic season sculptures in niches and cartouches on both sides. Personifications of Paris and flanking rivers Seine and Marne sit high above frost-work, in front of the central Ionic portico, all done by the royal favourite sculptor Edmée Bouchardon between 1739 and 1747. A large tablet in the portico explains that this fountain was built to provide water to Parisians, and to advertise the benevolence of king Louis XV to the people of Paris. It was a pity that all this sculptural exuberance presided over just four sea-monster-mask spouts at the bottom.

In the 19thC there was a demand for drinking fountains in the streets and squares. By public subscription two of the first cast-iron *fontaines* in Paris, designed by the sculptor André Martin, were installed in the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Martin in 1846. The pair gave water from a mask in the base, but the real attraction was the eye-catching pair of mermaids or mermen, carrying a table top with a sturdy putto with a fish or a swan. The one with the fish survived, and was in the 1970s moved to the public Jardin Villemin. About thirty of these *fontaines* were cast and dispersed over France. One with the swan rests in **Orleans** (45) at the Place Sainte-Croix, one with the fish in the Botanical gardens there. This classical model is regarded as the inspiration of a more common design in cast-iron, the Wallace fountain.

The rich philanthropist Richard Wallace, founder of the London Wallace Collection and several follies at Folie Bagatelle in Paris (see FiF;131), gave his name to a whole collection of street drinking fountains that he financed for Paris. Designed by Charles-Auguste Lebourg, and cast from 1872, the most common is the one with four caryatids on a pedestal, holding a dome over their heads. In Paris alone there are 95 of this model, and until the 1930s they have spread all over the world. There is even one at the Wallace Collection as a garden building. Related models have four naked putti, or four columns under the cupola, all classical in detail. Most are painted dark green, but in the 2010s some got a facelift by bright red, yellow or blue paint. Unfortunately hardly any gives drinkable water nowadays; they are just decorative in style.

Andernay (55) has the only fountain on a natural source in Lorraine. We happened to spot it when passing through the little village because it shone so brightly while the restorer was finishing it. Erected in 1840 by architect Châron and sculptor Jean-Joseph Caveneget it is a tall square box with a little door at the back of the podium. The corners have Corinthian pilasters, block-rusticated with frost-work. Three sides have blind round arches, the front has a niche with a shell and some rocks as background for a crowned but naked Neptune, with his trident forcing a dolphin underfoot to spout water into a fluted bowl, from where it streams through a lion-head into the larger basin on ground level. The entablature is beautifully detailed and topped by acroteria and a floral cupola with a vase, with a nestling swan. Surprising elegance in a rural village!

One would sooner expect this sort of luxury tap in a spa town like **Bourbonne-les-Bains** (52) where people could take healing warm waters from Roman times onwards. And indeed there had been several fountains, but only one is still standing as a monument. It is a square kiosque with blocked pilasters on the corners and a lovely stone cupola with finial, that is 'inserted' into a Doric temple of eight columns for sheltering clients while purchasing water. Very detailed entablature and gargoyles, but a flat roof, built 1867.

Left: Bourbonne-les-Bains (52)   ©PRB

Above left: Enghien-les-Bains (95), Source du Roi, 1934, photo credit: Lionel Allorge, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0
Above right: Vichy (03), Souce des Célestins, 19thC, photo credit: Jojovichy, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 3.0
Right: Dax (40), thermes, photo credit: MJvST, Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0
Below: Alvignac (46), La Source Salmière, all pictures ©Paul Godfrey

In many thermal spas like **Vichy** (03) and **Enghien-les-Bains** (95) the clientele needed to be entertained by casinos, parks and pavilions, and interesting spring *fontaines*. The hot springs or Nèhe well in **Dax** (40), already a spa in Roman times, were dressed up in 1814 to resemble a Roman bath with arcades and no roof. In **Alvignac** (46) the main pavilion

of the Miers-Alvignac firm, La Source Salmière, was built in almost Art Deco style between 1904 and 1906 in the Hennebique concrete technique (see FiF;168), with a raised dome above a projecting roof over the source, between two colonnades. In our opinion a worthy garden building. After a restoration of eight years the pavilion was inaugurated on 19 June 2016, and the waters can be had again, from a tap on a cast-iron wall fountain.

Ranchot (39) was in an iron industry area. No wonder that they produced, probably around 1860, a lovely metal roof over their well with hoisting wheel and all: a lovely overhanging octagonal pagoda roof resting on eight slender fluted candelabrum poles with connecting arches under the roof. It lost its washbasins long ago. In a garden it would certainly have folly status.

Left: Ranchot (39)   ©Rosy Hamelin

Another local folly is the recently restored Cow Fountain's cement cow in **Villotte-devant-Louppy** (55). It was donated in 1903 by the maker of it, Alcide Bister, to his village of birth. An amateur, he also moulded two lions and another cow as eye-catchers for his garden in nearby **Revigny-sur-Ornain** (55).

Below: Villotte-devant-Louppy (55) Cow Fountain in 2013 and 2015   ©PRB,   Bottom: Héricourt (70)   ©PRB


I fear that we would find many more nice examples of folly-worthy stuff if I would continue my research longer, but here I put an end to it, however carried away I am. We mustn't exhaust or bore the readers further. This article with the proposed pictures would have filled a Follies journal of the usual size completely. We have had to cull it into just a chapter in our *Follies in France III* (FiF;257-270), and we hope that the readers of this full version on the Folly Fellowship's website have satisfied their extended curiosity for the subject beyond just follydom. I want to thank all the contributors of pictures and information, and you, readers, for your patience! I hope you enjoyed it as much as I enjoyed composing it.
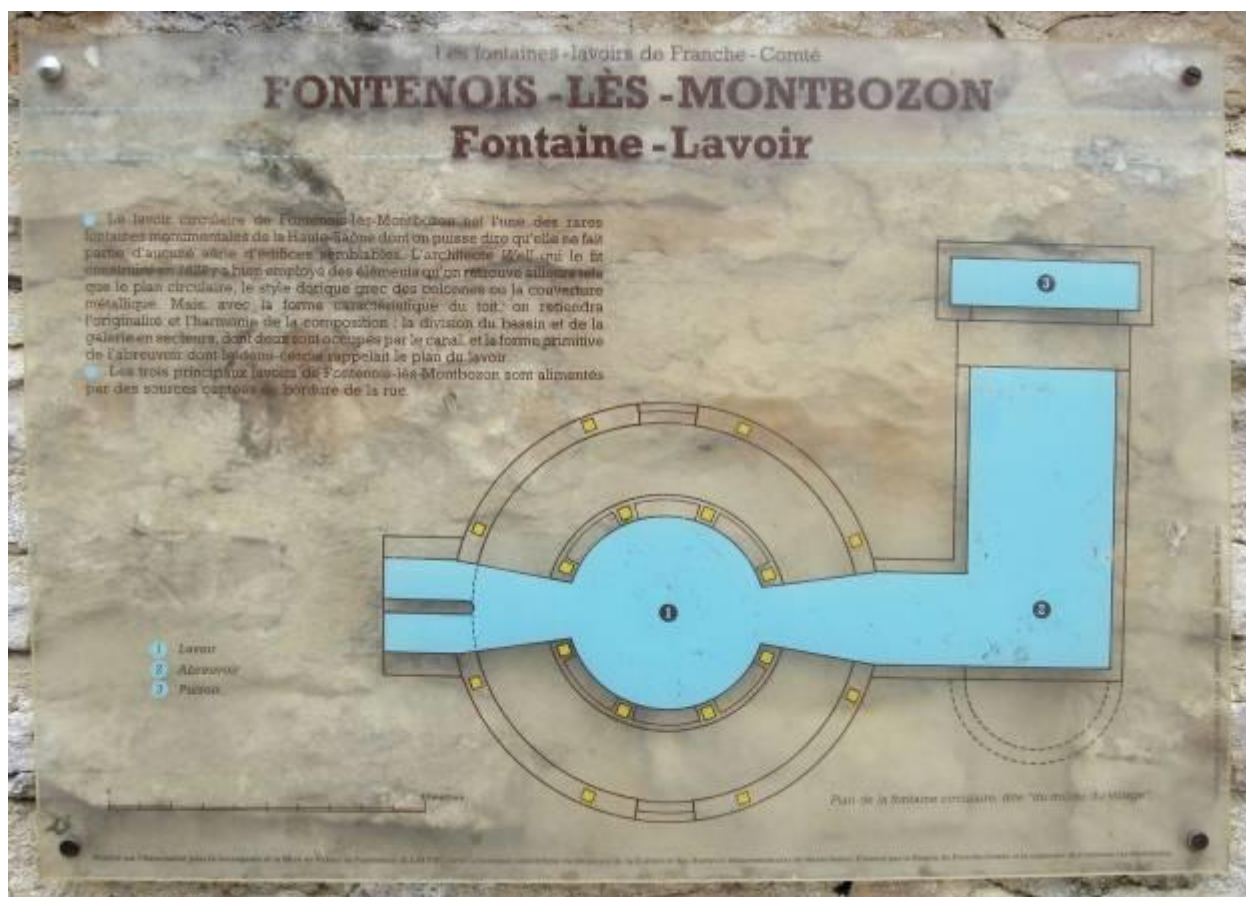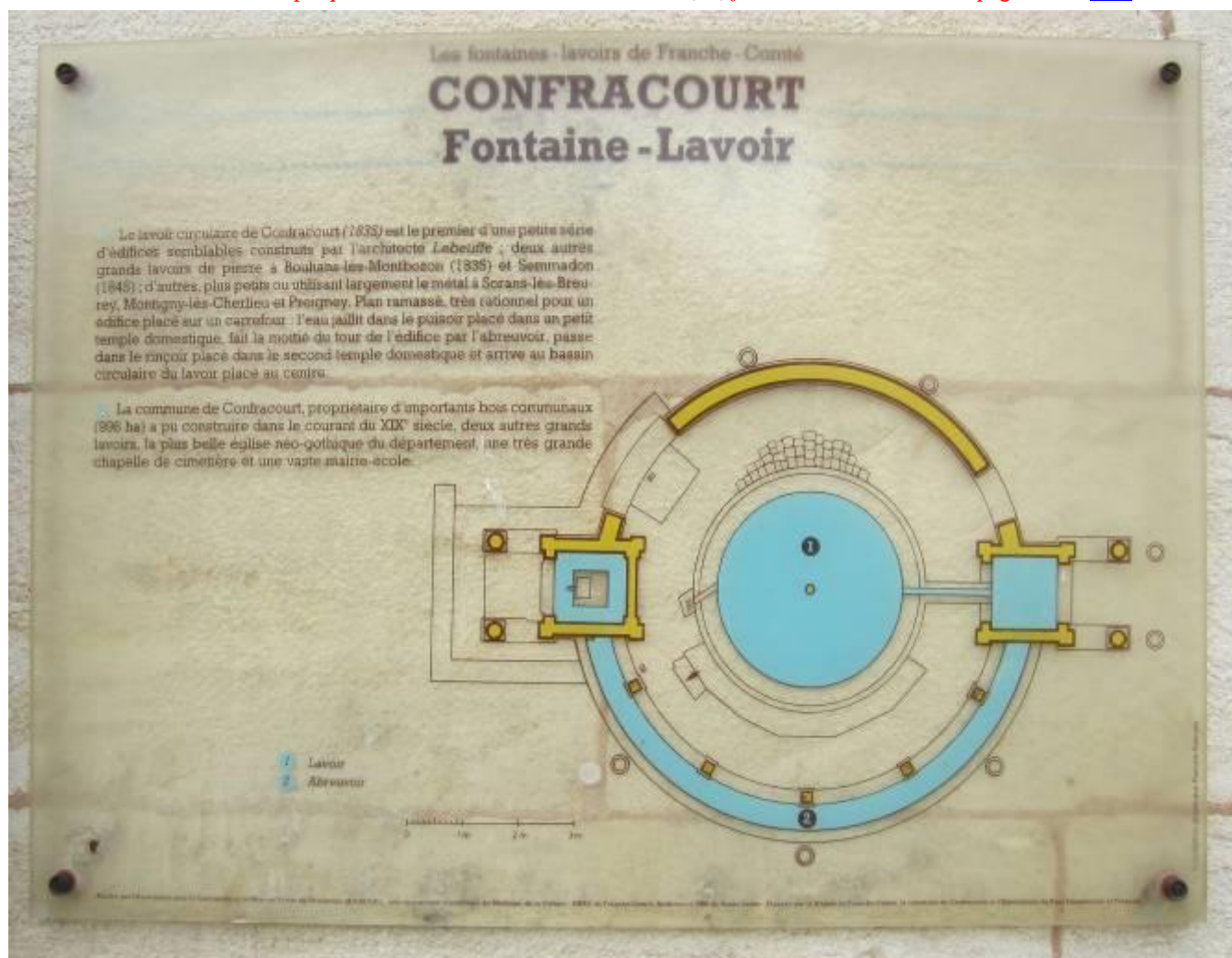
Eindhoven, Februari 2017

EXTRAS
a few information plaques, photographed on site by PRB
linked to lavoirs in the text
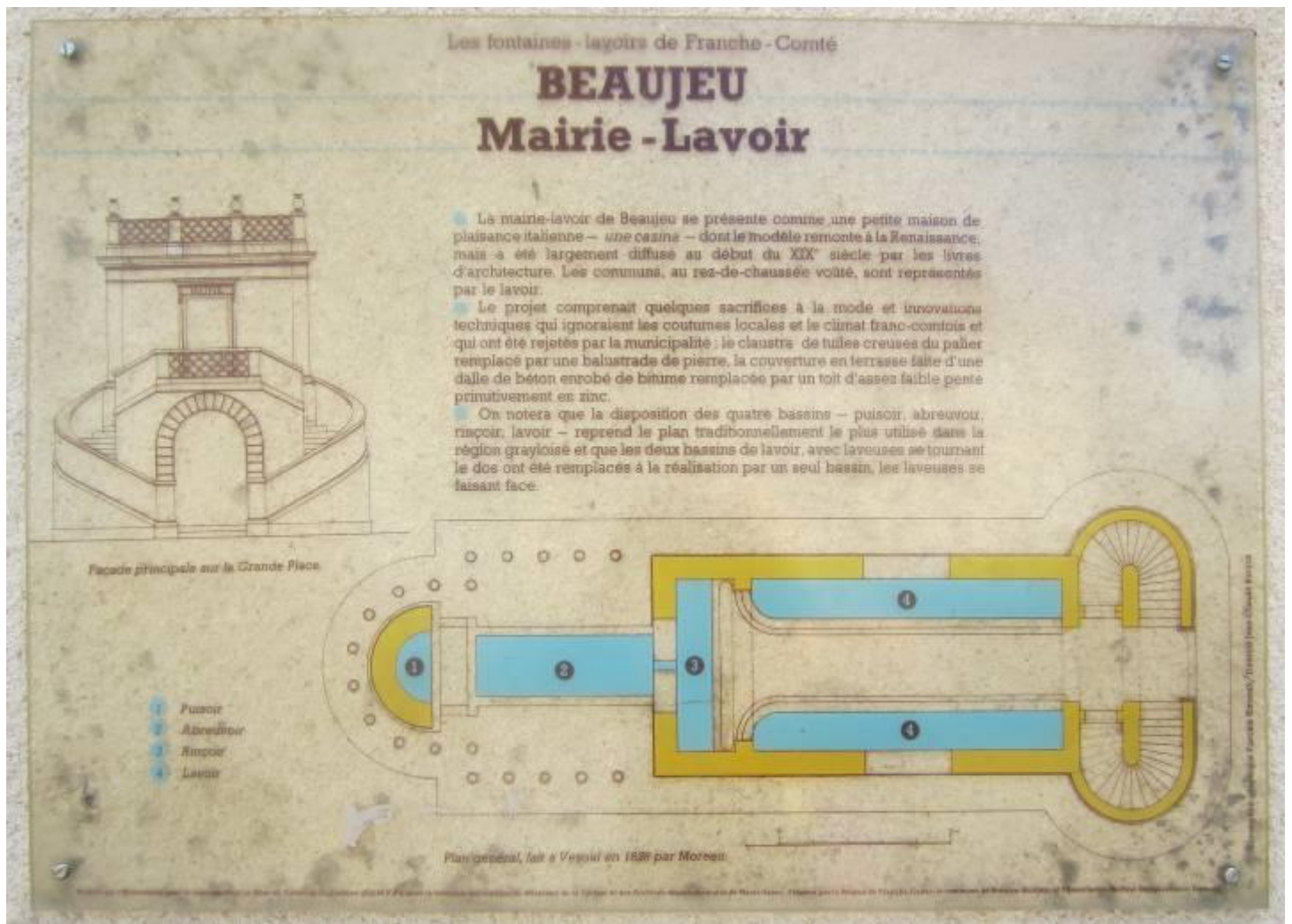
Information plaque at the Beaujeu (70) *mairie-lavoir.* Back to page: click here.

Above: Information plaque at the Fontenois-lès-Montbozon (70) *fontaine-lavoir*. Back to page: click here.

Above: Information plaque at Confracourt (70) *fontaine-lavoir*, a circular Haute-Saône scheme. Back to page: click here.