

# Secrets de village... Carnoules

Distance: 950 m • Start: 19 mars 1962 car park.

In the Middle Ages, the fortunes of the community of Carnoules were determined by the castrum of Château Royal. After it was destroyed in 1393, it would be over one hundred years before the region was repopulated: the village of Carnoules was established as a parish in 1560, on the site of a hamlet further to the west. This railway workers' town still rings with the commotion of travellers waiting at the station buffet for their train to leave; a not-so-distant time when most journeys were made by rail.



**1 Rue sous les moulins:** this street takes its name from two flour mills that are believed to have stood here. They were served by a canal that has now been covered over.

**2 The former monks' garden:** in the 17th century, the monastery and the church belonged to the Augustine monks of St Maximin. A terraced garden used to stretch out below the buildings, in the area now given over to the car park and the public garden. Protected from the Mistral wind, the monks could grow citrus fruit here. Fourteen apiers or bee walls can still be seen in the north wall of the car park: niches to protect the hives from the wind and rain. On winter nights, the apiers release the heat stored by the brickwork during the daytime hours of sunshine. The monks would collect honey from them, as well as wax for candle-making.

**3 The oil mill:** believed to be ancient, and extensively rebuilt around 1820 before eventually being converted into an exhibition hall and library. The enormous 'chapels' into which the presses were set can still be seen through the windows. A washing fountain built in the 19th century stands in front of the mill.

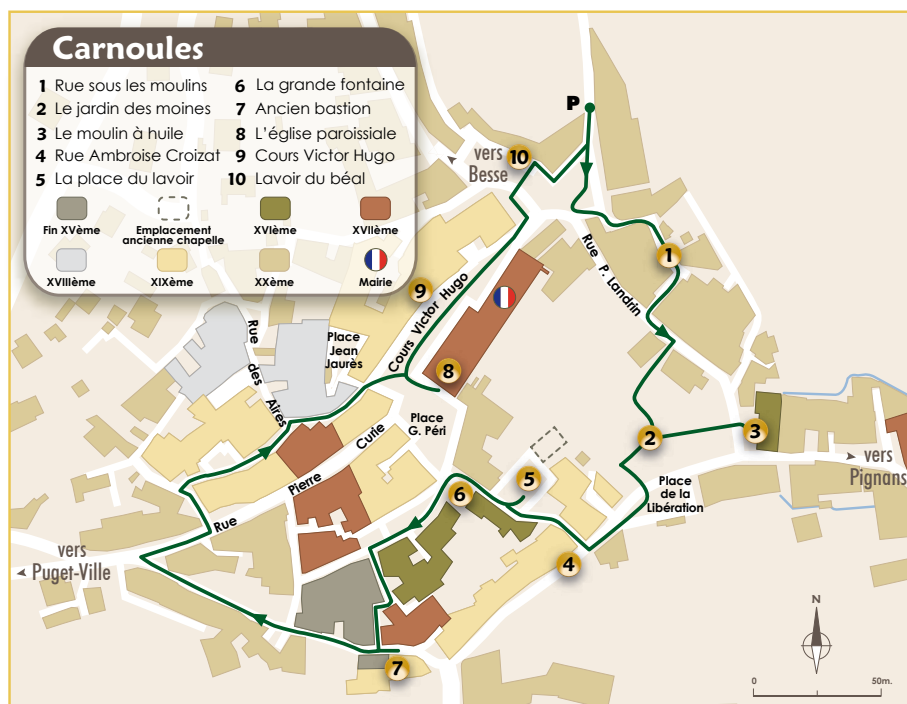
**4 Rue Ambroise Croizat:** the old 'low road', following the route of the late-15th-century entrance to the village.

**5 La place du lavoir:** in the 16th century this square, the site of the public washing place or lavoir, also held a chapel built by a brotherhood of penitents. When it was demolished, a number of graves were exposed in the open space around the building. Could this have been the original village's cemetery? The stones of the entrance gate can still be made out in the eastern wall beside the lavoir. The chapel must have been too cramped for more than a few worshippers.



**6 La grande fontaine:** the 'great fountain', the oldest in the village, is fed by a spring and was undoubtedly built in the 17th century; the date of 1881 marked on it represents a period of restoration.

**7 A house known as le château:** a former bastion controlling access to the burg, as entry at that time was from the east, from the direction of Pignans. This small fort is presumed to have played a primarily psychological role in en-



couraging the repopulation of the village, with a small garrison ensuring the safety of the residents. The thickness of the walls can be seen in the openings of the upper part of the façade. The Rue Jeanne d'Arc leading from there used to be known as 'Rue du 15ème siècle', this name confirming that construction of the new village began in this sector.

**8 The parish church:** is believed to have replaced as parish church a very old priory, Notre-Dame de Deyssia, which no longer exists but is thought to have stood outside the walls at the foot of the medieval castrum abandoned at the end of the 14th century. The date shown on the façade represents a restoration.

The date of consecration (1654) is inside, above the gallery. Agreements made between the community and the monks place the date of construction at 1625. This 29-year difference is explained by the slow progress of the building work, interrupted by a major dispute in 1633: they had forgotten to allow for the tower!

Interlinked with the church, the former Augustinian monastery was converted into a town hall in the 19th century. The tower is crowned by a wrought-iron bell tower, and supports a 225kg bell that rings F-sharp.

**9 Cours Victor Hugo:** this courtyard is thought to stand on the site of the original hamlet that was burnt and destroyed in 1393.

**10 Lavoir du béal:** a magnificent example of a running-water, kneeling public washing place, dating from the 19th century. It was used until 1969.

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