

VENDEE CHURCHES	
<p>Abbaye des Fontenelles</p> <p>Notre Dame</p> <p>At St André D'Ormay on the West edge of La Roche sur Yonne</p>	<p>This abbey is in ruins and is part of a farm. The church still has its vaults. It is large with transepts; the South one is collapsing. The apse is flat ended and has a number of tall windows. The Chapter House is also in a state of near collapse but it has fine vaults and good foliage capitals.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 170 to 172</p>
<p>Abbaye de L'Isle Chauvet</p> <p>Notre Dame</p> <p>At Bois de Cène in the North</p>	<p>This abbey was founded by Benedictines in the mid XIIc; it is mostly in ruins. The church has a fine West end; the door has good capitals. Above it is a large window that is off-set to the South. The nave is broad, with the remains of some interesting capitals. The transept and apse were also lit by large windows.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 60 and 61</p>
<p>Abbaye St Pierre de Maillezais</p> <p>North-west of Niort and South of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>Only the Western half of the abbey and one of the cellars were Romanesque. The remainder of the church was Gothic and the remaining monastic buildings were XVc. The church was used as a stone quarry in the XVIIIc and is now a ruin. But some fine XIc capitals are in the narthex and there are XIIc capitals on the remaining walls of the nave.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'L'Abbaye de Maillezais' and 'Poitou Roman' pages 32 and 33 and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 113 to 124</p>
<p>Angles</p> <p>Notre Dame</p> <p>West of Luçon</p>	<p>This church, an Augustine foundation, has been heavily restored, but retains some XIIc characteristics. It was founded in the XIc and has a long rounded apse and rounded side chapels. There is a cupola over the crossing. This was all early XIIc. The first bay of the nave was late XIIc and the second bay early XIIIc. The vaults are Gothic. Traces of the original West</p>

	<p>façade show through the XVIIc rebuild. In the South transept are four Catherine wheels and two original capitals. The remainder is recent (XIX/XXc). There is a bare, formless crypt below the nave.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 41 to 44</p>
<p>Aubigny St Laurent West of Lucon</p>	<p>This church has a single nave. The vaults and windows are in gothic style. The choir is long. The West door is stepped, with crude sculpture of heads and foliage in granite. There is a line of similarly crudely carved modillions over the door. The façade has similarities with that at Mouthiers les Maufaits, but this one is less well executed. Over the crossing is a modern spire.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes en Vendée' pages 48 to 50</p>
<p>Beauvoir sur Mer St Philbert East of Ile de Noirmouthier</p>	<p>This was once the church of a XIIc priory. It has been rebuilt in Gothic style. There is a capital of a head in foliage at the crossing</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 52 to 55</p>
<p>Benet St Eulalie North-west of Niort</p>	<p>Of the original church only the West façade is XIIc; the porch is not. The remainder is XVc. The façade has blind arches on two levels. On the upper level the central arch is particularly fine. The left bay on the lower level has a damaged horseman (Constantine?). On the upper level the outer bays have symbolic decoration but on the central one there is a lot of detail.</p> <p>See leaflets, 'Poitou Roman' pages 32 and 33 and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 56 to 59</p>

<p>Cézais St Hilaire North of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This church is of XIIc origin. It has a wide, single nave with three high windows on the North side and one on the South. The vaults are of timber. The West façade is plain and from the XIXc. The choir is rounded and has a large Gothic central window and a XIIc one to the South. There is a square tower to the North of the crossing. The upper parts of it have been rebuilt. There is a XIIc window low on its East wall.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 65 to 67</p>
<p>La Caillere St Jean L'Evangeliste North of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This church, of XIIc origin, has been very heavily restored and it is difficult to see what is or is not from the original church. The nave is Romanesque in style, with a barrel vault; the choir is Gothic. The West door is between two blind arches. The capitals are modern. The nave has very narrow side passages and is divided by large columns with capitals both at the top and at the three metre height. These depict monsters, heads and one has a lot of fish.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 62 to 65</p>
<p>La Chaise Giraud Notre Dame North-west of the Vendée</p>	<p>The XIIc church has been entirely rebuilt except for the West facade. The door is stepped with fine, but worn capitals on columns. There are two side tympanums, one of the Annunciation, the other of the Magi.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 69 to 71</p>
<p>La Chaise le Vicomte St Nicolas</p>	<p>This is a large church that is built of granite. Only the nave with its two side aisles and the crossing remain. The apse and transept have been destroyed, though a small column and capital remain on the ruined wall of</p>

<p>East of La Roche sur Yon</p>	<p>the north transept. The West door is stepped and has capitals with simple carvings of acanthus leaves. The nave is divided by large pillars and columns. Those near the crossing have interesting carvings of beasts and birds. The nave is lit by large windows in the side aisles and windows at the top of the central nave. The crossing had a cupola on trompes; it is now timber vaulted.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 71 to 75</p>
<p>Chalais St Pierre North-west of Niort</p>	<p>Only the apse of this church is XIIc; it has three windows; the central one has two capitals: one with a head set above interlacings and a siren. Above is a capital with two heads uttering foliage. There are modillions including a very explicit bottom-shower. On the North side of the apse is a small capital with a head with 'straw' in its mouth.</p>
<p>Chassy L'Eglise North-east of Fontenoy-le-Comte</p>	<p>This is a former Grandmont priory, which is largely intact, though only the church is XIIc. The church is set on the South side of the cloister and the monastic buildings. It has a single nave with a tall window in the West wall with porch 'bosses', an almost plain south door and a rounded apse with four more tall windows. There is no decoration. The monastic buildings, though later in date are well preserved.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 203 to 205</p>
<p>Curzon St Romain South-west of the Vendée</p>	<p>The single naved church has a transept and an apse that is slightly off line. It was rebuilt in the XIXc and lacks character. But the North chapel and the area of the crossing are XIIc. Below is a crypt that dates from the late XIc. It has columns and fine capitals including of a horse head and human heads.</p> <p>See special leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes</p>

<p>Fontaines</p> <p>North-west of Niort and South-west of Fontenoy-le-Comte</p>	<p>en Vendée' pages 84 to 87</p> <p>This is a XI/XIIc church. It has a stepped West door set between two blind arches. The door and both arches have decorated arcs of foliage and geometric patterns. The capitals depict mythical monsters. Above the door are four blind arches with simple capitals. Parts of the nave are XIc; the remainder of it and the transepts are XIIc; the apse is Gothic. There are modillions on the South wall of the nave that depict heads. Inside, in the nave are more capitals depicting lions and foliage.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 91 to 92</p>
<p>Foussais-Payre</p> <p>St Hilaire</p> <p>North-east of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This church has a XIc West facade. The rest of the church was a ruin by 1601 and it was then rebuilt. Fortunately the West façade was retained. To the left is a signed Descent from the Cross with Mary and Joseph of Aremathea carrying Christ and watched by Mary Magdalene and Nichodemus. On the right is Christ showing himself to Mary Magdalene and Christ eating with Simon the Pharisee. On the central arch Christ sits between the symbols of the four Evangelists, below which are a host of figures. Amongst them are musicians, acrobats, a soldier etc. Above them are modillions including one of an elephant. It is a fortified church.</p> <p>See leaflet, 'Poitou Roman' page 36 and 'Eglises et Abbayes Roman en Vendée' pages 95 to 98</p>
<p>Lucon</p>	<p>The Cathedral is mostly Gothic, but the North transept has fine Romanesque arches with three small tympanums. All have been defaced to a greater or</p>

	<p>lesser extent by the Huguenots.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendee' pages 106 to 109</p>
<p>Mareuil sur Ley</p> <p>St Sauveur</p> <p>North of Lucon</p>	<p>This XIIc church was heavily restored in the late XIX/early XXc. Apart from the upper line of blind arches on the apse which are in the style of the old church, only the narthex has the 'feel' of the original church. There is a long nave with large windows; the apse is rounded and also has a large window. The stonework is attractive. In the narthex are two interesting, but damaged capitals.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 128 to 131</p>
<p>Maille</p> <p>Notre Dame</p> <p>West of Niort</p>	<p>Only the west facade of this church is Romanesque. There is a stepped door between two blind arches. The arches and capitals are very eroded but, none the less, the details can be discerned. The arches of the door have lions eating men's heads, musicians and Virtues trampling Vices. The capitals depict lions and griffins. There is, on the left, a frieze of interlacings and stars. The right arch has the base of a statue and, to the left, an angel.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 111 to 113</p>
<p>Maillezais</p> <p>St Nicolas</p> <p>North-west of Niort and South of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This parish church, with a single nave, is of XII c origin. It has a particularly fine West façade with a stepped door between two blind arches with statues of St Nicolas (?) and St Martin (?). Above them is a line of interesting modillions and a central window between two more blind arches. The exterior of the apse also has fine, but probably restored modillions and capitals.</p>

<p>Mouthiers les Mauxfaits</p> <p>St Jacques</p> <p>West of Fontenay-le-Comte and Luçon</p>	<p>See leaflet, 'Poitou Roman' page 37 and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 124 to 127</p> <p>This church has a single nave and a flat ended apse. There is a modern door on the North wall of the nave. The West façade has some similarities with that at Aubigny, but here it is finer. A large stepped door is between two blind arches. Above is a line of worn modillions and two stubby windows. It is built using granite.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romane en Vendée' pages 138 to 141</p>
<p>Nieul-sur-Autise</p> <p>St Vincent</p> <p>North-west of Niort and South-east of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>Of the original XIc church only the South transept remains. The nave with its two side aisles was built in the XIIc. The aisles are separated from the nave by leaning columns. The church was severely damaged during the Wars of Religion; as the result three large buttresses were built against the South wall. The West façade of the church comprises a fine stepped door which has four arches with fine carvings between two blind arches; these also have fine sculptures. Above are three decorated windows. The rest of the façade and the bell tower are XIXc, as is the apse which is neo-Romanesque. The Augustine cloisters are the most complete in the West of France.</p> <p>See leaflet, 'Abbaye Royale de Nieul sur Autise', 'Poitou Roman' page 39 and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 142 to 147</p>
<p>Noirmouthier</p> <p>St Philbert</p> <p>Ile de Noirmouthier</p>	<p>Only the crypt is of interest. It is Carolingian though has been extensively restored. It has two long lines of thick, stubby columns that are topped by plain capitals. The tomb for the body of St Philbert is there but the body was removed first to St Philbert-du-Grandlieu and thence to Tournus (71) to escape</p>

	invaders.
Oulmes Notre Dame North-west of Niort	<p>This XIIc church has a fine West façade with geometric decoration and good capitals depicting birds and animals. It has a single nave with gothic vaults. The north transept has a XIIc rounded side chapel; the South one is XVIc. The North door has good decoration and a capital extolling medicinal goods. The apse is rounded. The tower is square with Lombard Bands. The top storey was added in the XIVc. The South wall of the nave has been rebuilt with two of the original XIIc windows; these are blocked up.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 154 and 155</p>
Pétosse St Julien West of Fontenay-le-Comte	<p>This single naved church is of XIc origin. It has good transepts and a very narrow, flat ended apse. The West façade has been rebuilt in the XIXc.</p>
Pouillé St Remi North-west of Fontenay-le-Comte	<p>This XIIc church retains its single nave, but the apse and choir are in XVIc Gothic style, as is the North side aisle to the nave. The west façade was remade, probably in the XVc The Romanesque style tower has a modern spire. The former nave which is XIc is now the narthex.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 161 and 162</p>
Pauzauges	In the old town is the former priory, elements of which

<p>Notre Dame</p> <p>North-east of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>date from the XIc. The church has a single nave with a plain West door that has slim bands of arches over it. In the nave, on the North wall, are a number of XIIIc frescos: the scenes include Anne & Joachim (Mary's parents), Mary at the Temple, the Annunciation and, above them, elements of the seasons. The transept is wide and has a side chapel. The North one is no longer rounded. The choir has been extended. At the crossing is a cupola on trompes with a tower, which has triple blind arches each side and modillions around the top. There are two heads low to the right of the West door; one is of a beast.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 163 to 166</p>
<p>Puyravault</p> <p>St Jean</p> <p>South of Luçon and South-west of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This is a small, rectangular church of XIIc origin that was once a Knights Hospitalier foundation. It has a small bell wall over a Renaissance West door that is set within a XIIc door arch. The nave has been rebuilt with Gothic windows. Along the top of the wall is a line of modern modillions.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 167 and 168</p>
<p>St Benoît sur Mer</p> <p>West of Luçon</p>	<p>A XIc foundation, this church has a single nave and a narrow, flat ended choir with Gothic vaults. The West façade is XVc (?) and the tower, which is defensive in character, is XIVc. At the entrance to the choir are incorporated columns with foliage capitals. Below the tower are a XIc narthex and a rounded entrance to the nave. The nave appears to have been rebuilt.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 172 and 173</p>
<p>St Denis de Payre</p> <p>South-west of Luçon</p>	<p>This XIIc church is of little interest; it has been extensively rebuilt in the XVIIc. It has a single nave, a rounded apse and a modern spire over the crossing.</p>

<p>St Etienne de Brillouet</p> <p>North-west of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 106 to 109</p> <p>This XIIc church is built of limestone. It has a single nave and a flat ended choir. There is a short modern spire on a squat tower that has good blind arches on the South side. The windows on the nave are small and high up on the wall. The West façade is plain.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 176 to 179</p>
<p>St Hilaire-des-Loges</p> <p>East of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>The apse and side chapels are modern(XIXc). The nave dates from the XIc. The stepped West door is very worn but there is one good capital of veined foliage. The nave has side aisles divided by solid columns topped by capitals. Those to the West are almost plain; those to the East depict figures in vines. The South aisle has been rebuilt. There is a square tower above a cupola on trompes. The tower is post 1850, but it is on the remains of the old tower.</p> <p>See leaflet and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 180 to 182</p>
<p>St Michael de l'Herm</p> <p>South-west of Lucon</p>	<p>The parish church is of XIc origin but the vaults are Gothic The apse is flat ended and there is a single nave. Of the former abbey nothing remains.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 184 to 193</p>
<p>St Nicolas de Brem</p> <p>West of La Roche sur Yon</p>	<p>This is a most unusual church. There are three naves each with a rounded apse. Only the central one is undamaged by the Wars of Religion. It is constructed</p>

	<p>from local stone and has a number of very small windows; over one on the South aisle is a carving of intertwined snakes. Over the stepped west door is a fine group of sculptures depicting St Nicolas (?) with his feet on a winged dragon.</p> <p>See leaflets and 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 194 to 200</p>
<p>Sallertaine St Martin North-west of La Roche sur Yon and South-east of Ile de Noirmouthier</p>	<p>The original church was XIc. Only part of one wall of the nave is from that period. The apse, which is rounded, and the transept, with a rounded north chapel, are XIIc. The South door is unusual, stepped and with fine twisted 'barley sugar' decoration. The church has been deconsecrated and has some modern domestic windows.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 208 to 212</p>
<p>Serigné St Hilaire North of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>This church is mostly Gothic (XVc ?) but the West door is late XIIc. It has an arch decorated with two lines of star patterns between thin columns and small XIVc(?) capitals. Above is a line of modillions with faces, an acrobat, a barrel, a head symbolizing avarice, a musician, a hairy head (anger) etc.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 212 and 213</p>
<p>Velluire St Jean Evangeliste South-west of the Vendée</p>	<p>This is a single naved XIIc church with a rounded apse and it is built of limestone. The church has been much rebuilt and it is of little interest architecturally. There are, however, either side of a blocked window on the North-west side of the apse two small capitals of heads, probably from the XIII/XIVc.</p>

<p>Vouvant Notre Dame North of Fontenay-le-Comte</p>	<p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 220 and 221</p> <p>Built in the XIc and extended in the XIIc, it was severely damaged, especially the nave. Of what we see today, the choir and north chapel are mainly XI/XIIc. They are rounded and have columns and capitals each side of the windows that depict a centaur, a siren, winged dragons and a huge face of a monster. Above are sculptured modillions and fine capitals that mostly depicting pairs of birds. The South chapel is rounded but heavily restored. The North transept has a double arched entrance with a scene of the Last Supper over it and above are the Apostles gazing at a severely damaged Christ. The decoration around the door is earlier (XIc) and has an arch of acrobats and another of monsters and animals including squirrels, a flamingo, a snake and a camel. To each side is a damaged Samson and a lion and Delilah. Inside, the choir and chapels have been restored. Below the choir is a three-aved XIc crypt divided by squat restored pillars. Some small pillars topped by small capitals are to the sides. The capitals have a scroll-leaf design. There is a damaged head of Christ on display. Over the crossing of the upper church is a cupola on trompes. The nave was nine-bayed. The three Western ones have been destroyed and the three Eastern ones, along with the bell tower over the crossing were rebuilt in the XIXc.</p> <p>See 'Eglises et Abbayes Romanes en Vendée' pages 223 to 227, 'Poitou Roman' pages 43 and 44 and leaflets</p>
<p>05.03.2009</p>	