

SAINT-VAAST-LÈS-MELLO

VISITS OF THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES ADVISED BY THE TOURIST OFFICE OF PIERRE SUD OISE ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello

If you see a little hillside village bordered by a pond in the Thérain valley and by a quarry on the plateau, no doubt about it: that is Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello! This former quarrymen's village has always lived into the stone exploitation. Saint-Vaast, its familiar appellation, still represents very well men who built it.

Everything started when inhabitants wanted to build their own house with the underground stone exploitation. Then numerous open-pit quarries modeled the landscape. We can guess millennia of geological formation took place there. With this extracted stone we could build public private and renowned establishments in Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello. The pond and the Glachoirs site are a good example to show that today, the nature takes over the old quarry sites

The stone exploitation has "deeply" marked the village: the municipality's basement is full of galleries and the extraction wastes constitute impressive hills called "**cavaliers**" (riders).

Around 1851 the first open-pit quarry is made in Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello. On this period, the stone that is transported aboard a trolley to Creil is loaded on boats to the Long Boyeau harbor and went to the paths of Paris. Later, the St Vaast's quarrymen drove their stone to the neighbor village's station; Cramoisy.

The church

12th century establishment classified in the Historical monuments since 1903, it has a transition between the Romanic and the gothic style. It has wonderful polychrome wooden statue, little stoned monsters and graved stone baptismal funds. It houses a sublime "glory beam" representing the twelve apostles, a "Veronic veil" and a Christ that was used as a model for the movie "The Controversy of Valladolid".

The "cantine"

Today, the "Tilleuls" residence is still called "la cantine" sometimes. Foreign workers resided there formerly: Polishes, Hungarians, Italians, and also young single men, working in the quarries and the construction site. The cantine was run by a woman who used to welcome about fifteen residents noon and night.

The Barisseuse farm

Built in the 19th century, it presents an architecture that characterizes ashlar's constructions of the period. This establishment was a landowners farmhouse now converted in 3* hostel "le Clos Barisseuse".

In there we can find an uncommon dovecote that is frozen in time. We can notice its conic roof topped with a sharp ridge and its round form built with the ashlar's of the country.

The Saint-Nicolas chapel

This chapel was included in the Mello's religious order in the 18th century. Today, it is a private property.

Wash houses

Formerly, the municipality counted three wash houses very visited where we could hear the battledores noise and the one of the horses we leaded to there to make them drink. Today, we can only apperceive the top and the down wash houses. They both are fueled by a source that also flows into the pond.

The pond

The stretch of water exists thanks to the alluviums' exploitation of the **vallée du Thérain (Thérain's valley)**. The aggregate industry is well represented in the Oise; we can provide the raw material (sand and gravels) very important for the establishments' and communication way's building. For years, the marsh was literally "aspired" making room for a 17 hectares pond. It counts among the biggest ponds of the sector on which plenty of species chose this place to make their nest. The will of the Saint-Vaast-lès-Mello municipality was to protect this zone today. An **interpretation path** was strewn with explicative panels about the population of fauna and flora of the site.

The quarries panorama

We have to go up to the top of the country by little paths that wind between the houses before to enter in one of the biggest hole of the department. Indeed we extract limestone from St-Vaast for centuries. The zone of the quarries is extended to Montataire on a depth of more than 50 meters.

The Glachoirs site

A hundred men worked on this site to extract the limestone. At the end of the exploitation the site stayed as it was with the raising walls in front of you, working face's remainders. On these walls the rock climbers are now spending their time to climbing.

Walking paths

Distance: 9.5km

Duration: 3h00

Average difficulty (small difference in height)

Yellow marking (right direction – turn on the left – turn on the right – wrong direction – post)

Departure of the "**Quarries hiking**" walk

Token n°1 on demand

Imagine a hike in a heritage that has all of the territory's characteristics: hillside quarrymen's village with a classified church, calcareous grasslands and ponds, open-pit quarries in activity or abandoned ones where nature takes over, the Barisseuse farm made with ashlar and the Saint Nicolas chapel.

Useful addresses

For more information:

Opened from Monday to Friday from 9 am to 12.30 pm and from 1.30 to 5 pm