

Musée de La Poterie de La Borne

18250 HENRICHEMONT

Traditional Pottery Bornoise and its History

Genesis

In the area of *Boisbelle* pieces of earthenware have been found dating from the beginning of the 12th century.

Earliest texts:

- 1260 (April) : text mentioning the road from *Achères* to « la poterie ».
- 1303: a document mentioning the potteries of *Vaulx*, *Crots-de-Vaux* situated between *Achères* and *Ménetou-Salon*.

Stoneware appeared at the 15th century.

The first potteries of *La Borne* and the potteries of *Neuvy deux Clochers* and *Humbligny* probably originated during 16th century.

At the townhall of *Neuvy deux Clochers* mention of « potiers de terre » are found :

- December 21, 1619
- July 11, 1621
- August 11, 1629

1707: a census of *La Borne* mentions 19 families of potters out of 278 inhabitants.

Prosperity

During the 19th century, the Bornoise pottery grew in importance supplying pots for domestic and farm use.

1861, a survey of the pottery workshops at *La Borne* shows 70 workers, 3 potteries at *Achères*, 4 at *Humbligny*, 2 at *Les Poteries* of *Neuvy deux Clochers*, 1 at *Les Sigurets* near *Neuilly en Sancerre*.

1891: 83 potters out of 739 inhabitants at *La Borne*.

1895: the chapel is built (Museum today).

1910 : 12 workshops at *La Borne*, 4 at *Les Poteries* of *Neuvy*, 1 at *Humbligny*.

1913, railways arrives.

From 1914 to 1918, the war marked the end of the potters prosperity.

The Decline

During the twenties, the economic conditions declined, people were leaving the countryside and the products made in galvanized iron became popular as they were less heavy, less fragile and cheaper than stoneware.

In spite of much effort, the potters could not keep a breast of these changes and their livelihood was in jeopardy.

- 1921 *La Borne* has only 514 inhabitants,
- 1931: 9 working potteries,
- 1946: At the end of the 2nd world war, *La Borne* had only 6 potteries and 16 workers.
- 1959: *Joseph Talbot* died,
- 1967: *Marius Bernon* and *Armand Bedu* died,
- 1970: *Alexandre Foucher* died,
- 1988: *Lucien Talbot* died.

These alongside *Jean Talbot* is the last traditional potters. The « bornoise » pottery had had its day.

The Present Day

But here in our village, the feeling for ceramiques is still strong and its roots deep. The traditional pottery lived out its last years, and in its place arrived a new pottery which developed and established itself.

Today *La Borne* is nationally and internationally known.

Figurative Pottery

The *La Borne* potters (or Bornois) with their lively imagination have always felt the need to express their zest, their mischief, their joyful humour.

Clays lends itself perfectly to this purpose, allowing each individual to show his skill in a varied production: fonts and crucifix, « épis de faîtage » (roof ornaments), casks, tobacco pots, jugs, fountains, « terrines » and « flûtiaux » (small musical pipes).

The most prolific period was from the middle of the 18th century at the end of 19th century, with the work of the three sons of *Madeleine* and *Jean Talbot*: *Jacques*, *Jean-Pierre* and especially *Jacques-Sebastien* (1769-1842).

Marie and *Jean*, the two children of *Jacques-Sebastien* succeeded him.

Jean-Pierre's grand-daughter: *Marie-Louise Chameron* (1846-1923) and her daughter-in-law *Valentine* (1866-1954) where the last in this particular line of « imagiers ».

In another style, we have *Eugène Bedu*, known as « le cuirassier » (the cavalry man) and *Marcel Dupond*, who stopped working in 1970, these being the last of the « imagiers ».