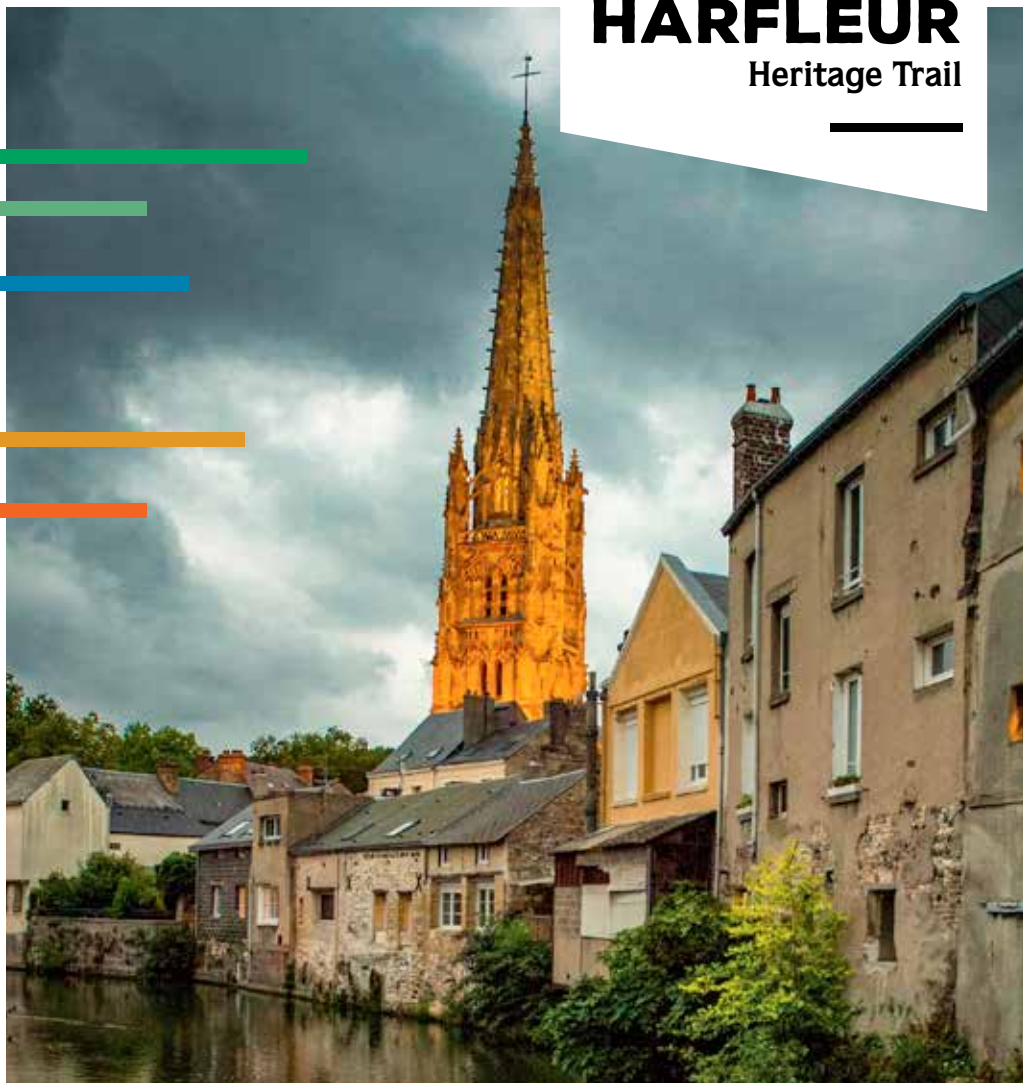


HARFLEUR

Heritage Trail



**STEP
INTO
HISTORY**

INTRODUCTION

In the language of the Vikings, the name 'Harfleur' means 'the upper port', as opposed to 'Honfleur', which means 'the lower port'.

In the Middle Ages, Harfleur was the outport of Rouen and traded with England. But Francis I sealed its fate when the port silted up and the new Havre de Grâce was built as a new gateway to the sea for Harfleur.

A new town grew up around this 'port of hope', which by the dawn of the modern era, had become more important than its parent town.

Today, Harfleur, as the historic centre of Le Havre, plays an important role locally thanks to its wealth of history and medieval feel. Its crowning glory is undoubtedly the 14th-century church of Saint-Martin, which has been dubbed the 'lighthouse of the Pays de Caux'.

SUMMARY

1	La Brèque, Battlefield	p. 5
2	Quai de la Douane	p. 6
3	Place Victor Hugo and the Gorand Bridge	p. 7
4	The Church of Saint Martin	p. 8-9
5	The Town Hall or Old Chateau	p. 10
6	Musée du Prieuré, former hôtel des Portugais	p. 11
7	Elsa Triolet Library, former Town Hall	p. 12
8	The Rouen Gate, a Fortress from the Hundred Years War	p. 13
9	La Forge	p. 14
10	Le Domaine du Colmoulins	p. 15



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LA BRÈQUE, BATTLEFIELD

Jehan de Grouchy, hero of the Hundred Years War.

In 1415, Henry V of England entered the town via a breach in the town wall known as 'la Brèque'. On 4 November 1435, in rebellion against their treatment by the English, a band of peasants, led by noblemen including Jehan de Grouchy, entered the town thanks to a diversion created by a hundred and four residents of Harfleur who perished in the battle.

A statue to Jehan de Grouchy 'Father of the Cauchois' was erected in 1876 in the Place d'Armes as a monument to The Hundred and Four. In 1995 it was moved to the centre of La Brèque roundabout. He is depicted in armour, wearing a helmet and with a sword in his hand, symbolising the resistance of an emerging nation to the oppression of an occupying power.

02



QUAI DE LA DOUANE

The Medieval Trading Port

During the middle ages, this site between the Pont Gorand and Pont aux Chaînes bridges (which was replaced by the road bridge over the canal), was the trading port. On its large quays, spices from the Far East were unloaded from Portuguese carracks,

and dried fish from the North Sea was landed.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the view of the church and the river were often depicted by the illustrators of the first tourist guides to show the beauty of picturesque France.





crédits photos : amis du musée d'Harfleur

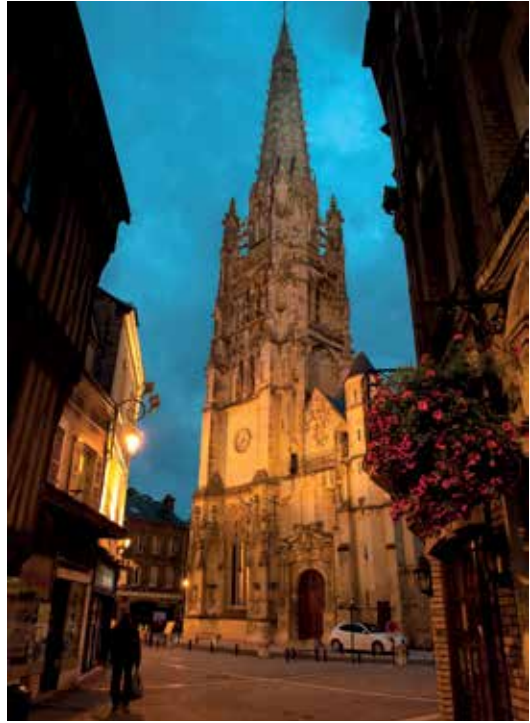
PLACE VICTOR HUGO AND THE GORAND BRIDGE

Former Place of la Croix Gorren.

In the Middle Ages, this was the Place de la Croix Gorren, which was accessible from the right bank of the river Lézarde via the stone bridge of the same name. The name comes from one Gorren whose house was bought by the town authorities for use as the town hall, before the Hôtel Guillard was bought.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the western side of the square was still separated from the river by tall houses that hid the bridge that was reached via an arched passageway. This was all knocked-down in 1868 and the bridge was rebuilt.

04



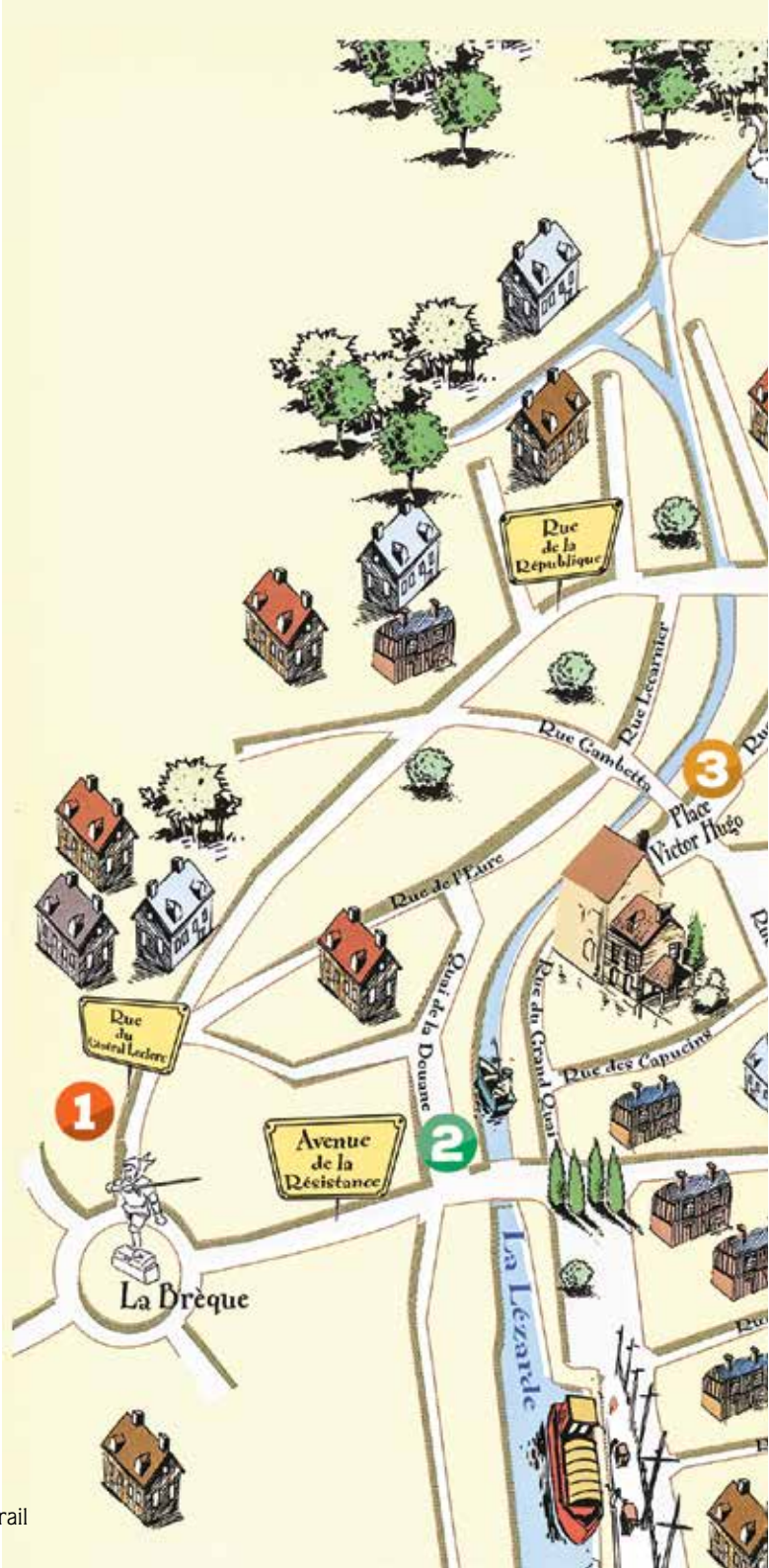
THE CHURCH OF SAINT MARTIN (15th - 17th century)

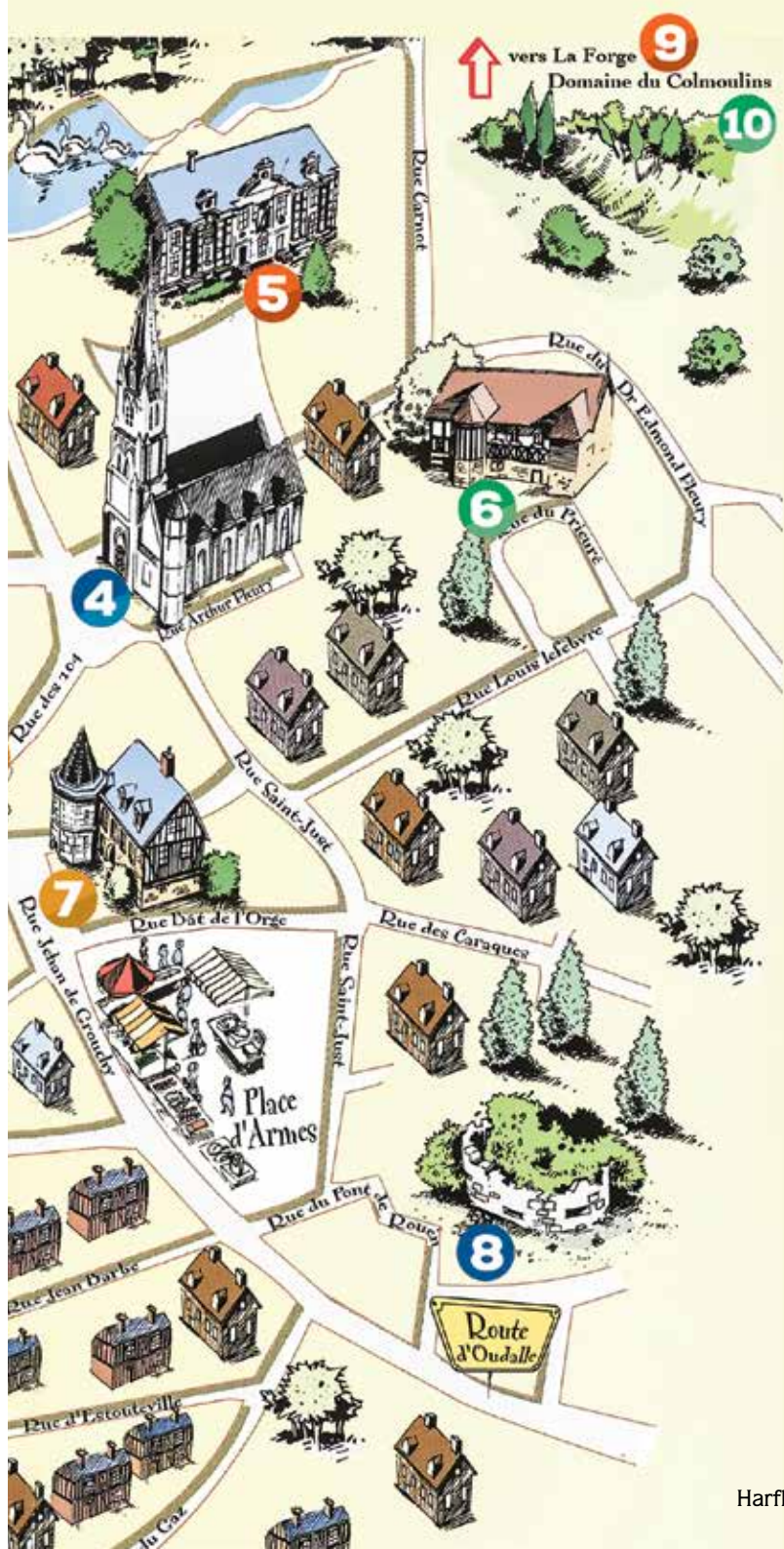
The church that can be seen today dates from the 15th century. After the Hundred Years' War, King Charles VII finished the bell tower and ordered the construction of two doorways on the northern and western sides of the building. He also began building the choir and ambulatory with radiating chapels.

In the 17th century, Louis XIII had the Medieval doorway covered with neoclassical designs and replaced the wooden vaulting with lower, stone vaults. By 1806, the nave of Saint Martin's was in a state of collapse due to poor

maintenance, but in 1840 the church, which was known as the 'lighthouse of the Pays de Caux', was listed as an historic monument. In 1999 the building was restored: the Louis XIII doorway was reopened, the square outside was repaved and the church was floodlit. Contemporary stained glass windows designed by the artist Bernard Piffaretti and installed by Ateliers Duchemin in 2011, are the most recent additions that deserves a visit of the church.







05



THE TOWN HALL OR OLD CHATEAU

(1636 – 1953)

In 1636 Pierre Coste de Saint Supplix, member of the Normandy Parliament, bought land in the middle of the town from Louis XIII in order to build his chateau.

In the 19th century, the estate belonged to the La Bedoyere family. In 1906, Charles Schneider bought it after founding his arms factory. It was bought and restored in 1953 by the town of Harfleur and converted into the civic centre.

MUSÉE DU PRIEURÉ FORMER HÔTEL DES PORTUGAIS

(15th - 19th century)

The museum is housed in a late 15th-century inn that was used by Portuguese sailors when they were staying in the Royal Port of Harfleur. The ground floor level of the facade is built of limestone and recalls the functions of the common room with its carvings of a serving girl, a jester and a minstrel. On the posts that support the roof you can see religious carvings that

are intended to welcome pilgrims including Christ the gardener, Mary Magdalene, Jesus rising from the tomb and Saint Nicholas. Bought by the town in 1958, the building was listed as an historic monument in 1959 and converted into a museum between 1978 & 1983 to exhibit archaeological artefacts found in the town.



crédit photo : amis du musée d'Harfleur

07



ELSA TRIOLET LIBRARY FORMER TOWN HALL

(1554 – 1953)

In 1554 the town of Harfleur bought a manor house from Louis Guillard to use as the town hall. The building dates from the end of the 15th century and was originally a timber-framed building with an external spiral staircase made of stone. In 1794 the town hall consisted of two large halls, three offices a caretaker's room and a prison. The courtyard next to the Rue aux Porcs (now Rue de Jehan de Grouchy) housed a market hall and a store for fire-pumps. After 1886 the timber-framed facade was

taken down and replaced with a brick wall and the staircase tower was covered in cement render. In 1953 the town hall moved to the château that was purchased from the Schneider family.

The building housed the council finance department until 1973 when it became the Elsa Triolet municipal library.



08

THE ROUEN GATE, A FORTRESS FROM THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR (1554 – 1953)

A royal fortification

The Rouen gate was built during the Hundred Years War to protect Harfleur from English attack. It has three parts. Firstly, the Porte aux Cerfs, which was built between 1391 & 1399 on the orders of King Charles VI of France, the Clos aux Galées - a fortified shipyard, which was built at the same time - and finally, the fixed stone bridge and the ravelin, which were both built in 1450 after the war ended.

The ravelin: a powerful defence

The ravelin is essentially a strong stone shield embedded in a large moat. The sideways position of its gate protects the entrance to the town from head-on attack. The fortification originally consisted of six towers fitted with casemates and gun emplacements looking out over the countryside. Its three-metre-thick walls presented an external curved surface which deflected cannonballs.

A fortress defended by water

The wide staircase enables soldiers to move arms and munitions to the top of the curtain wall quickly, while the low level of the fortification enables those defending the Porte aux Cerfs to see the area from above. The courtyard, which lies level to the moat, is submerged at high tide making it impregnable.





LA FORGE

Since it opened in 2010, the La Forge arts centre has become part of the community and the cultural landscape of Harfleur. The Salle le Creuset, a flexible and attractive space with excellent acoustics, the Taillanderie, the Galerie des Fondateurs, and the Zinc, welcome nearly four times the population of Harfleur each year.

Town planning and architectural design by Robert Bernard-Simonet, architect :

The building is located on a remarkable site where the valley coming down from the Cauchois plateau meets the Seine estuary and the main road and rail lines make their way out of Le Havre. The challenge was to create the new face of the northern entrance to Harfleur. The building therefore had primarily to be seen as a symbol of the town but without competing with the other iconic building in Harfleur, the spire of the Church of Saint Martin. It had to be something different, but needed to start a dialogue between the two major reference points of the urban environment. The building is arranged along a pedestrian precinct which is extended by a footbridge that crosses the Impasse de la Forge and links the new facility to rest of the town via the park. From the forecourt by the entrance the most

imposing and urban side of the building is visible, a view which is strengthened by a moat which references the medieval character of the town. The building is topped by a zinc roof that stretches from one end of the precinct to the other, giving the whole building a very dynamic look. This roof symbolises speed, and mysteriously seems to echo the symbolism of the church spire. In this way two iconic buildings of the same intensity and dynamic answer each other across the centuries, one representing height and the other speed and movement.





10

LE DOMAINE DU COLMOULINS

Located in an unspoiled, yet fragile, area of Harfleur, the Domaine du Colmoulins is full of treasures. Over an area of 27 hectares, its wetlands are the jewel in its crown. In 2009, 21.5 hectares of the site were listed as an 'Espace Naturel Sensible Local' (a local nature reserve) by the department of Seine-Maritime, who purchased 16.5 hectares of the land. This area, which is grazed by Konik Polski ponies and Bretonne Pie Noir cattle, is home to several rare or unusual plant and animal species including the inconspicuous marsh fern and the southern damselfly. The ruins of the old Brefdent farm (barn, dairy and laundry) are, however, still visible. The farm was built around 1866, and was famous

for the innovative ideas of its owner, who was ahead of his time in terms of hygiene and technology. At the beginning of the 20th century it became a model farm, largely thanks to the presence of a spring that made it possible to keep the milk cold and away from bacteria. This site can only be explored with a guide, please remember to bring appropriate clothing and boots.

Information available from the Département de la Seine-Maritime and the Ville d'Harfleur (Service Patrimoine - heritage department)



