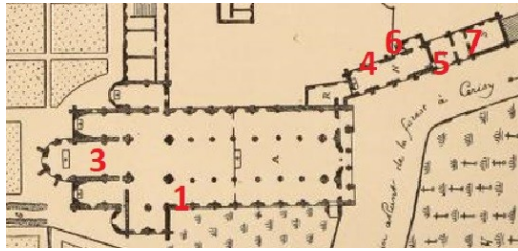


## The secrets of Cerisy-La-Forêt Saint-Vigor Abbey



Where will you find the answers to the questions ?

Each question number are marked in red on the map !

### 1/ First of all, who was Saint-Vigor ?

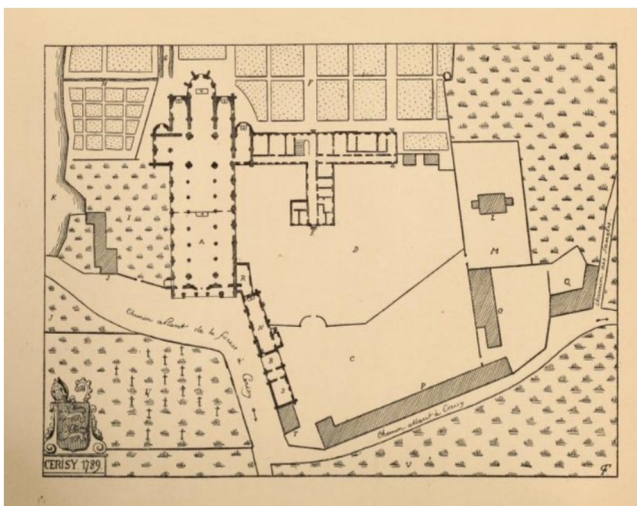


In the 6th century (around 510), Vigor saved Cerisy inhabitants by killing the dragon living in the forest. So as to thank him, the landlord gave him grounds on which he built the first monastery. Saint-Vigor will become the third bishop of Bayeux and a Saint after his death.

**In the church, where is the dragon**

Clue : It is on leash at Saint-Vigor's feet.

### 2/ What remains of the monastery ?



Nothing remains from Saint-Vigor's monastery! The Vikings destroyed it during the 9th century. Two hundred years later, a new monastery is built by the Dukes of Normandy, Robert The Magnificent and his son, William The Conqueror.

Benedictine monks will live there until the French Revolution. After 1789, most part of the conventual buildings and outbuildings are demolished ( dormitory, cloister, refectory...).

**Circle what remains of the monastery.**

### 3/ Where did the monks sit during masses ?



The monks prayed several times a day. At the end of the church, you will find their seats, called stalls. They are the oldest in Normandy (dated back from 1400!) and it made it through the Abbey tourmented history. They are certainly protected by the bats living in the Abbey undergrounds...

**On one of these stalls, you will see a carved bat. But, will you find where it hides ?**

These seats have a secret... The monks made people believe they were standing during the mass while they actually were sitting. **Did you understand how ? This system is called « a Misericord »**

**More informations : The Abbey also has a underground from the Middle Age. It runs under the Abbey from the hut near the apple press to the Monk pond on the north side of the Abbey. It's a narrow tunnel where you can walk standing ( if you are not afraid of the dark). You can discover it during the Medieval feast in July and Local Heritage Days in September.**

### 4/ Let's discover the Abbot Chapel !



The Abbot was the monks'superior, he made sure that the rules of the community were respected, because monks could be unruly sometimes... In the Chapel, you will see a double sacred hand bassin (our bathroom sink ancestor). It is where the cult object where cleaned.

**Did you find it ?** Excellent, now if you look above you will see that four coats of arms decorate the ceiling.

**The coat of arms of the Abbey looks like the Normandy flag with the two leopard, did you find it ?** There are very much alike except for the Bishop miter (the Bishop hat) that covers the two leopard of Normandy.

## 5/ And, now to the courtroom !



The symbol of Justice is a scale. **Will you find it in the room ?**

In this room, you will see different artifacts which belonged to the monks.



Among others, a **shrine ( look for a small wooden case)** inside which there was a bone from Saint-Vigor right arm offered by William the Conqueror in 1048.

Relics (body parts of Saints) were said to cure diseases. They attracted a lot of the pilgrims to the Abbey which increased The Abbey earnings. Sadly, this relic has disappeared, as well as all the precious gemstones that covered it.

## 6/ Murs extérieur de la Chapelle The Chapel outside walls

When you leave the Chapel, can you find **the stone spout from which the water leaks?** Look closely on the outside wall just below the stained-glass window.

**More information :** if you look slightly above at the stairs roof, you will find a odd stone in equilibrium. It is a old sundial.



Now, have a look on the floor level, there is a little door. It was the dungeon entrance for the prisoners.

The dungeon is opened during the guided tour and walls are engraved with pictures depicting big and fat Abbots in the shape of wales.

## 7. To finish, the VERY difficult bonus question, even for grownups !



Look very carefully at this photo of the Abbey, on the right door Abbey when you leave and above the reception door. There is a little difference between the two.

**Did you find it?**

**Now, you know much more about Saint-Vigor and its Abbey. Before you leave, go to the reception desk to get a souvenir from your visit at the Abbey.**

**And, don't miss all the Abbey surroundings !**



The visit continues around the Monk pond, where you will find the underground exit and a very nice point of view on the Abbey northside....



And in the sculpture park by the pond, you can say hello to our friendly ghost which looks after the children in the playground.

**At the Abbey reception desk, there is another free discovery booklet on the Sculpture Park.**