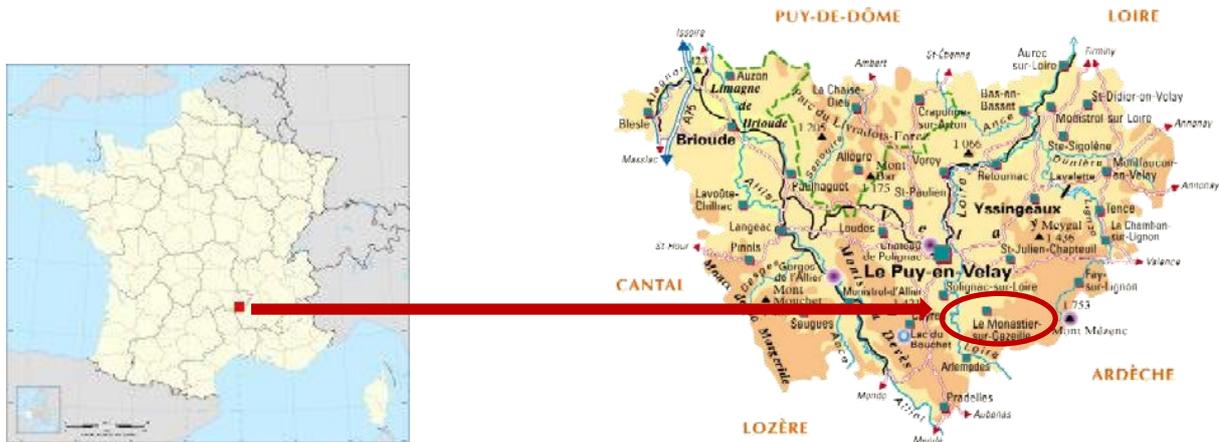


My school trip to Le Monastier with the Euro English Class



On Thursday 4th April 2019 I went to Le Monastier-sur-Gazeille, a small town of 1 800 inhabitants located in the south-east of the Haute-Loire department. We set off from Le Puy en Velay to go and visit « Le Musée des Croyances Populaires ».



Picture of the museum

The museum is located inside the castle of Le Monastier. It presents the intangible cultural heritage of the area. So it is about fantastic tales, old and popular beliefs of the rural world with ghosts, goblins, wizards, healers, witches and werewolves.

This museum was imagined and created by Patrice Rey, a plastic artist and scenarist who brings back to life some old beliefs and legends through figurines, diaporamas and paintings in typical settings of the Velay area. He modeled and painted about 200 characters. There are also photographs, sculptures and old things to look at. This aims to make visitors aware of old traditions and cultures deep rooted in this region.

So, we had a guided tour of this museum. The guide told us about numerous legends and stories of the area and I could see all the paintings and figurines illustrating them.



Examples of paintings and figurines

Then we visited the Abbey, the Convent and the Church of Le Monastier with an English guide. I have learnt that the Abbey was built in the 7th century. The monks used to live in the Monastery and the Church has beautiful stained glasses.



To sum up, what I first particularly enjoyed is the story about the « drac » in the museum. This character is a sort of goblin who was always up to some mischief. For instance he turned himself into a horse and he attracted children on his back. Then he galloped up to a cliff where he suddenly stopped and made the children fall into the water. He also cut the tail of birds so that they couldn't fly anymore.



Here are some pictures of the « drac »

I also liked the Convent because I found it was a very beautiful building. I loved the corridor, the shape of the ceiling and the rock walls were splendid.



The corridor of the convent

Then, I appreciated the visit of the Abbey, the Convent and the Church because it was in English and I realized that I could understand it fairly well.



however I think the visit was a little bit long and I was disappointed because the legends and the visit were not about Scotland. I found there were too many unnecessary details in the stories. Nevertheless it was an interesting and cultural discovery.



To finish, I must admit that I was surprised by the number of legends. I didn't think there were so many of them! Moreover the stories were incredible. The figurines and the paintings are uncommon, amazing and unique. So, I think the museum is both funny and instructive and it is a good way to learn about the past.



Various figurines



Lastly, I didn't expect the museum to be in a castle. This certainly gives it a more authentic side.

To conclude I would say that I enjoyed the visits although I must admit it was not my first time in the museum : I had already been there when I was in elementary school. I could still remember some of the legends and I had not forgotten the castle and the paintings.