

V e r v i e r s

# FONTAIN TOUR





## 1 The Water House

### House “Pierre de Bonvoisin”

Located in the former Bonvoisin cloth production plant, the last of its kind in existence, the Water Interpretation Centre was designed to be interactive and dynamic. Audio and visual multimedia techniques plunge the visitor in a surprising atmosphere and then into the bright light of the Vesdre. Walking through the river, penetrating the infrastructures of the Gileppe dam, flying like a bird - all these are part of this spectacular trip. Amusing educational activities for young and old heighten their awareness of water-related issues and the importance of water in our society.



2

Maison de l'Eau, rue Jules Cerexhe 86.  
Go on to n° 74 on this street.



## The Busay

2

This fountain sculpture is the work of the internationally known artist Serge Gangolf. He was born in 1943 and taught at the Fine Arts Academy of Namur. The fountain consists of three « busettes », also called « busay » in technical terms, referring to a cardboard cone that distributed the warp yarn in the shuttle on industrial looms. Each « busettes » consists of a series of small ground granite rings. The three cones are 2.70 metres high, 75 centimetres in diameter at the base and 20 centimetres at the top.



Come back to the Maison de l'Eau.  
Cross the Leopold bridge to the left.



### 3 The paddle wheel

This stylized paddle wheel recalls the many water mills that stood here and there all over town and have disappeared today. The fountain was designed by two members of the Verviers municipal administration, Michel Derchain, head engineer and Jean-Pierre Dewaide, architect and urban planning specialist. The principle is quite simple: a pump sends water through a pipe that drips into the pans on the paddle wheel until the wheel begins to turn like a mill. Paddle wheels were used to drive textile machines.



4

Turn left (rue Lucien Defays) and cross right away. Turn right (rue de la Station).



4

## The fountain of Grace

This long, slim sculpture represents Grace. This is a work by Marianne Doucet, born in 1958 and a teacher since 1978. Marianne Doucet uses materials as diverse as earth, resin, stone and bronze to meet the objective she is trying to reach. If the artist had to summarize her artistic approach, she would quote Botticelli: « In the movements of the body, I want to disclose those of the soul ». Running water veils the dancer, representing time that goes by for all of us despite everything. Inaugurated in March 2005, the Grace fountain is in bronze and blue stone, measuring 3 metres high.



Across from Grace, go straight (rue P. de Clermont), staying on the right side of the street.



5

## The water wall

Combining modernity of stainless steel and water, the eternal source of life, the water wall inaugurated in 2003 adds a charming touch to this quiet street. Water slides down it, finishing in a semi-circular basin made from blue stone. This location marks the former entry to Peltzer plain.



6

Keep going straight into the parc de l'Harmonie (on the right).



## The eagle of Harmonie 6

The Harmonie Royal Society was founded in 1829 to encourage budding talent and promote a taste for music. Many concerts were organized by the Society. The fountain, inaugurated in September 2003, represents an eagle spreading its wings as it overcomes a snake spitting a spray of water. The symbolism in this statue can be seen as a perpetual fight between good (the eagle) and evil (the snake).

➤ 7 Leave through the same entrance and take a right towards the stop lights. Go up rue de la Concorde on the right side.

## The S.W.D.E 7

The Société allonne des eaux (Walloon water company) is a public industrial and commercial enterprise whose mission, among others, is to provide a daily supply of drinking water under pressure in sufficient quantity to more than 200 municipal districts in the Walloon Region. The quality of water is monitored continually by an approved laboratory.

➤ 8 Keep going straight (on the same side of the street). Cross just before the roundabout.



8

## The fountain Place de la Victoire

This centrally located fountain stands across from the station and was the first to be inaugurated in 1999. It consists of a series of 96 circular jets pointing inward. The central components consists of 24 jets more or less 5 metres high. The fountain is lit by 28 spotlights. The inner diameter is 10.123 metres. 324 m<sup>3</sup> of water flows through it per hour.



9

Walk in front of the le monument to Victory. Turn left (rue du Palais).



## The fountain Rue du Palais

9

This fountain, put back in service in June 2006, was an integral part of the Stairway of Peace. This stairway is another testimony to the major urban projects carried out in the 19th century. Initially, it was meant to rapidly link the new Rue du Palais to the well-to-do neighbourhoods in the south of town. At the top is a statue of a woman representing Peace. The fountain stands in a hollow shaped like a hearth at the bottom of the stairway. The forward jet joins the jets falling from a set of vertical spouts at top of the cavity.



10

Keep going straight; take the 1st street to the left. Go down the stairs (rue de Rome) and keep going straight to reach Place Verte.



## 10 The secret fountain

This design of this fountain was based on an idea of « Verviers Fontaines 2000 » non-profit association that wanted to mark the turn of the millennium by reinforcing the motto « Verviers, Walloon water capital ». It was inaugurated in March 2002. The fountain was financed in part by the townspeople of Verviers who could purchase a slab nearby and have their names engraved on it. Seven pumps feed the 20 foam jets on the edges of the fountain and the 69 vertical jets of variable heights. The water climbs from one to five metres in a continual movement. When it falls back on the ground, it disappears into discrete gullies and is immediately recycled in a closed circuit. Thus it is a “secret” fountain.



11

Continue to your right.



## David Fountain

11

Pierre David was born in 1771. He was elected mayor in 1800 but resigned three years later in disappointment with the absolute Bonaparte government. He went back into office to become the first Mayor of Verviers after the Revolution of 1830. He died in 1839. His abrupt disappearance was a painful surprise: a subscription list was opened right away to finance a monument in for form of a limestone and painted iron fountain that stands on the place Verte. The fountain by architect Clément Vivroux was inaugurated in 1883.



12

Facing the fountain, turn right towards the bridge.



12

## The factory canal

Initially, the canal was a diversion of the Vesdre to supply water to the plants not located directly on the river. Subsequently, as industry grew and developed, the banks were used to wash wool and fabric. So the original course was modified and in some places, it was doubled or even tripled. As a token of the old canal that was filled in about a century ago, the Town of Verviers put in a new monument in June 2000: a reproduction of the old canal measuring 86 metres long and 2.5 metres wide.



13

Facing the fountain, turn left and then right to enter Rue du Collège and then walk past the Marchand de Ploquettes statue.



## Ortmans Fountain

13

Jean-François Ortman was an industrialist specialized in dyeing yarn and he was also Mayor of Verviers from 1855 to 1885. His name is associated with the construction of the Gileppe dam and the creation of a system for distributing water to industry and households. This fountain, mounted in 1893, is the work of Clément Vivroux. He used various materials like stone blocks, bronze and limestone. It measures 15 high and 13 metres wide.

On the pediment, the city of Verviers is represented by a lady sitting alongside a lion (symbol of force). In her right hand she holds a piece of fabric (in reference to the town's textile industry).

Two commemorative slabs are mounted on either side:

- on the left « 1878, Ortman's Hauzeur distributes the water of the Gileppe »



- on the right « To the Mayor Ortman's Hauzeur 1854-1885, from the grateful citizens ».

At the bottom, a sculpture imitating curtains of water stands in front of the massive stone base. One horizontal panel imitates waves with elements that refer to water:

- seashells;
- a very large shell behind the bust of Jean-François Ortman's;
- an amphora on either side.

The bottom of the monument evokes distribution of water and Jean-François Ortman's role in the growth of local industry. Five basins collect the water spouting from a pipe under the pedestal. This monument was installed vis-à-vis a house that has certain decorative elements similar to those of the fountain.



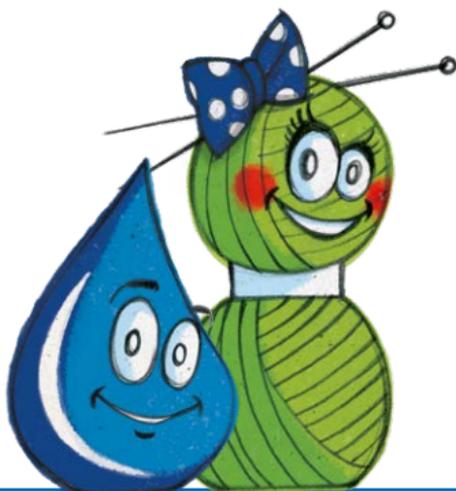
Facing the fountain, take the street that runs past it on the right hand side (Rue des Raines).



## The Comma

14

Toward the end of the 18th century, a fountain stood Rue des Raines, near this spot. The sculpture-fountain was created thanks to a joint effort by sculptor Serge Gangolf, the Soroptimist Club de Verviers (service club), Verviers Fontaines 2000 non-profit association and the town de Verviers. This fountain sculpture in stainless steel measures 2 metres high and was inaugurated in March 2006.



15

Turn right (Mont du Moulin).



15

## The Perron

The perron was erected in 1732 where a public fountain had stood. It represents both a prestigious symbol and convenience for the population which had recently been equipped with lead water pipes. Since 1934, the construction has been classified as a historical monument. It was made from blocks of Verviers limestone. The perron consists of a bronze column topped by a cross standing on a pine cone as a symbol of solidarity and the cross of the Principality of Liege, to which Verviers belonged. The total height is 4 metres. Not too long ago, during local festivities, the fountain spouted not water, but beer.



16

Walk past the Town hall on the right and take Rue Sécheval. Continue along Rue de Limbourg until number 41 (named «Résidence Simonis»).



## The Marabout and the curious young lady

16

This bronze and stone fountain is the work of Marianne Doucet, a sculptor and writer whose other works include the «La Grâce» fountain. With this work, erected in 2010, the artist wished to pay homage to the Marabout publishing house which was one of the jewels in the crown of cultural activity in Verviers. The marabou bird (similar to a stork), the emblem of this firm, is joined by a “Demoiselle Curieuse” (a curious young lady) who represents the collection of the same name. This 8-metre long edifice is adorned in the centre by an illuminated fountain with three different coloured jets of water, symbolising books as a fount of knowledge. This fountain is located in the very same place as the former site of the Marabout publishing house.



17

Turn back and go into the small park on the right. Do not cross the bridge and turn left (Rue des Hospices then Rue des Alliés), before turning right (Rue Renier). Cross the bridge.



17

## Pont d'Al Cûte Fountain

This is the last of the public fountains. It was put up in 1828 and at the time, it had the reputation of giving the best water in town. The Christ figure is still older, probably dating back to the 18th century. In the Walloon dialect from Verviers « cûte » means « prostitute ». The bridge is named in reference to the ladies who sold their charms in the nearby houses.



18

Go down the stairs near the bridge to the banks of the Vesdre. Turn right.

## The Vesdre

*Thanks to the water of the Vesdre, the town of Verviers developed a flourishing wool industry that brought prosperity to the townspeople. This water, plus local know-how, gave suppleness and sheen to the woollen fibres that produced a unique soft touch in the woven fabric. The source of the Vesdre is found in the Hautes Fagnes; after flowing about 70 kilometres, the river joins the Ourthe at Chênée (near Liege).*

## "Recollets" Promenade

18

This walk follows the north bank of the Vesdre. Its name comes from the fact that the Recollets monks used to walk along here reciting their breviary. The wool industry of the past has left exotic mementos here in the form of plants originating in Australia, South Africa or Argentina. The seeds of the plants came to Verviers entangled in imported wool and they were liberated when the wool was carded and washed (examples: Himalaya balsam, South African groundsel, ...).

19

Keep going straight under the first bridge. Cross the bridge across from the church Notre-Dame des Recollets. Walk in front of the church toward Place du Martyr.





## Rio +10 Fountain

19

This fountain, of a size never seen before in Belgium was a present from the Walloon Region. The Rio +10 Fountain was inaugurated in March 2003 to symbolize sustainable development of the planet. Verviers thus gives homage to the summit for the future of the planet held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1993. On the globe, the natural blue stone represents the seas and oceans - the continents are drawn in white using a special wear-proof resin. The entire work is 2 metres high. This globe of the earth, one metre in diameter, hovers a few tenths of millimetres over the base thanks to the pressure of the water jets that cushion it. Passers-by can easily spin the globe weighing a tonne and a half with a simple tap of the hand.



1

Walk along the quays to return to the starting point.



Starting Point:  
rue Jules Cerexhe 86, 4800 Verviers (on the river banks)

•  
Distance : 4 km  
(5 km with the extension to number 16)

•  
Duration: 2 hours  
(2 hrs 30 with the extension to number 16)

•  
Difficulty : easy



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