

# Clock-making museum

« A unique cultural spot in Normandy »



**Museum of Society,  
Museum of History and  
Museum of Science and Technics.**

The main purpose of this museum is to link the territory of Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont to its people, history, technics and specific activities which developed this town and shaped it to what it is today and will be tomorrow !



# Summary

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## Pictures on page 1 :

- Long case clock's dial, 1936.
- Alarm-clock, 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Movement of a recorder Lambert, 20th century.

# Mayor's speech

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In 1978, was born the idea to gather a collection of items coming from the local clock-making manufactures with the purpose to create a museum. Thirty years later, this project became reality. The most beautiful items were displayed in a place dedicated to them.

This museum opened to the public on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, exactly two centuries after the arrival of Honoré PONS, a master clock-maker who settle down in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont in 1807. He provided to the town the reputation we know now. At this time, mechanization started and industrial expansion too. Should we see there a sign of fate ? This development came after the arrival of Charles-Antoine CROUTTE, the first clock-maker to settle down in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont in 1725 !

We are proud and happy that this place has been a reality for 5 years now. Sharing place of the collective and working memories but also a place to transmit all the know-how from the past. No matter the time it took to think about it, to imagine it, to build it. The knowledge tool is here, in front of you, witness of a time which lasts but never stops. It's up to us to protect this fabulous inheritance and transmit it to the next generations.

Blandine Lefebvre

Regional councillor in High-Normandy

Mayor of Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont

# Clock-making museum : Presentation

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The clock-making museum redraws through an interactive and playful visit's circuit, the history of clock-making and precision, original know-how of Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to nowadays. Through the collections, archives, accounts, pictures and thanks to the **clock-maker workshop** (present in the museum), sink into the universe of the time measurement and discover the life of the clock-makers !



**Introduced by Charles-Antoine CROUTTE, who settled down in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont in 1725, the clock-making adventure strived towards two centuries and extends nowadays through the microtechnic and precision mechanics.**

Regional production, « **l'élégante** » of Saint-Nicolas is the **first** clock created in the town. **The mantel clocks** stamped « Honoré PONS », **the marine chronometers** of « Onésime DUMAS » and « FOURNIER » sustained this know-how based on quality and precision work. **The alarm-clock**, mass-produced by the « Bayard Company » (1867-1989) established the international fame of the town.



The productions of Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont played a major role in the management and control of time, at work with **the time-clock** and in the transports with the **ticket-machine** and the **speed checking machine**. In the 70's, deep mutations appeared : the clock-maker factories started either to close their doors (Bayard in 1989, Denis Frères in 1991) or to diversify their productions or even to re-convert completely (Vaucanson workshops were bought by Ericsson in 1955 or Denis Frères which produced from the seventies high-technology workpieces for the aeronautics).



Situated in the heart of the city, the museum is a subtle mix of ancient and modern architecture : rehabilitation of a norman house from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and construction of a new extension. The architect « Frédéric Chesnelong » wished to « hug tightly the old house in a case made of 2 galleries : the first one to the South sun-bathed thanks to the window panes, the other one to the North protected from the light ». The facade of the modern part is completely made of bricks, it's not without reminding us of the industrial architecture of this territory.

## A « Musée de France » collection

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Gathered since 1978, the collection of the clock-making museum increases ceaselessly. Today, it composes of 2 000 items.

This coherent collection is divided in 4 parts :

- **domestic clocks** (long case clocks, alarm clocks)
- **precision clock-making** or « **scientific clocks** » (marine chronometers, long case clocks)
- **clock-making for time management** (time-clock, ticket machine)
- **precision mechanic** (machines, tools and manufactured goods)



The items of the collection are manifold. Indeed, you can find manufactured goods but also clocks, machines, tools, drawings, schemas and archives coming from the factories of Saint-Nicolas.



The photographic collection is really rich and some pictures are rare and precious testimonies : view of workshops at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, portrait of characters from the « aliermontaise » industry, pictures of clock-makers or families working at home.

Our collection received the label « Musée de France » in January 2002. This label distinguishes the quality and the scientific, historical and aesthetic richness of our collection.

A library composed of technic and scientific but also historical and sociological books is available for consultation by appointment only.

### Pictures on page 4 :

- Saint-Nicolas clock's head, 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Mickey Mouse alarm-clock , Bayard, 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Flaman system, 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- The clock-making museum, exterior.

### On this page :

- Carriage clock, 19<sup>th</sup> century.



# The Team

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**Maïté DUCORNETZ**

Director

**Agnès GANGLOFF**

In charge of the Publics Office

**Julie BLARD**

Cultural mediator

**Aurélie RIDEL**

Receptionist

**Valérie MANGARD**

Cleaning lady

## **Contact :**

Clock-making museum

48 rue Edouard Cannevel 76510 Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont

Tél. 00 332 35 04 53 98 - Fax. 00 332 35 85 60 08

[museehorlogerie@wanadoo.fr](mailto:museehorlogerie@wanadoo.fr) / [www.musee-horlogerie-aliermont.fr](http://www.musee-horlogerie-aliermont.fr)

# The quality of service

## In the heart of our concerns

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**The museum team is regardful to offer to its visitors quality services which are adaptive for everybody.**

The museum, became in June 2011 the 150<sup>th</sup> structure to obtain the label « **Normandie Qualité Tourisme** » in Seine-Maritime.

This label is the witness of a voluntary procedure in a way of welcoming and quality services. It's also the proof the museum respects the legal obligations concerning health, safety and access standards for handicapped people.

On 300 criteria in relation to this label, the clock-making museum obtained a result of 97,16% !



Completetly accessible for wheelchair users, the museum suggests a series of activities, adaptive to each kind of handicap : tactile visit, visit in sign language, visit documents in big letters, workshops for people with mentally disabled. To develop this accessibility, the museum owns adaptive tools as a wheelchair (please, ask it to the receptionist) a magneto-induction terminal (for hearing-impaired people).

This politic of development was rewarded by the Ministry in charge of Tourism which gave to the museum the label « **Tourisme et Handicap** » in 2011.

**The museum takes part to the touristic development of the territory by proposing documents for french and foreign visitors :**

- guided visits in french and in english for individual visitors during summer time and all year long upon booking for groups,

- audio guides in french and in english all year long (for adults and children),

- visit documents in english, german, spanish, dutch and italian,

- physical and phone reception in english.



# Schedules and Fees

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## Schedules

### High season

From 1 June to 30 September

From Tuesday to Sunday : 10-12am and 2-6pm



### Low season

From 1 October to 31 December and from the 15 February to 31 May

From Wednesday to Sunday : 2 : 30 pm-6pm



### Closing Times

From 1 January to 14 February

The museum is closed on 1 May, 1 November, 11 November, 25 December.



**For groups :** guided visits and workshops all year long upon booking.

## Fees

**Full fee :** 3,50 €

**Reduced fee :** 1,50 € from 14 to 18 years old, students, families, unemployed people, handicapped people.

**Free** Less than 14 years old and owners of ICOM card.

**Groups:** 2,50 € / person

**Pupils :** Free for schools of Saint-Nicolas d'Algermont and 60 € for the other schools.



### Workshops during holidays :

3 € or 4 € (with a special organizer).



#### Pictures :

- Long case clock's dial, detail, 1936.
- Saint-Nicolas movement, 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Marine chronometer, 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Paris Movement, detail, 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Saint-Nicolas head, detail.
- Marine chronometer's movement, detail.

# A « lively » museum

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## The Publics Office

The mission of this office is to open the museum's collections to everybody (children, adults, handicapped people, elderly people, tourists..). It has to conceive and realize educative actions to provide an equal access to culture (shows, activities, guided visits, workshops, game booklets, educational suitcase) for everybody .



## For young people

During school time, the office suggests numerous educational activities. The richness of our collections gives professors the opportunity to evocate numerous themes and for young people to take over this heritage.



## For adults

All year long, the museum suggests a calendar with many cultural activities : guided visit of the permanent collections and of the temporary exhibition, workshops, great national events as Heritage Day (in September), Night of the Museums (in May) or Science Feest (in October).



For groups, guided visits are organised all year long upon booking.

## For handicapped people

Different kinds of activities : guided visits in sign language, tactile visits...These activities are available all year long upon booking.



# Activities for pupils



Publics Office works with schools from kindergarten to high-school. This office can help professors who want to visit the museum, to organize it according to the age of pupils. Professors can choose among 3 different kinds of visit :

## Guided visit

With a guide, children discover the museum's collections . Each visit is adaptive to the class level.

Duration : about 1h30



## Guided Visit + Workshop

A guided visit is extended by a workshop in relation to the chosen visit.

Duration : 2h (1h for the guided visit and 1h for the workshop).



## Visit without a guide

The professor alone leads the visit in the museum. The Publics Office can provide to the teacher educational explanations about the collections, or booklets in advance.

Duration : as planned during the booking.



## NURSERY SCHOOL

- Mechanics and gears • Time and its tools of measurement
- The bestiary

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

- Mechanic and gears • Time and its tools of measurement • The alarm clock's evolution • Game of the Giant Alarm clock • The industrial architecture (**guided visit in the town to see the old factories, the clock-maker's houses...**) • Le Corbusier • What is a « museum » ?



## SECONDARY SCHOOL

- What is « Heritage » ? • Time and its tools of measurement • The alarm clock's evolution • Game of the Giant Alarm clock • The industrial architecture (**guided visit in the town to see the old factories, the clock-maker's houses...**).



## HIGH SCHOOL

- Time and its tools of measurement • The industrial architecture (**guided visit in the town to see the old factories, the clock-maker's houses...**). • Visit with a demonstration performed by a retired clock-maker.



## Information and booking

Claire DEBEUF, in charge of the Publics Office  
00 332 35 04 53 98 or museehorlogerie@wanadoo.fr

# A few figures...

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## Dimensions

- > exhibition space : 340 square meters at street level,
- > total space (offices + storeroom) : 500 square meters,
- > 5 exhibition rooms, 2 galleries
- > 1 place of the temporary exhibition area, about 25 square meters,
- > movies and reports (on several screens in the museum)
- > 1 clock-maker workshop,
- > 1 shop.



## Collections

- > 400 items displayed,
- > 2 000 items in total
- > label « **Musée de France** » obtained in 2002,
- > label « **Normandie Qualité Tourisme** » obtained in 2011,
- > label « **Tourisme et Handicap** » obtained in 2011,
- > audio guides available in french and english ,
- > financial partners :
  - the city of Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont,
  - the department of « Seine-Maritime »,
  - Region « Haute-Normandie »,
  - Regional Direction of Culture.



## The shop

- > Bayard alarm-clocks,
- > postcards and bookmarks,
- > educational books,
- > books written by the museum : « La mécanique du geste » (*a book about the clock-making factories in Saint-Nicolas d'Aliermont from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century*), the catalogs of the different temporary exhibitions...



## Museum-going

The clock-making museum, opened in April 2007, welcomed 27 355 visitors as to 31 December 2011.

# The Clock-makers Association

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20 years ago, the threats upon clock-making pushed Mr. Paul CARON (then mayor of Saint-Nicolas) and Mr. René LE COURTOIS to gather the first items and machines, witnesses of the clock-making industry. These items became the basis of the museum.



The association, created in June 1981, is composed of volunteers, former technicians or engineers from the companies specialised in clock-making or micro-mechanic in Saint-Nicolas. Famous names amongst them, BAYARD, DENIS FRÈRES, COUAILLET or LAMBERT.

At the beginning, the museum was in the castle of the city, on the first floor where it lasted 20 years : the members thus welcomed 800 visitors a year.



In today's museum, members of this association lead a clock-maker workshop. They give a new life to the old mechanisms by repairing them in front of the visitors (on Wednesday and Tuesday morning). They make us discover the tools but also their talents, their abilities and their secrets of the subtle mechanics in a clock or in an alarm-clock.

## Mr. Paul CARON, creator of the museum :

« The opening of the clock-making museum in Saint-Nicolas d'Alhiermont is the outcome of a project that was born 30 years ago but which drew back as and when time lasted, as a mirage ! Indeed, it's in 1978 that I proposed to Mr. DUBOUCHEZ (director of the House for Young Workers) to start, as a cultural activity, a collection of items coming from clock-making factories to create a museum. It's also in 1978 that Mr. René LE COURTOIS, unemployed since the closing of LEMAIGNEN LE CHEVALLIER and MERCIER Company in 1977, accepted with enthusiasm to take part to this realisation.»

**June 1981** : Creation of the clock-making association.

**1985** : Mrs. Claudette JOANES, considered the collection as a good one.

**July 1987** : Mrs. Brigitte BOURRET, conservator, came once a week, to make an inventory and to think about a museographic program.

**1993** : The project stopped.

**1995** : The project started again.

**2001** : The new municipality, with Mayor Blandine LEFEBVRE, activated the realisation of this museum and lead it to the end.

**2007** : Opening of the museum, unfortunately without Mr. LE COURTOIS, died in 2006.