

DUMPHLUN



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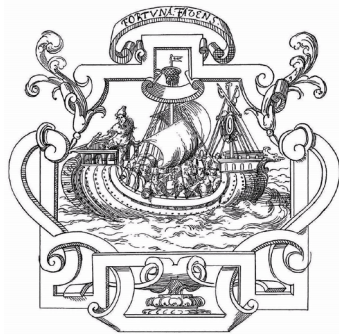
HISTORY

Dumphlun, a fortified site

The name Dumphlun, of Celtic origin, combines the roots “dun” (fortified enclosure) and “flun” (watercourse), attesting to the site’s very ancient occupation. The first documentary mentions of the castle date from the 15th century, a period of reconstruction following the Hundred Years’ War, which had led to the destruction of the neighboring castle of Billy in 1428–1430.

The construction of Dumphlun—then a fortified manor house with towers and moats—is attributed to Philibert d’Anlezy, a man-at-arms in 1467 and maître d’hôtel to the Countess of Nevers in 1475, who died before 1489. His grandson, Imbert d’Anlezy, one of the hundred gentlemen of the King’s Household and a veteran of the Italian Wars, is remembered for his “Book of Fortune” (1568), dedicated to the Duke of Alençon and illustrated by the Mannerist artist Jean Cousin the Younger.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the site expanded and gained several towers—up to seven at its peak. Until the 17th century, Dumphlun remained in the hands of the d’Anlezy and Cossaye families, both of whom converted to Protestantism, like much of the Nivernais nobility. Dumphlun’s chapel (now destroyed) was converted into a Protestant temple.



Dumphlun, an agricultural site

In the 17th century, Dumphlun passed to the Rémigny de Joux family. Charles, Baron of Rémigny, Lieutenant General of the provinces of Nivernais and Dionzais, married Marie-Chrétienne de La Perrière and settled there in 1642.

This family, very influential in the Nivernais region until the French Revolution, also left behind the Hôtel de Rémigny in Nevers (1 rue de Rémigny), and the memory of Luc-Angélique de Rémigny (1716–1779), who fought with his company in New France against British troops, notably during the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (1759), defending the city of Quebec.

Between 1774 and 1781, the Marquis Jean-Baptiste de Rémigny undertook a vast transformation of Dumphlun, in the context of the agricultural renewal driven by physiocratic ideas. The château was partially rebuilt, and a monumental farm was constructed by the Parisian architect Jean Babin. The entire estate became one of the largest agricultural complexes in the Nivernais region.

During the French Revolution, the last Marquis de Rémigny, Angélique-Louis Marie, vanished either abroad or within France, while his mother and brother were guillotined in Paris (1794). He died in 1803, leaving behind a young son, Pierre-Nicolas de Rémigny, who himself died in 1821. The entire estate—château and farm—was purchased in 1814 by a Parisian family, the Bouchers. They made Dumphlun their summer residence and began implementing the latest agricultural techniques.

In the 19th century, Dumphlun played a recognized role in the development of the Charolais cattle breed, whose expansion contributed to the region's economic prosperity. This model farm also became an active breeding center for the black Nivernais horses, which won several awards at major French and international exhibitions.

Over the course of the 20th century, the farm declined due to changes in agricultural practices and mechanization. It ceased operations entirely in 2003.

DESCRIPTION

The Site

Dumphlun stands on a promontory offering wide panoramic views over the wooded hills of the Amognes. Visitors are welcome to walk freely through this vast garden and discover its scenic vistas overlooking woodlands, meadows, orchards, and hedgerows.

The site underwent major transformations in the 19th century: the dovecote was removed, the farm—once part of a single courtyard with the château—was gradually partitioned, and the ponds were drained. The long plane tree avenue leading to Dumphlun from the village of Billy-Chevannes was officially listed as a historic monument in 2021. The agricultural park is home to several notable trees, including the large cedar tree facing the valley.

Students from the École nationale supérieure de paysage de Versailles worked on the site in 2022–2023. Their projects are exhibited in the farm buildings.

The Château

The château has an L-shaped layout centered around an old tower dating from the 14th or 15th century. This tower opens onto a wing built in the 15th century, to which a polygonal turret was added in the 18th century, replacing an older staircase. The ensemble is completed by a large 18th-century wing, with a sober and luminous architecture typical of country residences of the time.

Its apparent architectural unity actually conceals the layering of several successive building phases, which the guided tour helps to uncover and explain.

The Farm

Built in the late 18th century, Dumphlun's farm is a remarkable example of agricultural architecture. Designed to accommodate crops, livestock, workers' housing, and equipment, it impresses with its scale: over 150 meters long and 13 meters high for its barn-stables.

These buildings form a coherent ensemble with the château, surrounding what remained—until the 19th century—a large, shared courtyard. Cisterns, wine press, boundary walls, and dwelling house all testify to a system designed for self-sufficiency.

Abandoned for several decades, the farm is now undergoing a restoration program supported by the French State (DRAC), the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, the Stéphane Bern Heritage Mission / Fondation du Patrimoine, and the Airbnb / Tourism & Heritage program.

Today, it hosts guided tours, cultural events, artist residencies, and an agricultural project focused on willow cultivation and the art of basketry. In this way, Dumphlun reconnects with its original vocation: a place for living, working, and passing on knowledge.

