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The Sainte-Rolende folkloric procession in Gerpennes

Event planned for the month of June 2022



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<https://www.gerpennes.be/loisirs/folklore/les-marches-folkloriques-de-lentre-sambre-et-meuse-1/la-marche-ste-rolende>

Gerpennes invites you to join its folkloric procession, a tribute to Sainte-Rolende. This tradition has been declared Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

The legend of Sainte-Rolende

In 774, Rolende, daughter of Didier, King of Gaul, was meant to marry the son of the King of Scotland. She decided, instead, to escape from the palace and dedicate her life to God. She wandered endlessly before finding shelter at the Villers-Poterie castle where she died, exhausted. Her mortal remains were brought back to the church in Gerpennes. A few miracles later, beginning of the XIIth century, the religious authorities declared the body sacred. Pilgrims, since then, have been asking the Saint

for protection with a procession around the parish.

The procession

A mass is said at 3 am on Pentecost Monday in the Gerpennes-Centre church. The procession starts from there, around 3.45 am, with the Compagnie de Villers-Poterie having the honour of carrying the reliquary out. 3,000, dressed in outfits inspired by Napoleonian times, join the event, paced by the sound of drums and fifes. The 35-km itinerary goes through all the villages that used to depend of the parish. The **Sainte-Rolende** reliquary returns to the church around 7 pm.

The history

Religious in the start, then influenced by the Napoleonian era, the processions evolved through the 20th century to the actual format. A number take place in the region, with 20,000 persons putting on a costume to join this tradition between May and September. Each procession has its own traditions and rules. These processions are considered Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO

The information contained herein is provided as a guide only.

We recommend that you check with the local supplier before you leave.

Website editor

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