

Stories and the history of the island

A site going back as far as pre historical times

The first traces of humanity found on the island, flint tools, date back 20,000 years. Some plots of land and traces of agricultural buildings from the Bronze Age (1800 to 1000 B.C.) were also found.

In the ninth century, the Vikings who were established on the coasts of Normandy, named the island « Tatihou ». (« hou » = land surrounded by water and « tat » = Scandinavian proper name).

In the Middle Ages, it is said that there was a large-sized manor on the island.

The terrible battle of la Hougue

The battle of Barfleur - La Hougue took place from May 30th to June 2nd, 1692. In 1692, the island only had a few redoubts protected by earth walls that

Lazaret, scientific laboratory and more recently, centre for children.

In order to avoid spreading the plague of Marseilles in 1720, the King decided to create a lazaret on Tatihou. During « quarantines », goods and crews were fumigated with smoke from burning heather, juniper berries, old leather... This medical unit functioned until the 1860's.

In 1887, the natural history museum based in Paris occupied the buildings of the lazaret. The researchers set up a maritime laboratory with a sea water tower to study seaweed, plankton and

were built in 1688 following the Vauban inspection.

This battle was a clash between France and an Anglo-Dutch coalition. At the end of the battle, eleven French vessels commanded by the Admiral Tourville were beached and burned between Tatihou and La Hougue point.

As from 1694, in order to defend the bay against new attacks, the towers in Tatihou and La Hougue were built by Benjamin de Combes, a Vauban engineer. Vauban notes in 1699 that the « La Hougue harbour is the best in France ». The building of fortifications went on into the nineteenth century with the construction of a fort and sizeable powder magazines.

turbot breeding. In 1925, this laboratory moved to Saint-Servan then to Dinard. The following year (1926), children became the occupants of the island. This outdoor school of health education stayed on the island until the war.

In 1948 the educationalist, Camille Belliard, settled on the island and catered to young people in difficulties. The teenagers were placed on the island by the court and they benefited from the vocational building industry training until 1984.

Heritage, protection and development

The island was deserted until its assignment to the « Conservatoire de l'Espace Littoral », a public corporation charged with protecting the natural coasts of France.

In 1990, the island was entrusted to the County Council of La Manche for development, management and cultural

activities. On June 5th 1992, the Tri centennial anniversary of the battle of La Hougue, Tatihou island was opened to the public.

Today you can have the pleasure of exploring it for yourself.

Services provided

- Free guided tours regarding history, architecture and ornithology from 15/07 to 31/08.
- Thematic shop and restaurants.
- Discovery centre (55 beds), run by the local educational authority, day-long educational activities and documentation for teachers.
- Seminar centre for firms and individual accommodation.
- The « Traversées de Tatihou », a festival of traditional music from around the world, each year after August 15th
- « Thematic weekends » (ask for a programme).

Good Behaviour Code

Please help to contribute to the preservation of this fragile area :

- Do not throw away any waste on the island or the beaches. No dustbins are provided, so please take away your rubbish with you when you leave the island !
- Dogs are forbidden on the island, even on a lead, because they disturb the seabirds !
- Do not disturb the birds, especially during nesting time (mid-March to mid-July).
- Do not pick wild plants and flowers from gardens. Leave them for everyone to enjoy.
- Camping is forbidden.
- No photographs in the showrooms.
- It takes 10 years for cigarette butts to degrade, so please take them with you when you leave the island.

Tatihou Partners

- The district of Saint-Vaast-la-Hougue.
- The ornithological group of Normandy.
- The coastal area committee.
- Ministries for culture (DRAC), Ecology (DIREN) and State education (Vice-chancellorship).
- Restoration work enjoys financial help from the district council of Basse-Normandie and the European Union.

Information

- Tatihou island belongs to the network of sites and museums managed by the County Council of la Manche.
- The syndicat mixte "Espaces Littoraux de la Manche" (SyMEL), in charge of natural area - Conseil général de la Manche - 50050 Saint-Lô Cedex - T. 02 33 05 98 83

- Tatihou reception - Tickets and individual reservation
Quai Vauban - 50550 St-Vaast-la-Hougue - T. 02 33 23 19 92 - Fax 02 33 23 90 70

Ile Tatihou (groups/accommodation)
BP3 - 50550 St-Vaast-la-Hougue - France
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Ile.tatihou@manche.fr



Tatihou Island

St-Vaast-la-Hougue - Manche

SITES & MUSÉES
DU DÉPARTEMENT
DE LA MANCHE



Welcome to Tatihou



Please follow the instructions given to you by the ticket office as to where and when to board and the exact time, depending on the tide, to go to the appropriate boarding area to await the boat. Enjoy your visit !

Crossing on the Tatihou II boat

Boarding at Green Light Pier « Jetée feu vert » : Sailing to the island !

Boarding on the beach at « la Cale » : Driving to the island !

The boat « Tatihou II » is unique. This boat was inspired by Shell Industry Barges of the Cancale bay. This amphibious boat operates by hydraulic propulsion which moves propellers and wheels. Therefore, the boat is equipped with a steering wheel for driving and boating. The boat sails over the oyster beds and close to the site of the shipwrecks of the Battle of la Hougue. On the horizon, towards the south, you can see the fortified St-Marcouf islands.

The « Tatihou II » crosses the Rhun, which is covered with every tide. This area is used by oyster-farmers, who have oyster beds set up on 250 hectares in the shallow tidal areas, « l'estran ». Saint-Vaast is the oldest oyster basin of La Manche. This oyster is characterized by its hazelnut taste linked to the quality of the water and to the oyster-farming techniques using tables and pouches. The yearly production is about 6500 tons.

Visitor's guide book

patrimoine.manche.fr



LA MANCHE
CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL

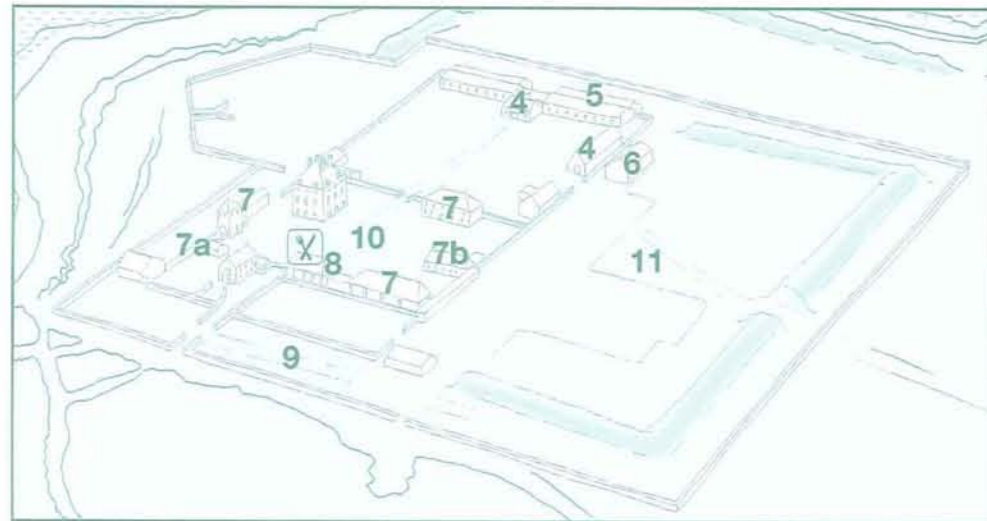
Map of the island

1 - Harbour

2 - The customs house

This is the starting point of the guided tours and the location of the exhibitions on the island's heritage. In spring the bridal parades and the nesting of the egrets and the seagulls can be seen live thanks to a video camera situated in the islet fort. There are also toilets located here.

3 - The lazaret



4 - The maritime museum and ship hall

The archaeological wreckages of Louis XIV's ships, sunk at the time of the battle of La Hougue (1692), are at the origin of the museum which is now part of "Musée de France". Each year there are exhibitions on history, maritime and coastal ethnology. Shop.

5 - The boat-shed

Discover traditional fishing boats from the coastline of la Manche and Calvados: such as rowing boats, punts...

6 - The shipyard contains a "trawl-line boat" that is being restored in the ship workshop. This area is not open to the public.

7 - Accommodation is available for groups and individual visitors.

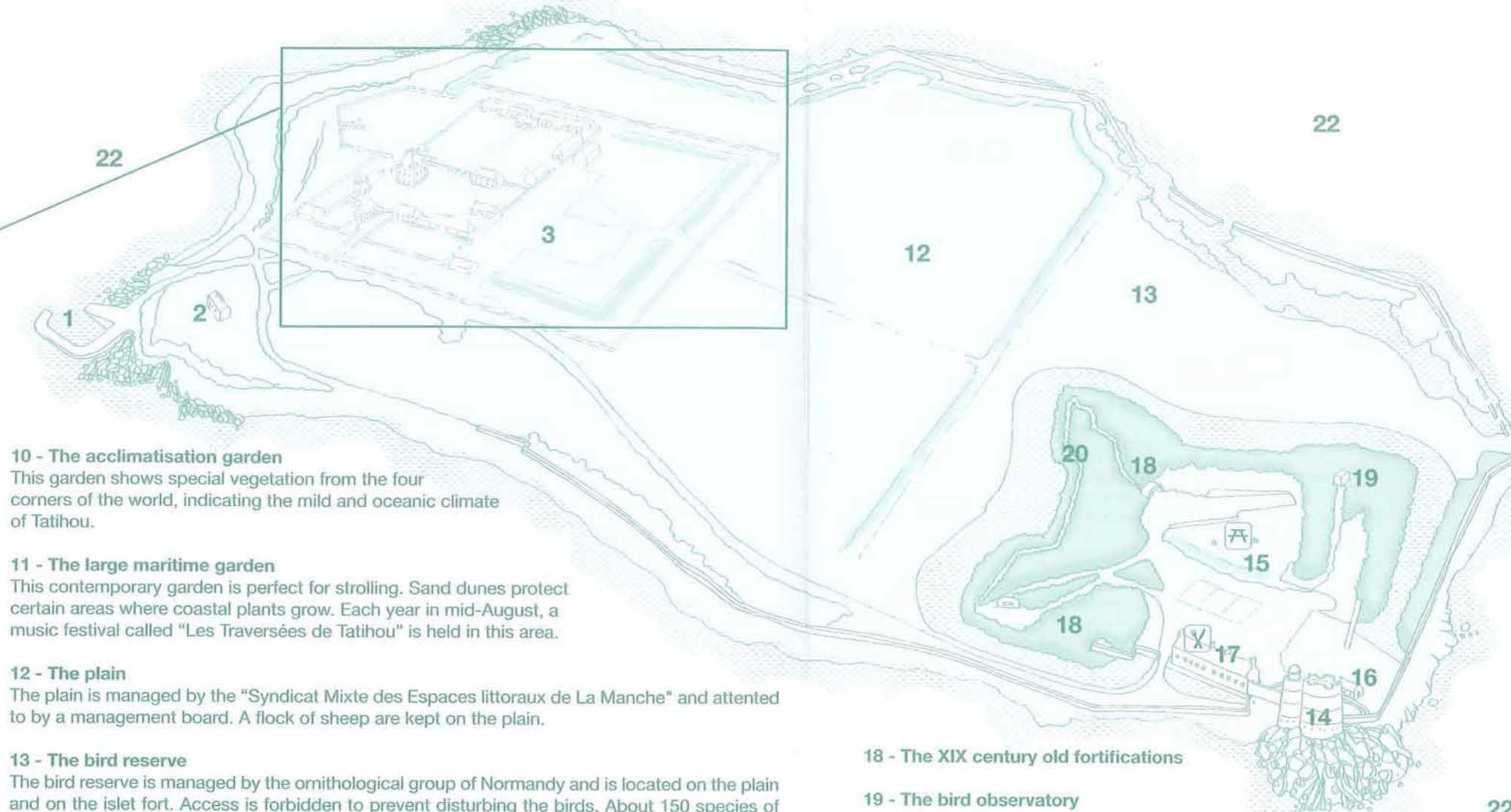
7a - The club room

7b - The conference room

8 - The restaurant is for the groups and the individual visitors who are in residence. 

9 - The discovery garden

As you walk inland you can see many coastal plants. This garden is intentionally left to grow naturally to provide a true representation of the varied species that flourish with the passing seasons.



10 - The acclimatisation garden

This garden shows special vegetation from the four corners of the world, indicating the mild and oceanic climate of Tatihou.

11 - The large maritime garden

This contemporary garden is perfect for strolling. Sand dunes protect certain areas where coastal plants grow. Each year in mid-August, a music festival called "Les Traversées de Tatihou" is held in this area.

12 - The plain

The plain is managed by the "Syndicat Mixte des Espaces littoraux de La Manche" and attended to by a management board. A flock of sheep are kept on the plain.

13 - The bird reserve

The bird reserve is managed by the ornithological group of Normandy and is located on the plain and on the islet fort. Access is forbidden to prevent disturbing the birds. About 150 species of migrant and winter birds are in the area. Some species even nest on the site.


14 - The Vauban tower XVII century

This tower was built after the battle of la Hougue in order to defend the Saint-Vaast harbour. Go up to the top and admire the panoramic view from the artillery platform.

15 - The powder magazines XIX century

16 - The chapel

17 - The barracks 7

On the ground floor you can find an exhibition on the fauna and flora of the island and its shoreline. On the first floor there is a restaurant and a tearoom.  There are also public toilets located here.

18 - The XIX century old fortifications

19 - The bird observatory

20 - The tamarisk path

21 - The islet fort, bird reserve (non authorized access)

22 - The shoreline and sea environment

Due to the abundance and diversity of the fauna and maritime flora a maritime laboratory was established on the island in the XIX century. Today, it is a Natura 2000 zone. Watch out for the tide!

