

St Anthony – patron saint of all crosseurs

Posted by ancientgolf under [Crosse \(choule\)](#)

Comments Off



The 17th of January was once the special day to celebrate the patron saint of all crosseurs in the crosse region around the cities of Mons (South Belgium) and Maubeuge (North France) in the ancient county of Hainaut. On this day people from the region joined in a pilgrimage from Mons to the St Anthony chapel near the village of Havré to ask the saint for protection against the plague.

Also the many crosseurs joined in this pilgrimage holding proudly their crosse club over their shoulders. When they arrived after a walk of more than 10 kilometres they put a crosse club in the hand of the statue of St Anthony and they participated in a special mass.

After the religious duties in and near the chapel the people stayed to meet each other, to sing and dance, to drink and to play games. The crosseurs started to play their game in the fields around the chapel. The final target of the game was the door of the chapel. Late in the afternoon the crosseurs returned to Mons stopping at every tavern on its way to a traditional, copious meal of rabbit sprinkled with beer and wine. They sang over and over again the ancient song of St Anthony:

A Saint Antoine,
on va crocher,
avec ‘n soule et ‘n macquet.

*On the day of St Anthony,
we are going to play crosse,
with a ball and a club.*

When diseases like the plague became more and more under control the interest in making pilgrimages to Havré dwindled and eventually stopped. The crosseurs however continued for many years to come to hold a pilgrimage to the chapel to celebrate St Anthony who had become their patron saint. After the Second World War when also the interest in the game of crosse declined as well as the interest in the pilgrimage to Havré.

Today the chapel is in a dilapidated state and the door seems to be definitely closed.