

Jeu de mail in France

The map is a visual feast adorned with different coloured round stickers representing the various jeu de mail locations. The map's borders are further enriched with the reader cards of most of the over 60 departmental and municipal archives we visited, providing a comprehensive visual overview of our research journeys.

The orange stickers indicate the towns or villages with a mail court or roads where people undoubtedly played the mail game. In the south of France, ordinary people played on roads and tracks in the open fields around the towns and villages the variant 'mail à la chicane'.

The yellow stickers show the castles where the royals and aristocrats constructed mail alleys in their stately gardens to add grandeur to their families and estates.

The blue ones still need to be confirmed. They indicate villages or towns where there is a road with the name of 'mail'. After the decline of the game, sometimes the prestigious mail alleys became beautiful promenades where people used to walk in the shadow of the grown-up trees. In later times shadowy avenues were laid out and called 'mail'.

After further research, a black sticker replaced the blue one when the name mail had no reference to the game.

The research is far from over; there is still much to uncover in the fascinating world of jeu de mail.

