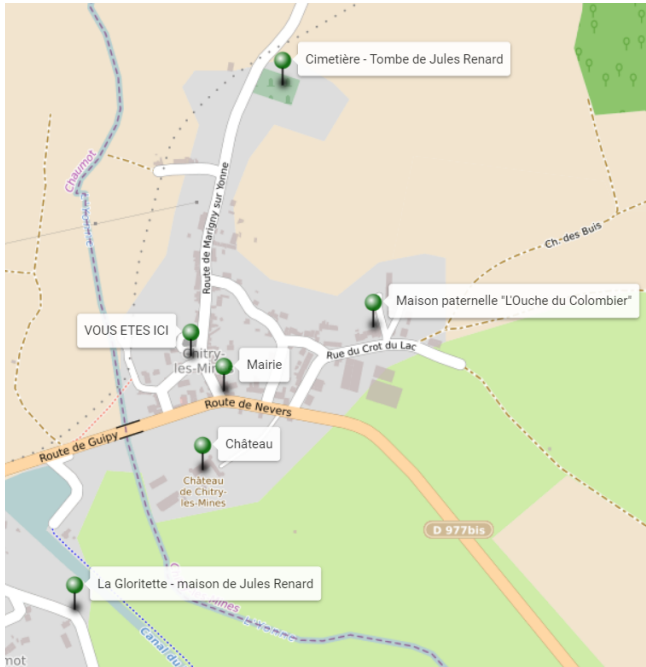


# JULES RENARD

**Jules Renard (1864-1910) – man of letters**

“The only man who is really free is the one who can turn down an invitation to dinner without giving an excuse.” (Jules Renard)

Jules Renard, best known as the author of *Poil de Carotte* ('Carrot Top'), was a novelist, playwright and humorist. He also gives his name to a long list of inspirational and witty aphorisms courtesy of his popular diaries, which he kept from the age of 23 until the year he died. He grew up in Chitry-les-Mines, and later returned to the village, where he served as mayor.



## ASSOCIATION DES AMIS DE JULES RENARD



Mairie 58800 Chitry-les-Mines



[lesamisdejules.renard@laposte.net](mailto:lesamisdejules.renard@laposte.net)



## BIOGRAPHY

Jules Renard was born at Châlons-du-Maine in Mayenne, northwest France, on 22nd February 1864, the youngest of three children of François Renard and Rosa-Anne Colin (Poil de Carotte's Mr and Mrs Lepic).

**1866 :** The family moves to Chitry-les-Mines where Jules spends his childhood. His father became mayor of the village.

**1875 :** Jules Renard studies at the high school in Nevers (today it's known as the Lycée Jules Renard). With his brother, Maurice, he boards at the Institution Saint-Louis. He only comes back to Chitry for school holidays.

**1881 :** Leaves for Paris where he studies rhetoric at the Lycée Charlemagne.

**1882 :** In July, Jules Renard passes the first part of the baccalauréat. In October he majors in philosophy and prepares to sit the entrance exams for the Ecole Normale Supérieure.

**1883 :** Decides not to sit the exam and passes the second part of the baccalauréat.

**1884 :** Jules works on his first novel, which will only be published in 1919.

**1885 :** Military service.

**1886 :** Self-publishes a poetry collection called Les Roses.

**1887 :** Starts writing his Journal.

**1888 :** On 28th April, Jules Renard marries Marie Morneau.

**1889 :** Publishes Crime de Village.

**1890 :** Contributes regularly to Mercure de France [French cultural magazine] and publishes Sourires Pincés.

**1891 :** Starts contributing to Gils Blas [daily literary newspaper].

**1892 :** Publishes l'Ecornifleur.

**1893 :** First incarnation of Poil de Carotte and publication of La Lanterne Sourde.

**1895 :** First performance of La Demande, a one-act play.

**1896 :** Publishes Histoires Naturelles and La Maîtresse.

**1897 :** Writes Plaisir de Rompre.

**1898 :** Jules Renard plays an active part in the campaign supporting Captain Dreyfus and Emile Zola. He has a new play, Le Pain de Ménage, and publishes Bucoliques.

**1900 :** Poil de Carotte is staged at the Théâtre Antoine. On 6th May, Jules Renard is elected onto the town council of nearby Chaumot. On 15th August, he is made a knight of the Legion of Honour. 3rd October sees the 100th performance of Poil de Carotte.

**1903 :** First performance of Monsieur Vernet.

**1904 :** Contributes to Jean Jaurès' Humanité [left-wing daily newspaper]. On 15th May Renard is elected mayor of Chitry-les-Mines.

**1905 :** Renard delivers a speech at the unveiling of a statue of Claude Tillier [contemporary French writer] in the nearby market town of Clamecy.

**1906 :** Maurice Ravel sets five of Renard's Histoires Naturelles to music.

**1907 :** Jules Renard is elected member of the Académie Goncourt.

**1908 :** The release of Mots d'Ecrit, Nos Frères Farouches and Ragotte.

**1909 :** Performance of La Bigote at the Théâtre Antoine.

**1910 :** April: the last entry in his Journal. On 22nd May Jules Renard dies at his Parisian apartment on 44 rue du Rocher. Civil funeral at Chitry on 24th May.

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