

Castanheira owes its name to a “deep wood of chestnuts, which formerly, shaded Nossa Senhora do Tojo Hermitage”. Along Tagus river we find the most ancient traces of human occupation, which go back to Paleolithic. Long time after, in the 1st millennium BC, there were in the neighborhoods big fortified towns, from which we detach, in the area of the parish, Monte dos Castelinhos. The Roman occupation was also marked by findings in Monte dos Castelinhos (local, which is now being target of archeological systematic diggings) and in Bairro Gulbenkian.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Castanheira was part of Povos region, which had old charter in 1195. In 1452, D. Afonso V, granted letter of town to the village and place of Castanheira. The new charter was granted by D. Manuel I, in 1510.

Fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were marked by the power of the Ataíde family, lords of Castanheira, being D. António de Ataíde, the 1st Count of Castanheira. Castanheira county was extinct in 1837 and the pillory was dismantled in 1845.

The township of Castanheira do Ribatejo, was once again raised to town in 1985.

Nossa Senhora de Suberra Convent

Rua do Convento (Convent Street)

This former religious building of Franciscan nuns, existed until 1985, when it was destroyed by EPAL (Public Company of Lisbon Waters) pipe. Erected by D. Fernando de Ataíde, it was instituted by Papal Bull on the 15th August 1520. The works continued after D. Fernando's death (1525), conducted by his wife D. Leonor, who died in 1541 and the Works were concluded by Count D. António, in 1547.

São João Baptista Hermitage

Founded by Castanheira Counts, in 1554, it had bellow the churchyard a water spring, which water ran to a small tank, where the cattle, that passed on the road, drank (today National Road nr. 1). Ataíde family insignia is placed above de entry.

Santa Catarina Fountain

This fountain corresponds to a vaulted rectangular structure, with a side tank. Originally, it had a small niche where it was the image of Santa Catarina, later replaced by the insignia of Ataíde family. The structural repair of the fountain was concluded in March 2001.



Bairro Gulbenkian

Following the trenching for the implantation of an EPAL (Public Company of Lisbon Waters) pipe, there were found traces of a roman town. Although the presence of roman materials was already known, only the archeological diggings allowed the characterization of the station. Among other findings, there were traces of walls, water gutters and a polychrome mosaic.



6th League Boundary Milestone

Classified as Public Interest Property, this boundary milestone is located in EN1 (national road), at KM 29 270, near Quinta dos Fidalgos. It was built in 1788 by order of Queen D. Maria I, to mark the Royal Road from Lisbon to Santarém, being the sixth of the twelfth league boundary milestones, which were erected on this road. Of the three known boundary milestones of Vila Franca de Xira county, the 6th league boundary milestone is the only one that is intact and in the original location.



Igreja Matriz de São Bartolomeu

Classified as Public Interest Property, is located in Largo de São José and is one of the most important temples of the county. Rebuilt in 1534, by the 1st Count of Castanheira, D. António de Ataíde, whose family insignia is above the entry, after the early Parish Church of Castanheira, had been destroyed by 1531 earthquake. Parish Church of longitudinal plan view formed by nave and presbytery. Central entry, of round-arch with archivolts, surrounded by fluted shaft columns and capitals decorated and finished by entablature, with angles, intrados and architrave ornamented (rosettes and human and animal figures). The inside has a single nave, with walls coated by tiles of carpet type and altars of Baroque carving of national style. The presbytery, on crypt, also has a tile coating, a Baroque carving altar and a painted panelled ceiling. On the outside, there is the Renaissance entry on the street-front.

