

Guenrouët (Saint-Clair) – Blain

STAGE PROFILE : 22.4 km – 05H35

It is difficult to escape from the presence of water during this short stage, where every such escape seems like time lost. If this itinerary does not appear to be truly 'historical', it at least has the advantage of guaranteeing the pilgrim an enjoyable walk, far from major roads, and going alongside the Nantes-Brest Canal. And also, if you allow yourself time to stop and talk, it is interesting to hear the lock-keepers speaking about their work and about the canal. Another reason to take your time with a gentle walk.

The day can end pleasantly, with a visit to the château of Blain where the Connétable tower is linked to the memory of Olivier V of Clisson, who is buried in the basilica of Notre Dame du Roncier at Josselin; or seeing the beautiful wall frescoes of the chapel of Saint Roch.

DIRECTIONS:

0.00 – Guenrouët - Saint-Clair. Leave the lodging place [gîte d'étape] and rejoin the D 2/ rue de l'Isac above by taking the steps in front of a restaurant. Cross the bridge over the Nantes-Brest Canal and, opposite a crêperie and before a carpark, go right down the towpath which is overlooked by a Cross with a statue and an Oratory. Your itinerary is the same as that of the marked walking trail 'GRP des Trois Rivières' which follows the north bank of the river Isac, a left-bank tributary of the Vilaine, also serving as the canal waterway. This allows a particularly agreeable walk towards Blain ; curving canal banks, wooded areas, gravel towpaths and lots of birds – cormorants, grey herons, mallard ducks and waterhens are plentiful, also some wild geese as well as jays with their magnificent plumage. After a little less than an hour you will come alongside the boundary wall of ...

0H55 3.8 – ... Château de Carheil; you can see its chapel from the towpath. Ahead, after wooded banks, the canal goes alongside a flatter area with meadowland. After a large curve in the canal and the river Isac ...

1H20 5.3 – ... near the village « La Douettée », fork left onto a tarmac road and, after about 100m, turn right onto a gravelled agricultural access track which, after about 100m, goes alongside the canal. After a little more than 1km, there is an intersection (notice on the right the iron cross on a stone base) with a tarmac road to the village of Melneuf ; go right to get back onto the towpath after 50m, which you follow, heading left, once again along the north bank – as does the GRP. At PK 66, after several dozen metres, pass by the Lock of Melneuf (6.9km). The view around the canal is more open and the embankments of the towpath are even nicer, looking over a marshy area on the left, before the D3 ...

2H20 9,3 – ... at Pont de Nozay. Continue on the towpath where the banks become more wooded as you approach the lovely lock and spillway of La Touche (11km). 700m further, with the GRP, leave the towpath by the left [Here however, the pilgrim can continue along the un-waymarked towpath to rejoin the GRP trail after 4.3km near the area of La Pessuais. This is 800m longer than by following the GRP] After about 30m, turn right to go through the village of

La Touche aux Thébauds. Go through Peslan, after a little less than 1km, keeping to the right. At the far outskirts of this latter village, bear left after a Cross near a joining of roads (goose-foot shape).

[Here it is possible to go straight ahead to get to the market town of **Saint-Omer-de-Blain** to avail of the services there (bar, grocery, restaurants...). The walking distance is a little shorter this way, and you rejoin the GRP trail a little after the sign marking the far outskirts of Saint-Omer.]

About 1km further, still on the tarmac road...

3H25 13.9 – ... there is an intersection with a D-road near the entry-sign to Saint-Omer-de-Blain. [New church with remarkable modern style stained glass windows]. Fork left, and after 100m, take a right for 20m, then head left onto a path (subject to standing water/puddles during rain) towards the village of La Pessuais. After 350m, cross a tarmac road and continue on the path opposite you to arrive at a tarmac road serving two little houses. 50m further down...

3H40 14.7 ... there is an intersection with a **tarmac road**. Go left in the village of **La Pessuais** and fork right onto a first track after 150m, to go down to the towpath (15.2km) after having turned right a second time. Continue to the left along the towpath. There is an intersection with the D81 after 600m which adjoins the lock and spillway of Bougard. [Bar and crêperie nearby] The towpath continues on a quite high embankment, going by several marshy areas; it is bordered with Douglas firs, pine trees¹ and also a beautiful row of lime trees before...

5H05 20,4 – ... the **Lock of la Paulais** and beyond. After 1.1km, cross the N171 to get to the harbour of Blain (Surcouf quay). At the end of this quay, climb the 'passerelle' overbridge and take the promenade Anne de Bretagne to get to...

5H35 22,4 – ... the **gîte municipal / lodging place near the château**. [Surcouf quay has a number of restaurants, and the start of a path towards the town centre 750m away.

VARIATION to visit the chapel of Saint-Roch leaving from the gîte :

00h30 01.5 – From the gîte go out the boundary walls of the château of Groulais and turn left; go straight ahead as far as the D15. Turn left then keep to the left on the D42. Go along the Champ Brunet to the Chapel of Saint-Roch, situated on your left (1.6km).

Built in 1450 by Alain IX of Rohan to ward off the black plague which was rife in the region, this chapel was the seat of the friary of the château. Erected on a megalithic site (le petit roc fou – the little mad rock) like most of the Breton holy places, a druidic sacred place has become a Christian one. Rebuilt in the 19th Century by the Jolian de Clerville family, who added a little belltower and a south chapel. The building has been the property of the community since 1870. Beautiful wall paintings. (To visit: ask for the key from the Tourist Office)