

D Starting point

P Car Park
Park at Samara Car Park

1 Cross the road via the passage, go down the steps and take the right turning

2 Take the left turning and follow alongside the pasture

3 Turn left

4 Take the right turn and climb the steps

5 Turn right

6 Take the right turn over the embankment of the Sarrazin Ditch.
Variation: return via the minor road

7 Cross the stile and follow the trail across the chalk-bank

8 Cross the stile and return to the trail

9 Continue along the trail

10 Take the trail to the right through the wooded area and return to the pasture

Be careful:

The site is closed during hunting periods. Keep dogs on leads when crossing the hillside to point 8 during grazing periods. Not suitable for horse riding or cycling (stiles)

Protect the natural environment

To help with the conservation of the rich natural habitats of this fragile site, please:

- . Always use the marked trails
- . Keep gates and stiles closed
- . Respect the fauna and flora
- . Take your litter away with you
- . Always keep dogs on leads

This trail is maintained by the municipality of Chaussée-Tirancourt.



This leaflet was created by the Somme County Council

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To find out more:

- Tourist Office:
Picquigny : 03 22 51 46 85
www.amiens-ouest-tourisme.fr
- Somme Tourist Board:
www.somme-tourisme.com
www.somme-nature.com

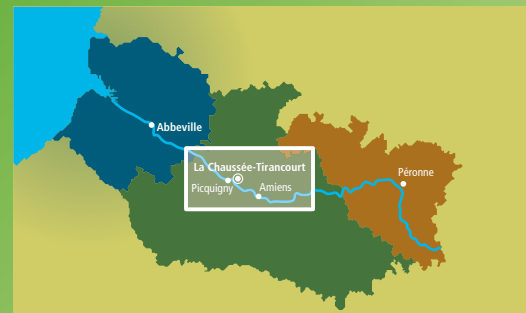
Managers of the site:



The Acon Valley

La Chaussée-Tirancourt,
2km from Picquigny, 17km
from Amiens

Halfway along the Somme Valley enjoy a walk of great diversity: this is the major quality of the site - a fascinating journey through the wet valley to the dry hillsides.



D Starting at: Samara Car Park

Time: 1 hour 15m

Distance: 3.8km

Route: moderate

Spring

Summer

Autumn

Winter

Exploring the natural sites

Walk **6**





The Acon Valley

Leading into the Somme River, the Acon Valley has a wonderful diverse landscape. At the bottom of the valley, the River Acon snakes across the wetlands and damp pastures dotted with ponds. On the left bank, a chalky hillside is covered with short grass and bushes: this is the chalk-bank. Many types of fauna and flora flourish here thanks to the conservation work carried out by the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie.



Michel Bellanger,
Operations
Manager for the
Lycée Agricole du
Paraquet
"Grazing animals
preserve this
natural habitat."

A partnership was put into place a few years ago between the Lycée Agricole du Paraquet and the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie, who manage the site. This has allowed us to preserve a rare breed of "Nantais" cattle, and to maintain the bio-diversity. The Nantais cows are rustic animals, well suited to grazing in wet zones and are very sociable. They maintain the site of the Acon Valley by grazing here for 2 to 3 months every year".

About the site

- > **Proprietor:** Somme County Council, Municipality of Chaussée-Tirancourt, CHU of Amiens
- > **Size:** 11ha
- > **Managed by:** Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Picardie
- > **Maintenance partners:** Municipality, Lycée Agricole du Paraquet, a cattle farmer, Communauté de Communes de l'Ouest Amienois
- > **Financial partners:** Europe, State, Agence d'Eau Artois-Picardie, Regional Council of Picardie, Somme County Council

Refresh yourself in the valley

At the bottom of the valley, where the River Acon runs, the scenery is of pasture lands. In summer, cows and horses maintain the area by grazing and so limiting the growth of tall grasses and bushes. Accessible from the RD191 (the starting point is opposite the Samara Car Park); a marked trail will take you across the grasslands. On the edge of a pasture, you will recognise common types of plants such as: the Marsh Marigold - a kind of large buttercup that grows in large bunches at the beginning of spring, or the fragrant Water Mint. On the banks, the pink swords of the Purple Loosestrife join the Great Water Dock. The grasslands (regularly flooded during bad weather) are alive with wildlife: micro-organisms, insects, amphibians and birds. During the summertime, in the early morning or late evening,



you can listen to the green frogs in concert: a pleasure to hear!

Take some height

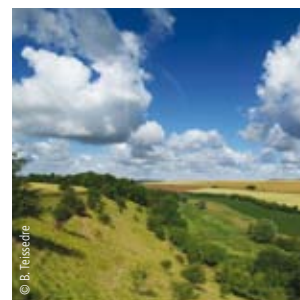
On the slopes of the chalk-banks there is a southern feel to the atmosphere. Vegetation colours the chalky ground, dominated mainly by Gramineae.

About ten different species of orchids - such as the Fragrant Orchid (visible from May) or the Man Orchid - thrive here, as do different aromatic plants. You can also see many types of insects: crickets, grass-hoppers, butterflies, etc.

The trail continues climbing through a wood onto the cultivated land on the heights. Take the embankment that looks over the "Sarrazin Ditch", the last visible mark of the surrounding wall of Caesar's Camp, a Gallo-Roman fortified camp.

Today, it is covered by fields and protected on its two other flanks by the natural ramparts which make up the dominant slopes of the Somme and Acon Valleys. From here, beautiful panoramic views can be seen.

At the end of the ditch, which looks over the Acon Valley, cross the stile and descend the chalk-bank to meet the second stile and find the trail previously taken across the grasslands. This is where the pollarded willows live: a special technique



The Chiltern Gentian: On the hillsides bordering the valley, and on the many banks, the Chiltern Gentian flowers at the end of summer. Its finely cut, mauve flowers will certainly draw your eye.

for timbering, where only the branches are cut giving the trees their curious silhouettes. The enclosed area, which can be seen on the left from June to October, protects the Tumble Mustard from being eaten by goats; a particularly rare and remarkable plant to Picardy and protected on a European level.

Close by, the **Samara Archaeological Park** not only offers a historical interest to visitors but also allows you to discover a variety of habitats: marshlands, reed beds and an arboretum.

Some ten different species of amphibians have been counted in the Acon Valley: toads, frogs and newts are all at home here. It is the complementary habitats which provide such excellent living conditions: aquatic areas for reproduction, and grasslands, limestone, and wooded areas for feeding, shelter and hibernation. The Great Crested Newt and the Common Parsley Frog are the most remarkable of the species to be found here.



The Common Parsley Frog: Amphibians are wonderful indicators of the quality of the wet zones. Many species, including the Common Parsley Frog, co-habit on the site.

Because it hosts many protected species, is composed of rare natural habitats and was in danger of becoming an illegal dumping ground, the site has been regulated by a prefectural order of protection of the biotope since 1994.

From April to November, you will meet the "maintenance workforce": Nantais cattle, (an endangered breed), Fjord horses, and sheep graze on the hillsides. Of course, their presence here is supervised so as not to disturb the development of the plants.



Man Orchid