




# The Green March Valley

## (La vallée de la Marche verte)

As its name suggests, this route will mainly take you through marshland, valleys and woods.

-  Time: 3 hours 20
-  Distance: 10 km
-  Route: easy

**Leaving from:** Church in Athies



**Athies**, 11 km south of Péronne, 15 km north-east of Ham



La Somme

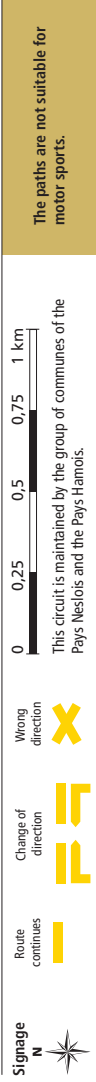
- ① Facing the south door of the church, turn right. Cross the road. Walk past the square, then the tree-lined avenue. Take the Chemin des Petites Vignes on the left, then the Chemin des Marais.
  - ▶ *The church, dedicated to Notre-Dame de l'Assomption, dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The tower and vaults were rebuilt after the Great War. The restored 13<sup>th</sup>-century south door has many columns topped by capitals with sculpted arches.*
- ② Continue walking between the marshes on one side and the plain on the other. You'll come to a plain, then a road. Turn left, passing the bridge over the Omignon.
- ③ Go into Saint-Christ-Briost. Walk alongside the fish farms by the old mill.
  - ▶ *In the village there is a traditional "anguillière" [eel trap]. You find this tradition everywhere in the Haute Somme. The fishing season runs from April to September, when the eels are heading back to the*
- ④ Take the first road on the left. Keeping the Omignon on your left, continue along the plain with its lush greenery.
- ⑤ You will come to the old water-mills.
  - ▶ *These were converted into an industrial flour-mill in 1903. It was in turn destroyed during the Great War, and has not been used since 1955.*
- ⑥ Your route takes you past the Ennemain road, whose Jacques Debat-Ponsan church alternates courses of brick and plaster. Continue along the road, then cross the Omignon to reach the outskirts of Athies.
- ⑦ Turn right to take the counter-scarp, which leads you up to the high points of the town via the meadow below the old town. Pass the retirement home, then turn back down to the church.

**Tourism Office Haute-Somme,**  
Tel: 03 2284 4238  
[www.hautesomme-tourisme.com](http://www.hautesomme-tourisme.com)

of interest

### Sainte-Radegonde

You cannot talk about Athies, the village in the Omignon Valley, without mentioning Radegonde, daughter of the King of Thuringia. After the Frankish defeat of the Thuringians, Clotaire, son of Clovis, brought this young princess and her brother to Athies as "spoils of war". Radegonde became Queen of the Franks in 538 against her will, after having received an intellectual and religious education in Athies. Queen Radegonde enjoyed considerable prestige until the day when she decided to leave the Court for good after her brother was murdered by her husband, Clotaire. She then gave her life to God, retiring to a convent until her death in 587. Her tomb in Poitiers receives many visitors. In Athies, Radegonde had an infirmary built on the spot where the present retirement home bearing her name stands. Her life is depicted in stained glass windows in the church of Notre-Dame de l'Assomption in Athies.



This circuit is maintained by the group of communes of the Pays Neslois and the Pays Hamois.

6 km away, Monchy-Lagache: church with listed stained-glass windows.

10 km away, Péronne: Historial de la Grande Guerre, Hôtel de Ville, Hardines or floating market gardens, Musée Alfred-Danicourt, church of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Étang du Cam, Porte de Bretagne, Ramparts, etc.

15 km away, Ham: its Château dating from the 13th century, and transformed by the Luxembourg family in the 15th century. In 1846, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from there disguised as a builder called "Badinguet".

The Crypt of the Abbey Church of Notre-Dame, built at the end of the 12th century is a blend of Romanesque and Gothic. It is considered as one of the most beautiful crypts in northern France and contains the recumbent effigies of Odon IV, lord of Ham from 1216 to 1234, and Isabelle de Bethencourt, his wife;

The station frescoes depict the château, the sugar industry, wheat growing and the insignia of the communes and lords.