



ST MICHEL DES ANDAINES

La ronde de l'Archange

Découverte Bocage Ornaïs
Walking in the Bocage Normand



The « Etang de la Brisette » used to be a stone quarry. The stones were used to build the wall around Bagnoles lake.



Little anecdotes :

- Most mayors of Saint Michel used to live in St Ouen (Paris) and were in charge of the last stages of the maturing process of Brie cheese.
- There used to be an archangel on the top of the church spire.

This archangel fell just in front of the congregation leaving the church after mass as the bells were ringing.

Time taken	Distance	Variation	Pathway	Sign posting
6h	20.5 km	322 m	60%	yellow
Difficulties	Difficult			

Mayor's office : 02 33 37 02 84
Monday and thursday : 15H30 à 17H30
Email : mairsaintmicheldesand@wanadoo.fr
Découverte Bocage Ornaïs
02 33 37 10 97
11 rue de La Victoire, 61600 La Ferté Macé
www.tourisme-lafertemace.fr

www.d-bo.fr

La forêt domaniale des Andaines
The forêt domaniale des Andaines (5,380 hectares divided into 473 parcels) is the remains of the « Sylvae Andennae » from the early Middle Ages., a huge wooded expanse extending from Domfront to Alençon and separating Normandy from Maine. Resting of the sandstone shield of the Massif Armoricain, this forest has a dense network of streams and marshy areas at the heart of an occasionally hilly landscape.

The soil supports a vegetation typical of acid ground (ferns, blueberries, etc...) The actual proportions of forest species is more or less balanced between deciduous (oak, beech) and evergreen (pine, fir).



The dominance of pine during the last century was justified by the necessity of replanting the vast deforested spaces caused by overharvesting in a time of particularly demanding industrial activity resulting from the need for wood for burning : forges, glass factories....etc.

The management of the forest mainly generates wood production (roughly 22,000 m³ per year). Its social role is equally important, in particular for hunting (with hounds and with guns), and for the use of the general public. Its many amenities make for a quality experience : multi-usage marked pathways, wooden benches, play areas, healthy walks, an arboretum.

Ecological considerations occupy a continually growing importance. The Office National des Forêts, after a biological and physical heritage census in the Forêts des Andaines, has established management rules for individuals, in respect of the protection of species and rare or fragile habitats (woodpeckers, the alpine newt, peat bogs... etc.), according to their importance and access by the general public (trees and noteworthy landscapes, rocky outcrops...).

Extract from an information sheet on St Michel des Andaines



In the 15th and 16th century, there were a lot of big forges in the region. The iron ore was mainly extracted in the forest,

Today, there only remains the Mansion where the forge master used to live and a large pond.



Chapelle des Prises.

Private property.No entry

« Prises » refers to a piece of land after clearing



« Saint Ortaire » and « Chapelle des Servites » : free entrance or possibility of guided visits (see Tourism office Bagnoles de l'Orne Normandie)



Notable trees along the way :

- 11 Douglas trees, each 42 m tall.
- Oak tree nicknamed Hippolyte it is 30 metres tall and its trunk is 5 metres 30 cm around.

(free sheet)

ST MICHEL DES ANDAINES - La ronde de l'Archange

Commune de Bagnoles de l'Orne Normandie

1 Park near the church. With the church behind you, carefully cross the D 908, and turn right onto the road « Rue de l'Étre Plessis » leaving the village and going towards St Maurice du Désert. Take the first road on the left towards « Val de Gestel ». Follow this lane downhill.

Before the bridge, turn right into the lane then at the end of the lane turn left onto the road.

2 After the « Pilonnière » take the first left onto the road which is just before a roadside cross. Continue along the edge of the forest on the tarmac road for about 2.2 km until you reach the D53; cross the road (carefully) and head for "l'Étang de la Forge »(pond) .

3 Immediately after the « maison du maître de forge » (private property), bear left round the bend up to « Chapelle des prises »(private property no entry)and then go into the edge of the forest. Follow the forestry path on the left. At the « Carrefour des Amazones », continue straight on not forgetting to take a slight detour to your left to have a look at the pond« Etang de la Brisette ». Head back onto the forestry path until you reach « Carrefour de la Brisette »

4 Fork left onto the forestry road « Qué de Chalendray ». At the crossroads, take the tarmac road on the right. After about 30m, turn right, immediately before the plot of land numbered 105. Continue straight on to the « Carrefour Ferrière » then turn left towards « Carrefour des Pépinières »(Don't forget to have a look at the Douglas firs on the left). Cross the D 908, (carefully) and go straight on to the forestry road « Prise Pontin » (1.8 km) until the D53. Cross the road, (carefully!) Continue along the lane across the road towards the « Village du Cheval »

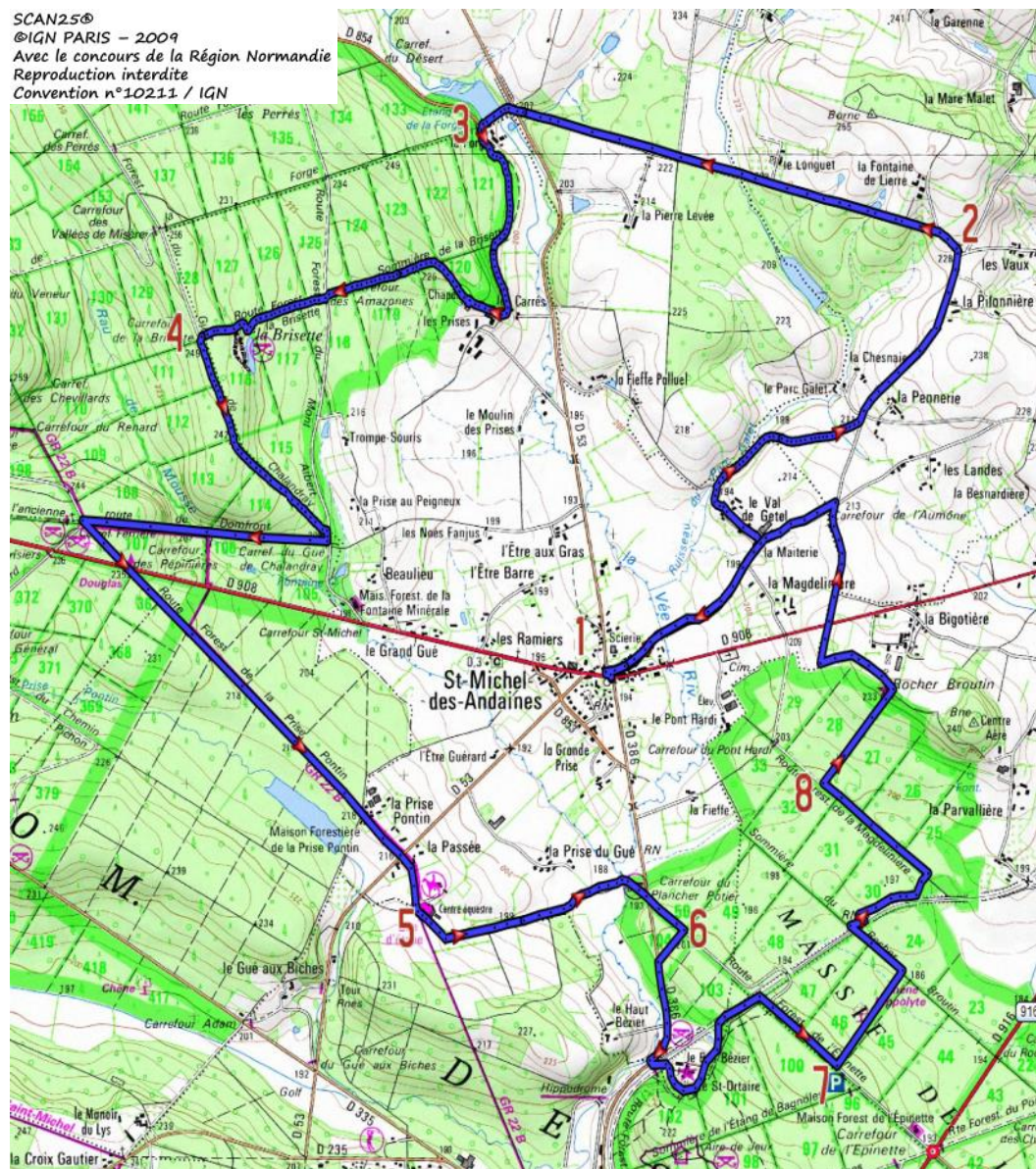
5 Leaving the village behind you on the left, turn immediately onto the path on the far left. At « Carrefour du Plancher Pottier(D386), continue onto the road opposite « route forestière de l'Épinette ».

6 Fork right between the plots of land numbered 103 and 104. Keeping the D386 on your left then go under the railway bridge. You pass by the « Prieuré de St Ortaire". Continue straight on then immediately turn left onto a lane which borders the edge of the forest. Go back uphill towards the forestry lane , turn right and continue (for about 200m)

7 Follow the signs to Chêne Hippolyte (oak tree) and go between the plots of land numbered 45 and 46. Turn left onto « Sommière du Rocher Broutin ». Turn right and follow the railway, then turn left on the forest road "la Magdelinière ».

8 Turn right between plots of land numbered 27 and 28. Near Rocher Broutin turn off to the left along the edge of the forest for 400m. Turn right and go straight on until you reach the D908. Crossing the D908 (carefully) continue along the road opposite until you reach the tarmac road. Turn left and follow the road towards St Michel.

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