



Visits

The Tourist Office provides guided tours for groups throughout the year :

The beffroi (the Watch Tower) (1h15) : follow your guide up the 236 steps of the beffroi; find out more about an eventful history ; enjoy the panoramic view of Aire and its surroundings.

The chapel of Saint-Jacques (1h) : learn about a monument that is the one most characteristic of the Lowland Baroque.

Further suggestions for walks

Le marais (the marshes) (2h30) : 10 km to the south of the town in the pastures you will find the former watercress beds of Aire, the Lacquette (a tributary of the Lys), and the Lenglet Marsh (the « Chico-Mendes » site which preserves the appearance of the ancient marsh for educational purposes). Begin at the AREA (former cinema).

The Bruveau (local stream) (2h30) : 10 km towards the hamlets of Moulin-le-Comte and Rincq, returning via the common of Glomenghem, along the banks of the River Lys. Begin at the AREA.

Between the Lys and the Canal (3h) : Aire is an important waterways crossroad, symbolised by the Basin with Four Sides. Here, the Lys passes through a siphon under the canal. The canal, the Grand Gabarit, is one of the largest and busiest in France (see walk below). The 12 km of this footpath follows the old canalised River Lys towards the town of Saint Venant and returns via the Canal d'Aire. Begin at the Basin of Four Sides (Bassin des Quatre Faces).

La Melde (2h) : start at the Basin of Four Sides and walk for 8 km along the Neufosse Canal and through the ballastieres (former quarries of stone for railway ballast, now fishing lakes) ; pass through the village of Wittes ; return by the agricultural plateau behind the St Martin industrial zone.

Note : these walks are marked by painted yellow arrows on trees, fences, etc.

The Town, step-by-step (2h) : wander along the paved streets, linger in front of an eighteenth-century town house, stand astonished before a whole row of old houses for the religious staff of the collegial church... This is the walk which shows you the charms of Aire-sur-la-Lys...



Aire-sur-la-Lys



Walk through the open books

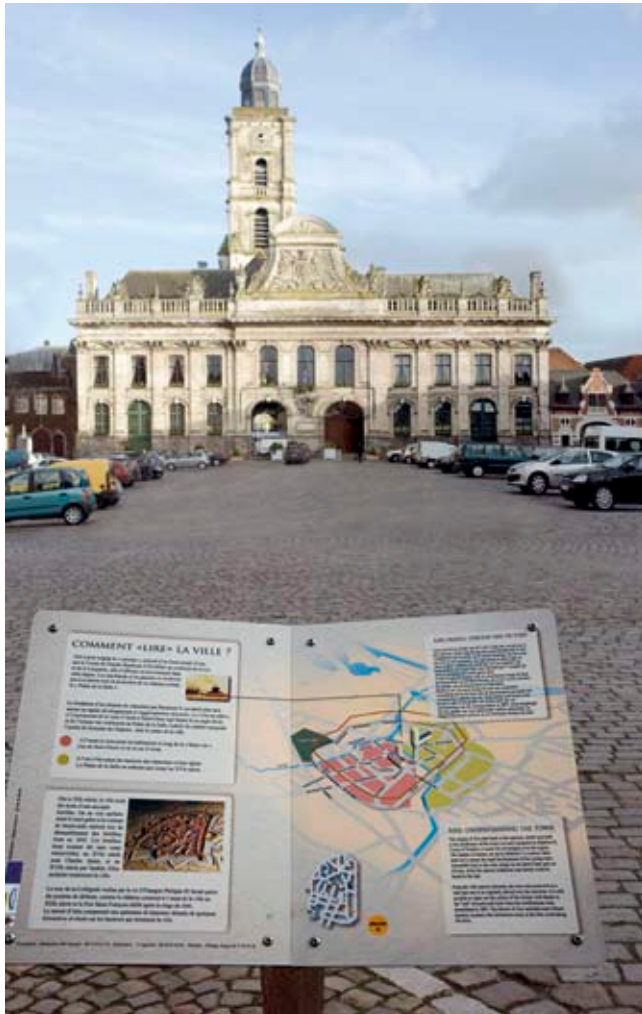


[translation Robert & Jill Cowley] - © atelierphotographique - 03 21 12 10 00 - 12.09.

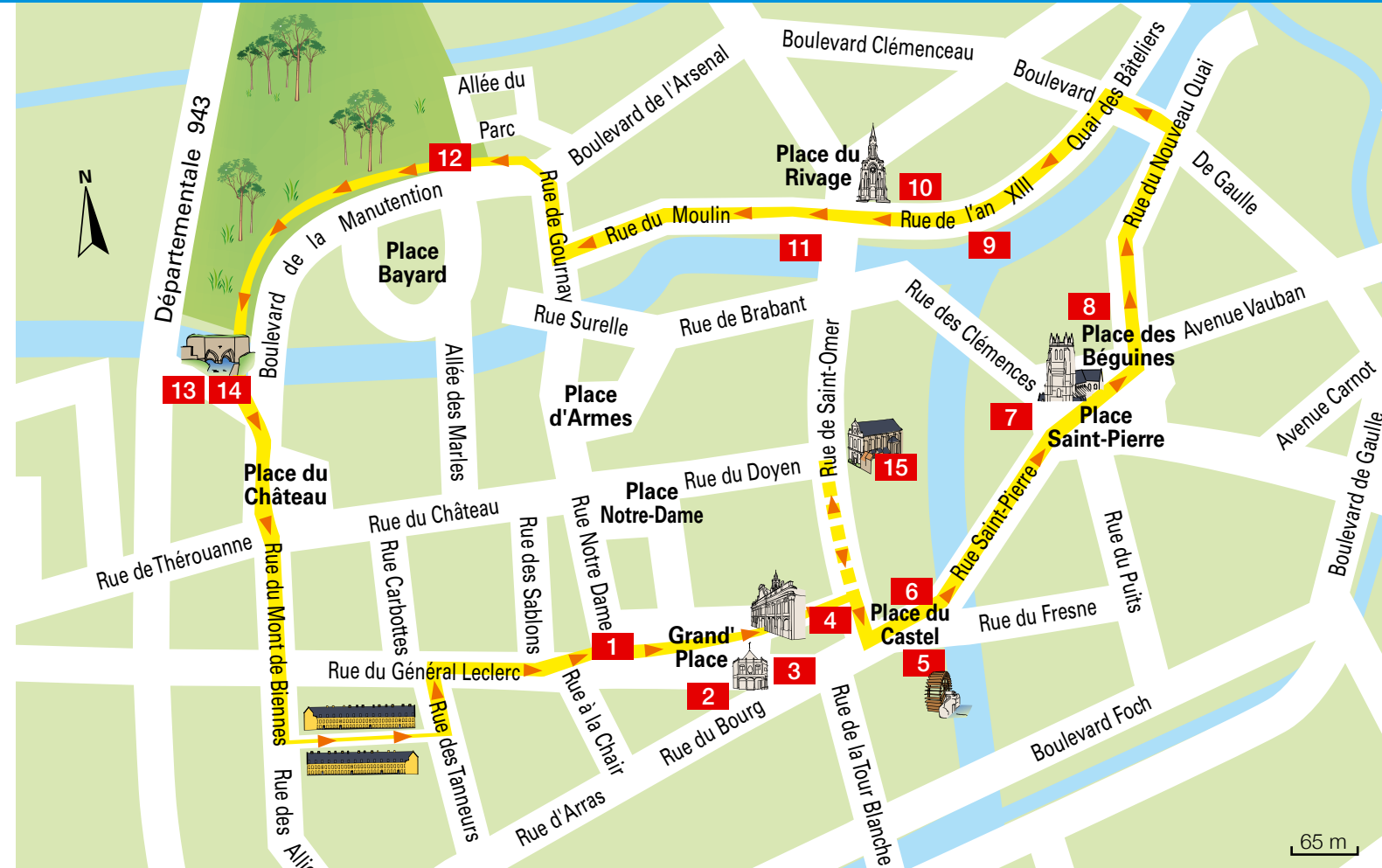
Aire-sur-la-Lys

Walk through the open books

This walk is an hour-and-a-half long. We invite you to read about the history of the town on panels which look like open books on lecterns. The lecterns, positioned at strategic points in the streets of the town, will give you the information you need for an understanding of the history and architecture of Aire. Each lectern is numbered, according to the list below. Have a good walk in our town, « The beauty of the Pas-de-Calais! »



Begin at the bottom of the Town Square



Read 15 « Open Books » and understand the history of the town

Begin at the bottom of the Town Square, facing the Hotel de Ville (Town Hall)

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| 1 How to « read » the town | 8 From Flanders to Artois |
| 2 The jewel of Aire-sur-la-Lys : the eighteenth-century town square | 9 Water, the principal source of wealth of Aire |
| 3 What do the buildings tell us ? | 10 A future monument : the Beaudelle family chapel |
| 4 The beffroi (watch tower) symbol of liberties ? | 11 Commerce and industry in Aire |
| 5 Le Moulin des Invalides (mill of the disabled servicemen) | 12 The military presence |
| 6 The influence of the church | 13 The fortified town |
| 7 The collegiate church of Saint Peter and the religious dwellings | 14 A frontier town |
| | 15 The Jesuits and the Catholic Reformation |