

Walks

Le Bercuit (7km)

Doiceau



This walk begins at Doiceau, a pretty hamlet of Grez-Doiceau. Here several attractive houses lie around a neo-classical church, which contains a 17th century Christ on the cross, and two parts of a communion bench dating from the end of the 18th century. From the small square at the back of the church one can see the impressive, high bell-tower.

As the trees and hedge by the church restrict any view, it is worth walking down to house No 16, from where one can look across the fields (try to ignore the new houses) and up to the woods on the horizon – le Bois des Vallées and le Bois de Dion.

At the church turn into Le Chemin des Crahauts. Follow this narrow road initially for about 100 metres; then continue, bearing right, as it becomes a footpath. Keep an eye open for deer in a field on the right; the path climbs, at times a sunken track, through fields and woods as far as the wood Le Bois de Bercuit.

2. Le Bois du Bercuit

The Bois de Bercuit has undergone a gradual transformation in more recent years. Once an area of wild woodland belonging to the Chapitre of Notre-Dame in Cambrai, it has been drastically changed by a up-market housing development and a fine golf course, which have been attractively designed into its wooded slopes and valleys. Nevertheless there are still roe deer to be seen in the wooded areas.

Please note that the Bercuit Estate is private property and not all roads are open to the public. Continue through the woods as far as the 'Six-chemins' (Six Roads) round-about (height 110 metres). Cross the round-about, pass the club house, and continue along the asphalt road. After 600 metres, where it turns to the left, take the forest track straight ahead beside a wooden fence. After 50 metres turn left along a track leading behind the houses, initially through woods and then onto the hill-side.

3. Bayarmont et Morsaint

This part of the walk can become very muddy and difficult after rain.

Turn right into the path that gradually drops down to Morsaint, crossing a field and then joining the small cobbled road 'rue de Bayarmont'. Enjoy the good view over the valley of the River Train; this is a protected site.

This small hamlet is where the well-known puppeteer 'le Peruchet' used to live and where he built up a small puppet museum. A riding stables was established at an old farm, where there is still a beautiful barn and old stables.

Turn left into the old cobbled road 'rue de Péry'. Some good views of Biez and its hill-top church, of Morsaint, and of the woods of Bercuit. Straight on down the road can be seen the arrow of the bell-tower of Grez, and on the horizon on the left the church of Bossut.

Turn left into l'Allée de la Ferme du Bercuit to return to the housing estate. On the way up this road enjoy the lovely views back over the village of Biez and the valley of the River Train.

4. Château du Bercuit

At the end of l'Allée de la Ferme du Bercuit, before turning left into l'Allée du Bois du Bercuit, admire the beautiful avenue of linden trees in the left corner of the junction. After about 100 metres turn off l'Allée du Bois du Bercuit along a track into deciduous woods – it is waymarked with

the red and white stripe of the Grande Randonnée long-distance paths. This track drops down through beautiful woods, at times a sunken lane, and offers glimpses on the right of the 'château du Bercuit', a large, classical manor. On coming out of the woods, admire the view ahead where the medieval 'château de Laurensart' sits prominently on the hillside opposite. After the path leaves the woods turn left at a small crossroads, follow the path along beside the cemetery, and return to the starting-point.

Before returning to your car, walk down the road to the left of the church to look at La Ferme du Colombier, a beautiful, old farm situated on the other side of the main road, l'Avenue d'Ursel. Despite several renovation works this enclosed farm with an interior yard, which dates from the 17th and 18th centuries, has retained an interesting feature in its arched entrance and its barn.

A little further off, at roughly 2 kilometres, the village of Dion-le-Val is worth stopping at to visit its church and cemetery, the curate's house, the manor house and parkland, and the manor farm; a certain portion of these is classified.



This walk has taken you across the plateau between the two valleys of the rivers the Pisselet and the Train, where, thanks to the careful planning of the new buildings and residential areas, the countryside and wildlife can still be enjoyed.