

The walk starts at the church in Gottechain, a small, attractive village situated on a rise at the edge of a large plateau. It still retains its rural character, and you will see many old houses, orchards and vegetable plots.

Park on the small church square, where the walk begins. At the foot of the steps leading to the church take the path to the left of the church which brings you out on Rue de le Bryle. Although your route is to the left, take a moment to go down the road to the right where 100 metres further down on the right there is a large 18th/19th century farm with an interior court-yard. There is a large barn built in 1804, beautiful, old stables and cowsheds, a spacious court-yard, and a brick gateway with a dovecot, all typical of this region. The large house was built in the 19th century; a modern chapel dedicated to Saint Rita stands outside the farm walls. In Spring and Summer the rhodedendrons and climbing ivy make an attractive display.

Turn back down Rue de la Bryle. A little further on, on the right, there is an old, whitewashed farm, of similar age, with an arched gateway with dovecot built in 1833. There are many interesting architectural details. This is still a working farm with its manure heap in the court-yard.

A variation of this walk can be made by turning right along Rue de Linsmeau and returning to Rue de la Bryle 250 metres further down – see below for a description.

Continue along la Rue de la Bryle; turn right at the junction with la Rue de Nodebais. Follow la Rue de Nodebais out over the fields of the rich plateau of Gottechain. From here there are good, open views across beautiful countryside towards Incourt, Beauvechain and Nodebais, as far as the large church tower in Tourinnes, the forest of Meerdael, the higher parts of Néthen, the village of Bossut and behind that Ottenburg, and lastly the village of Gottechain itself.

At the first 'crossroads' along this track, in the middle of the fields, turn left down another farm-track towards Guertechin, taking care at another crossroads to carry straight on. The path then runs along the edge of the Château de la Fresnaye and its parkland, an attractive property which dates back to the 19th century, apart from a 1657 dovecot visible on the right. Ferme du grand royal

Go straight across the main road, the Chaussée de Louvain, and along a track towards the two farms, le Petit Royal and le Grand Royal. 'Royal' comes from the old Wallon word 'roya' meaning 'furrow'. Both farms lie in a dip, hidden from sight from the Chaussée de Louvain, and surrounded by fields, grassy meadows, thickets, and poplar and hawthorn hedges.

Leave le Petit Royal, an attractive group of brick buildings, on your right and turn left along the track towards le Grand Royal, which used to belong to the Abbaye de Valduc at Hamme-Mille as far back as 1686. This large farm and its interior courtyard were built in the 18th century and restored in the 19th century. On the gateway is set the coat-of-arms of Thérèse Fioco with the date 1754. There is a long, traditional barn and interesting house.

Continue along the track up towards the plateau of Bossut. Here the route has been changed (from that marked on the map) to take advantage of a small, old path that leads to Bossut. At the first crossroads turn left along Le Trou des Chiens; at the end turn left to continue along a track past riding stables on your left, and up Rue de Nethen to the centre of Bossut. Take some time to discover the charms of Bossut with its old houses and farms, small cobbled roads and old orchards; of particular interest is the 17th century church and its original organ, built in 1760 and recently restored; it is one of the most beautiful in Belgium and in regular use for concerts.

Take the path by the church entrance to reach the former 18th century presbytery behind the cemetery; this large and attractive building.

Beside the church the former presbytery is now a Bénédictine monastery, a large and attractive 18th century building which stands behind the cemetery (take the path by the church entrance). From the church, heading down Avenue Labby F, admire La Ferme du Seigneur, an old manor which used to belong to the lords of Bossut, built from brick and sandstone in the 16th and 18th century, and today still a working farm. On the other side of the road is the Maison Communale.

Further on down, on the left at the junction with Rue Léon Everard, is a large farm built in 1784. Turn up Rue Léon Everard, a narrow, sunken path; at the top turn right into La Rue Verbanis and then bear left at the fork into La Rue Capitaine Linard. Follow this road out of Bossut towards the main road to Leuven. To cross this road turn left at the end of La Rue Capitaine Linard as far as the pedestrian/cycle crossing; then follow the cycle track back towards Grez-Doiceau. Take the second farm track on the left (roughly opposite the Sports Centre on the other side of the road); although often muddy here, the track soon becomes a small, pleasant path leading out across the fields. After crossing the River Lambais, you will reach a small road; at the junction (house no 34 opposite you) turn left towards Gottechain.

As with the approach to Bossut, the approach to Gottechain has been changed. At the fork in the track keep to the left; then at the bottom of the slope, where the path swings right, turn left into a small path which offers wide views across to Bossut and then swings right to return to Gottechain. This is La Rue des Déportés, and there remain only 500 metres to walk to the church square.

Optional Route (4 km)

This makes a very pleasant extension to the walk above, or can be enjoyed as a walk on its own.

On reaching la Rue de la Bryle cross virtually straight over into la Rue de Linsmeau. Where this road forks, keep to the right and follow the cobbled track (at moments a sunken lane) down through the fields. Near the bottom lie wetlands near the River Lambais. At the fork turn left and follow this track along the edge of the field, continue past a small track which runs up the end of the field, up into the woods towards the Bois de Linsmeau. This is a very pretty section with its fields, meadows, hedges and woods. Where the path joins a track, continue straight on; on the left is an old lodge, and a little further on, set back on the left, can be seen the old Farm du Linsmeau through the trees.

At the crossroads in the woods take the track straight ahead along the side of the beech hedge at the edge of the wood, le bois de Beusart. Soon the Château-Farm of Beusart will come into sight on the right. At the T-junction there is a small, neo-classical building and a small, alcove chapel in blue stone with "Ave Maria 1775" engraved on the base.

At the end of the poplar avenue on your right (private property) notice the dovecot (built in 1726) over the archway, and the charming Château-Farm, a large 18th century building which from the middle of the 12th century belonged to the Abbey of Aulne. The château façade is at the front and the farm buildings are to the rear; these include an interior court-yard, a large barn, stables, and various outbuildings of architectural note. Within the interior courtyard stands a chapel dedicated to Saint Gertrude, designed in 17th century style but actually built earlier (private property).

Turn left away from the Château-Farm, and at the next crossroads turn left back to Gottechain along a farm track which leads across a wide plateau, now at 100 metres altitude, which dominates the surrounding area. All the villages and church-towers around can be seen far off across the fields and woods. The extensive views and distant horizons are impressive.