



Hondschoote and the vagaries of history

Splendour and good spirit are the prevailing impressions on has of the town of Hondschoote. In the XIIth century the town took up production of a woollen cloth called locally "saye" and became a major cloth town trading with the greatest cities in Europe, notably Bruges, and even exporting to Florence. In 1581, a census revealed the existence in the town of 3.024 cloth-workers. It displayed its wealth in the construction of wonderful landmarks such as the present-day church of Saint Vaast and the town hall.



Hondschoote church.

The people of Hondschoote should however be disabused of this very ephemeral distinction. It is nothing compared to the sense for celebrations and traditions that they, like every Flemish person, possess. In this connection there is a story going the rounds in the local villages. The morning after a particularly well-lubricated celebration, the people of Hondschoote confused the early glow of the rising sun with the start of a fire. They therefore decided to try and put out the sun, whence their present-day nickname of "sun-extinguishers"!



Spinnewyn Mill, Hondschoote.

But pride comes before a fall! The troubles of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation led to the flight of weavers, especially to Holland. The Wars of Religion finally destroyed the town. At the start of the XVIIIth century, Hondschoote was little more than a patch of farming land. Against all expectations, one glorious event restored its prestige: in 1793 the town was the scene of a great victory by the young French army over the coalition of England and Austria. The men of the 32nd division of gendarmerie carried out the decisive assault below the Spinnewyn windmill, a symbol which was to be rebuilt two centuries later.

Hondschoote church.



WALKING in the NORD

Flandre Côte d'Opale



All the practical information featured relates to an area within a radius of 10 km from the trails.

Activities and curiosities

Bergues: Seasonal guided tours of the belfry, Vauban's fortifications, the church of Saint-Martin – ruins of the abbey of Saint-Winoc, touristic tram in season (+33(0)3.28.68.71.06), Mont de Piété museum (+33(0)3.28.68.13.30).

Ghyvelde: Bommelers Wall eco-museum (+33(0)3.28.20.11.03), tours of the "Camélus" ostrich farm in season (+33(0)3.28.26.04.05), tours of the fossil dune (+33(0)3.28.26.50.20).

Hondschoote: Tours of the "Spinnewyn" windmill, church, town hall..., biking trails in the town and surrounding area (+33(0)3.28.62.53.00), workshop making traditional Flemish games (+33(0)3.28.68.37.65).

Les Moères: Trekking on horseback, Ferme Sainte-Foy (+33(0)3.28.58.28.28).

Annual events

Bergues: Gastronomy fair in March, Secondhand goods fair in June and August (book stalls on +33(0)3.28.68.71.06), Carnival in March, Palm Sunday festival in April, "Nuit du miroir aux alouettes, anno 1585" in May by prior reservation, Feux de la Saint-Jean bonfire and fireworks in June, "Nuit du miroir aux alouettes, anno 1585" in October by prior reservation, Fête de la Saint-Martin in November, (+33(0)3.28.68.71.06).

Bray-Dunes: World folklore festival in July and "Plateau d'artistes" pageant in August (+33(0)3.28.26.61.09).

Further information

Nord Tourist Board
6, rue Gauthier de Châtillon - B.P. 1232 - 59013 Lille Cedex - FRANCE
+33 (0)3 20 57 59 59. All our tourist information can be found on the Tourist Board web site: www.cdt-nord.fr, where this leaflet and others can be viewed and downloaded free of charge.



WALKING in the NORD

Flandre Côte d'Opale



N° 16

Circuit des Anguilles Hondschoote (9 km - 3 hr 00)

Flanders
Opal
Coast
a precious land

Flanders
Opal
Coast
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Hondschoote town hall.

①

Walking Trail:
Circuit des Anguilles:
9 km

Duration: 3 hr 00

Start: Hondschoote,
Place du Général
de Gaulle, near the
bandstand

Yellow waymarking
IGN map: 2402 Ouest

Notes for walkers:

A discovery trail through the watergang country and around the charming town of Hondschoote with its yellow bricks. Please exercise caution along the RD 3, on the northern part of the trail.



Hondschoote.

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Circuit des Anguilles

(9 km - 3 hr 00)

Start: Hondschoote, Place du Général de Gaulle, near the bandstand

1 Take the *rue de la Libération* behind the church.

2 Cross the park on your right, then the RD 947, and follow the watercourse in the direction of the 'Pré Joly' campsite and then continue along the same path. A little way along, a number of cabins are signs of hunting activity in the area.

3 At the RD 3 turn left. Go along the Basse Colme canal as far as the pumping station. On parts of the road you are at sea-level.

4 Leave the road and turn left along the track alongside the Killem drain. To your left note the tower of the Church of Saint-Waast in Hondschoote, and further away the sails of the Spinnewyn mill (the mill that was the scene of the battle of Hondschoote).

5 Leave the *chemin des Huttes* and turn left into the RD 110. Turn left again into the *chemin des Anguilles*.

6 At the RD 110 turn left, then follow the signs to the town centre and back to the *place du Général de Gaulle*.

Follow the guide!

Arrows, marker posts and paint marks are positioned all along the various circuits.



Scale: 0 250 500 m

1

2

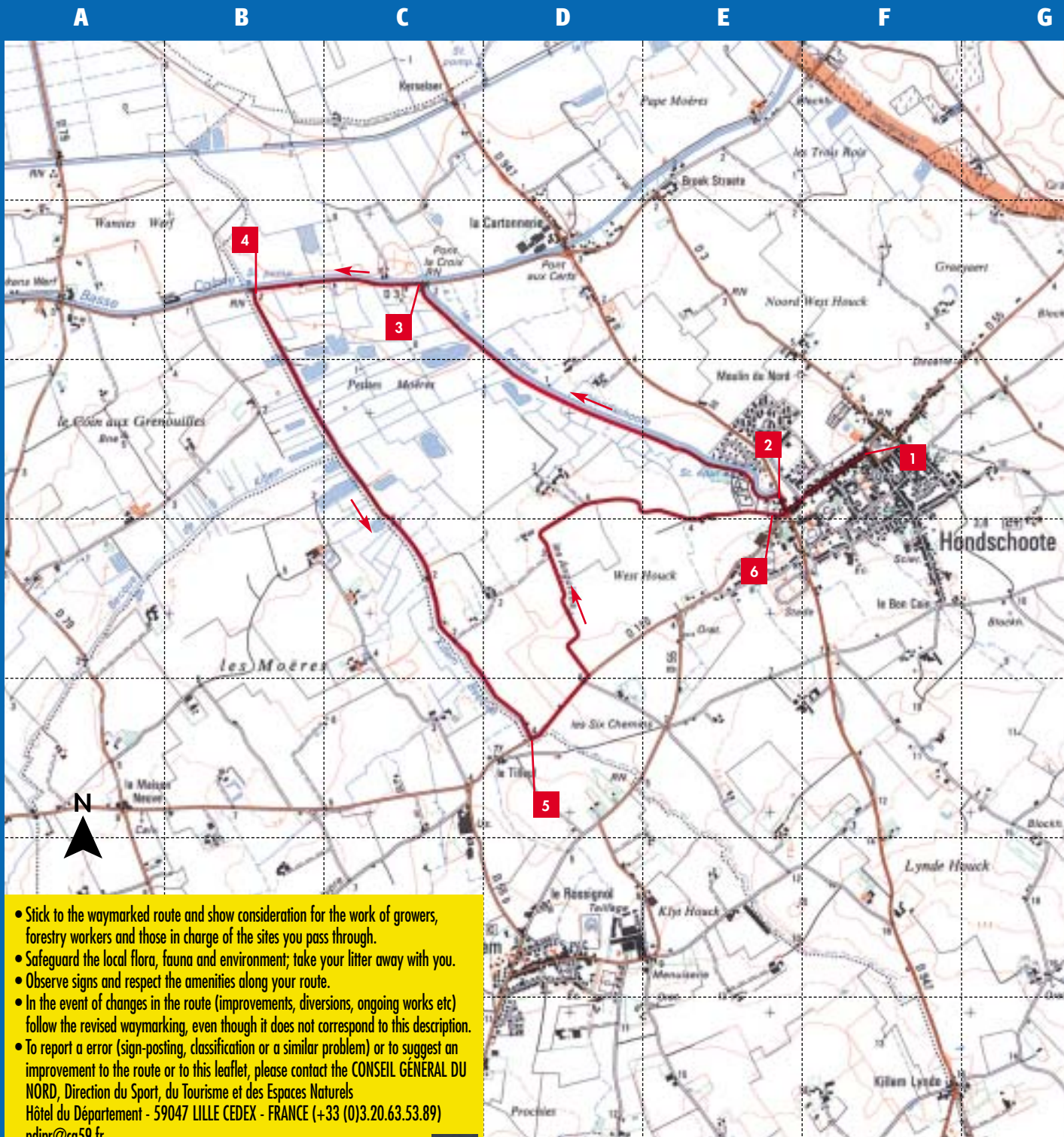
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6

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- Stick to the waymarked route and show consideration for the work of growers, forestry workers and those in charge of the sites you pass through.
- Safeguard the local flora, fauna and environment; take your litter away with you.
- Observe signs and respect the amenities along your route.
- In the event of changes in the route (improvements, diversions, ongoing works etc) follow the revised waymarking, even though it does not correspond to this description.
- To report a error (sign-posting, classification or a similar problem) or to suggest an improvement to the route or to this leaflet, please contact the CONSEIL GÉNÉRAL DU NORD, Direction du Sport, du Tourisme et des Espaces Naturels
Hôtel du Département - 59047 LILLE CEDEX - FRANCE (+33 (0)3.20.63.53.89)
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