



This walk explores the farmland of La Grande Blaye and spectacular coastal views over France. The terrain is mostly gentle but the coastal path in some parts is steep and uneven.

1 Starting at the Visitor Information Centre, head up Victoria Street then turn left at the T-junction along High Street.

HIGH STREET

Up until 1939 St Anne was largely an agricultural settlement using an old farming system; the 'Open Field System'. This ancient way of farming created a large, enclosed field (La Grand Blaye) surrounding a farming village (St Anne) with all the farmhouses in the town. As you walk along High Street you will notice the difference in appearance between the buildings that line the street. Many of the larger houses were the farmhouses with an adjacent barn and yard - most of which have now been redeveloped into smaller residential dwellings.

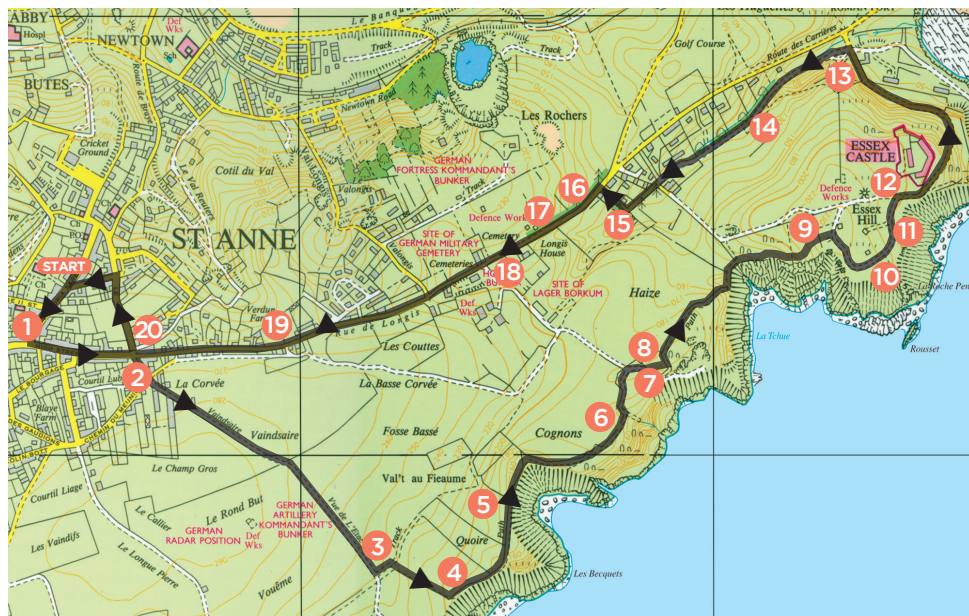
2 At the crossroads, turn right and follow the road straight into 'Tugby's Yard' an area known as La Corvée. Passing through the industrial buildings, you come to the fields of La Grande Blaye, the largest single field system in the Channel Islands. Continue, heading out to the cliffs

LA GRANDE BLAYE

From approximately 800AD up until WWII this open field area of the island was divided into numerous hand ploughed strips of land owned in family blocks. These many hundreds of strips were enclosed by a banked wall, the 'Costiere' or 'Blaye Wall' to keep livestock out on the cliffs during the summer crop growing season, and inside during the winter.

BATTERY BLÜCHER

On your left you can see a brick observation post, the only remains of the WWII German Army coastal artillery Battery Blücher. In August 1944 the battery was shelled by the guns of the British battleship HMS Rodney.



3 Follow this path to a T-junction. Turn left by a bench dedicated to Colin Ravilious, then soon after, right onto the path through fenced fields, towards the cliffs. You are walking along the old Coastal Road, originally a main road around the island which bounds the edge of La Grande Blaye's earth bank wall.

4 As you near the cliffs there is a sharp left turn.

5 Look in front of you and spot the square shaped rock sticking out of the cliff. This is locally known as 'the Hanging Rock'. One legend has it that Guernsye men tied a rope onto it and tried to pull Alderney back to Guernsey, but the rope broke! Its shape today is the result of the Germans blowing part of it up during WWII to enable a better view of the Race.

6 Continue on this path to the next steep valley where on your left-hand side you can see one of the best-preserved sections of the old Blaye Wall which surrounded the family owned strips of land.

7 Turn right when you reach the tarmac road which runs down to the island's waste management site known as the 'Impot', and then almost immediately left onto the path next to the gated entrance. The Impot is far from picturesque but highlights the issues any community, especially an island, faces in managing and reducing waste.

8 Ignoring a dead-end path to your right, continue left through to the next valley and at the next sharp bend take the narrow uneven path going right,

up through the gorse. You are now on the edge of 'Essex Hill', an area of heather and gorse and rich in wildlife. Occasional sightings of Dartford warblers are possible and peregrine, common buzzard and raven can be seen frequently in this area.

9 When you reach the white Coast Path Marker 14 continue straight on up the hill and then at marker 15 turn right.

10 As you follow this path you will see remains of the WWII German Flak Battery *Wirbelberg*.

FLAK BATTERY 'WIRBELBERG'

This WWII German Flak Battery, one of four on the island, was armed with six large 88mm anti-aircraft guns mounted on open emplacements. You can still see ammunition bunkers and hut bases, as well as machine gun and radar positions.

On a clear day, enjoy amazing views over France (Normandy, Cotentin). Landmarks that can be seen are: Gourey Lighthouse (Cap de la Hague), the nuclear waste recycling centre (large building on top of the cliff, La Hague), Biville beach and Diélette Harbour.

11 As you round the top of the hill, the Victorian Forts Raz and Houmet Herbé further in the distance come into sight and then Essex Castle comes into view.

ESSEX CASTLE

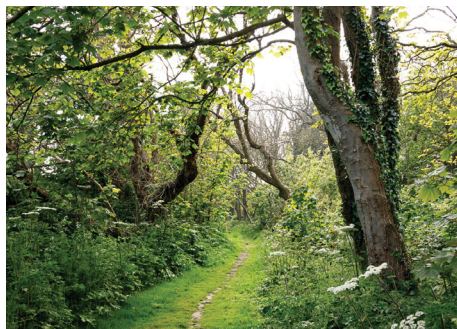
Originally constructed during the Tudor period, but never fully completed, this fort was known as 'Les Murs de Haut' or 'Fort Hill'. The small iconic watch tower, locally known as 'The Pepper Pot' was added in the early 1800s. In the 1850s the site was reconstructed by the Victorians and known as 'Essex Barracks'. In 1869 the southern section of the barracks was converted to a military hospital. Today it is referred to as 'Essex Castle'.

12 At the Essex Castle information board turn right following the tarmac road around Essex Castle, admiring the views across Longis Bay and the Longis Nature Reserve.

13 At the bottom of the tarmac road, immediately after the stone pillars, turn left onto a grassy woodland path known as Barrack Masters Lane. Otherwise you can join **Walk 9** from the Roman Fort car park.



14 The wooded Barrack Masters Lane is a great place for birds such as chiffchaff. In the spring and autumn migration you may see flycatcher and hoopoe. During the winter you may see long-tail tits, goldcrest and thrushes. This is also one of the richest areas for the island's diverse bat population.



15 The lane turns into a tarmac road and bears right up to meet Longis Road. At the junction turn left, up back towards town.

16 After 120m on the right side of the road there is a memorial stone. This was erected in 1885 for Captain Edward Charles Lethbridge Walter who was stationed on Alderney with the Royal Irish Rifles. On the evening of 4 May 1885 he was driving his horse and trap with fellow Officer Lieutenant Orpen when the horse went out of control. Captain Walter was thrown from the trap and died at this spot.



17 Further up the road is a tall painted puffin sculpture, a popular spot for a photo!

18 A little further up, on the left, you will see a road and two concrete gateposts which were the entrance to the WWII German Labour Camp *Lager Borkum*, but which now form the entry to the island's Impot and Kiln Farm.



LAGER BORKUM

Lager Borkum was one of the four WWII German camps built on the island in January 1942 by the Organisation Todt (OT) for forced labourers. It housed mostly German personnel engaged by the OT, as well as specialist foreign workers and was the only camp to remain in use until the end of the occupation.

KILN FARM

Originally the site of a Victorian brick kiln and earlier windmill, the farm is the last remaining commercial farm on the island

and houses the island's slaughterhouse and dairy.

19 Continue up Longis Road, passing John Arlott's residence, with a Blue Plaque (see page 24, **Walk 6**)

20 At the crossroads turn right down 'Le Val' until you reach a left hand turning onto Ollivier Street which leads you back to Victoria Street and your starting point.