

THE CHURCH AND ITS INHABITANTS

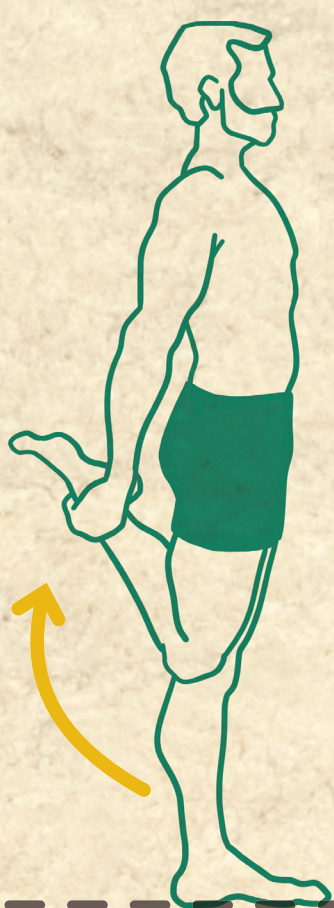


Mindfulness walk

Warm up

■ Before starting your walk, take 5 to 10 minutes to warm up your muscles :

Quads



Hip flexor



Listen to the sounds around you

■ Take advantage of the warm-up to close your eyes and listen to the Saint-Aquilin soundscape.

Hold for about 30 seconds then switch to the other leg.

St-Aquilin church



Cadaastre napoléonien, ca. 1870, AD24, 3P34160

■ The current church dates back to the 15th century but has some older elements at its base, including the “door of the dead” on the south wall. The village owes its name to a hermit called “Aquilinus”, a follower of Saint Astier, a 6th-century evangelist in the region.

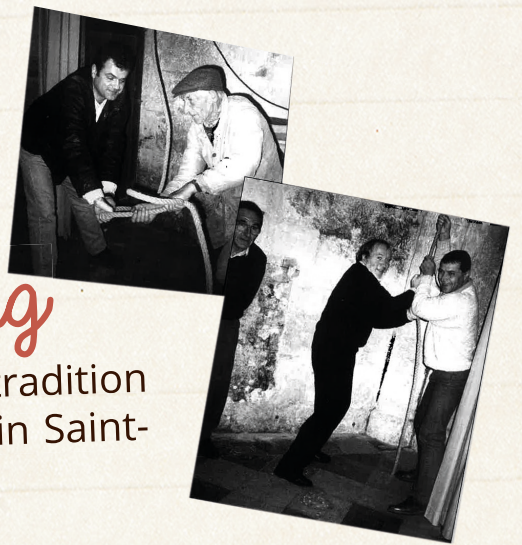
Source : Les amis de Saint-Aquilin

Bell-ringing

■ This secular tradition has never stopped in Saint-Aquilin.



Villagers meet every evening between 13th and 24th December to ring the church bells for a ¼ of an hour.



The church's inhabitants



■ Old buildings like the church are prized habitats for many animals as they offer a stable temperature, with little damp and numerous gaps between the stones to provide shelter. Prey is plentiful in the varied surroundings.

Common pipistrelle

Pipistrellus pipistrellus

■ This is one of Europe's smallest bats, with a 20cm-wingspan and weighing 3-7g.

It feeds on insects lured by the artificial lighting and, in the wetlands, on midges and mosquitoes in particular.

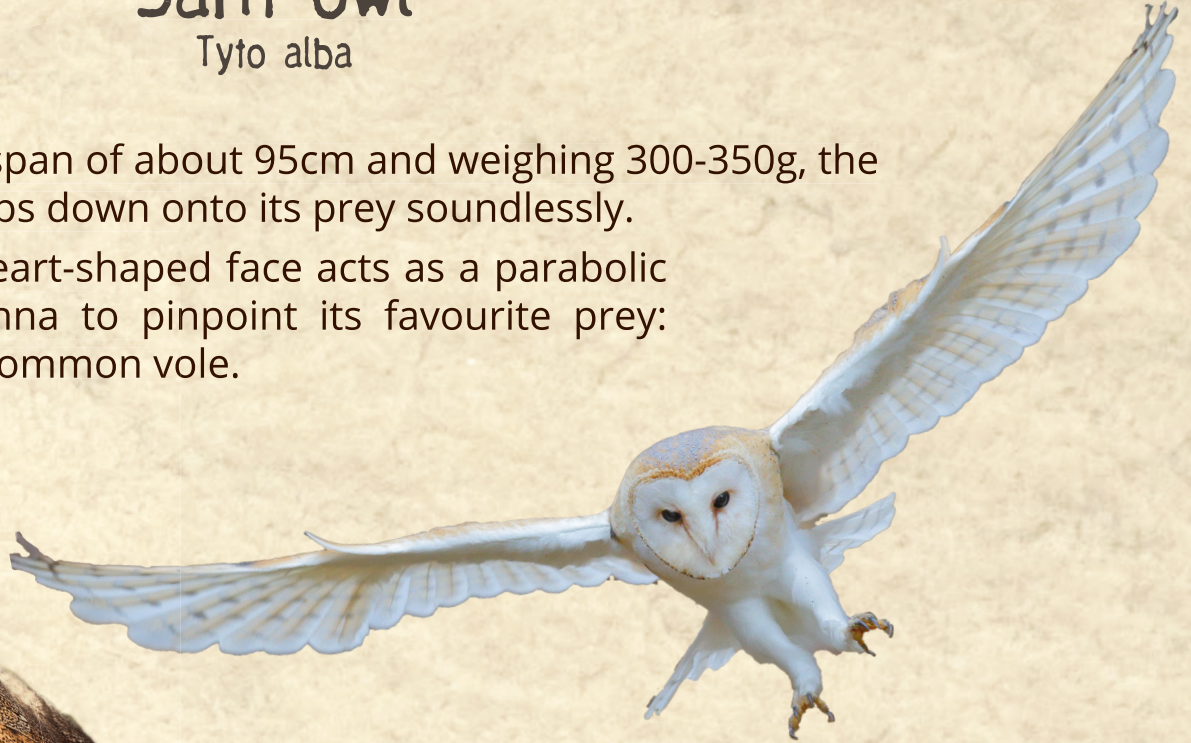
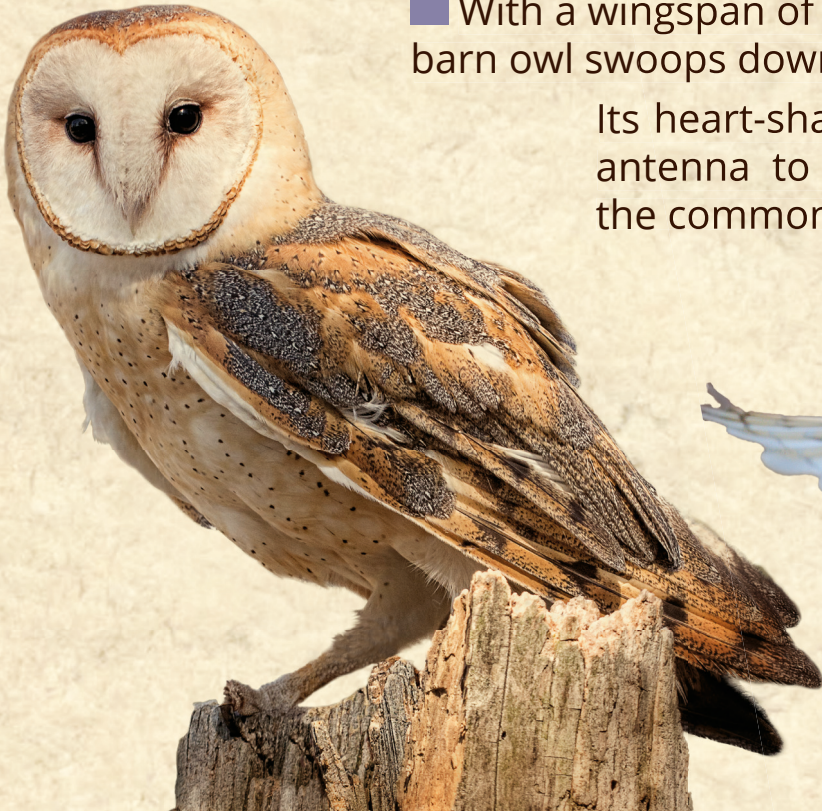


Barn owl

Tyto alba

■ With a wingspan of about 95cm and weighing 300-350g, the barn owl swoops down onto its prey soundlessly.

Its heart-shaped face acts as a parabolic antenna to pinpoint its favourite prey: the common vole.





Common swift

Apus apus

■ This small migratory bird, weighing 31-56g and with a 45cm-wingspan, is an unparalleled pilot.

It leads an entirely airborne life outside the nest and can hit a speed of 200kph!

It feeds on the wing on insects and dangling spiders.



DOMESTIC PLANTS



History of the flowerpot

■ The flowerpot's presence dates back to ancient times but experienced a surge in the latter half of the Middle Ages as towns sprang up. This miniature garden condenses the symbolism of the Paradise of Christianity. It also serves a practical purpose in urban areas where lack of space prevents people having a garden.



Little garden of Paradise, painting on woods, ca. 1410, Städel Museum, Frankfurt.

🇬🇧 *The flowerpot has an ancient history. This symbolic condensation of the Christian Paradise experienced a surge with the development of towns in the Middle Ages.*



Fonctions des plantes



Ornamental plants, pleasing to the eye.



Medical plants for maintaining good health.



Aromatic plants for seasoning food.



Edible plants for nourishment.



Create an ecosystem on the balcony

■ An ecosystem is defined as a space in which animals and plants find a balance that is conducive to their growth, depending on climate conditions and the nature of the ground. It can be considered on a regional scale but also on the scale of a balcony !

Highly scented plants to attract insects



↖ A variety of heights will help encourage them to come.

Think about every season



↖ Think about having flowers and greenery all year round, such as crocuses in spring and cabbages in winter.

Let nature get to work



↗ Leave pots with earth in them and insects will do the planting for you !

CLUES ON FAÇADES



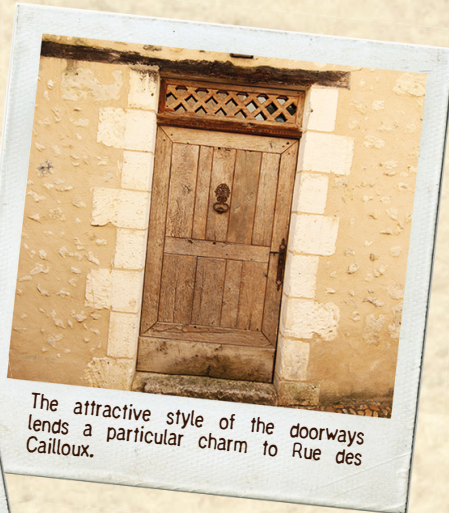
"Reading" a façade



This bricked-up opening was the entrance to a barn. Certain details highlight the inspiration drawn from the classic style.



The mouldings on this window demonstrate the owner's wish to display his wealth.



The attractive style of the doorways lends a particular charm to Rue des Cailloux.

■ Old buildings speak volumes about the history of a town or village. They provide evidence of the **nature of the ground** through the **materials** used, their **owners' wealth** (decor) and the purpose of and changes to the built architecture.



Formes architecturales



Semi-circular arch
Mediaeval origin:
12th - 13th century



Classic style doorway
18th century



Classic style window
18th century



"Reading the vegetation" – lichens

■ Lichens go largely unnoticed and yet are omnipresent on the walls of our houses, with an astonishing capacity for growth and survival ! They are found in extreme environments, with over 20,000 species throughout the world.

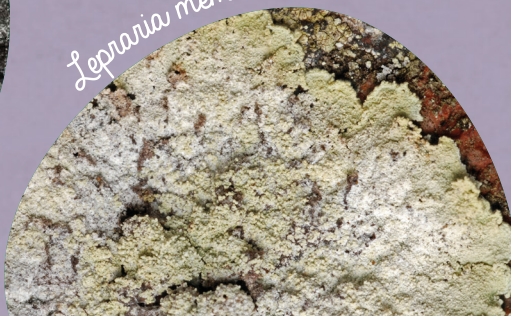
Algae-fungi symbiosis

Lichens are complex plants, able to grow on surfaces that are low in nutrients and to spring back to life after a long spell of drought. Some lichens can live for centuries.

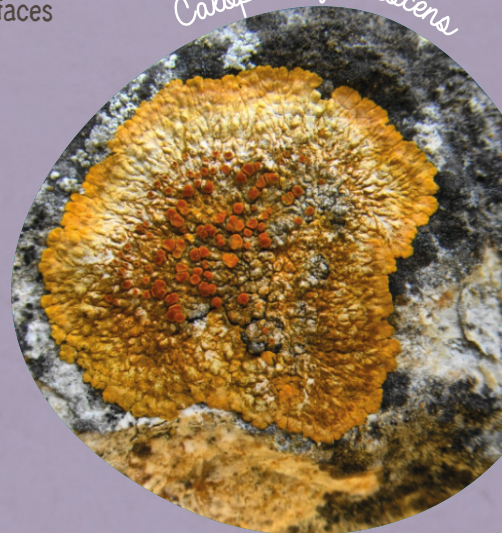
Lethyrum cristatum



Leparia membranacea



Caloplaca flavescens



LA RUE DES CAILLOUX



The town's main



Aquarelle de J. Reboul
Source : Les amis de Saint-Aquilin

■ Rue des Cailloux was the main road through Saint-Aquilin before the D43 was built. Its physiognomy and architectural evidence on façades indicate the nature of the street as a shopping and trading area, with former shops and stalls.



A medieval shop



Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture,
E. Viollet-le-Duc, 1854-68



Wild grasses

■ Abandoning the use of pesticides means pioneer species can colonize gaps. Such plants are far from being “weeds” as they play host to a wide variety of insects, including pollinators.

Greater celandine (*Chelidonium majus*)



Can you spot them?

Downy-leaved toadflax (*Cymbalaria muralis*)



Wild lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*)



TRANSPORT ROUTES



19th century changes

■ The arrival of the **railway** in the late 19th century transformed the countryside. Roads were built to provide easier access to train stations. It was in this context that the **D43** secondary road was built. The nearest train station is in Saint-Astier.



Cadaastre napoléonien, ca. 1870,
Archives départementales de la Dordogne, 3P34157



Key

- Existing roads and paths circa 1870
- Future secondary roads
- Future Étang des Garennes lake



Saint-Astier station circa 1920



21st century changes

Notre commune s'engage

objectif



**ZERO
PESTICIDE**

■ Changes are more about improving the living environment through measures to increase greenery in public spaces and abandoning the use of plant protection products such as pesticides. Saint-Aquilin is fully embracing this approach and letting "wild grasses" recolonize the space!

Manual weeding



Change in practices

Late mowing



Mulching



At THE CROSSROADS



Mindfulness walk

Be mindful of your body



■ Watch out for anything that might hamper your walk: a pebble in your shoe or poorly adjusted straps could completely undo the benefit of the walk !



"Savour"
the forest trail

■ Learn to "taste the air quality" by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Imagine the taste of wild berries!



Sloes



Elderflower blossom
and elderberries



Rosehip



Wild
strawberries



Blackberries

At the crossroads of legend



■ Crossroads, sometimes called "cafourche" in French, have great symbolism in the collective imagination. The place for choosing the "right" or "wrong" path to take in life and where you encounter many characters in the oral tradition.

The characters



■ The **Bad Angel or Devil** who leads the foolhardy along the wrong path. That's why crosses are erected there !

■ The "**Lébéro**" is a man dressed in a wolf skin. He pounces on his victim and forces them to travel through 7 parishes to transfer his curse.



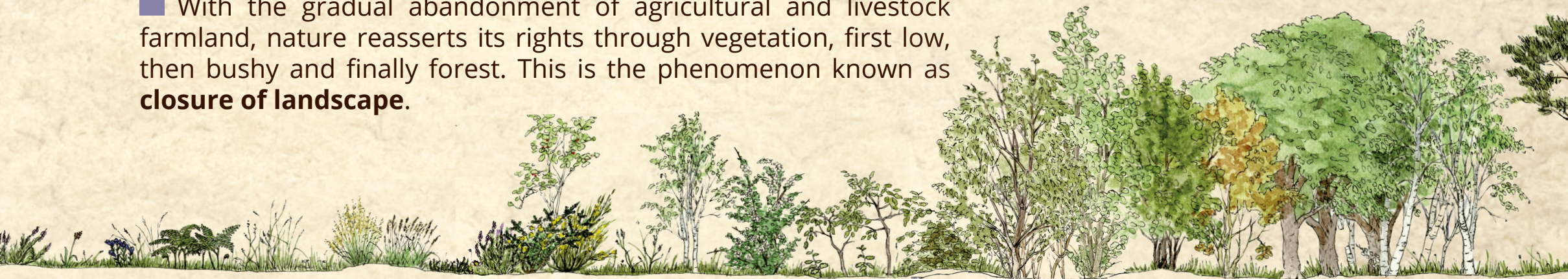
Changes in the landscape



■ The landscape of the Saint-Aquilin hillsides has evolved over time. The move from animal to mechanical traction and the rural exodus have altered the landscape in the space of a few decades.

The evolving landscape

■ With the gradual abandonment of agricultural and livestock farmland, nature reasserts its rights through vegetation, first low, then bushy and finally forest. This is the phenomenon known as **closure of landscape**.



GRASSLAND

natural grass

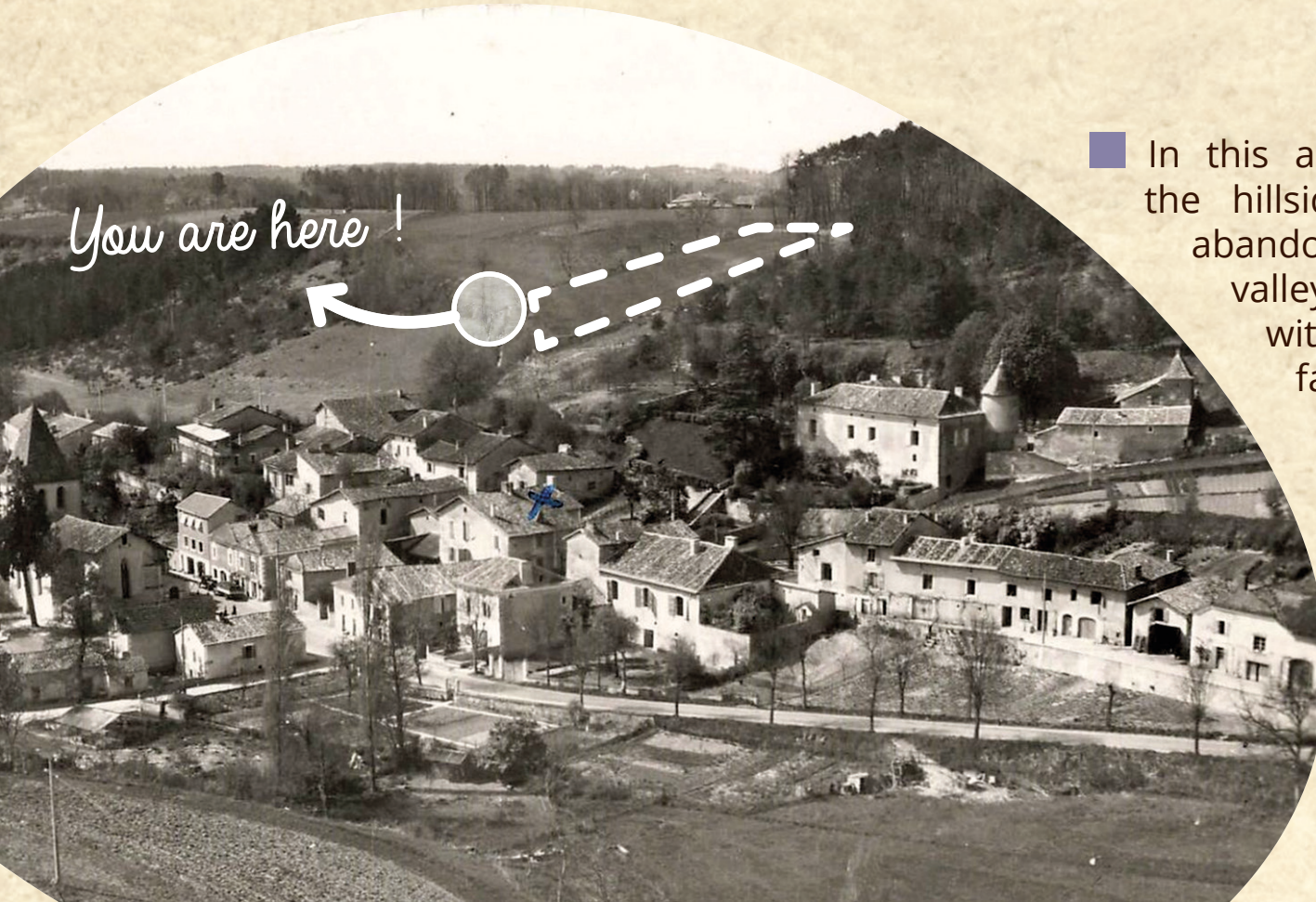
EDGE

bushes and shrubs

SHRUB STRATUM

trees

Saint-Aquilin circa 1950

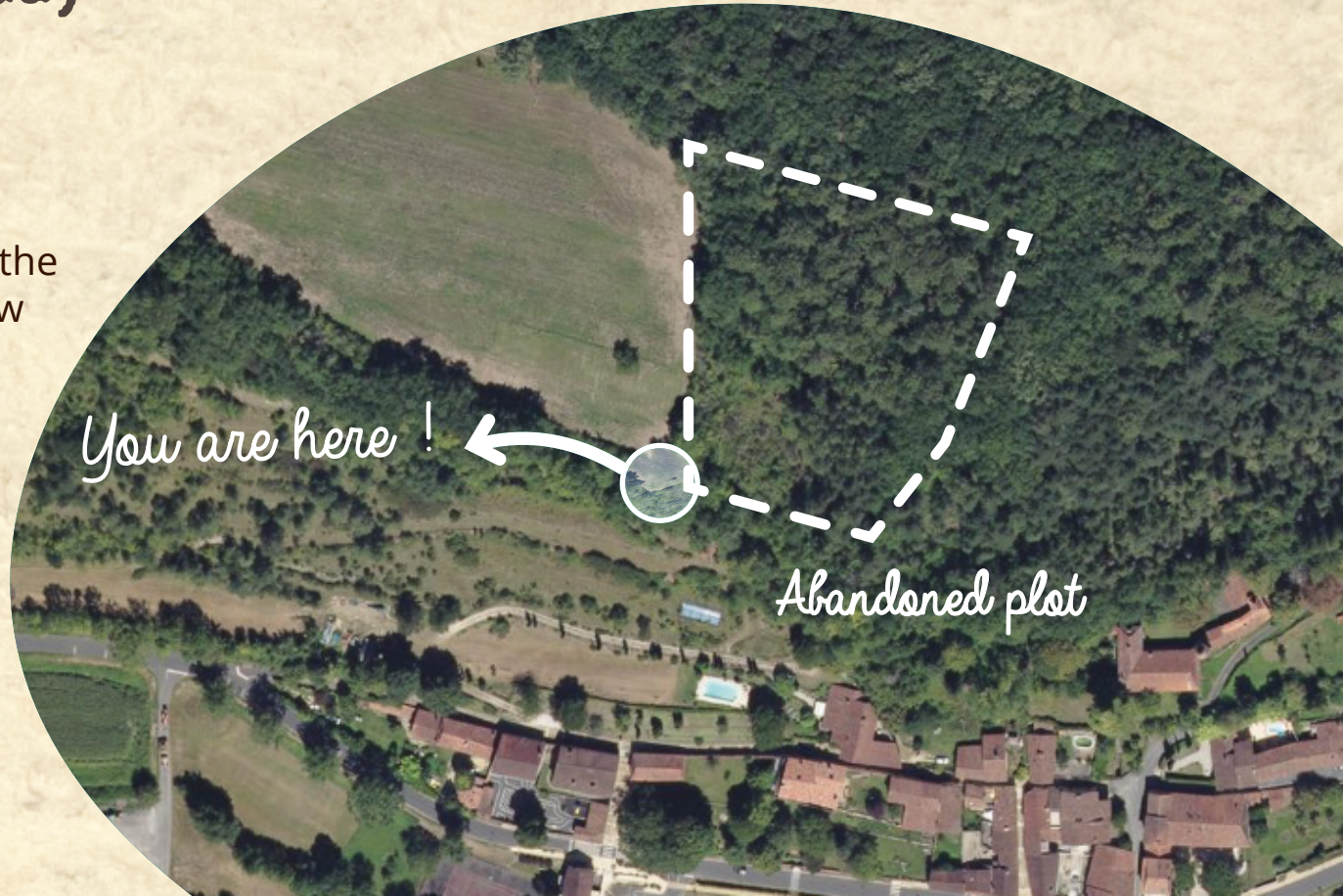


You are here !

■ In this aerial view, you can see the hillsides are starting to be abandoned. The plateau and valley, which are easier to work with a tractor, are still being farmed.

St-Aquilin today

■ The presence of farmers in the municipality means that few plots have been abandoned. Grasslands have now supplanted cultivated land, especially in the valley.



TREES ALONG THE PATHS

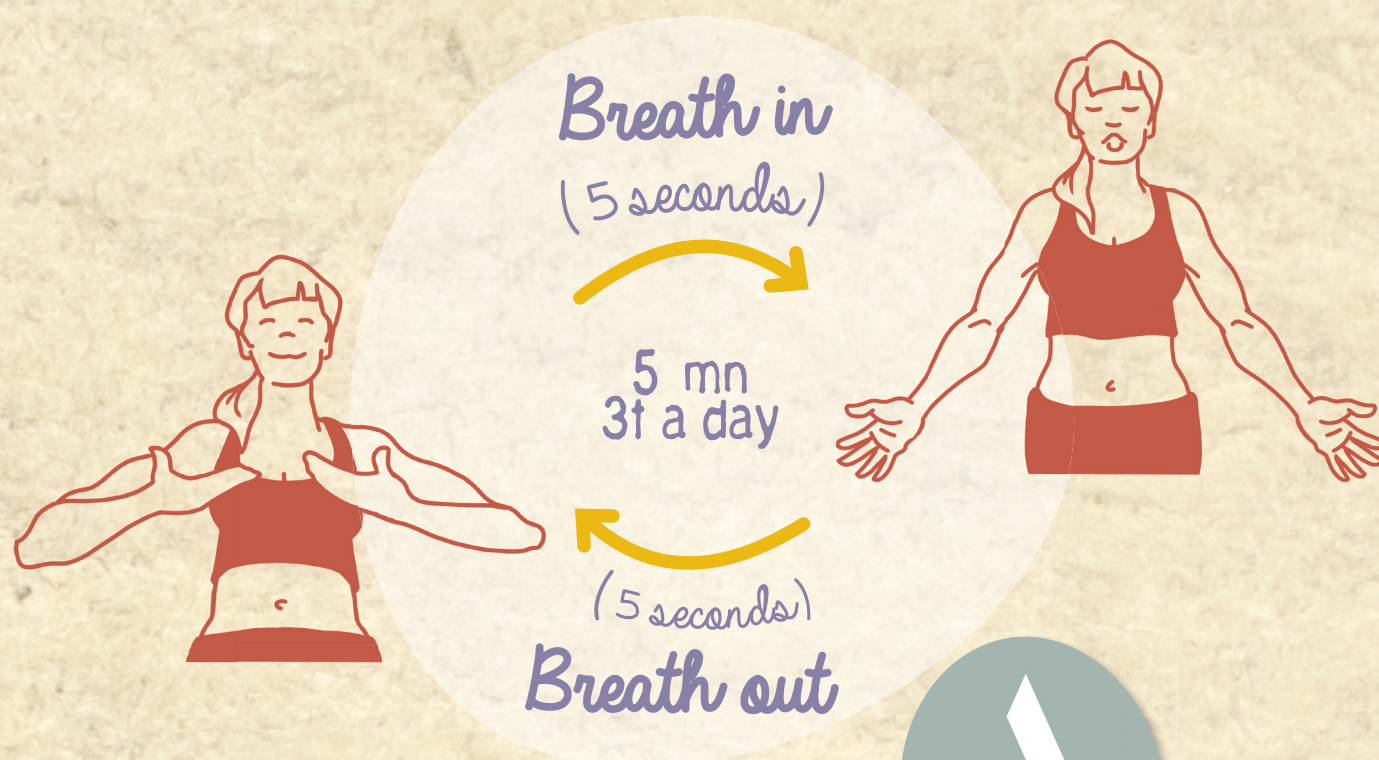


Mindfulness walk

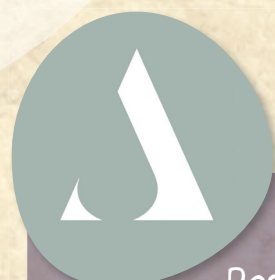


Square breathing

Start by taking slow, deep, rhythmic breaths. Make the most of this opportunity to concentrate on the olfactory landscape.

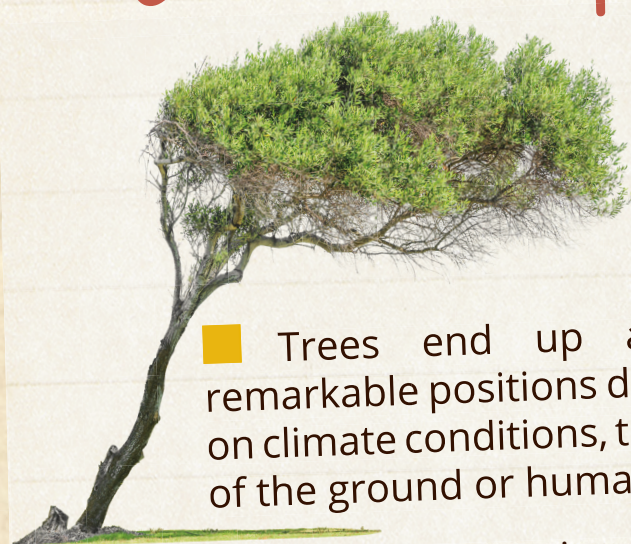


Benefits :
Lowers your heart rate, reduces anxiety and improves ability to withstand stress and manage emotions.



The RespiRelax+ app is a very practical tool for practising your breathing exercises.

Macro shapes



Trees end up assuming remarkable positions depending on climate conditions, the nature of the ground or human activity.

This phenomenon is called **thigmomorphogenesis** (literally the "construction of shape from touch").

Micro shapes



At a microscopic level, plant shapes are abounding in details, such as the veins in leaves that act like rivers and streams to distribute the tree sap.



Species and uses

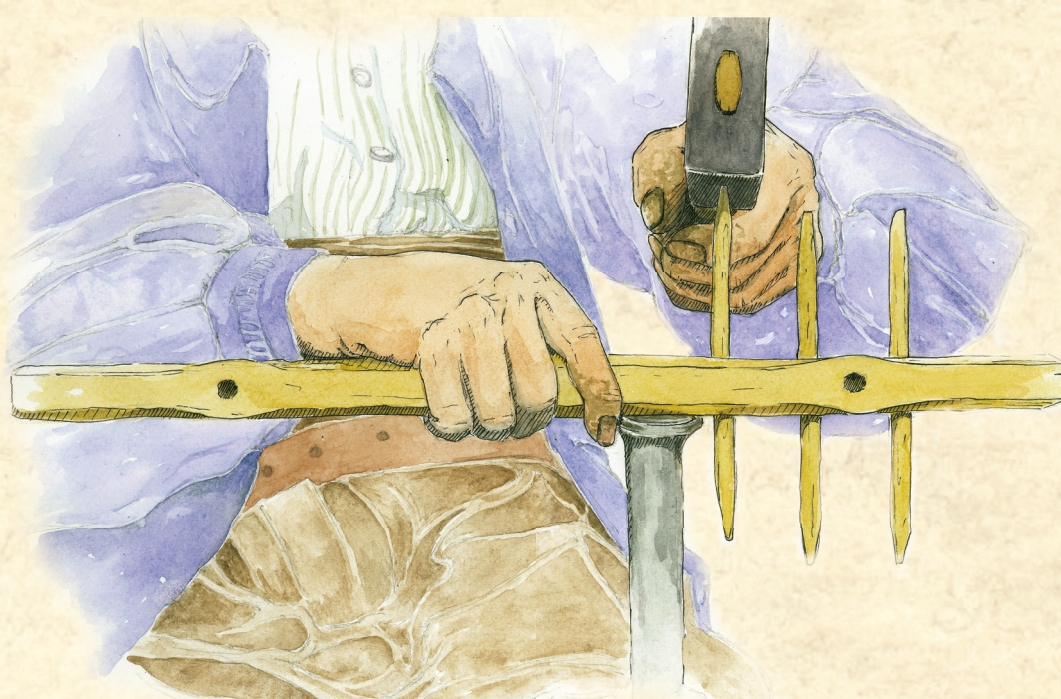


In addition to providing shade for walkers, trees bordering the path can be used for a variety of purposes.

Common hornbeam

Carpinus betulus

A tree with dense wood, good as fuel and used in charcoal making. It is also used for making playing pieces, tool handles and shafts, and butcher's blocks.



Common oak

Quercus robur

■ Its high-quality wood is used in both woodwork and carpentry, notably for monumental buildings and in shipbuilding. Makes very good fuel wood and its bark is a source of tannins that were once essential for tanning leather.



Common hazel

Corylus avellana

Also called **filbert**, the common hazel is grown for its fruit, the hazelnut. Its tough yet supple wood is used by water diviners to detect the presence of water. It is also used in making baskets, woven wood-strip fencing, canes and walking sticks.

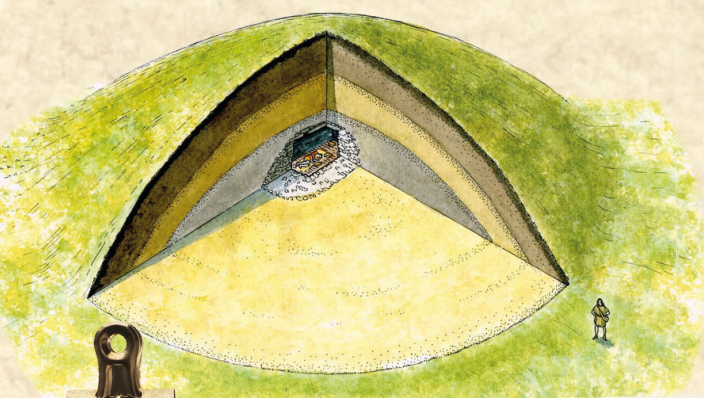


AN ENIGMATIC MOUND



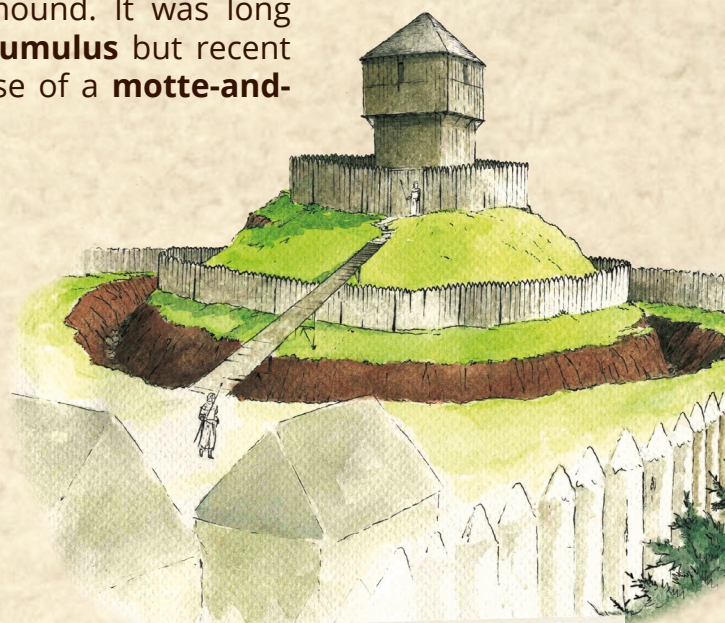
Tumulus or motte-and-bailey-castle?

■ In the meadow below is a man-made mound. It was long considered to be a **Gallic burial mound or tumulus** but recent research has instead revealed it to be the base of a **motte-and-bailey-castle**.



Tumulus

A tumulus was the burial method used in the Bronze Age (2200 - 1600 BCE). During that period, the region was occupied by Celts.



Motte-and-bailey castle

Motte-and-bailey castles are the forebears of fortified castles. They were built by local lords to display their power and, from the 10th century, to provide defence against the Vikings.



Mystery solved !

■ The Ventadour mound or “motte” only owes its name to the presence of a nearby 15th century fortified manor house bearing this name and whose entrance would have borne the coat of arms of the Jaubert family. A “Motte de Ventadour” fief is evidence, however, of an old appellation related to the small seigniorie of La Vigerie, belonging to the Belet family up until the 17th century.

This structure's position in a steep-sided valley, halfway up a hill exposed to the north, raises questions about the surveillance system it had to control.

It is a structure made from earth, often “reinforced” with posts for stability. It would have supported a tower, one of the walls of which, about a metre-thick and made from rubble stones and hardened mortar, was found in 1897 when an oak was cut down on the summit. It is thought that another oak, uprooted in the early 19th century, caused it to subside.

Its shape today is elliptical as the structure's contours have softened to stand no more than 3m high, with little obvious sign of ditches. Its identification as a tumulus or burial mound for a Gallic high dignitary was a mistake.

Hervé Gaillard, historian
DRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine

SACRED OAK



Mindfulness walk



Come closer...

■ Forest bathing helps combat stress, whilst increasing energy levels.



Place your hands against a tree trunk,
hug it and recharge your batteries.
You can also press your back against the trunk
and feel its energy.



The companion of humans...



Saint Louis dispensing justice under an oak tree,
A. Leodor, Versailles art gallery.

■ A tree that was sacred to the Celts, symbolizing strength, courage, sturdiness and immortality. Saint Louis was said to dispense justice from under an oak tree and people celebrate 80 years of marriage with their oak wedding anniversary!

... and animals!

■ From their roots to their leaves, oaks are home to such great biodiversity that they are regarded as entire ecosystems and known as "**biodiversity hotspots**".



Sacred trees



The Dolmen of Peyre-Brune is indicative of an ancient human presence in Saint-Aquilin.
Photo : Père Igor, CC-BY-SA.

■ Among the Celts, the tree had a highly symbolic value, forming the link between the three worlds: the earthly, celestial and underworld. Christians picked up on some of these symbolic aspects during the region's evangelization.



Common holly

Ilex aquifolium

■ In Celtic mythology, holly and oak are twin trees. The oak rules during the light part of the year whilst the holly rules during the dark part.

It is used as a Christmas decoration because of its association with the birth of Christ. It is a symbol of luck, good fortune and eternal life.





Apple tree

Malus domestica

■ Associated with love and eternal youth. Among Celts, it was known as the tree of Avalon, a heavenly place and home of the gods. Western Christianity associated it with the Garden of Eden and original sin. It is the tree of knowledge and health. It is also very evident in the symbolism of Antiquity, through the golden apples in the Garden of the Hesperides.





White willow

Salix alba

■ In ancient times it was associated with death and regarded as a tree of enchantment. In Northern Europe, flutes used to be carved from its wood to chase away demons and witches. It also represents fertility and health. The salicylic acid it contains relieves pain and is the precursor to aspirin.



EVOCATED NAMES



A bit about place names

■ You are between the places known as **Ventadour** and **Vigerie-Haute**, whose names are evocative of their position in the landscape.

Ventadour is suggestive of a windswept place, as “vent” means wind in French.

Vigerie is reminiscent of a place high up, serving as a lookout post, or “vigie” in French.



Photo J. Pralon
Source : Les amis de Saint-Aquilin



La Chartreuse de la Vigerie-Haute

By taking a slight detour from the path at the next crossroads, you can see the Vigerie-Haute “chartreuse”, one of the finest residences in Saint-Aquilin.

A “chartreuse” is an 18th-century country manor house. It often consists of a main central building, flanked by two projecting pavilions.



Colours of the landscape

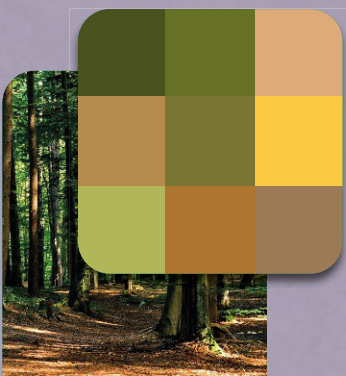
■ This opening onto the landscape draws the eye, inviting you to survey the horizon and take a short rest to observe the scene. By taking time to look, you can spot a host of different shades!

La prairie

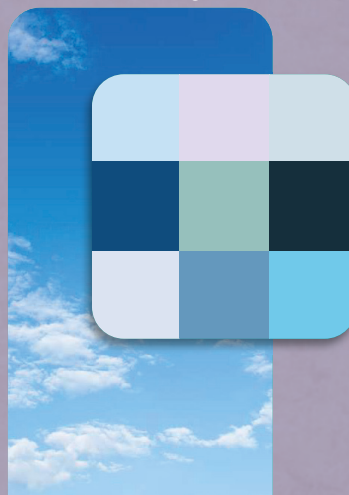


The landscape's colour palette over the seasons

La forêt



Le ciel



FARMING LIFE



Change in practices

■ Farming life is still evident in Saint-Aquilin. In olden days, there were more farms and more varied farming operations: mixed livestock and mixed cropping. Today, farming still represents $\frac{1}{4}$ of the village's economic activity, with market gardening, meat cattle farming and cereal crops.



La batteuse en 1950 à Saint-Aquilin
Source : Les amis de Saint-Aquilin.



Farmers' sayings

If the toad croaks in January,
tighten the thatch on the hayloft.

If it thunders in February, put the
barrels up in the loft.

When the geese head south, they bring
the cold under their wings.

For Saint Martin's Day, winter's on its way.



The truffle fields

■ The truffle is the fungus that represents an essential element of Périgord tradition. In olden days, it could be found in its wild form in the "right spots". Nowadays, climate change has got the better of wild truffles. Cultivated truffle fields, like the one nearby, allow us to still savour this refined dish.

Unearthing (= hunting)

*Traditional truffle hunting with a pig. This
had to be stopped as pigs go wild for truffles!*



*Present-day truffle hunting
with a dog, which finds the
hunt more of an entertainment.*



LE CHÂTEAU DU ROC



Mindfulness walk



A return to calm



■ The trail is nearing its end and this is the moment to enjoy some active recuperation in the form of a “return to calm”. Walk for a few minutes at a slower, less brisk pace to allow your body to return to its normal state.

Note the magnificent palette of colours in the landscape !

The castle



■ Château du Roc is more of a **manor house**, having belonged to the Rey family, members of the French bourgeoisie, in the 17th century. A **mural** depicting a hunting scene was discovered during renovation work in 1970.

The right to a dovecote

■ Prior to the French Revolution, this was the exclusive right of the nobility. The pigeon droppings, known then as **colombine**, would be gathered to use as fertilizer. The eggs were also highly prized.



The castles of Saint-Aquilin



Armoiries de la famille de Solminihac

Château de Belet

■ Saint-Aquilin's most imposing chateau has been towering over the Salembre valley since the 15th century, although its foundations undoubtedly date back still further. It saw the birth of Alain de Solminihac, Abbot of Chancelade and then Bishop of Cahors from 1636 until

Gravure d'A. de Solminihac, BNF.



A. Roumejoux, 1809, Archives départementales de la Dordogne.



Manoir de Moncé

■ This mansion house with corner tower is said to date back to the 100 Years' War. It belonged to the Chantemerle family, followed by the Fourgeaud and lastly Desvergne families. It has now been converted into self-catering gîte accommodation for visitors to Périgord.

Château de Boisset



■ It is mentioned in around 1295. In the 17th century, it was the fief of the Rastouil de Périgueux family before passing to the Escatha family who, in around 1870, would remould it into its current form. It is a neo-classical style residence.



Château prior to its reconstruction in 1870
Source : Les amis de Saint-Aquilin

Château des Meynichoux



■ Former noble seat of the Ribeyreys family from 1550 to 1850.

It consists of the principal building, or **corps de logis**, flanked by square towers. A barn adjoining the towers forms a U-shaped layout. It is currently open as a gîte for self-catering holiday accommodation.



Armoiries de la famille de Ribeyreys