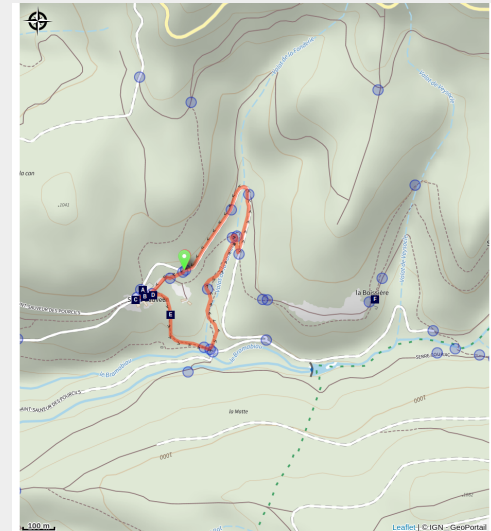


Saint Sauveur des Pourcils

CEVENNES



(© Olivier Prohin)



Saint-Sauveur – the birthplace of reforestation on the Aigoual massif – today seems to lie abandoned in its dense forest setting. And yet the hamlet has a rich and intense past.

Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils was one of the great farm estates of the Aigoual massif, bought by the forestry office in the late 19th century. The hamlet only consists of a church and a few buildings, including an imposing farmstead that looks almost like a castle. But the existing buildings make it easy to understand several traditional construction techniques. Nearby, the walk continues through part of the vast arboretum that highlights a great variety of species and some remarkable specimens.

Useful information

Practice : Sentiers de découverte

Duration : 1 h

Length : 1.7 km

Trek ascent : 53 m

Difficulty : Very easy

Type : Boucle

Themes : Architecture et village, Milieu naturel

Trek

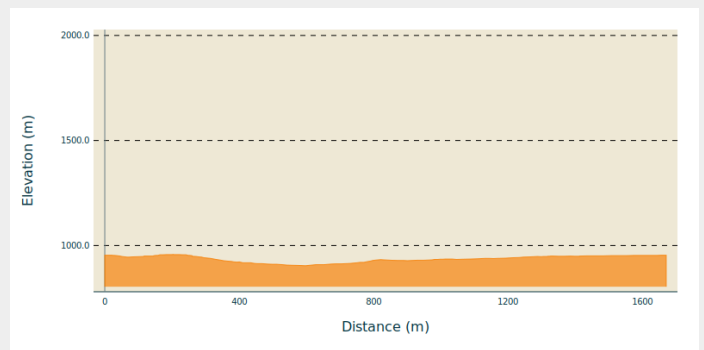
Departure : Saint Sauveur hamlet

Arrival : Saint Sauveur hamlet

Markings : 🌀 Découverte PNC

Cities : 1. Saint-Sauveur-Camprieu

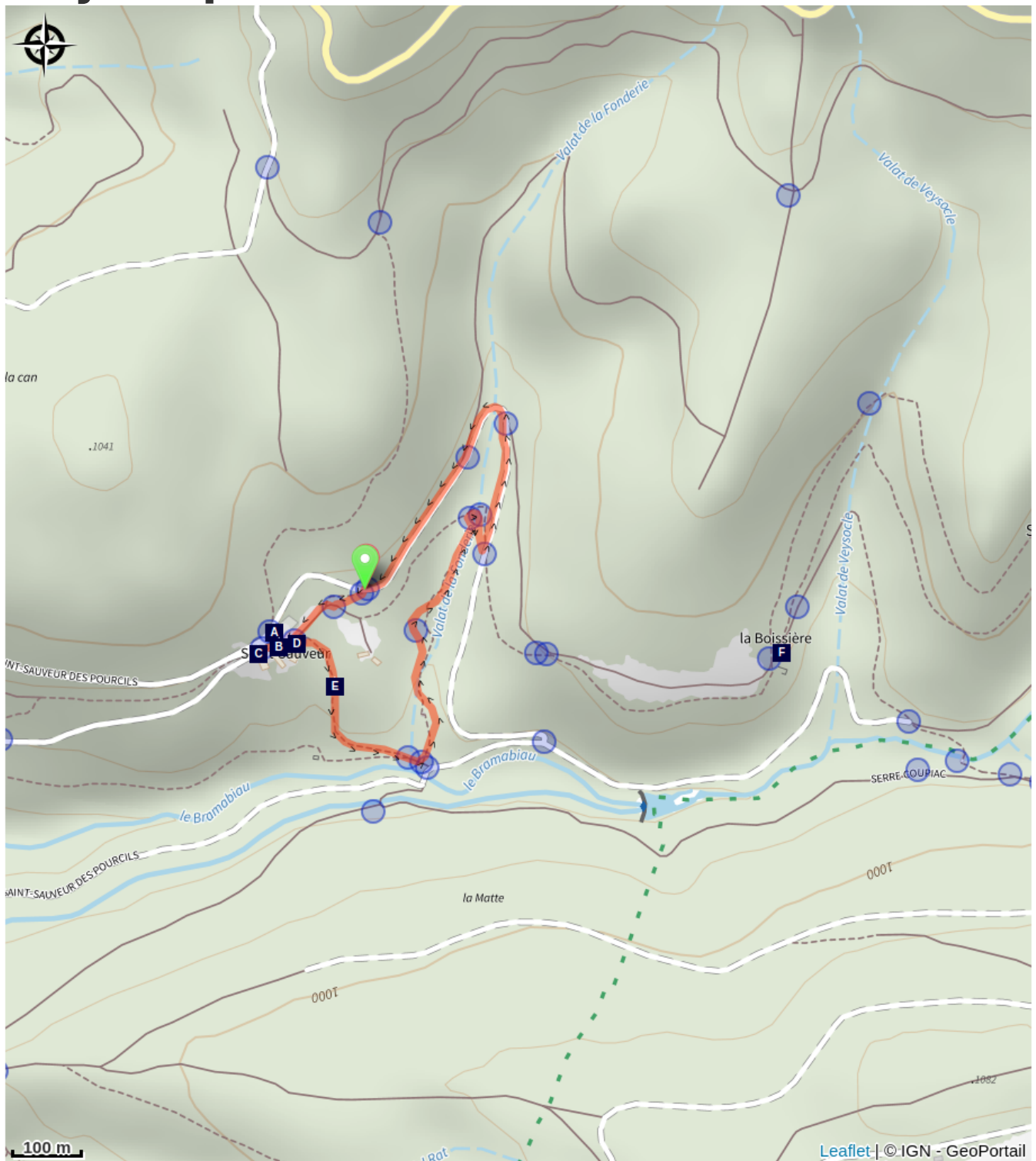
Altimetric profile



Min elevation 913 m Max elevation 958 m

From the car park, the path first leads into the centre of the hamlet, before entering the arboretum by a trail that leads down into the forest towards the brook. Once you have crossed a footbridge, the path gently heads uphill to the track that takes you back to the car park.

On your path...



- A cemetery that reveals histories (A)
- Un domaine agricole reboisé (C)
- Arboretum (E)

- A church at the heart of it all (B)
- Castle or farm estate? (D)
- La Boissière farm (F)

All useful information



Is in the midst of the park

The national park is an unrestricted natural area but subjected to regulations which must be known by all visitors.



Advices

It is not advisable to access Saint-Sauveur hamlet after heavy rainfall (which may affect the state of the tracks). Please respect the signposting for forestry work along the access tracks.

Horses and mountain bikes are not allowed on discovery trails.

How to come ?

Access

From Camprieu, on the D157, intersection at Villemagne, then 1.2 km of forestry track suitable for motor vehicles. From Camprieu on the D986 (direction Meyrueis), intersection 3 km after the Abîme de Bramabiau reappearing river, then 2.8 km of forestry track suitable for motor vehicles.

Advised parking

You must use the hamlet's marked car park.



Information desks

Tourism & national parc'house

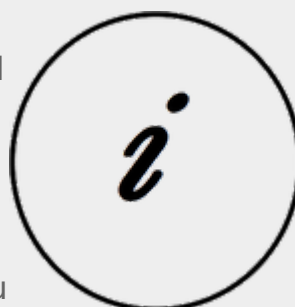
Col de la Serreyrède, 30570 Val d'Aigoual

maison delaigoual@sudcevennes.com

Tel : 04 67 82 64 67

<https://www.sudcevennes.com>

Accessibility : Accessible aux personnes à mobilité réduite sur les trois niveaux du bâtiment (ascenseur)



Source

On your path...



A cemetery that reveals histories (A)

The small cemetery of Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils, so peaceful today, reveals a rich and eventful history. The gravestones bear the names of Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim families. This religious plurality is partly due to the arrival in the 20th century of foreign workers to mine argentiferous lead and copper in the neighbouring hamlet of Villemagne. During the murky period of World War II, the wife of a resistance fighter and her six children took refuge in the surrounding area. The Muslim graves bear witness to the period following the Algerian War when a camp for harkis was set up in the region. These Algerian Muslims, who had served in the French army, were employed by the French Forestry Office for the reforestation of the Aigoual massif.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



A church at the heart of it all (B)

Why was such an imposing church built in a small hamlet? The profound attachment of the parishioners to their place of worship was key. The church was destroyed three times, by Protestants (1562 and 1703) and by the ravages of time (1848). But each time the parishioners who lived in neighbouring hamlets decided to rebuild it. Despite this determination, the church and cemetery were eventually transferred to Camprieu (1871). The episcopal authorities cited difficulties in accessing the place of worship and disagreements between the mayor and parish priest. The local faithful, who were opposed to the transfer, managed to keep masses for the yearly pilgrimage, baptisms, funerals and weddings in St-Sauveur.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



Un domaine agricole reboisé (C)

Today, the hamlet of Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils is surrounded by trees but in the 19th century the Aigoual massif was bare! Its reforestation began as a state programme managed by foresters. The French Forestry Office bought many farm estates to turn them into foresters' houses. Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils had all the required characteristics: buildings for housing foresters; varied soils; good sun exposure; and water nearby (the river below). The foresters set up a tree nursery to grow young trees and an arboretum to test how well-adapted different species were.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



Castle or farm estate? (D)

In the 12th century, minor vassal lords of the Roquefeuil family ruled from a castle at Saint-Sauveur des Pourcils. They lived in autarky with their livestock, large pastures and a share of the farmers' harvests. No remains from that period survive. The main building looks more like a farmhouse. Over the centuries, the castle has become a large farm estate with outbuildings.

Attribution : © Coll. G. Mathon



Arboretum (E)

To begin with, arboretums were experiments to study the behaviour of tree species introduced to the massif as part of the reforestation programme from the late 19th century on. Over time, their scientific character gave way to a more educational and ornamental outlook. On the Aigoual, the French Forestry Office maintains a network of arboretums that are representative of the forest's diversity and of the work carried out by foresters on the massif since the early 20th century. The waymarked circuit only covers a part of the vast arboretum.

Attribution : © Elodie Mazel



La Boissière farm (F)

La Boissière farm was abandoned by its inhabitants when Mont Aigoual was reforested. A salary from the French National Water and Forestry Commission was so much more secure than the meagre revenues from a farmer's endless work. You pass through the farm's porch and walk on its threshing floor – but there are no chickens or cereals on the threshing floor, and no herds ambling to the meadow. Today the forest has won.

Attribution : nathalie.thomas