

## Discovery walk around the heart of Sanguinet village

### Discovery walk around Sanguinet– approx. 4km

Extra information is available on the 9 flashcodes you will find along the route

Starting point : the Tourist Information Office. Head towards the war memorial and the Lake museum\* (Flashcode N°1). Go around the righthand side of the museum building and turn left into 'l'allée du Pirogue'. Facing you are two houses built in the Basque-Landaise\* style in the 1770s, one on either side of the 'chemin de Lillot'. Cross over using the zebra crossing and follow the pavement to the right towards the Espace Gemme\* (Flashcodes N°s 2 and 3). This group of buildings is the cultural headquarters of many of Sanguinet's associations. Two of the buildings\* were previously to be found in the heart of the Landes county before being demolished and rebuilt identically on site. The first one is the 'sheepbarn' the second, near the pond, is the traditional Landaise house.

Go past the 'mediatheque' and leave the espace Gemme. Cross over the 'avenue de Born' and just off to your right go up the footpath between the hedges into the 'rue de la forge'. Cross the 'rue du château d'eau', straight on past the cemetery. Turn right and go past the skate park and basketball court where young people get together. Turn right alongside the cemetery then left into the marketplace\* (Flashcode N°4) which was inspired architecturally by the Bastide towns of South West France. The traditional food market takes place here all year-round on a Saturday morning and, in summer, on Wednesday mornings as well. There is also a non-food market every Saturday evening in season.

At the top end of the square, cross the 'avenue des Grands Lacs', turning left as you do so and walk along Sanguinet high street, past the shops, to the supermarket roundabout where you will see, in the centre, a wooden cabin by a mini-lake \* (Flashcode N°5) which represents the 'tonnes', the duck-hunting cabins still used around the lake.

Follow the 'avenue du stade' down towards the lake past the tennis courts and rugby ground, the picnic area and fitness course. On a fine day if you look across the lake it is possible to see the Dune de Pyla opposite.

Follow the cycle path and lakeside to the right (Flashcode N°6) and then turn left and go to the end of the embankment from where you have a view of the whole of the 'bay' of Sanguinet with the Estey port in the West, the pine forest and dunes separating the lake from the sea and Cazaux airbase in the distance and, opposite, the creek and lagoon at Pût Blanc, the duck-hunting tonnes, the beaches at Caton and the mouth of the Gourgue to the East. You will notice the different shades of blue across the lake, the darker blue corresponding to the deep water of the ancient riverbed in the centre. The Pavillon beach to the right of the embankment, opposite the restaurants, is one of the two supervised beaches in summer.

Come back to the cycle path along which, in summer, you will find different restaurants and snack bars open to the public and, if you need them, public toilets (Flashcode N°6).

The sunken village of Losa and its temple\* are just off to the right of the wooden pier and you can still see the double row of wooden posts (Flashcode N°7) the remains of a 'nasse' an ancient eel-fishing technique which is nowadays banned. A few metres further along, protected by the reedbeds you may see the colony of ducks and other waterfowl splashing around.

Keep going past the next sandy beach with its play area for young children and different fishing spots for the disabled. A wooden bridge (Flashcode N°8) will take you to the other side of the Gourgue.

Turn right and follow the cycle path back towards the main road, going past a traditional henhouse\*, just visible behind the hedge, and, on the other side of the stream, a magnificent Arcachon-style mansion “La Villa du Lac”\* with its superb riding stables behind.

Turn right along the ‘avenue de la Côte d’argent’. On your left, just after the bridge, is another large house, “La Renardière” built by the Bordeaux architect, Duphil in the Basque Art-Deco style of the 1940s.

A few steps on and you will reach Saint Saviour’s church which was built between 1853 and 1856 on the site of an old 12<sup>th</sup> century Romanic church (Flashcode N°9). Do not hesitate to go inside and admire the remarkable altar.

After the church, carry on back towards the centre, the oldest part of the village where the town hall, the school and the Telegraph were all housed in the present Post Office building. Nearby could be found two hotel-restaurants, the village ‘pub’, the Café du Lac, a butcher’s, a grocer’s, a greengrocer’s, a tailor’s, a blacksmith’s and a petrol pump. The large house opposite with Basque-red shutters and timbering was built in 1770.

A few metres further on and you’ll be back at your starting point.

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### **The Lake Museum**

Three thousand years ago the river Gourgue flowed into the sea. Little by little the movement of the coastal dunes closed off the river opening and created Sanguinet lake.

Different archeological treasures found at the bottom of the lake are exhibited in the museum, the most notable of which are the canoes which bear witness to the economic activities along the river before the access to the sea was cut off.

### **“ESCOUASSE” house**

The domain of Escouasse, now demolished, was situated behind the present house where the coloured buildings now stand. The domain belonged to François Armand de Montferrand, knight, Lord Marquess of Montferrand, Marquess of Landiras, Viscount of Escouasse, Lord of Sanguinet. The Escouasse house built in 1769 must have been part of the original property with its Basque-style red timbering and 2 balconies on the main façade. It doesn’t look its age thanks to the extension and renovation work carried out in 1945 and 1948.

The Montferrand family appeared to have in its possession a large amount of property in Sanguinet mostly related to farming and breeding livestock. In July 1705, a fire, accidentally started by a shepherd named Cestal who was employed by Jean and François Bausmaurin from Le Teich, caused considerable damage estimated at 950 pounds. As compensation, the Marquess received 325 sheep, less than half of Bausmaurin’s herd. This affair allows us to measure the importance of the herds grazing in the Landes before Napoleon III instigated the draining and planting of the Landes forest.

### **The Sheepbarn and Landes-style house**

After the resin collecting industry disappeared the Espace Gemme site was taken over by Dassault industries in the 1960s and used for assembling airplane parts. The site was completely modernized in conformity with the needs of the new activity and embellished with two typical Landes-style buildings. These authentic buildings, found elsewhere in the area, were demolished piece by piece

and rebuilt identically onsite. The first of these is the sheepbarn “Lou parc de teules” (the tile park), the second, near the pond, is a traditional Landaise house “L’Oustaou”.

### **The Market Square**

This square was inspired by the bas tide towns of South West France. The entire building work, including the new school, was conceived by a local architect’s office and carried out between 2016 and 2019. In different parts of the buildings around the school your eyes will be drawn to the ‘rust-coloured’ cladding stones typical of the Landes region called “Garluche”, or “bad-stone”. The architects deliberately chose this material to highlight the link between the old school and the new. In the old days the base of most buildings was built using this stone.

### **The Gallo-Roman village of Losa and its temple**

In order to reach the village of Losa the coastal Roman road coming from the North had to cross the river valley which is presently at a depth of 7 metres. Oak and pine stakes can still be found in place revealing exactly where this ‘bridge’ aligned itself with the land route. Losa occupied a wide, well-drained plateau, roughly two metres above the water level and the floodplain. It was a road-stop where travelers could find board and lodging. The village was built around a small temple. The abundance of domestic pots and plates as well as some nobler pottery pieces such as fine stamped goblets or amphorae bear witness to commercial exchanges covering a vast geographical area. However, the largest part of the archaeological artifacts found is made up of the pieces of the jars and vats used in the industrial production of pine-based tar.

The many different coins found onsite allow us to date precisely the period of occupation of Losa.

The temple of Losa (12 x 10m) was a rectangular building, the entrance of which opened onto a vestibule which gave access to a gallery going round the central room of the temple, the ‘Cella’. Its thick walls (45cm) were made from blocks of ‘Garluche’. The abandon of the temple could be linked to the appearance of Christianity in the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

### **The Villa du Lac**

This superb residence of Arcachon-style architecture was built around 1900. The property includes magnificent riding stables behind the main villa. It belonged to Earl Leonard of Mezamat de Lisle and Countess Antonie née Arnoulx de Pirey. They resided the rest of the year in the chateau of Maisières in Maisières-Notre-Dame in the Doubs County. The Earl was a cavalry officer, born in Castelsarrasin, who owned racing stables and whose horses raced at the Becquet hippodrome in La Teste. It was one of the first second homes in Sanguinet.

### **The Hen-house**

Traditional Landaise hen-houses were built on stilts, high above ground in order to protect the fowl from predators. To gain access the chickens would climb a one-sided ladder.

This hen-house is a little more sophisticated. It was completely restored to its original form about twenty years ago.

Enjoy your walk!

*Translated by JW*