

Redon (Saint-Nicolas de Redon) – Saint-Gildas des Bois - Guenrouët (Saint-Clair)

STAGE PROFILE - 33.7 km - 08 H 20

From wherever you stay in Redon - Convent of the Calvairiennes (see its cloister and the sisters' chapel) – or in a different accommodation, you can see a number of medieval monuments and buildings, like the church of Saint-Sauveur with its gothic tower, cloisters, and the remains of the abbey of Saint-Sauveur (and if you can, see its underground passage going from the edge of the cloister in the college of Saint Sauveur. The passage led in the past to the river Vilaine, before the fortified boundary wall was built) ; also see the beautiful 15th and 16th Century houses, before heading off in the direction of the river Vilaine towards the quay of Saint-Jacques (St James). Here you find the house of Saint-Jacques, the point of departure for pilgrims who went by boat via the Vilaine towards the sea, as well as the stele (stone marker) of Saint-Jacques placed there 2003, before getting to the bridge over the Vilaine, which is the departure point for this stage.

You will go past the former industrial and commercial area of Redon, via the quays, the docks, and the warehouses bearing witness to the importance of river commerce to the city and its near neighbours, such as St Nicholas. Although this commerce is abandoned today, it was active until the 1970s ; the construction of the dam of Arzal greatly modified navigation in the lower basin of the Vilaine. See the museum of Batellerie.

At any rate, the pilgrim will not want to miss visiting the double representation of St James in the chapel of Saint-Jacques du Bellion, in Fégréac, after having tried to see – as much as the vegetation there will allow – the ruins of the citadel of Rieux on the opposite bank. A ford existed from ancient times between Rieux and Bellion, which was replaced during the Middle Ages by a wooden bridge ; this has now disappeared.

This stage does not present any particular difficulties.

DIRECTIONS

0.00 – To help you orientate yourself leaving Redon, depending where you stayed overnight, 2 descriptions are given for leaving the town and getting back to the towpath of the Canal from Nantes to Brest which constitutes part of the way you walk towards Guenrouët.

1. If you have stayed overnight in the municipal lodging place [gîte municipal] at the Convent of the Calvairiennes, go down the way between the sports hall of the school Lycée Saint-Sauveur and the gîte/lodging building to go directly towards the river Vilaine. 100m further down you take wooden steps between the two buildings of the residence Belles Rives". Then go right along Boulevard Bonne Nouvelle and, having gone under the railway bridge, to Quai Saint-Jacques (ancient embarkation quay for pilgrims taking the way via the river and sea) along which you go for 300m to cross to the left ...
2. If you are leaving accommodation near the town centre, follow the St-Jacques/James

waymarks from the Maison du Tourisme, Place de la République : go down the steps to go under the railway bridge towards the Town Hall - Hôtel de Ville – and cross Place Saint-Sauveur to go around the Gothic Tower, and pass between the abbey of Saint-Sauveur and the Hôtel de Ville via Passage Saint-Benoît. Cross rue Richelieu to head, towards the right, to the little garden of Cours Clémenceau, and after having kept right, go down by the steps to Quay Saint-Jacques along which you go right and continue for 200m to cross to the left...

Immediately after crossing the river, go right to cross the bridge over the Lock of la Digue on the Nantes-Brest Canal. There go left onto the towpath, (Lock Quay - quai de l'Ecluse) which goes along the right-hand side of the canal – (on the other bank is a large commercial zone), for 1km before turning right near St-Nicolas-de-Redon. Continue straight ahead – after leaving to your left a bridge to the other bank (1.9km) – to follow a gravel path (not actually towpath because it is separated from the canal by a narrow band of trees) for 1.2km. After having crossed a tarmac road, continue on the towpath, rather grassy and here close to the canal, for about 800m...

1H00 3.9 -... to the top of the bridge crossing the Nantes-Brest canal.

...Cross the bridge... **VARIATION** by the GRP walking trail of Vilaine : (yellow and red waymarks) going towards the pond of Aumée then La Touche St Joseph as far as the chapel of St Jacques du Bellion - increasing the distance of this stage by 4.5 km – see the description at the end of this document.

3.2 - ... Cross the bridge and take a right to follow the canal along the other bank by the towpath. You arrive at the top of the Lock 'écluse du Bellion', 3.1km away. Continue to the bridge, turn left, go past the campsite. The **chapel of Saint-Jacques du Bellion** (7.4km) is in front of the entrance to the campsite.

1H45 7.4 – To get back on your way ... **VARIATION** via the towpath alongside the canal as far as the area of Pont-Miny en Fégréac 5.1km away – see the description at the end of this document.

– To get back on your way, continue on the CD35 as far as the chapel of Saint-Joseph.

(Red and yellow 'GRP de Vilaine' waymarks from the Chapel of Saint-Joseph to Pont Miny) Head right opposite the chapel onto a 'hollow' embanked path for 700m. Leaving the path, fork right then immediately left to reach and then go through the area of Henrieux for about 250m. Fork right onto a 'hollow' path for 600m then take the path to the right for 400m to come out opposite a house in the area known as ...

2H25 9.9 - La Coquelinais. Turn left for 50m, and take a path for 700m which brings you to Guénélais. Go through and continue for 250m as far as a T-junction. Turn right, go for 300m and turn again to the right. Follow this non-tarmac track – **subject to flooding in winter (*)** – for 800m as far as a D-road at the outskirts of Fégréac. Cross it to continue almost opposite, to the left of a house, onto a grassy path for 200m which leads, passing behind the parish hall, to...

(*) in winter, instead of turning again to the right, go straight ahead for 400m to the D35.

Go right as far as the market town of Fégréac and the church of Saint-Méréal, 1.5 km away.

3H00 12.3 - ... l'église **Saint-Méréal de Fégréac**. (granite cross dating from the 15th Century, situated in the old cemetery behind the church of Fégréac, which is sculpted on both sides, with Christ on one side, and the taking down from the cross carved in a heart-shaped medallion on the other side.

Continue to the right along the main street (Rue Grégoire Orain) for 100 m before turning right onto Rue du Tertre which you go along for 200m before forking left onto another road. Leave on your right a ruined windmill and continue along this road ; notice a recently restored fountain/wash-house on a bend after 300m. Continue for another 300m on this road which becomes a gravel path before taking a rightangled turn to the left. A little more than 400m further, reach an intersection with the D124. Cross it then follow a road opposite for about 200m through the area of **Ballac** before forking left. After 500m on this path go to the right down another path which bends left to go through the area of **L'Hôtel Menant** which brings you to Pont Miny.

3H35 14.9 - At **Pont-Miny**, turn right, cross the canal and the Isac by the old bridge, and take the disused road in the direction of La Doue. Go through the group of houses. At the top of the slope, turn left, cross the D773 towards...

4H05 16.4 - le **Chêne**. At the outskirts of the village, turn right and continue straight ahead for 800m towards **Branleix** and go through this area as far as the D102. At the intersection, turn right, then take the road on your left, heading towards le Sable, as far as an intersection with a Cross 450m away. Take the road facing you for about 100m, then a track on your left for 350m. Exiting at a road, take a right for 400m as far as the top of a moto-cross track, on your left. Go through it till you arrive at a road. Turn left. After 400m you arrive at...

4H50 19.4 - ... a **chapel** (with a picnic area and toilets) at the area of **rocher de la Vache** with a little walking trail through the woods on your left to see the rocher de la vache (cow's rock), a Cross, St Michael and a cromlech...

Continue on the road to a T-junction. Take a right and go straight ahead for about 750m as far as...

5H05 20.5 - ...Les Buttes. At the Cross, leave the road and continue on the track facing you for 1.4km approx, going through the Buttes de Brénugat via the woods. At the intersetion with a road, go right for 450m. Turn left and take the path through a woods leading to the old path of Croix de Saint Gildas des Bois. At the intersection with a path (at the statue of Christ) turn right to go towards the town centre of

5H50 23.5 - the **Abbey of Saint-Gildas-des-Bois**.

In Saint Gildas des Bois, to continue along the way, take the D2. Keep going (with care) for 300m after the sign indicating the outskirts of the town, then take a path on the left. At the T-junction take a right and continue straight ahead for 2km – leaving several paths to the left and

to the right – as far as a T-junction with the D102.

6H45 27.0 – At the intersection, those who are most weary may take the road on their right to get to **Guenrouët** (4 km away).

Those who still have energy can turn right a little after the Cross (partly hidden in vegetation 20m from the junction) and follow the path to the right for 500m, then left for 800m, then left to cross the D102. Continue straight ahead for 300m. Take the track to the right for 100m going alongside a wood, then to the left for 450m in the woods. At the crossing with another path, take a right for 250m, then go right again for another 450m. At the crossing with another path, take a left for 600m to get to the area of...

7H35 30.7 - ... La Gicquelais. Upon entering this area, turn right, and continue for 200m as far as a Cross. Take a path on your left. After 400m you cross another path to your left and another Cross. Go straight ahead for 400m to cross a path on your left...

-Take it (31.7km) and go down to the path alongside the Nantes-Brest Canal for 750m as far as a path which takes you to the D102. Turn left towards the town centre of Guenrouët, where you will arrive at the church of **Saint-Hermeland** (worth a visit)

.... go around this building to go down towards the leisure park of ...

8H20 33.7 - ... Saint Clair. (Tourist Office – G.E.(?) – Campsite)

VARIATON using the ‘GRP de Vilaine’ : (waymarked yellow and red)

0.0 ... Cross the bridge, go straight ahead, and go through the passage near the Redon-Nantes railway, then the area of **Le Tertre** (3.3km) and at the far side of it, 400m from the canal, turn right at the intersection. Continue for 300 m on this tarmac road before taking a farm track on the right. After 200m, fork right onto a lovely track, to follow for 500m, which becomes a path overlooking the railway, turning to the left. Go up it for a little more than 200m before turning left and continuing to find a track on a bend 80m away. Take the track to the right for 180m as far as a T-junction near the area of ...

5.0 - ... Le Verger. Go right down the tarmac road for 100m, before taking an uphill path on the left surrounded with woods, and looking down again briefly on the railway, for a little more than 300m as far as a handwritten sign drawing attention to a viewpoint which you find in due course. Go down the slope to the left for about 50m, as far as a path which you go up towards the right – leaving a reservoir below on the right – as far as the farm in the area of Finetais (6.5km). 500m further, just before the first house of the area of La Broussais, go right down a path which goes alongside a field for 300m to get to a tarmac road. Fork right towards the area of **La Cour de Rotz**. After 500m, after a private chapel on the right, turn left to go between a residence and a very large farmhouse, and take a farm track. A little more than 250m further, turn left to continue on another track for a little more than 700m before forking right onto a grassy path. Continue for 150m before taking a farm track on the left. At 200m, before a D-road, go right onto a grassy path, and after 150m turn left to reach...

5.0 - ... near an **Ecole de Voile** (sailing school), the tarmac road going alongside the pond **Étang d'Aumée**. Continue following the road to the right and cross the dam. Just after, fork right onto a path which you follow for a little less than 500m before coming to a road, where you go straight ahead for 800m to the area of La Gicquellerie where the road goes 90° left to get to-alongside the domaine of the château of Touche-Saint-Joseph on the left – the T-junction with the D35.

Turn right to find, 600m away, the **small chapel of Saint-Jacques** (7.72.km) , just before the Nantes-Brest Canal in the area of **Le Bellion** (end of the Variation)

VARIATION via the Nantes-Brest Canal starting from Pont-Miny as far as Guenrouët :

0.0 - the area of **Pont Miny** on the Nantes-Brest Canal and cross to the left the road which goes to the bridge over the canal. Leave on your left a lodging place [gîte d'étape] and head along the towpath to

10.2 - arrive at the bridge over the canal at **Saint-Clair**, in the area of Guenrouët (end of the Variation).