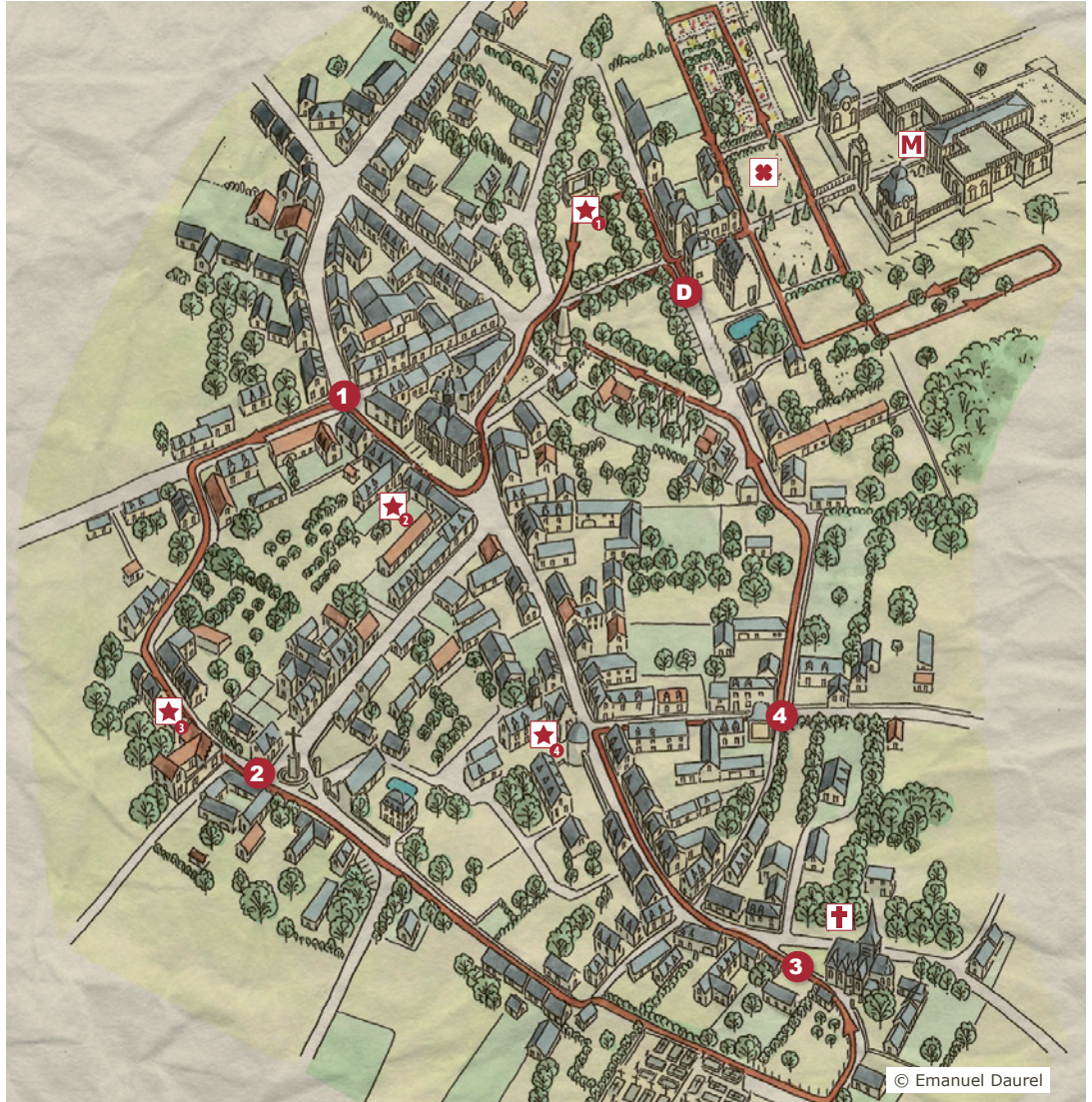




- **Est. time:** 1hr
- **Length:** 2.6 km
- **Lowest point:** 63 m
- **Highest point:** 81 m
- **Level:** Easy
- **Waymarking:** none
- **Passing through:** Blérancourt

With its distinctive architecture featuring crow-stepped gables and typical, white Soissonnais stone, Blérancourt belonged to the Lords of Coucy until 1230. It was also the childhood home of the revolutionary, Saint-Just. Although the village was partly destroyed by shelling during World War I, it was nevertheless chosen by the American ladies, Anne Morgan and Ann Murray Dike, as their headquarters to help local people and coordinate aid for rebuilding the region.



© Emanuel Daurel



American volunteers  
© Archives départementales

### TOURIST INFO.:

Tourist Information office  
T. 03 23 39 72 17

### CREATION AND UPKEEP OF ROUTE:

Village, Tourist Information office and Château of Blérancourt

### ON THE ROUTE

- ☘ New World gardens
- M Franco-American museum at the château of Blérancourt
- ★<sub>1</sub> Ann Murray Dike stele
- ★<sub>2</sub> Reconstruction huts
- ★ Hornbeam tree and Saint-Just's house
- † Church of Saint Pierre and grave of Ann Murray Dike
- ★<sub>3</sub> Le Moulin Vert

### NEARBY

- Door to Les Feuillants Convent
- Cavessy lake
- Church at Blérancourdelle

Departure point: in Blérancourt, go to the Place du Général Leclerc, and use parking spaces in front of Le Griffon hotel-restaurant.

- D Go into château grounds to see the New World gardens. Leave the château, cross the square (Ann Murray Dike stele on your right), walk left around the Town Hall, turn right into main street (Tourist Information Office, huts).
- 1 Take first street on left towards Blérancourdelle, then left again into the Rue Saint-Just (Saint-Just's house).

- 2 At Place du Preslet (wayside cross) go straight on. Take Rue Guittone facing you. At bend, turn right onto footpath. Go through graveyard to church, (tomb of Ann Murray Dike).
- 3 Walk down Rue de l'église, then left onto Rue Bernard Potier. At the Moulin Vert, turn right towards Coucy-le-Château.
- 4 After 50m, take narrow street on left. Go back to Place du Général Leclerc (archery, château).

Route card taken from  
[www.randonner.fr](http://www.randonner.fr)  
the Aisne walking/hiking website



See all our good deals on [www.facebook.com/randonnee.aisne](http://www.facebook.com/randonnee.aisne)



## STORY OF WOMEN

### *The Anne Morgan route*



© Communauté de Communes du Val de l'Ailette

*App.*

*"The Anne Morgan route"*

Anne Morgan was a pioneering American humanitarian who drove her Ford Model T all over Picardy from 1917, helping the civilian population. The route links the 5 towns where she set up an operations centre for CARD (Comité Américain pour les Régions Dévastées): Blérancourt, Anizy-le-Château, Coucy-le-Château, Soissons, Vic-sur-Aisne.

More information on:  
[www.anne-morgan.org](http://www.anne-morgan.org)

See details of WW1 centenary events on [www.aisne14-18.com](http://www.aisne14-18.com) and in brochure available for free in all Aisne Tourist Information offices

Find "Aisne-14-18" on



## *Story of a museum*

### THE CHÂTEAU, RESIDENCE OF MISSES MORGAN AND DIKE



© Médiathèque de l'Architecture et du Pat.

*Organised events at the château in 1917*

Built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century for the Potier de Gesvres family, the château was partly destroyed during the French Revolution then during the First World War.

In March 1917, after the German withdrawal, two American ladies, Anne Morgan and Ann Murray Dike, made it the headquarters of C.A.R.D. (Comité Américain pour les Régions Dévastées). Originally working out of wooden huts, the volunteers helped local people to regain their independence and resume life as a community. Anne Morgan bought the ruined château in 1919 and restored it in 1924 to house the Franco-American museum. In 1938 the south wing, called the "volunteers' wing", was rebuilt to house memorabilia of American volunteers during the Great War, then extended in 1989 and 2016. Visitors can pay homage at the grave of Miss Ann Murray Dike, located in a little garden to the left of the church.



### NEW WORLD GARDENS

The New World gardens, with their collection of American flowers and shrubs, are unique in France. They were laid out by famous landscape gardeners in 1989, with support from the American Friends of Blérancourt, on the old château vegetable garden. There are rare specimens from America as well as common plants, acclimatized to local conditions, but which came originally from America.



© OT de Blérancourt

*Saint-Just's house*

### DID YOU KNOW ?

Blérancourt was the childhood village of Saint-Just, an 18<sup>th</sup> century French politician who helped draw up the "Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen". His house is on the route.

## *Story of an orphanage*

### THE HÔTEL DE FOURCROY (KNOWN AS "LE MOULIN VERT")

This foundation for children was the first to be recognised by King Louis XIV. In 1667 the Bishop of Soissons placed it in the care of a religious congregation. In 1915 the orphanage was evacuated and German soldiers used it as a military hospital which was partly destroyed by shelling. Renovated after the war, it closed down in 1957. In 1959 the "Moulin Vert" association took over the building to create a special school.



© OT de Blérancourt

*The 'Moulin Vert' today*