



British Association of the Var

Putting people and social needs together since 1998

Association Loi 1901 No: W831001750

www.baofthevar.com

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Newsletter Supplement

WALK – BAGNOLS EN FORET *Les Meulières du Defens*

Circular walk about 1 hour 45 minutes through the forest with sea views, oppidum* and former millstone grinding areas. Strong footwear and good fitness level essential as some paths are stony or rocky and there is some steep climbing up to the oppidum, but worth it for the views. Map IGN 3544 ET

Car access: Take the D47 from Le Muy to Bagnols passing the stunning Colle de Rouet rocks on the left, then traversing the Gorge de Blavet. At the highest point just after a sharp left hand bend, there is a viewing point on the left across Roquebrune-sur-Argens to the sea, soon followed by another viewpoint on the right of the Gorge de Blavet. After 16km look for the Chapelle Notre Dame. Turn right there and follow this road, passing the "Déchetterie" until you reach the cemetery on the left. Park there.

Take the forest path signed "Le Petit Roc". After 15 mins take the right fork signed "Taillerie de Meules" GR 51 and "Pierre du Coucou" G59. After 10 mins of steady climbing turn right onto the GR51 "Les Meules" (marked in red and white stripes) and follow this stony path up through the trees where you will find the former millwheel grinding works, and a view of the sea and the *Pic de la Gardiette* to the east. Keep climbing up rocks, following a green arrow painted on a rock and any more red and white stripes you can find on trees or rocks until you reach the centre of the oppidum where you will find a discarded millwheel.

To leave this area, take the path to the north-east, looking for the red and white stripes painted on a rock to confirm your path. Follow this path downwards through the forest where you should reach two green poles with the red and white stripes on, 30 mins after first joining the G51. Carry straight on through the forest for another 20 mins where you will see huge stones appearing on the right. In a clearing there is a cairn and more large stones to the right. Leave the GR51, turning right onto a narrow stony path and follow it down the hill back to the starting point (30 mins).

*An **oppidum** is a large defended [Iron Age](#) settlement. They emerged in the Bronze age and spread across Europe, stretching from Britain in the west to the edge of the [Hungarian plain](#) in the east. They continued in use until the Romans began conquering Europe.

Paris-Nice TGV plans scrapped

It is the end for an ambitious new TGV train line project between Nice and Paris. In its 12 billion euro investment programme, the government has allocated no funding for France's famous '*Trains à Grande Vitesse*' (High Speed Trains), judged too costly. The project was officially postponed until at least 2040. Many fast train projects have been cut short by the present government including the local LGV PACA, originally designed to provide high-speed transport linking together Nice and Marseille in one hour. Instead of a new high-speed line, around four billion euros will be allocated to renovate the local rail network as part of the new project *Ligne nouvelle ferroviaire Provence Côte d'Azur*.

BATs 2013....BATs 2014

In this year's BATs show, we had more sketches than ever before. In watching the film of the show, it was apparent that the greatest laughter was as a result of 'The Lamp-post Sketch', one in which there were no words, only action.

The Scene: A lady walks across the stage in a provocative manner. She stops at a lamp-post and holds it, looking seductively at the audience. A man approaches her. Silent words are exchanged. He takes out some money and offers it to the lady. She refuses. He shrugs his shoulders and walks away. A second man approaches. Silent words are exchanged. He offers her some money. She refuses. He shrugs his shoulders and walks away. A third person approaches the lady. Silent words are exchanged. Money is offered. The lady nods her head in acceptance and.....hands over the lampost !

For next year's shows, we are looking for further ideas on possible sketches, or indeed, other amusing material. All suggestions most welcome. Ivan Rose : *****@notimetolook.eu

Reduced mobility – adapting for independence

Sometimes, due to age or a medical condition, we have to learn to live with reduced mobility, often after a lifetime of activity with no restrictions. This can be hard to take, but a positive attitude can help, coupled with sensible lifestyle changes.

Firstly, be honest with yourself and your carer – ask your doctor what the likely effects of your condition will be, and especially if this will include using a wheelchair in the future as many of the next steps depend on this.

Secondly, take stock of your current situation – housing, care and support, income, social needs – and plan around these.

Housing with provision for a wheelchair

If you don't want to move, take a close look at your current accommodation asking these questions. If you then feel you need to move, ask the same questions in each property that you view.

- Exterior access – are there steps between the parking area and the entrance? If an apartment, are there steps, narrow corridors, heavy fire doors or steep ramps between the parking area and the entrance? If a ramp is needed, there are laws about the gradient that is safe for wheelchairs, which can result in a long, shallow ramp that takes up a large amount of space.
- Interior access – are the doorways wide enough? Is there enough single-floor accommodation without using stairs? Is the bathroom and WC large enough? Are the walls suitable for handrails to be securely fixed? Could the bath or existing shower be replaced by a large walk-in shower with seat? Is the flooring smooth?

Housing for reduced mobility without a wheelchair

- Exterior access – as above, but some of these obstacles can be overcome by strategically placed handrails on staircases and grab rails by steps.
- Interior access – as above, but a second stair-rail or a stair-lift can make the first floor accessible, depending on the type of disability. In any case, a ground floor WC should be a priority.

Before undertaking any adaptations to your home, check with your *Mairie* to see if advice and/or financial help is available. You will need to be assessed by a medical/social team to decide at which level you qualify.

Mobility

There are many types of aids to mobility on the market, from sticks and crutches to walkers with a seat and electric scooters, and advice about these can be obtained from your physiotherapist and the specialist disability equipment shops that are found in large towns. There is also the disabled parking badge scheme, similar to the one in the UK, which can be accessed through your doctor. Simple provisions can minimise risks – wear well-fitting shoes with good support; avoid any loose mats in the house; keep corridors and terraces free from unnecessary furniture and ornaments.

Care and Support – high dependency

As in the UK, there are services provided by the state to enable people to be cared for at home, and usually an initial assessment by a health professional will be necessary to determine what level of care is needed and how it can be provided. This can be initiated by your doctor and will include looking at the level of dependency, mobility, and existing family support so that help can be arranged from nurses, physiotherapists, home help, and the provision of specialist equipment such as hospital beds and hoists. A stay in a clinic may also be possible to give your carer a break, or in case of their illness.

Care and Support – medium dependency

A lower level of the above help may be available, especially if you live alone or have a carer with limitations of their own.

Income

The APA (*allocation personnalisée d'autonomie*) is available for those needing support at home due to disability or age-related problems, and like all these benefits, is subject to certain conditions for acceptance. Please check with your *Mairie* for the procedure and paperwork involved.

Social and daily living needs

Most people prefer to be as independent as possible and there are many gadgets available to assist those with reduced mobility to continue to wash, toilet, dress, and eat with the minimum of help. Again, check with your local disabled equipment store.

To find more information about services and provision for disabled people in the Var:

www.proxihandicap.com - choose Var.

For help in the home: www.sendra.fr

To find accessible beaches in the Var:

www.handiplage.fr.

To find advice in English: www.dlf.org.uk.

