



### Diedendorf Castle

The castle's builder Jean Streiff von Lauenstein is the man behind the welches' arrival in the region. It was he who convinced the Count of Nassau-Saarbrücken to accept them. The Count gave him land at Diedendorf where he set about building the castle. This small fortified manor built in 1577 is typical of the architectural and ornamental style of the Alsatian Renaissance of the 16th century.

### The reconstruction of the villages

When the Huguenots arrived in the spring, they found a totally dilapidated area awaiting them. The Count issued them with forest plots which they cleared in order to be able to set about building. In just a few weeks, new houses had been erected. These rebuilt villages all feature a common characteristic: their layout as "**street-villages**", i.e. featuring a main street along which all of the houses are built on either side as seen at **Rauwiller, Kirrberg or Diedendorf**.



### The traditional orchards

The trees in the numerous orchards to be seen along the way are usually not treated. These include apple, plum and cherry trees, but also walnut and pear trees. These orchards are **ecological biotopes**. Why? Because they are home to a range of fauna and flora no longer found on intensively farmed plots using industrial agricultural methods. A thriving community found **ONLY** in the orchards.



### Calcicole strips

Calcicole strips are comprised of trees driven out of the forest due to a lack of light and forestry management techniques. These trees extend their branches outside the forest in their quest for light. They are referred to as being "calcicole" as they are comprised of **plants which like chalky soil**, which is lighter and offers better filtration properties than other soils. These two factors encourage a warmer microclimate in which we find those plants which prefer a warm environment including hazelnut, hawthorn, blackthorn and ivy etc. It is even possible to find orchids here, which are rare in our regions!

## THE CENTRAL WELCHE VILLAGES TRAIL



The complete Huguenot village trail covers approximately 24 km.

**Caution: Lorentzen is around 10 km away from the starting point (Wolsthof). The trail is not marked out and you should not take any notice of the existing signposting for bicycles.**

### What is *Alsace bossue*?

This is a hilly area between Alsace and Lorraine. To the east, heading towards the Alsatian plain, we find forested hills on a bed of sandstone, while to the west the plain of Lorraine features a deeper calcareous and clay soil which is used for agriculture. The gentle terrain offers sweeping views across the open landscapes.



### The welche villages

Back in the 16th century, the area that you will be travelling through belonged to the Counts of Nassau-Sarrewerden who introduced the Reformation here. Open to those of a different confession, from 1559 onwards the earldom of Sarrewerden welcomed refugees from Lorraine, Belgium and northern France, who were fleeing religious persecution in the Kingdom of France and the Duchy of Lorraine. They rebuilt and repopulated seven villages which have been known ever since as the "welche villages": **Rauwiller, Goerlingen, Eywiller, Burbach, Kirrberg, Diedendorf and Altwiller.**

### What does "welche" mean?

This is a German word which means "French". Any French person ending up in Germany was referred to as *welche*. Indeed, up until 1793, these villages were part of the German Holy Roman Empire. A *welche* village is therefore a village in which French is spoken. The Huguenots brought their customs, their faith and their language. Although they quickly learned the local German dialect, the immigrants continued to use their language.



## THE CENTRAL WELCHE VILLAGES TRAIL



**Starting point: the Wolsthof car park (on the outskirts of Berg), on road number RD 1061.**

To begin the trail, head down **rue de la Forêt**, on the left near the bus shelter, and continue as far as **Eywiller**.









### **Travelling through Eywiller (a welche village)**

When you arrive in the village, turn right twice in quick succession and continue on to Wolfskirchen.

You will travel alongside the Eywiller district forest before entering that of Wolfskirchen.

*At the bottom of the hill you will see a Napoleonic bench dating from 1854.*

Continue along the road on the D55. On the left you will see the orchards.

	<p><b><u>Travelling through Wolfskirchen</u></b></p> <p>Turn left at the "Toutes directions" (all routes) sign and continue on to Diedendorf on the D55</p> <p>Continue to the left, still on the D55.</p> <p>Turn left at the crossroads, towards Niederstinzeln and Fénétrange on the D8.</p> <p><i>Caution: you'll be travelling on a very busy road. Take great care!</i></p> <p>At the roundabout, take the D55 on the right, heading towards Diedendorf. This is the main street.</p>
	<p><b><u>Travelling through Diedendorf (a welche village)</u></b></p> <p>Turn right into Rue de la Fontaine via the hairpin bend.</p> <p>You are now entering the Bischtroff-sur-Sarre district forest. This is the public forest for the Sarre-Union and the Bambusch Canton area. Remain on this asphalt surface until you reach the Bischtroff forestry centre just before leaving the forest.</p> <p>Turn left and then right to head back to Zollingen.</p>
	<p><b><u>Travelling through Zollingen</u></b></p> <p>Turn right at the bottom of the downhill slope and continue through the village, where you will be travelling alongside the Sarre.</p> <p>Stay on the D96 to the left as you cross the Sarre, heading towards Bischtroff-sur-Sarre.</p>
	<p><b><u>Travelling through Bischtroff-sur-Sarre</u></b></p> <p>Continue straight ahead following the "Toutes directions" sign on the D96, towards Burbach.</p> <p>At the roundabout, take the second exit heading towards Burbach</p>
	<p><b><u>Travelling through Burbach (a welche village)</u></b></p> <p>Travel through Burbach. After the lime tree in front of the church, continue along the road for 100 m <i>as far as the rhinoceros on your right where you can take a break.</i></p> <p>Then backtrack and turn left at the lime tree.</p> <p>Turn left at the fountain (Rue de la Montée) until you reach the edge of the forest.</p>
	<p><b><u>Back to the starting point</u></b></p> <p>Turn left just before the information sign.</p> <p>As you leave the forest, turn right then left and go through the tunnel under the motorway. Turn left after the bridge and you should have the motorway on your left.</p> <p>Continue alongside this. Turn right onto the gravel path just before the secondary road to get back to <b>your starting point.</b></p>