



Woking DFAS Tour 11th to 15th June 2015

Art, Gardens and Châteaux of Normandy



Tour Guide: Mrs Helen McCabe.

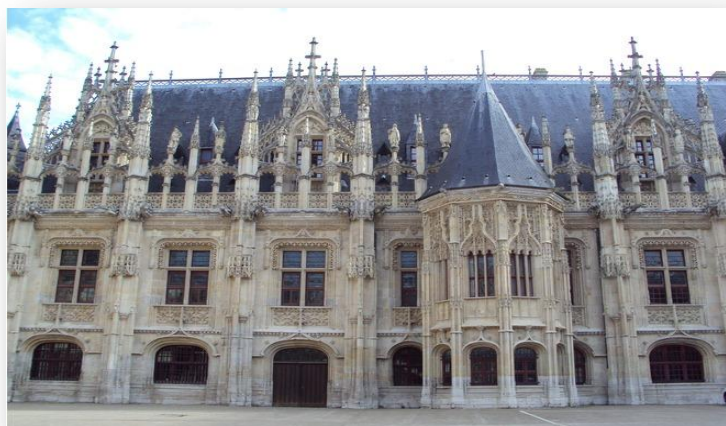
Helen is a NADFAS accredited lecturer whose lectures to Woking DFAS have been voted “excellent”. Helen read French at university and studied history of art and architecture in Paris where she lived for years. She is an experienced gardener having created her own woodland garden near Penzance in Cornwall.

During our journey from Calais to Rouen, Helen will remind us of our early links with Normandy. She will tell us of Rouen's two thousand years of history, remind us that Joan of Arc was tried and burned here at the stake in May 1431. She will talk of the architecture, the ancient half-timbered houses, the Gothic churches including the magnificent Cathedral immortalised by Monet's paintings and the impressive Le Gros Horloge.

Each day on our trips she will prepare us with details of the gardens, the châteaux and their inhabitants. She will talk about Lutyens when we visit le Bois des Moutiers and, of course, relate Monet's story before we arrive at his gardens and house in Giverny.

Please contact Caroline Symington carosymington@gmail.com if you would like to find out more

ITINERARY



Travel by Safeguard Coaches with ferry crossings from Dover/Calais.

Stay in historic Rouen in the 4 Star Hotel Mercure Champ de Mars (Michelin recommended)

Thursday 11th June

- 8:30 am : Depart from Woking Station (Oriental Road side) by touring coach (loo on board) to Dover, ferry to Calais, onward to Rouen, arrive at our Hotel at about 5:30 pm (4:30pm UK time)
- 3 course dinner in Hotel

Friday 12th June

- Le Vasterival
- Le Bois des Moutiers
- L'Eglise de St Valery
- Château de Miromesnil

Saturday 13th June

- Monet's gardens and house in Giverny
- Le Jardin Plume

Sunday 14th June

- AM. Rouen. A free morning to enjoy the sights of Rouen and perhaps to go shopping in the Sunday market. In the evening of the previous two days you may decide to have a wander round Rouen centre which is a 10/15 minute walk from the Hotel. Some of many sightseeing options are shown in this tour brochure.
- PM. Château du Champ de Bataille

Monday 15th June

- En route visit Château du Mesnil Geoffroy arriving back at Woking Station at around 8:00pm

MONET'S HOUSE & GARDEN AT GIVERNY



Photo (left) of spring flowers in Monet's garden at Giverny

The whole of Giverny (if not all of Normandy) is suffused with the spirit of Claude Monet. Half close your eyes when you are in the flower or the water garden and you can imagine him at his easel endlessly capturing with his brush strokes the colours and the beauty of his lovingly created garden. Many believe that never before had a painter so shaped his subjects in nature before painting them.



The painting (left) by Monet of the flower Garden in spring would appear to be painted from the same spot as the photo. (above)

Claude Monet

MONET'S HOUSE & GARDEN AT GIVERNY (cont'd)



We took this photo
(below) in April 2014
because we were
touched by the Lady
Gardener's obvious
loving care of the
plants.



(left) This is the
japanese bridge
over Monet's lily
pond in Giverny.
He endlessly
painted his
beloved
"nymphs"
(lilies) and was
fascinated by
reflections on
water.

LE JARDIN PLUME



(left) Caroline meets the owner of Le Jardin Plume, M. Quibel

Patrick Quibel and his wife created the garden from a typical Normandy orchard from 1997 onwards. This garden delighted Monty Don who included it in a documentary on gardens in Normandy.

(below) Le Jardin Plume in summer. It has a formal layout of clipped box in a square edged pattern. Each box is filled with natural plantings of grasses.



LE VASTERIVAL

Princess Greta Sturdza (**below**) passed away on November 30th, 2009, age 96, surrounded by her beloved garden. Since 1955, when she moved to Normandy into the old house of well-known composer Albert Roussel with her Romanian husband and 3 sons, the princess organised her life



around her garden. Over the years, she undertook the immense task of clearing 12 hectares of swampy forest on the edge of a windswept cliff top, with rigorous standards she set herself, and transforming them into a botanical garden with invaluable plant collections

Great care has been taken to ensure that Le Vasterival is a garden for all seasons. Of note are the hydrangeas (**right**). Princess Sturdza selected numerous varieties which flower beautifully and abundantly each year thanks to her simple but very unique pruning method.



We were shown round by Sybil (**below with Caroline**). She has worked for the Sturdza family

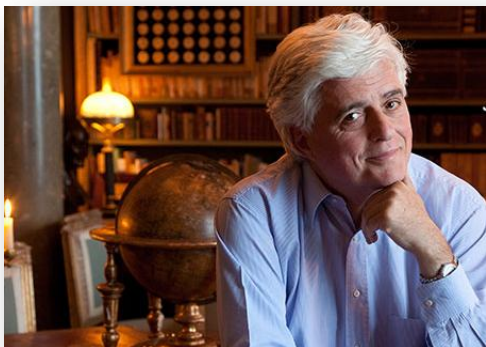


for over 30 years. Her knowledge, pride and love of the garden is immense and , just like the late Princess, she was armed with a long-handled, three-pronged tool which she used against any weed that dared to show its head.

Château du Champs de Bataille



Translated as “Castle of the Battle Field”, **Château du Champs de Bataille** is impressive in every way, with its classical French architecture and beautiful formal gardens. The name dates from the 10th Century when in 935 a large battle was fought in the vicinity of the present day chateau.



In 1992 the castle was bought by its current owner, the flamboyant Interior Designer **Jacques Garcia**, who restored the building and created the gardens. Jacques Garcia ranks as one of the most sought-after French interior decorators. Specializing in mythical places such as James Joyce's favourite restaurant (Le Fouquet's), Oscar Wilde's Parisian residence (the Hotel des Beaux-Arts), and the magnificent **Château du Champs de Bataille**, the elegance of his work is exceeded only by his personality.

Château de Miromesnil



The château, birthplace of writer Guy de Maupassant, nestles in a cluster of beech trees near to the sea. Two totally different façades, large walled grounds, dominated by a two hundred year old cedar, a listed chapel hidden in the woods and a flowery kitchen garden invite you to rest and relax.



The Landlords of the castle, Christophe and Nathalie Romatet, are passionate about this historical monument and warmly invite you to explore the stunning château and the well kept kitchen gardens.

Le BOIS des MOUTIERS



In 1898 Guillaume Mallet met the young British architect Edwin Lutyens. Sensing his exceptional abilities and impending brilliant career...The Cenotaph was one of his designs.....Mallet commissioned him to build the house at Le Bois des Moutiers. He then employed Gertrude Jekyll to select the species for the various gardens’.

We met Antoine Bouchayer-Mallet (above) who is a fourth generation family member. He had interesting stories to tell of Lutyens the architect, of the cultural history and of the famous people who had an involvement in Moutiers. For Antoine the ideas of the theosophists and the Arts and Craft people have never gone away. “They stressed the human over the material, and they feared the ravages of hyper-industrialisation. How much more relevant could that be?”, he asks.



Château du Mesnil Geoffroy



Victor Hugo once stayed at this lovely château which is run by Prince and Princess Kayali. It is famous for its exceptional rose garden with over 2500 rosebushes.





THE CHURCH OF ST VALERY AT VARENGEVILLE

(Left, painting by Monet) The church of St Valery's history is linked with famous painters and creative people. Originally built in the 12th century, then enlarged in the 16th, the building has resisted storms and the assault of the waves that gnaw at the cliffs below.

Georges Braque who developed cubism with Pablo Picasso is buried here. The mosaic of blue and grey which forms part of his tomb recalls the colours of the Normandy coat of arms



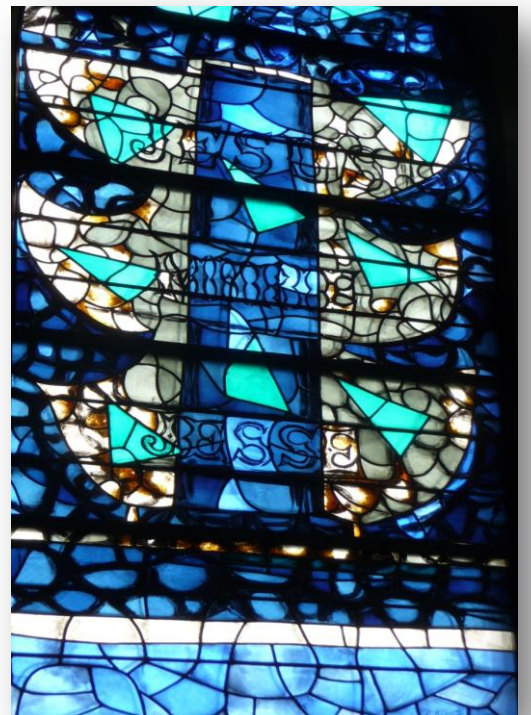
G Braque

In the church of St Valery is the stained glass window designed by Georges

Braque. (Left, see close up of his signature)



Albert Roussel, the composer, has an imposing carved tomb overlooking the sea. It is perhaps his naval career before he became a musician that made Roussel choose this cliff top churchyard as his last resting place. Influenced by Debussy's music, Roussel composed melodies and symphonies as well as an opera-ballet inspired by a voyage to India.





ROUEN

The Paschal Lamb has been part of Rouen's coat of arms since the 14th century.



The **Mercur**e is to the right of the Ibis Hotel...see the red sign  on the first building above the arrow.

Rouen was one of the largest and most prosperous cities of medieval Europe. It was one of the capitals of the Anglo-Norman dynasties, which ruled both England and large parts of modern France from the 11th century to the 15th century. It is in Rouen that the English burnt Joan of Arc in 1431. The town was heavily damaged during World War II.

There is much to see in Rouen. The ancient half timbered buildings set the scene for a visit to the Cathédrale de Notre Dame and the other magnificent churches and old buildings. Then there are the museums and the art galleries.

There are great shopping opportunities in Rouen and much pleasure to be had by generally walking about and stopping for a coffee and perhaps a macaroon.

We have appended a few of the sights and things that interested us during our first ever visit to Rouen

POTTERY IN ROUEN



Rouen is one of the oldest centres of ceramics in France and one whose influence has played a leading role in the development of the industry. For those interested a visit to the Musee de la Ceramique (of which more later) would be very worthwhile.

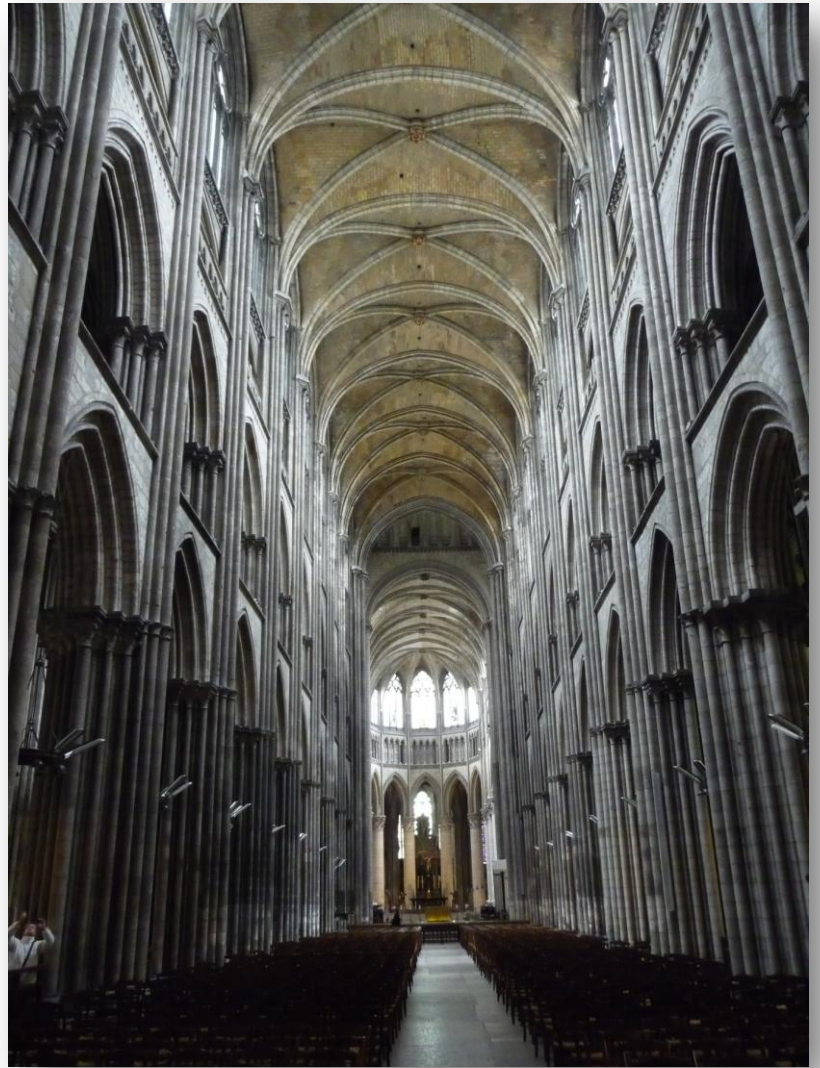
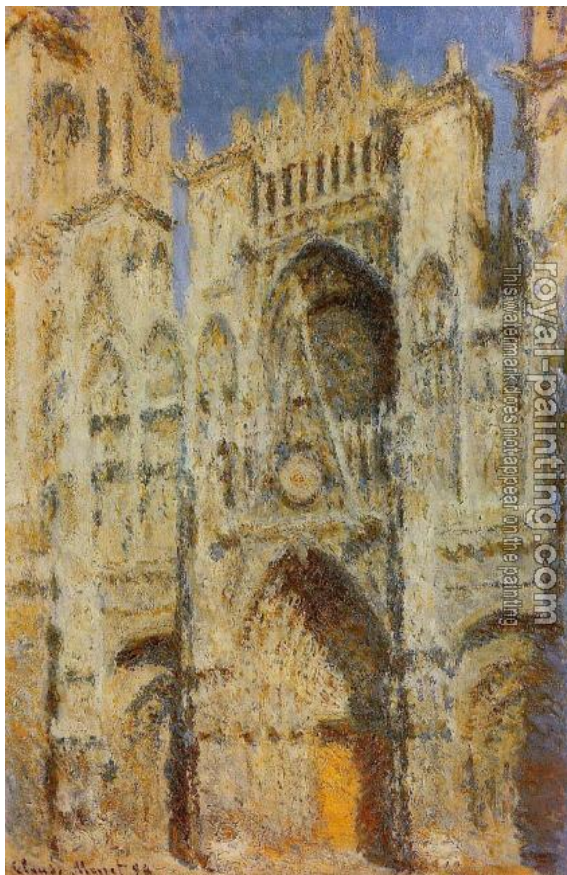
Today in rue Saint-Romain close to Notre Dame Cathedral you can see ceramic painters at work. See the photo we took of the craftsman who was totally absorbed in his work ([above](#))



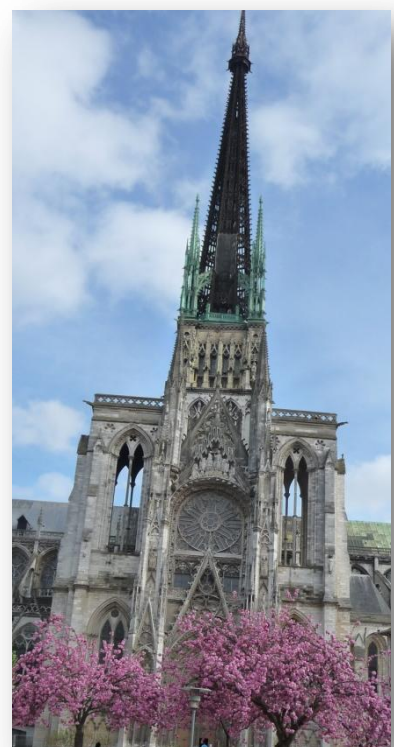
CATHEDRALE de NOTRE DAME

Monet seldom painted anything other than landscapes, the notable exception being his series of paintings of the Cathedral. **(below)**

Historically, the series was commercially well-timed. In the early 1890s, France was seeing a revival of interest in Catholicism and the subject was well received. Apart from its religious significance, Rouen Cathedral—built in the Gothic style—represented all that was best in French history and culture, being a style of architecture that was admired and adopted by many European countries during the middle ages.



(right) It was the photographer and not the cathedral that was “leaning”!!





PLACE de VIEUX MARCHE & HALF TIMBERED BUILDINGS

This open market place was the site of Joan of Arc's immolation in May 1431

14th Century timber framed houses
in rue du Petit Mouton



Caroline enjoys a break



The Church of Saint-Maclou is a Roman Catholic church which is considered one of the best examples of the Flamboyant style of Gothic architecture in France. Saint-Maclou, along with Rouen Cathedral, the Palais de Justice (also Flamboyant), and the Church of St. Ouen, form a famous ensemble of significant Gothic buildings in Rouen.

The Church of Saint Maclou was built during the transition from the late Gothic period (15th - 16th century) to the Renaissance in the 16th century. The tympanum of the main entrance of the Church of Saint Maclou displays Christ standing with his hands held out to people surrounding him, those to his right heading for Heaven and those to his left heading for the fiery pits of Hell. This message, commonly depicted during the Gothic period, was designed to scare and evoke emotion from the public.



The Church of St. Ouen is a large Gothic Roman Catholic church famous for both its architecture and its large, unaltered Cavallé-Coll organ, which Charles-Marie Widor described as "a Michelangelo of an organ". Built on a similar scale to nearby Rouen Cathedral, it is, along with church of Saint Maclou, one of the principal Gothic monuments of Rouen.



LE GROS HORLOGE



Le Gros Horloge is installed in a Renaissance arch.

LE GROS HORLOGE (cont'd)

The mechanism of the clock is one of the oldest in France, the movement being made in 1389. The clock was originally constructed without a dial, with one revolution of the hour-hand representing twenty four hours. The movement cast in wrought iron, is perhaps the largest such mechanism still extant. A facade was added in 1529. The Renaissance facade represents a golden sun with 24 rays on a starry blue background.

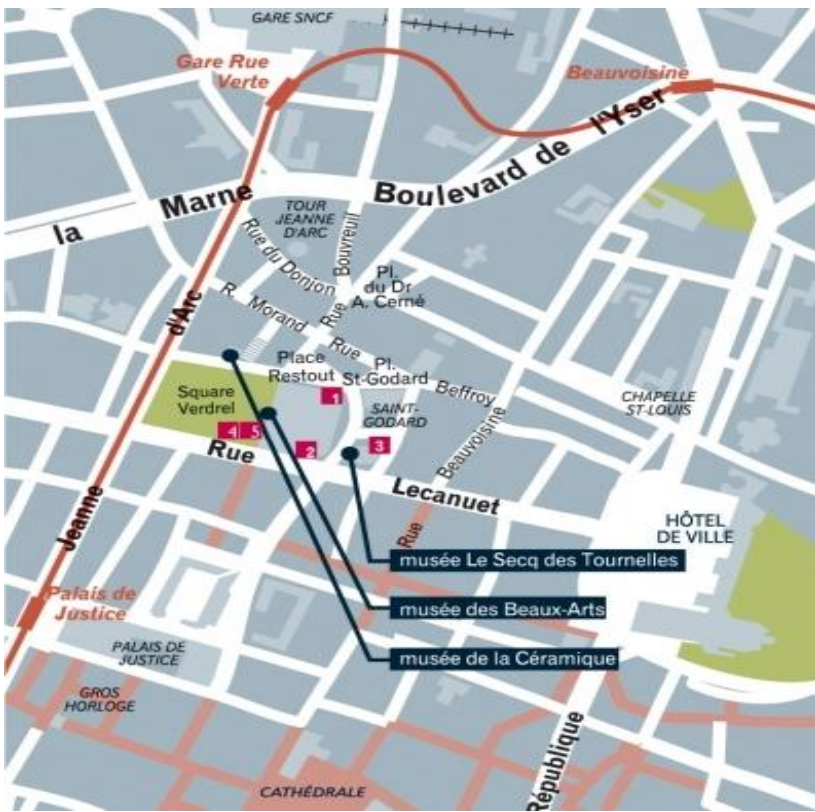
Many depictions of sheep show the importance of the wool trade in Rouen and the Paschal Lamb, which has been part of Rouen's coat of arms since the 14th century, is represented on the underside of the arch.

The phases of the moon are shown in the oculus of the upper part of the dial. It completes a full rotation in 29 days. The week days are shown in an opening at the base of the dial with allegorical subjects for each day of the week.

The mechanism was electrified in the 1920s and it was restored in 1997.



Le Gros Horloge Painting by J.M.W. TURNER



ROUEN MUSEUMS & GALLERIES (Map, left)

Comprehensive information is available on the website that covers all three museums (Google: Musée des Beaux Arts, Rouen)

These buildings are about a 15 minute walk from our hotel

MUSEE des BEAUX ARTES



Claude Monet

We were enchanted by this gallery and have selected, as shown below, two paintings from the impressionist section. The extent of the collections in the gallery can be seen by accessing their website. Claude Monet is well represented ...as well he should be as in Normandy his presence is everywhere.



Alfred Sisley

MUSEE de la CERAMIQUE



Dating from 1725, this ceramic violin is very rare with only seven known examples.

The water lily candle holder was created by Leon Kann in 1900.



MUSEE Le SECQ des TOURNELLES



Musee Tournelles:
Ceremonial key

" One visitor to this museum wrote "the stuff in here is really nice. My favourite section is the chastity locks. Once you have been here, you will never look at wrought iron the same way again

ST JOAN OF ARC



The church of Saint Joan of Arc was completed in 1979 in the Place du Vieux-Marché. This is the same location where Joan of Arc was burned alive for heresy in 1431 - a large cross outside the church marks the exact spot. The sweeping curves of the structure are meant to evoke the flames that consumed Joan of Arc

These beautiful stained glass windows came from the 16th century Church of Saint of Saint Vincent which was almost completely destroyed in 1944 during World War II, but fortunately the windows had been removed and stored in a safe location during the war. They were then incorporated into the Church of Saint Joan of Arc.

Chris & Caroline Symington