



2023 Loire Tour – Return Leg

A Journey through Haut Normandie

Sunday 10th September to Friday 15th September 2023

Introduction

The six-night tour of the Loire will finish on Sunday morning 10th September. For those wishing to enjoy a further five nights in Northern France on a return journey to the UK, a ‘return leg’ tour has been arranged via the Eure and Seine valleys in Haut Normandie.

The region was devastated by the Vikings in the 9th century, as they sailed up the River Seine to besiege Paris. But their descendants, the Dukes of Normandy, presided over the construction of castles and abbeys along the River Seine as well as conquering England in 1066 after the Battle of Hastings, the event recorded in the contemporary Bayeux Tapestry. For hundreds of years the histories of England and Normandy were intertwined through inheritance, marriage and war.

From the Middle Ages, Channel ports such as Harfleur and Honfleur flourished. In the second half of the 19th century, the River Seine became the haunt of the impressionist painters (Manet, Matisse, Monet, Pissarro and Renoir). On the coast, towns such as Deauville and Trouville became fashionable seaside resorts. Then, in the Second World War, the area witnessed the 1940 evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk and the successful D-Day Allied landings of 1944.

Normandy is known for its fine churches, cathedrals, manor houses and châteaux but it is also known for its food – lamb, chicken and duck, laced with creamy sauces, seafood (fresh fish, lobster, crab, shrimps, mussels and oysters), sensational cheeses (Camembert, Livarot and Pont-l'Évêque), cider and calvados. Wines from Burgundy, Bordeaux, the Loire and the Rhone, as well as other regions of France are also in plentiful supply.

Choice of hotels and number of participants

For the ‘return leg’ tour of Haut Normandie, hotels have been chosen with an emphasis on quality and character, good food, as well as interesting locations with, of course, adequate and secure parking. There will be a maximum of 21 cars/couples. A tour engineer will accompany us. In devising this return leg tour through Haut Normandie and choosing the hotels, the club is grateful to Dominique Bernaz, a club member who lives in Lisieux, a town in the Calvados Department of the Normandy region in north west France.

Itinerary

Sunday 10th September

Travel from our hotel in the Loire via Le Mans to Nogent-le-Rotrou (100 miles) In Le Mans, visit either or both of:



Le Mans Cathedral



Le Mans 24-hour Museum

On Sunday evening, stay at:

- Le Moulin de Villeray, near Condé-sur-Huisne, a 16th century converted mill in the 50 hectares of parkland of Domaine de Villeray (4-star: 24 rooms with spa, swimming pool and traditional gastronomic French restaurant)



Moulin de Villeray

Monday 11th September

Travel for 125 miles Condé-sur-Huisne (39 miles) through Sarthe and the attractive Vallée de L' Eure, with its 16th century Château d'Anet and, if time allows, visit the picturesque town of Vernon, with its castle, mill, church and museum. There is also an opportunity to take a slightly longer route to visit the UNESCO World Heritage 13th century Romanesque/Gothic cathedral at Chartres, noted for its sculptures and its 176 stained glass windows.



Chateau D'Anet



Chartres Cathedral

Stay two nights at one of two hotels in the Seine valley:

- Le Moulin de Connelles at Connelles, a manor house built around a 17th century water mill on the River Seine (4-star: a small, charming hotel with 12 rooms, river views, good parking and gourmet restaurant, recommended by Michelin).
- Le Moulin de Fourges, a recently converted old water mill on the River Epte, a tributary of the River Seine only 15 minutes from Giverny. (4-star: 9 rooms, a charming hotel with river views and excellent restaurant).



Le Moulin de Connelles



Le Moulin de Fourges

Tuesday 12th September

Opportunity for driving in the area and visiting a number of interesting and important sites:

- Claude Monet's house and stunning garden and the Musée des Impressionnistes at Giverny by the Seine (24 miles from Connelles and 8 miles from Fourges)
- Château Gaillard, a late 12th century barbican and stronghold, built by King Richard I (the Lionheart). The impressive ruins dominate Le Petit Andely (also worth a visit)
- Vernon, if you haven't seen it on the previous day
- Évreux, the capital of France's Eure region with its 12th century cathedral, containing stunning stained glass windows and carved wooden screens (20 miles from Connelles and 32 from Fourges)



La Maison de Claude Monet



Château Gaillard

Second night at either La Chaîne D'Or or Le Moulin de Connelles.

Wednesday 13th September

Travel from Connelles (75 miles) or Fourges (97 miles) to Sassetot-le-Mauconduit on the French coast. Taking the north bank of the River Seine:

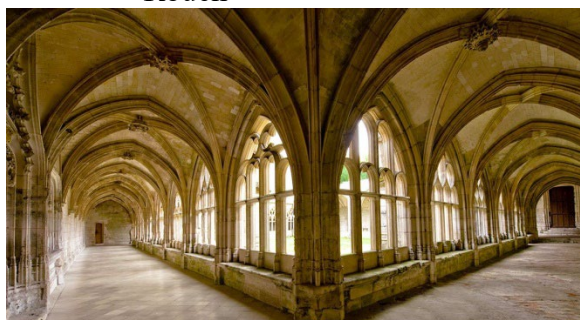
- Rouen, if you want to see this important ancient Norman city (including the 13th century Cathédrale Notre Dame and the over 700 restored half-timbered houses)
- The 10th century Abbaye de Jumièges, destroyed in the 19th century and considered to be 'the most beautiful ruin in France'
- The Abbaye Saint-Wandrille, founded in the 7th century and one of the first Benedictine abbeys in Normandy. Now part in ruins and part a working monastery
- The Abbaye de Valmont with its ancient church and links with the Royal Grimaldi family of Monaco



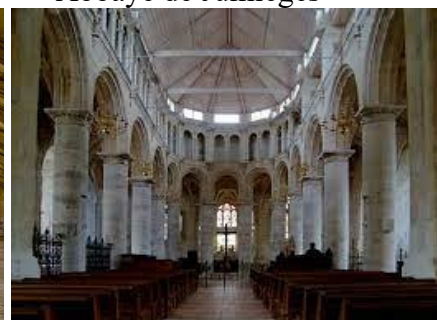
Rouen



Abbaye de Jumièges



Abbaye Saint-Wandrille



Abbaye de Valmont

Our hotel for the final two nights is the 18th century Château de Sissi, a former summer residence of Empress Elisabeth I (Sissi or Sisi) of Austria at Rue Elisabeth d' Autriche, 76540 Sassetot-le-Mauconduit (4-star: With 28 rooms and spa, the château has a Michelin recommended restaurant, Les 3 Rose). From our hotel, there is an opportunity to explore the French coastal region before catching a ferry back to the UK, if, indeed, this is your destination.



Château de Sissi



Palais Bénédictine

Thursday 14th September

For the final day, the following are recommended:

- The Palais Bénédictine, where the famous liqueur was invented and where you can visit the distillery, at Fécamp (10 miles west of our hotel)
- The 12th century Fécamp Abbey and its historical links with both Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror
- Étretat (25 miles west of our hotel) – Les Jardins (the avant-garde garden, inspired by Monet) and the white cliffs with natural rock arches
- The attractive and ancient seaport of Honfleur, a little gem although parking is difficult (40 miles west of our hotel). Alternatively, there may be an opportunity to visit Honfleur, subject to parking, on the following day, if you are taking the ferry from Le Havre in the late afternoon or overnight or staying in Northern France for a few extra days (see below).



The Distillery at Le Palais Bénédictine



Fécamp Abbaye



Porte d'Aval



Honfleur

Second night at Château de Sissi in Sassetot-le-Mauconduit.

Ferries to the UK

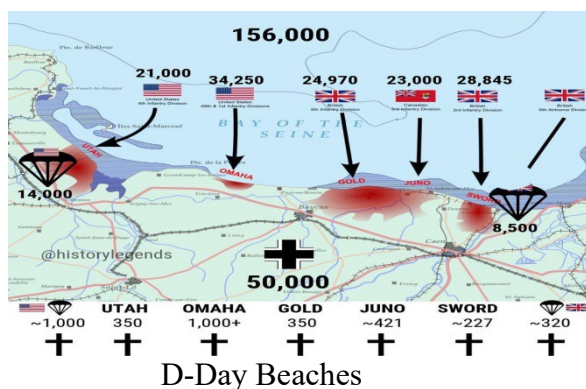
Close to our hotel, there are ferries to the UK, which can be booked individually by participants, from:

- Dieppe (30 miles to the east) to Newhaven in East Sussex (4-hour journey. Operated by DFDS. Typically: 12.30-15.30 or 18.00-21.00. Check-in 90 minutes before)
- Caen (85 miles to the west) to Portsmouth (5¾ hour journey. Operated by Brittany Ferries. Typically: 16.30-21.15 or overnight. Check-in 90 minutes before)

If you are catching a late afternoon or overnight ferry from Caen, then you will have time in the morning to visit Honfleur (40 miles from our hotel), subject to parking, and then on to Caen for the ferry (45 miles).

Stay longer?

Of course, you don't have to leave France now. The area south of Le Havre is very interesting, either west along the coast to Deauville or Trouville to capture the glamour and grandeur of a 19th century fashionable seaside resort or south to Lisieux and the Haut Vallée de la Tourques, where you can find where Livarot and Pont-l'Évêque are made, as well as seeing more attractive and very different châteaux and manoirs. Alternatively, if you haven't seen the D-Day Beaches or the Bayeux Tapestry, or if you want to see them again, they are close by – 75 miles to the west of Le Havre. And, of course, there is the spectacular Mont St Michel further to the west, if you are considering returning to the UK via Saint-Malo.



Mont Saint-Michel

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Please e-mail johnstuttard@btinternet.com and scan/send this form to Sir John Stuttard, Layton House, 23 Layton Lane, Shaftesbury SP7 8EY, with copy to the club's Treasurer, Philip Hall: pah.rr@btinternet.com

I would like to join this tour of 5 nights through Haut Normandie starting on Sunday 10th September and finishing on Friday 15th September 2023. The price of the tour will be €2,650. The above price includes a reception each evening and wine with each dinner. The price is based on our current expectations of costs in September 2023 and may have to be adjusted if inflation is higher than assumed.

A deposit of €920 or £800 is required with an application. Note: details on this form must be completed in full to apply for a place.

Full names of driver and passengers:

Address:

E-mail address:

Number of mobile phone/(s) on tour.....

Dietary requirements, if any.....

Room at hotels: Double or Twin.....

Car: Model..... Chassis No..... Reg No..... Year.....

Body style/type.....Colour(s).....

As a participant in this event and in consideration of the right and privilege to enter and participate in this event and intending to be legally bound, I agree to release The 20-Ghost Club Limited and all committee members and its representatives from any and all liability and injuries, damage or loss or consequential loss arising from my entry and participation in the event. I also agree that information about the participating car, the names of the driver and passengers, including photographs taken during the event and tour, may be published in the Club's journal, *News & Record*, unless I inform the Editor by e-mail that I do not wish such information and/or photographs to appear. I confirm that I will have public liability insurance cover in place for France should I be accepted for this tour/event.

Signed..... Dated

For Sterling: Bank – Lloyds; Sort code: 30-96-35 Branch: CARFAX OXFORD BIC: LOYDGB21023 IBAN: GB69 LOYD 3096 3500 0668 03 Account name: The 20-Ghost Club Limited Account no: 00066803	For Euros: Bank - C Hoare & Co 37 Fleet Street, London EC4P 4D Account Name: The 20-Ghost Club Ltd Sort Code: 15-99-00 Account No: 27487380 IBAN: GB88 HOAB 1599 0027 4873 80 BIC: HOABGB2L
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