



Amicale-Singer-France Granville Rally 2006 by Trish & Mike Hyman



Selwyn joins the Line-up at Portsmouth

Selwyn, our 1956 Singer Hunter, had lived by the seaside in Swansea for the past 50 years, but I don't think he had ever taken to the water before. However, he showed no signs of apprehension as we motored towards Portsmouth for the Thursday night ferry to St Malo, en route to the Granville Rally organized by Patrick Lemierre, President of Amicale Singer France, who had invited Singers from the UK and Holland to attend their inaugural rally.

About a dozen Singers lined up on the dockside, and the crossing was uneventful. But when we arrived in St Malo it was raining and we were glad not to be in an open car.

Gifford Wright had organized a scenic route to get us to Granville, complete with maps and directions. The route took us first to Dinan, where we parked in the town centre square, courtesy of the Mayor, who unfortunately was in a meeting and unable to come and greet us. There was, however, time to have a coffee and stroll around the old town, with its beautiful timber buildings.



Old Quarter, Dinan

15.9.2006

On then through Combourg, Tremblay and St Brice to Fougères for lunch and a walk around the magnificent medieval

The castle was attacked and destroyed by King Henry II in 1166, but was rebuilt to the present high-walled stronghold. The castle was attacked again several times over the

the last being when Fougères took a severe bombardment on June 9, 1944 as the Allies fought to free it from four years of German occupation.



The Castle at Fougères

Onwards north past Villedieu-Les-Poêles, famous for its copper-bottomed saucepans, then east to the Etap Hotel, our base for the weekend, on the outskirts of Granville.



The rally proper started with a reception at Patrick's house, which used to be a farm. This was as well, with around thirty thirsty Singers arriving for coffee.

From there we drove down the coast road for a view of Mont St Michel, but all we could see was a grey outline in the mist. After lunch we visited a small museum depicting life in the Mont St Michel bay, including an exhibition of salt making,



Patrick's 'Farm'.



Mont St Michel (inset) from across the bay at the cabane Viewpoint

16.9.2006

and the 11th century Cistercian 'Abbey de la Lucerne' at Avranches. The abbey was sold off as 'property of the nation' during the French Revolution, and turned into a mill in the 19th century. The ruins have been partially restored.



Abbey de la Lucerne, Avranches



Making Salt

A coach took us to the Saturday evening dinner, where we were entertained by Patrick's daughter in law playing her piano-accordion. Chris Hayward did a magnificent job translating the speeches from French to English and vice-versa, and Gifford presented Patrick with a load of SOC Regalia, which went down very well.





Christian Dior Museum

The sun shone on Sunday for our visit to the Christian Dior museum in the Villa 'Les Rhumbs', set in beautiful gardens on a 200ft cliff top overlooking the sea.

This was where the future couturier lived as a child, and where he got his passion for gardens and developed his tastes for parties, costumes and old styles.

The exhibition we saw was on the theme 'Christain Dior and the World', with dresses designed to reflect tribal and national costumes from around the world.



Christian Dior's 'H' Line





For lunch we visited the 12th century Chateau d'Equilly, where the Singers were parked all round the front garden, and Patrick's superbly restored Le Mans was centre-piece for a group photo (See previous page).

A buffet lunch was served on two long tables in the gardens at the rear - delightfully different!



**100 Year-Old
Calvados Still**



Lunch at the Chateau

After a tour of a family owned cider farm, including a display of cider presses used by the family over the generations, we were offered a taste of the produce, from pure apple juice to cider and calvados - just right to whet our appetites for a champagne farewell at Patrick's place, and another chance to see his superbly restored 1936 Le Mans.



*Patrick with his
superb 1936 Le Mans*

16. 9. 2006



Our ferry home was from Caen on Monday night, and Gifford had again organised a scenic route, taking us along the Normandy beaches, with visits to the museums at Arromanches and Pegasus Bridge, and the beautifully maintained but sombre war graves cemetery at Ranville, which will never be forgotten.

Mike & 'Trish.



Above - Some of the remains of the Mulberry Harbour on the beach at Arromanches. In the foreground are pontoons from the floating pier, and in the distance, sections of the harbour wall.

Above: A Horsa Glider as used for the invasion, and for capture of the Pegasus Bridge.

Below: The original Pegasus Bridge, from over the Caen Canal near Ranville.

