



CICERONI
T R A V E L

MEDIEVAL MIGHT TO MONET VISITING NORMANDY

SATURDAY 21 – FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2021 (7 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£2275

- **Wonderful opportunity to explore Medieval Normandy**
- **See the historic abbeys of William the Conqueror & Matilda at Caen**
- **Discover the remarkable Bayeux ‘Tapestry’**
- **Explore the world of the Impressionists & visit Monet’s Garden at Giverny**
- **Gardens & Châteaux including inspiring Jardin Plume & Balleroy**
- **Comfortable 5* hotel in central Rouen**



‘Messengers signal appearance of a comet’, Bayeux Tapestry

OVERVIEW

The verdant landscapes of Normandy are an oasis of peace and tranquillity. However, this masks a history full of incident; from the emergence of one of the great feudal dynasties, the Dukes of Normandy, to the momentous events of World War II. In between these ‘book-ends’, its rural semi-obscurity attracted some of the finest painters of nineteenth century France, the precursors to and creators of Impressionism, above all Claude Monet.

“1066 & All That...” is one of those references which evokes mixed memories, but there is no denying the importance of the date itself. Duke William’s life is full of incident, not least his invasion and conquest of England. Today we see this reflected in the shared style of Romanesque architecture which we know as ‘Norman’ - most obviously in the two mighty abbeys commissioned by William and his wife, Matilda, at Caen. The conquest itself is immortalised in the great Bayeux Tapestry, magnificently displayed, while the town’s cathedral is a fine example of the new, Gothic, style; carried to new levels of flamboyance in the cathedral at Rouen.

By the end of the sixteenth century, walled towns and thick walled châteaux gave way to sophisticated styles based on new ideas coming in from Italy. One of the delights of Normandy is the way in which these renaissance, baroque and later idioms fused with local materials and customs. The idyllic Château de Balleroy is a good local example with its echoes of Versailles. The River Seine meanders its sleepy way through Normandy, doubtless one of the attractions which brought several generations of painters to re-imagine nature in its fields, woods and on its coast. From Corot and the Barbizon School to the new approach to capturing how we perceive colour in light - what we now call “impressionism”, it was an unprecedented chapter in the history of art. Given that Claude Monet is the dominant force behind this movement we shall spend time exploring his house and garden at Giverny, together with other sites associated with the painter and his contemporaries.

The modern art of gardening will also feature in our daily itineraries. The renowned partnership of Gertrude Jekyll and Edwin Lutyens can be found at Bois de Moutiers, until recently the home of the Mallet family. Though the house is currently closed for restoration, Miss Jekyll’s garden is still there for us to enjoy. Just along the coast is a more recent horticultural icon, La Vasterival, where over fifty years Princess Greta Sturdza transformed and gardened wild thickets into a magical garden of ambition and intent. Back near Rouen and on a contemporary note, living colour weaves its way through the glorious gardens of the Jardin Plume, described by Robin Lane-Fox in the *FT* one of the most exciting gardens to be created in France in recent years.

Participants will meet at and depart from Ashford International Station in Kent, where we join our coach which will be with us throughout the tour. We travel to France via the Channel Tunnel and continue to Rouen for our six-night stay at the 5* Hôtel de Bourgtheroulde. The excellent facilities include a fine dining restaurant, indoor swimming pool and spa. This converted sixteenth century palace could not be better placed as the River Seine, Old Market Square, restaurants, cafes and shops are all minutes away.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Saturday 21 August – We meet at **Ashford International Station** in Kent, where we join our coach which will be with us throughout the tour. We travel to France via the Channel Tunnel and continue to **Rouen** for our six-night stay at the **5* Hôtel de Bourgheroulde**, ideally set in the historic centre. Dinner will be nearby in one of the oldest restaurants in France – wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Sunday 22 August – Today will be spent in and around the famous Norman city of **Caen**. On our way we pause to visit the gardens at the **Château de Canon**. The fine eighteenth century ensemble is framed by an enchanting garden uniting Italian formality, French ornament and English planting. After our group lunch we visit two remarkable ‘Norman’ churches in **Caen**. The **Abbaye Sainte-Trinité** known as the **Abbaye aux Dames** and the **Abbaye Saint-Étienne** known as the **Abbaye aux Hommes**, were founded by William the Conqueror and his wife, Matilda of Flanders in the 1060s. Following our visits, we return to Rouen where the evening will be free.

Day 3: Monday 23 August – This morning we explore **Rouen** on foot. We begin by walking through the old town admiring wonderful medieval buildings, including visits to the wonderful Gothic **Église de Saint-Maclou** and the even more impressive **Cathedral**, a font of inspiration to Monet. We continue to the **Musée des Beaux-Arts** with its impressive collection of French art from the Renaissance to the Romantic and Impressionist periods. Lunch (not included) and the remainder of the afternoon and evening will be free to explore Rouen at leisure.

Day 4: Tuesday 24 August – We drive south, following the line of the Seine to **Giverny**. We begin at **Monet’s House**, his home for forty years, exploring both the house and his collection of Japanese prints. We continue into the surrounding gardens, where the nasturtiums should have clothed the path running through the Grande Allée towards the Water Garden - where the water lilies will be in bloom. We continue to the **Musée des Impressionismes**, the former American Impressionist Museum; set in contemporary borders inspired by movement, and especially by the work of Monet. After some free time for lunch (not included) and to explore this very pretty village, we return to Rouen, stopping for a visit to the important **Jardin Plume** where contemporary plantsmanship is displayed to the highest standards – truly inspiring. The evening will be free.

Day 5: Wednesday 25 August – West across Normandy to the remarkable town of **Bayeux**, where we visit the town’s early Gothic **Cathedral**. We continue to the **Bayeux Museum** to view the extraordinary ‘**Tapestry**’ – an embroidered cloth documenting the events of 1066. Following a group lunch in the town, we visit the nearby gardens at **Château de Balleroy**. Built in the seventeenth century in the style of François Mansart, the gardens were designed by André le Nôtre who transformed Versailles. More recently the château was the home of American entrepreneur and publisher, Malcolm Forbes. We return to Rouen where the evening will be free.

Day 6: Thursday 26 August – **Dieppe** lies to the north on the coast and here at nearby **Varengeville-sur-Mer** we begin with a garden visit to the renowned **Bois des Moutiers**. Though the house designed by Edwin Lutyens cannot be visited at present due to restoration, the charming surrounding gardens designed by Gertrude Jekyll are available. We continue to the nearby **Jardin Le Vasterival**, where for over fifty years, Princess Greta Sturdza transformed and gardened tricky, wild coastal thickets into a magical garden of ambition and intent. Following a light group lunch, we return to Rouen where the remainder of the afternoon will be free. Our final dinner takes place in one of Rouen’s best restaurants.

Day 7: Friday 27 August – We leave Rouen stopping for a snack (not included) late morning, and return to the UK via Calais. Following our crossing we end our formal journey at Ashford International Station mid-afternoon.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2275 **Single Supplement** £425 (Double/Twin Room for Sole Use) **Deposit** £325

Hotel 6 nights with breakfast at the 5* Hotel Bourgheroulde in Rouen

Hotel Upgrade £180 per room for Privilege Room

Coach We meet at Ashford International Station, Newtown Road, Ashford, Kent, TN24 OPS, which can be easily reached by train or by car. There are two car-parks with rates between £5-10 per day. Further details can be found at <https://ashfordintl.co.uk>

Price includes 2 dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, UK coach for the full tour, Channel Tunnel crossing, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan as lecturer & James Hill as tour manager

Not included Travel to/from coach meeting point, 4 dinners & 4 lunches



CICERONI TRAVEL
2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL
Telephone +44 (0) 1869 811167 Fax +44 (0) 1869 811188
Email info@ciceroni.co.uk Website www.ciceroni.co.uk

