

JOSSSELIN JOURNAL

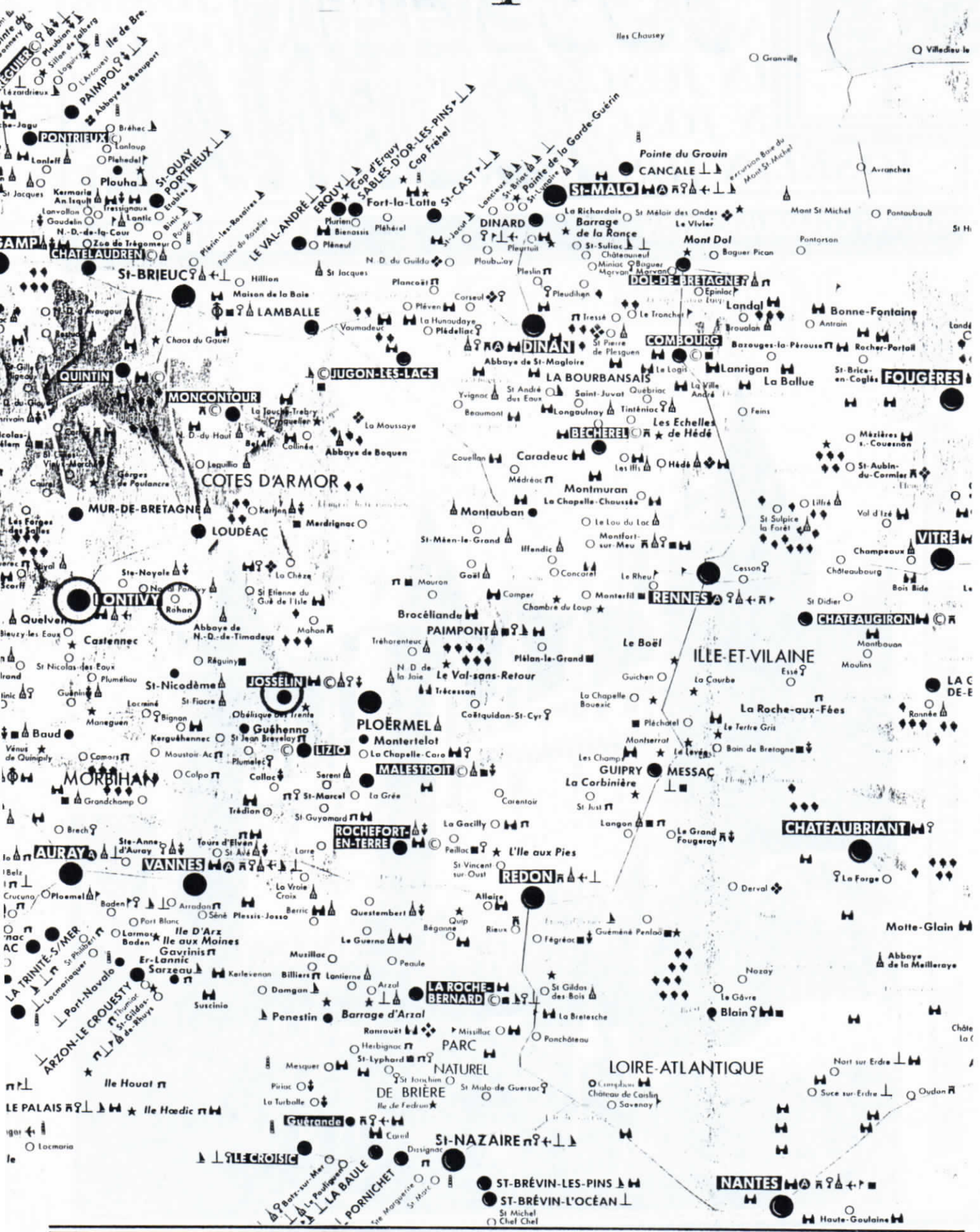
INTERIM COMMUNICATION

ISSUE NO: 13

JOSSSELIN CASTLE

REPORT OF OUR SOCIETY VISIT TO JOSSELIN 1997







REPORT OF OUR SOCIETY VISIT TO JOSSELIN 1997

Members And Friends Who Attended

Bill Joscelyne (02), David, Jane & Sarah Joscelyne (04), Dave & Ann Thompson (13), Hugh & Celia Joscelyne (44), Violet Joslin (58), Oliver & Rosemary Gosnell (63), Chris & Margaret Joscelyne (89), Garth & Susan Joscelyne.

You will have read about our previous visit in September 1994 to the town and Chateau Josselin in Brittany, which was recorded in a special bulletin following our return. On that visit we had 12 members who were able to attempt the pilgrimage, and I was grateful to accept a lift with Dave, and Ann Thompson our Secretary (although their car tried to Veto the arrangement on the return journey home).

In the previous report I tried to write a brief history of the Chateau and the Duke's de Rohan who own it. I got rather enthusiastic and the history covered more pages than expected, but nevertheless was well worth while, so I will not repeat it in this issue.

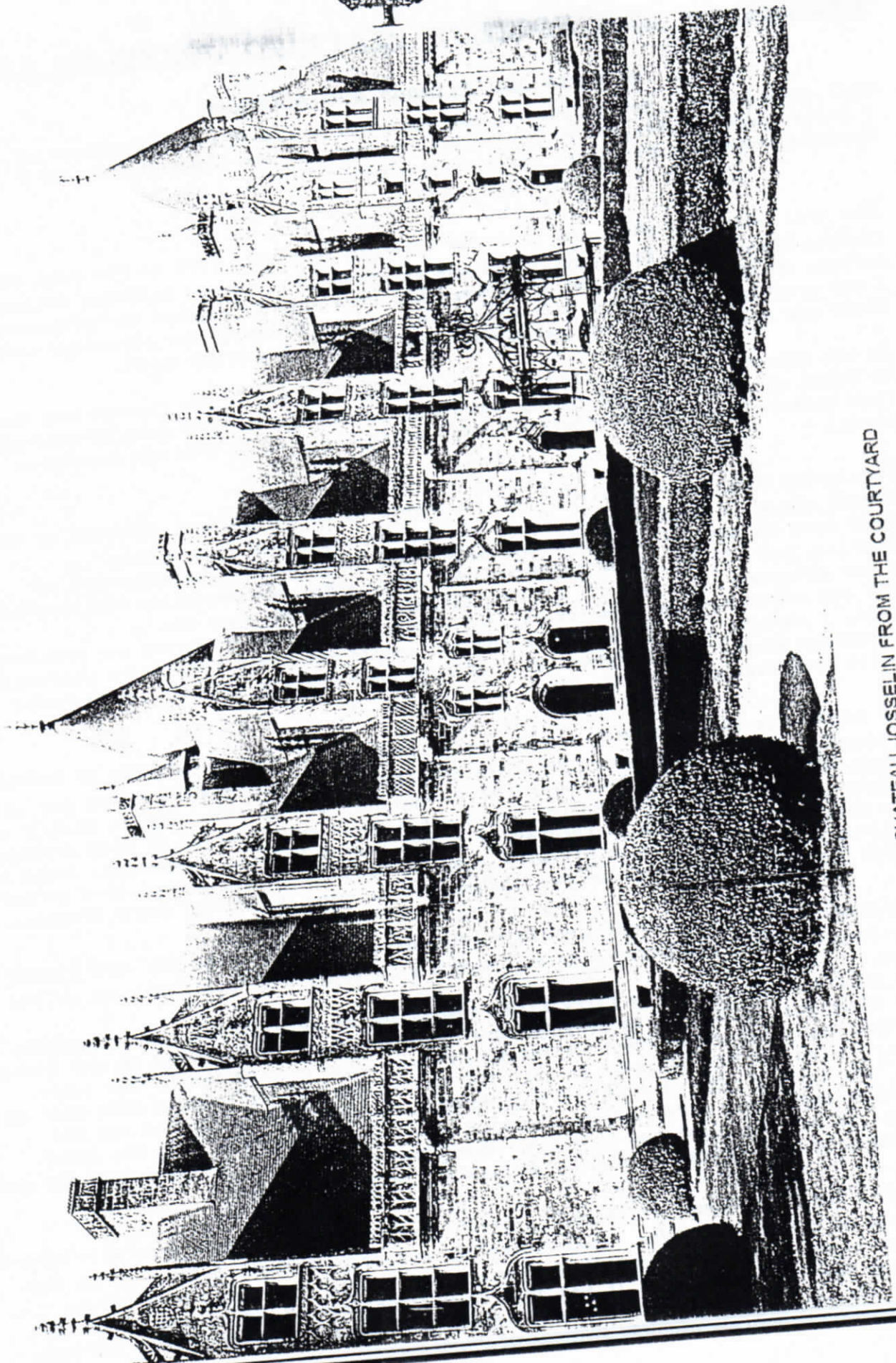
The latest visit was again arranged to enable us to enjoy their FESTIVAL OF THE PARDON, which is repeated every year on the 8th September in Josselin. There were 15 members this year who made their own transport arrangements to Josselin, but all met up at the Hotel de France where accommodation had been booked by our Secretary Ann, not all arrived or departed on the same day. As I had enjoyed being a passenger, and unreliable navigator during our previous visit, I thought it only fair Dave and Ann should get their revenge by showing me how navigation should be conducted. So I offered them passage, together with Violet Joslin from Barnstaple in my car.

The plans were made for Dave and Ann to collect Violet from an address in Twickenham on their way to my house where we would transfer to my car, leaving their car in my garage. We were to depart Portsmouth at 8-30pm Sat; 6th on the ferry to St.Malo with a night crossing time of 12 hours. There was a small modification to this arrangement when David Joscelyne, who is recovering from a recent hospital operation, found he could make the journey, with his wife Jane and daughter Sarah, and offered to collect Violet local to their house in Twickenham, and all meet up at the ferry terminal.

Following lunch at our local Inn, Dave, Ann and myself left Ockendon with plenty of time for hold-ups, and arrived at Portsmouth at 6-00pm, and near the front of the queue.

Snag No 1 occurred when the ferry kiosk opened and we were issued with a Boarding Pass which was quickly taken away because we were one passenger short on our booking, and they would not accept that Violet would be joining us from Davids car later. Having pulled out of the queue to wait for David, Ann and her husband Dave went to a cafe, and shortly after the second car arrived, Violet was transferred and all Boarding Passes were obtained. By the time Dave and Ann returned from the cafe, Davids car was the first one they saw, which was minus Violet. I had joined the queue further back with Violet on board. WE HAD NOT LEFT ENGLAND YET!!.

Boarding the ferry went off without a hitch. David, Jane and Sarah were able to book a couple of cabins, and Dave, Ann, Violet and myself parked our belongings on the 'Salon' lounge chairs we had booked, and all met up for an evening meal before settling down for the night. It was just as well we located our chairs while the lounge was illuminated, because when we returned from eating, the lights had been



CHATEAU JOSSELIN FROM THE COURTYARD



dimmed and the floor was like a mine field, with bodies rolled in sleeping bags between rows of seats and in the gangways.

The first 3-4 hours were reasonably comfortable on the reclining chairs (I think they were a job lot from the dentists). But the situation changed as the hours passed, until I was glad to rise at 5-30am, wash and take a breather on deck. We had our breakfasts and it was agreed that David would follow us along the roads to Josselin, it looked like he would be first off the ship and would wait for us at the first convenient place to pull in.

Snag No2. We were first to disembark and although we stopped outside the port until the last of the cars passed us, we missed them as we were unaware they were waiting for us further back. I had prepared a one line map with written instructions, but on leaving the port, road numbers were not clearly displayed in St;Malo, and we returned twice to the roundabout outside the port gates before we decided a sign interpreted ALL ROUTES was worth a try. At last we were out of St;Malo and actually on the road we had planned.

It was early Sunday morning and very little traffic, we became very relaxed and conversation had changed from "keep to the right around the roundabout-take the next exit, NOT THIS ONE,-I wonder what number road this is, it said N176-E401, and we were enjoying the scenery, until we all came to the conclusion together that for some reason the road number had changed, and we were no longer on a road number we recognised, in fact someone had shifted the sun so that we were travelling in a SW direction instead of South. We shortly spotted a sign that directed us to Josselin and approached the town from the West. We arrived at about 1-00pm, having made a detour (purposely of course) and made a journey of 69 miles from St;Malo to Josselin into 90 miles.

After booking into our rooms at the Hotel de France, we met the other members of our party for something to eat and a welcome jar at the cafe bar in front of the hotel, where Ann offered to arrange for us a tour of the Chateau with an English speaking guide at 2-30pm that afternoon (Sunday), and an evening meal in the Hotel de Chateau for 8-00pm. We were able to get a message to Monsieur le Duke de Rohan, inviting him to join us for dinner. Our tour of the Chateau was made very interesting by our young lady guide who told us in good English about the history of the chateau and the Duke's de Rohan who have owned it since the year 1400, and who name their eldest son of each generation alternatively Allain or Josselin de Rohan. Photographs were taken in the courtyard by an obliging unknown visitor, who very patiently photographed us with about six assorted cameras. We then separated, with those who had travelled to Josselin that day having a couple of hours relaxation before the evening meal.

The Hotel de Chateau is across the bridge over the River Oust, and on the river frontage immediately opposite the chateau, and is a fairy-land setting when the flood lights are switched on after dark, reflecting the chateau on the river. Shortly after seating ourselves in the large restaurant at a long table reserved for our party of fifteen, I received a telephone call from Monsieur le Duke who apologised in perfect English for not being able to join us for the evening meal, due to a prior commitment involving the festivities on the following day. He repeated his wish to meet us and suggested joining us for breakfast at 9-30am in our hotel the following morning.

The food and wine at the Hotel de Chateau had a good selection for all tastes and was enjoyed by all. The other diners gradually departed, and we realised that the catering staff were getting restless, so we paid our bill (reasonably priced) and departed shortly after midnight.

It was a nice night, so I sat at a table in front of our hotel with a glass of wine, listening to the service from the Basilica Church just in front of me. If we had not



CHATEAU JOSSELIN FROM THE CHURCH BELLTOWER



been 'feeding our faces' earlier, we would have enjoyed the candle light procession around the town. I think I would have sat there longer, but the bar staff were stacking tables, and I took the hint and went up to bed. It had been an enjoyable day, and it was now Monday.

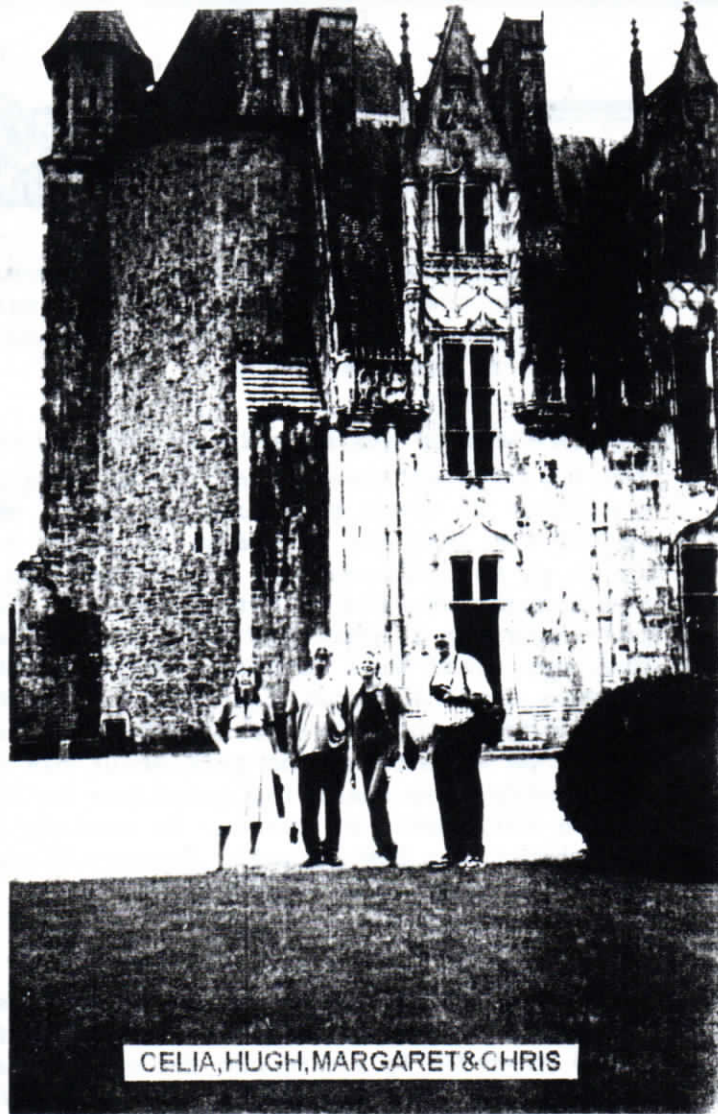
We were all up quite early in expectation of our meeting with the Duke de Rohan. Ann and myself positioned ourselves at a table in front of the hotel, feeling quite confident we would recognise the duke, who is also the Mayor of Josselin, and would escort him into our assembly. At about 9-35 a man passed us, who did not present the image we had of a duke or mayor, but who seemed to be late for an appointment. With one thought we said "I bet that's him" and hurried after him, to learn at reception that Monsieur le Duke had entered the breakfast room. (readers of my report of our previous visit will realise I seem to make a habit of being at the wrong place to witness something that takes place elsewhere). When we entered, our group were seated listening to the duke who was standing, and there he stood for an hour and a half giving us an interesting talk about his castles (he has more than Chateau Josselin), his family, and answering questions on French politics from his position as a Senator in the Parliament of France. In no time it seemed, he had to leave us, and expressed his thanks for the Josselin Society Tie and copies of two passed Josselin Journals we presented to him.

The religious procession commemorating 'The Pardon' occurs every year on the 8th September, commencing at 11-00am from the Basilica Church, and involves a lengthily procession, made up of groups of people from towns and villages in the area, each group preceded by their own decorative banner and all followed by the statue of 'OUR LADY OF THE THORN BUSH' carried on the shoulders of four bearers. The Mayor and his company follow behind, but do not distract the attention of the spectators from the statue. The statue is escorted to a church at the top of the town where an open air service is conducted from a balcony to the people below throughout the day, returning to the Basilica soon after 5-00pm. The weather had again been fine and sunny. Four of our party left, Hugh and Celia departed for home, Chris and Margaret for a stay elsewhere in France, leaving eleven of us for dinner that evening in the restaurant of our hotel. We still had members with us who could interpret the French menu which was set out in four set menus covering a wide choice of dishes. But we needn't have worried, as the proprietress, who spoke English took our orders personally. The meal was enjoyable complimented by the wine and I observed other diners interrupting their own meals to listen in on our conversations. Again, the time to break up the evening (and the hotel fittings) came round too soon, and we retired to our rooms. One of our party of lofty stature climbing the first flight of stairs, did not notice a twin branch wall light fitting, and it was persuaded to leave the wall after being hit by his head. His attempts to re-establish said wall light on its fixing, caused him some embarrassment, but it appeared to be replaced perfectly when we came down the following morning.

Tuesday, we separated into groups. I was part of a two car party with Dave and Ann, David, Jane and Sarah, and Violet who made the short journey of 35km to visit the 15th century Castle de Rohan at Pontivy. Again we were separated from David, who had stopped for petrol on leaving Josselin, but met us at Pontivy for our tour around the castle. This castle is not occupied as a residence, but rented to the council for a museum and art centre. The appearance from the outside is very formidable, but has a large open courtyard in the centre. Part of the castle is being reconstructed. Pontivy also has a festival, called the PARDON NOTRE DAME DE JOIE which is held every year on 12th September. After a mid-day meal in a local cafe, we headed back to our hotel to pack our cases for the early start home the following morning, as we would have little time after our evening meal.



PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS TAKEN BY UNKNOWN VISITOR



CELIA, HUGH, MARGARET & CHRIS



OUR EVENING MEAL IN THE HOTEL DE CHATEAU



THE DUKE DE ROHAN STANDING, & HUGH SEATED



THE STATUE APPROACHES



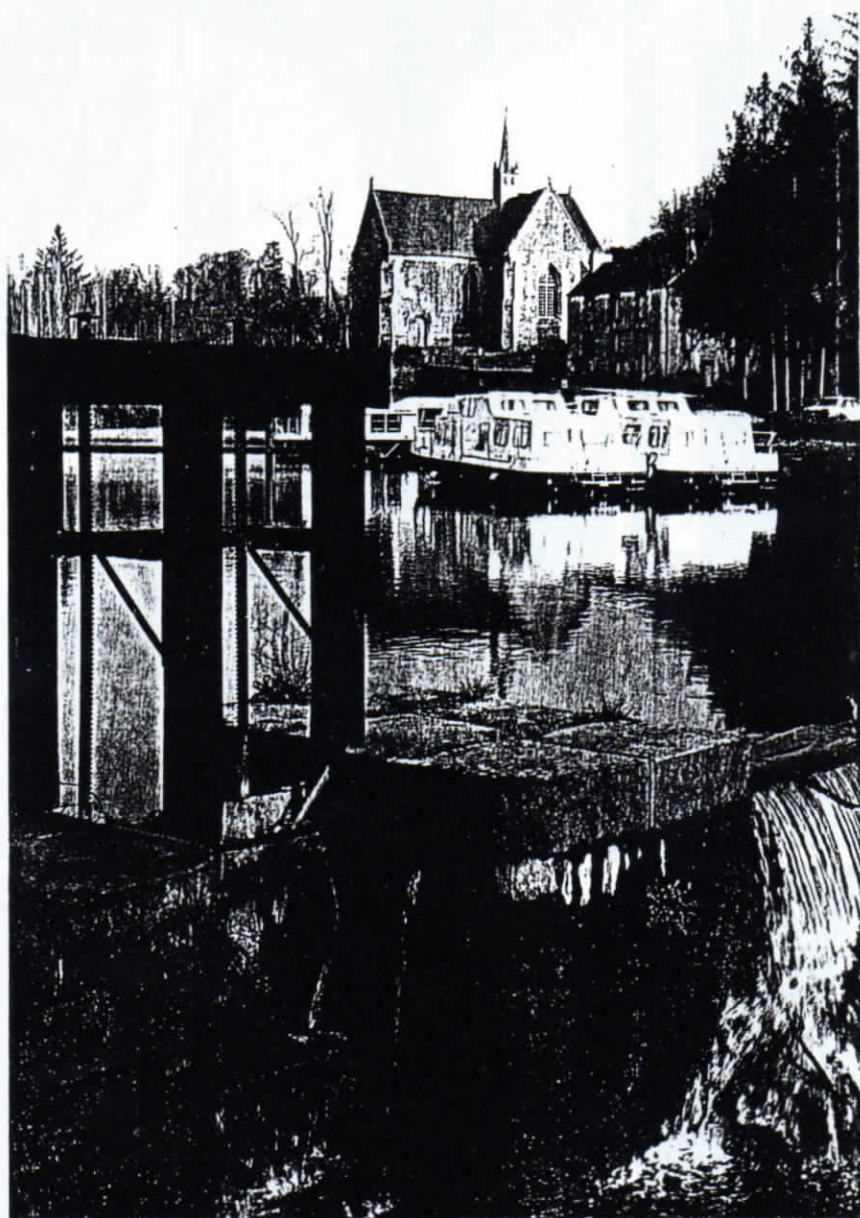
THE STATUE LEAVING THE SQUARE



THE SERVICE CONDUCTED FROM THE BALCONY



HOTEL DE CHATEAU FAR SIDE OF RIVER & RIGHT OF TOWER
SLIDING WINDOWS IN RESTAURANT CAN BE SEEN



ROHAN

12 m. NW of Josselin.

The little town of Rohan would probably pass unnoticed if it did not bear the name of one of the most famous families in Brittany and France. Why, in 1104, did Viscount Alain of Porhoët decide to leave his home in Castennec (to the south of Pontivy) and take up residence in Rohan? Probably because of the setting, and the proximity of the game-filled Lanouée Forest. He had a castle built here, then had monks brought from Josselin to evangelise the area. They settled in a place which, nine centuries later, still serves as a reminder of their stay, Bourg-ès-Moines (literally "Monks' Village") on a hillside in Crédin. For some five hundred years, the town featured constantly in historical events because of the lords who lived here.

It seems appropriate to meditate on the rise and fall of towns as one strolls along the banks of the **Oust Canal** which was dug by convicts in 1831. Near the Rohan Bridge is the **Chapel of Our Lady of the Fortunate Encounter** (Notre-Dame de Bonne-Encontre, 1510). It has a rare stone-vaulted roof.

Rohan and the Oust Canal.



The evening meal was again enjoyed in our hotel restaurant, but we didn't stay so late, and after paying our hotel bills, those who were leaving early retired to their rooms.

Our small group who visited Pontivy yesterday, were due to leave the hotel by 6-45am in order to catch the 10-45 ferry from St;Malo to Portsmouth. We were down before the hotel staff who had offered to provide us with a 'Continental Breakfast' before we left. We were soon on the road, and the journey to St;Malo being well sign posted, was uneventful, arriving at the ferry terminus in one and a half hours, and near the front of the queue. It was a lovely morning, so we didn't mind waiting to board. We had a good crossing, David, Jane and Sarah obtained cabins for the eight hour crossing, where they relaxed for a few hours, and all met in the lounge at the rear of the ship.

It wasn't long before we were docking, and with fond farewells, Violet went with David on the journey back to Twickenham, and Dave, Ann and myself had an easy run back to my place, arriving South Ockendon at 8-30pm. They had arranged to stay the night with friends at Basingstoke, so after a coffee they took their leave.

Looking back it had been a great holiday for me, with good company, many laughs, and my first experience of driving on the wrong side of the road was not as horrific as I expected.

Thank you to all who attended our gathering, with a special thanks to Ann our Secretary, who I know had a few anxious moments while making our arrangements. You did a splendid job.

The suggestion was raised while we were away, had we considered coach transport for the whole party?. Prior to our visit in 1994, estimates were obtained which ranged from £89 to £95 for a minimum of 30 passengers spending 3 nights in Josselin. Cabins on the ferry and hotel accommodation were extra. There was some opposition from committee members who felt complications would arise due to variable times of departure, and widespread pick up points for members.

Thought for the day- Considering the ease at which we returned to St;Malo from Josselin, I think its a shame we cannot do the return journey first, or at least read the road signs after we pass them in the reverse direction. (He's flipped his lid this time!!)

Chairman Bill(02)





An Article From The Daily
Telegraph 24 May 1994

Princess Charles de Rohan

THE ROHAN'S CASTLE



PRINCESS CHARLES DE ROHAN, who has died aged 90, was put under house arrest at Choustnik, Czechoslovakia, early in the Second World War, after her butler reported the family for listening to the BBC.

Her sons were interned, and her husband spent the rest of the war in concentration camps, narrowly escaping the gas chamber.

By the time the Russians

liberated his camp at Stettin, Prince Charles's weight had dropped from 18 stone to eight. He made his way back to Choustnik in rags. Two years later, when the Communists had seized the family's pencil factories, the Prince and Princess left with their sons for Chard, Somerset, the site of their only remaining factory.

She was born Maria Anna von Hardtmuth in Vienna in 1903, heiress to the Hardtmuth pencil fortune, and brought up near one of the factories at Budweis.

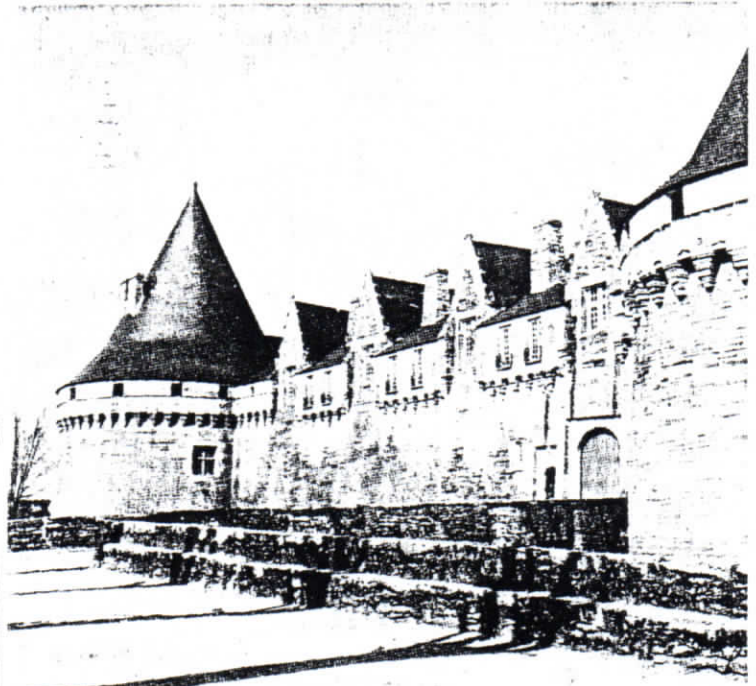
In 1923 she married Prince Charles de Rohan, of the Austrian branch of the de Rohan family, which can be traced to Brittany in 1026; its motto is *Roy ne puis, prince ne daigne, Rohan je suis* ("I cannot be king, I disdain to be prince, I am Rohan").

The de Rohans boasted six cardinals and three Derby winners; after the Marie Antoinette diamond scandal, in which Cardinal Louis de Rohan was involved, the family fled to Bohemia.

After the death of her husband in 1965 the Princess retained her style, and in later years enjoyed recounting the intrigues of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to younger generations.



Princess Charles de Rohan



PONTIVY

