



CHEMINS DU LE BOURDET
and
FRONTENAY-ROHAN-ROHAN
May and September 2018

Footsteps in the **Village of Le Bourdet** where Francois Meloche my 6th great grandfather was born and presumed to have lived before, he left France.

Footsteps made on a **walk from Le Bourdet to Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan** to see the countryside that my ancestral Meloche family would have lived in.

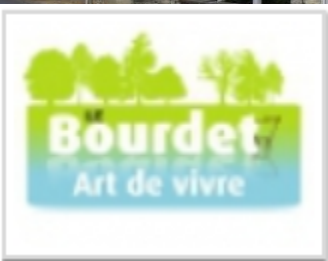
Footsteps made in the **town of Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan** where many Meloche family baptisms, weddings and burials took place at Eglise St Pierre during the 17th century.

MELOCHE, François		242866
Statut	Marié	
Date de baptême	11-10-1676	
Lieu d'origine	Fontenay-l'Abbatu (St-Pierre), auj. Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan (Deux-Sèvres) 79130	
Lieu actuel	Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan	
Parents	François MELOCHE et Thérèse Hernu	
Métier du père	Marchand, puis voiturier	
Date de mariage des parents	14-04-1663 cm	
Lieu de mariage des parents	Me Jacques Savin, La Rochelle (Charente-Maritime) (79130)	
Première mention au pays	1700	
Occupation à l'arrivée	Laboureur	
Date de mariage	25-10-1700	
Lieu du mariage	Montréal (Notre-Dame)	
Conjoint	Marie Mouflet	
Décès ou inhumation	Lachine, 12-09-1741	

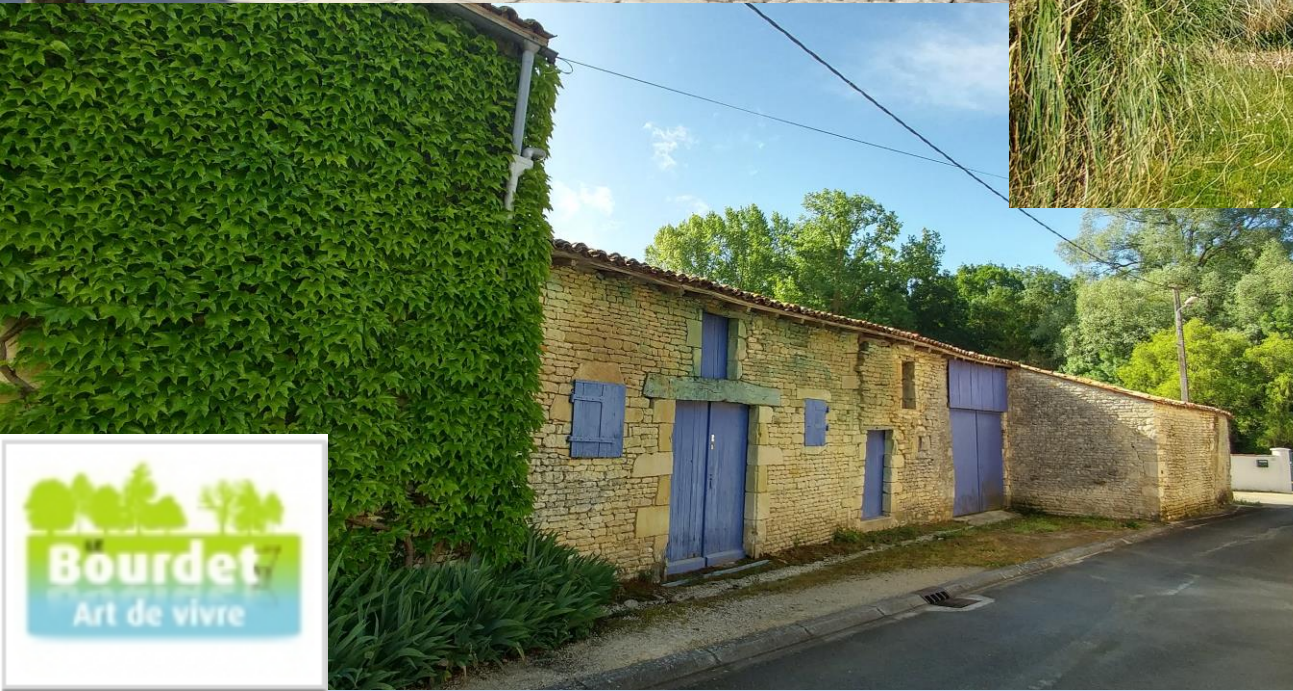
Remarques	<p>En 1700, sa mère est nommée Marie Bloquin. Trois soeurs et un frère sont nés à Fontenay-l'Abbatu : Françoise, m. LR (St-Sauveur), le 06-02-1690 avec Alexis Brouard/Bronard (f. Louis, sergent royal et Michelle Millet), laboureur né à Marennes (17219); Louis, né 1680, d. 12, s. 13-06-1687 LR (N-D), 7 ans; Renée, m. LR (St-Nicolas), le 16-11-1701 avec Antoine Yverneau (vf de Rachel Bizière); Marie, m. LR (St-Barthélémy), le 15-07-1704, avec Jacques Bonnoteau (Louis, tailleur d'habits et Jeanne Bertin), journalier né à Luçon. Son père François Méloche (fils de François), marchand à Le Bourdet (79046), puis voiturier à Fontenay-l'Abbatu, s.14-05-1696; veuf m-1 de Marie Péloquin, dont Marie, née 1657, 6 ans en 1663. Ses grands-parents maternels sont Massé Hernu, roulier rés. à LR, et Mathurine Mallet. Ses arrière-gp maternels sont Michel Hernu, marchand à Tourville..., Normandie, et Anne Hay; veuf m-2 avec Judith Borg.</p>
Identification*	DGFQ, p. 793 ; DGFC, vol. 1, p. 422
Chercheur(s)	Madeleine Meloche ; Archange Godbout ; Lise Dandonneau
Référence*	DGFQ-COMPL., p. 26 ; AG-LAR, p. 165
Copie d'acte	AD-79 numérisé
Dossier d'archives	numérisé
Date de modification	2019-11-26

LE BOURDET

Francois Meloche my 6th great grandfather was born here in 1676. There was no local church in the village, so he was baptized at Frontenay Rohan-Rohan. His father (also Francois Meloche), his grandfather Michel and his great grandfather Andre are all believed to have lived at Le Bourdet over more than 100 years (1575 to 1696).



Many of the houses in the village of Le Bourdet are trimmed in blue (which is my favorite color).



LE BOURDET TODAY

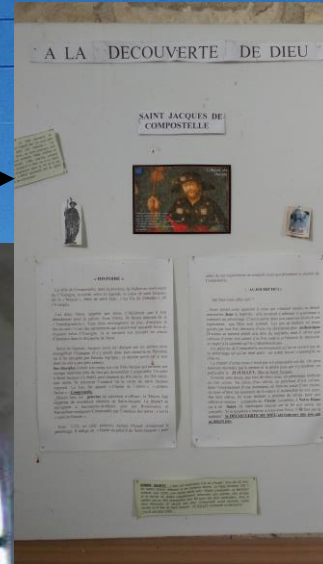
Former Mill site on right of chateau. The Bief du Bourdet (a man made canal) fed water to this mill. In the lower right hand corner there is picture with water in the canal in the spring.



Eglise St Jacques Circa 1789



Inside there was a poster board with information about the St Jacques pilgrimage (better the Camino de Santiago). It was the inspiration for my ancestral camino in France. I walked on the Vendee portion of the route in September 2018.



This is the Mairie (Town Hall) in Le Bourdet. The top view faces the street “Rue de la Courance” and the bottom view faces the street “Rue de l’Eglise”.

Lower left corner:
The entrance to the village approaching from the east.



LE BOURDET TODAY

LOCATION: Le Bourdet is 20 km from Niort, 50 km from La Rochelle, 8 km from Frontenay Rohan-Rohan.

POPULATION: 2013 Just over 500.

MAIN ACTIVITIES: Agriculture and Poultry farms.

PRESERVATION EFFORTS:

- GRAND TRAVAUX DU MARAIS POITEVIN: Restoration of square of Eglise St Jacques and the reach of the old mill.
- PEAT BOG PRESERVATION –After exploitation was terminated at the end of WWII
- CONSERVATION OF THE MARACHINE BREED of cows.
- MARACHINE TRAIL WALK to perpetuate and preserve the communal swamp.

I was able to **visit the MAIRIE (town hall)** on Monday Oct 1, 2018.

The mayor greeted me in the hallway, stamped my pilgrim credential and then we discussed a few items on my question list:

Q: Does he recognize any of the following last names as being present day locals?

A: Meloche, Pelloquin, Hernu, Brunet, Mouflet, Latour, Moncion, Mathieu, Pacquet

- Only Pelloquin and Brunet- Oldest tombstone found was Pelloquin 1859 to 1922

Q: Is there an actual camino route that includes Le Bourdet?

A: No, the routes are close by but do not actually go thru Le Bourdet.

Q: Does he think it may be possible that there was a water mill in Le Bourdet in the late 16th Century?

A: He preferred not to say a definite no, but indicated it is only a slight possibility.

Of course no records were kept at that time.

He provided me with a write up about the church (but it was built after my ancestors migrated).

I asked him about the Marachine trail walk and he warned me that it had been catastrophically decimated by the drought this past summer.

I did visit the trail and it was very sad to see the drought impact.



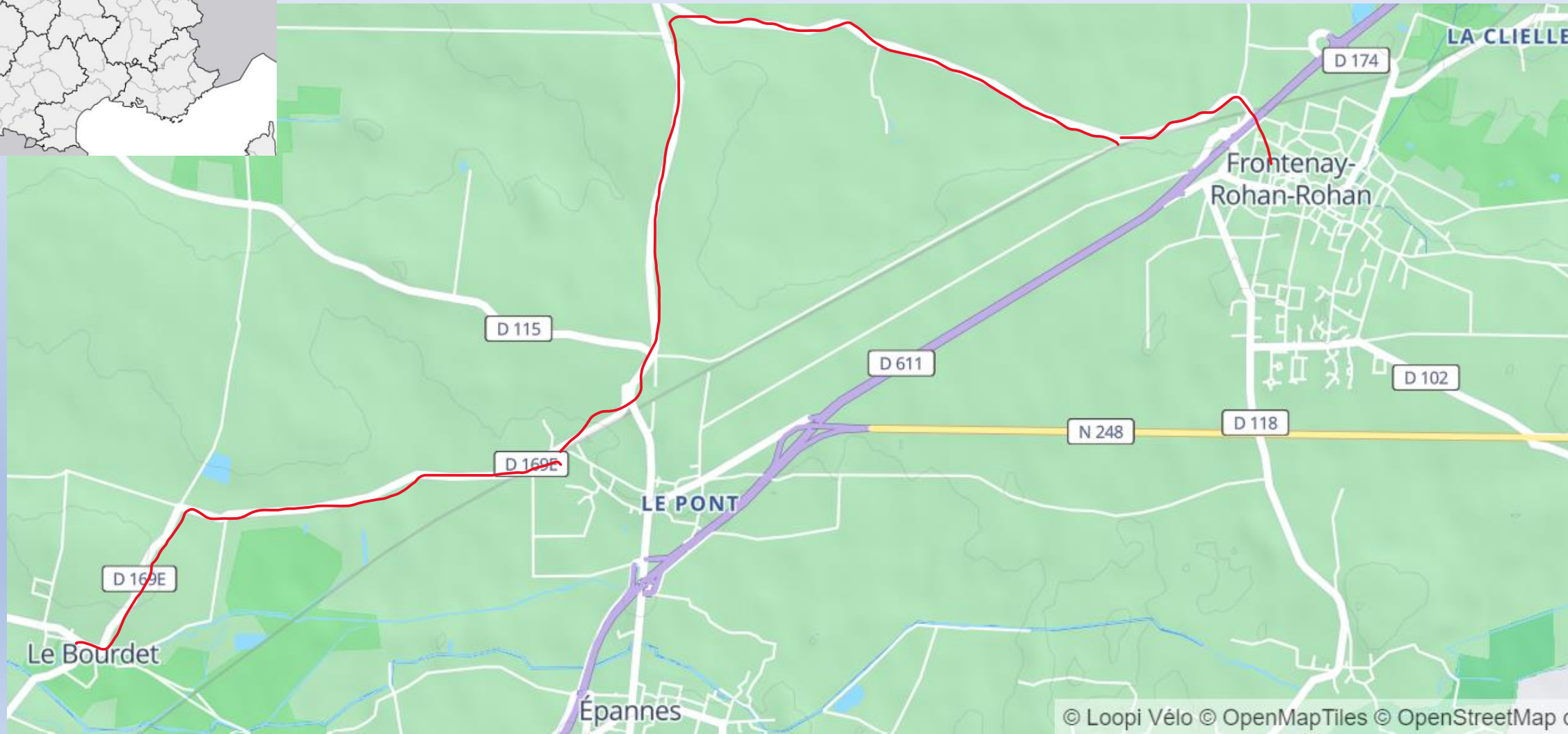
Mayor Jean-Luc Clisson



I walked a bike route between the village of Le Bourdet and the town of Frontenay Rohan-Rohan



Sept 29, 2018. The location of the bike route I walked from Le Bourdet to Frontenay Rohan-Rohan and back (Total distance 16km). This is the countryside where Francois Meloche, his parents, grandparents and great grandparents lived during the 17th century.



BIG SKY BETWEEN LE BOURDET and FRONTENAY ROHAN-ROHAN





FLAT FARMLAND FOR MILES AND MILES





This is where the windmill wings would have been attached

Old Windmill located at La Gorre about 1/3 way between Le Bourdet & Frontenay Rohan-Rohan



The passenger train between Niort and La Rochelle is on the horizon



ENTERING THE TOWN –
VERY WARM SUNNY DAY

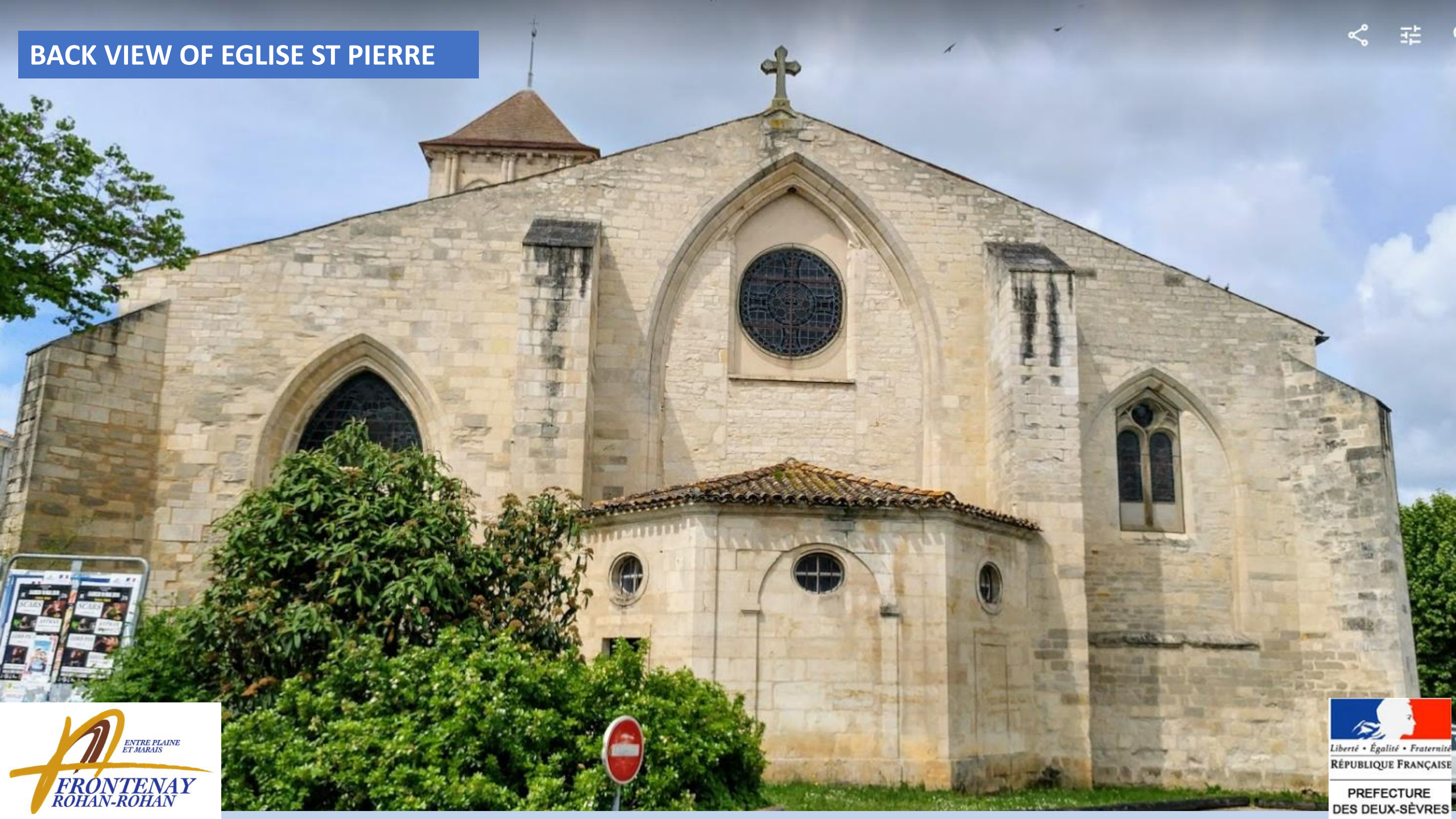
Walking into Frontenay Rohan-Rohan
–The Church steeple is just visible



EGLISE ST PIERRE
Frontenay Rohan-Rohan

FRANCOIS MELOCHE (my 6th ggf)
was baptized here in 1676.

BACK VIEW OF EGLISE ST PIERRE



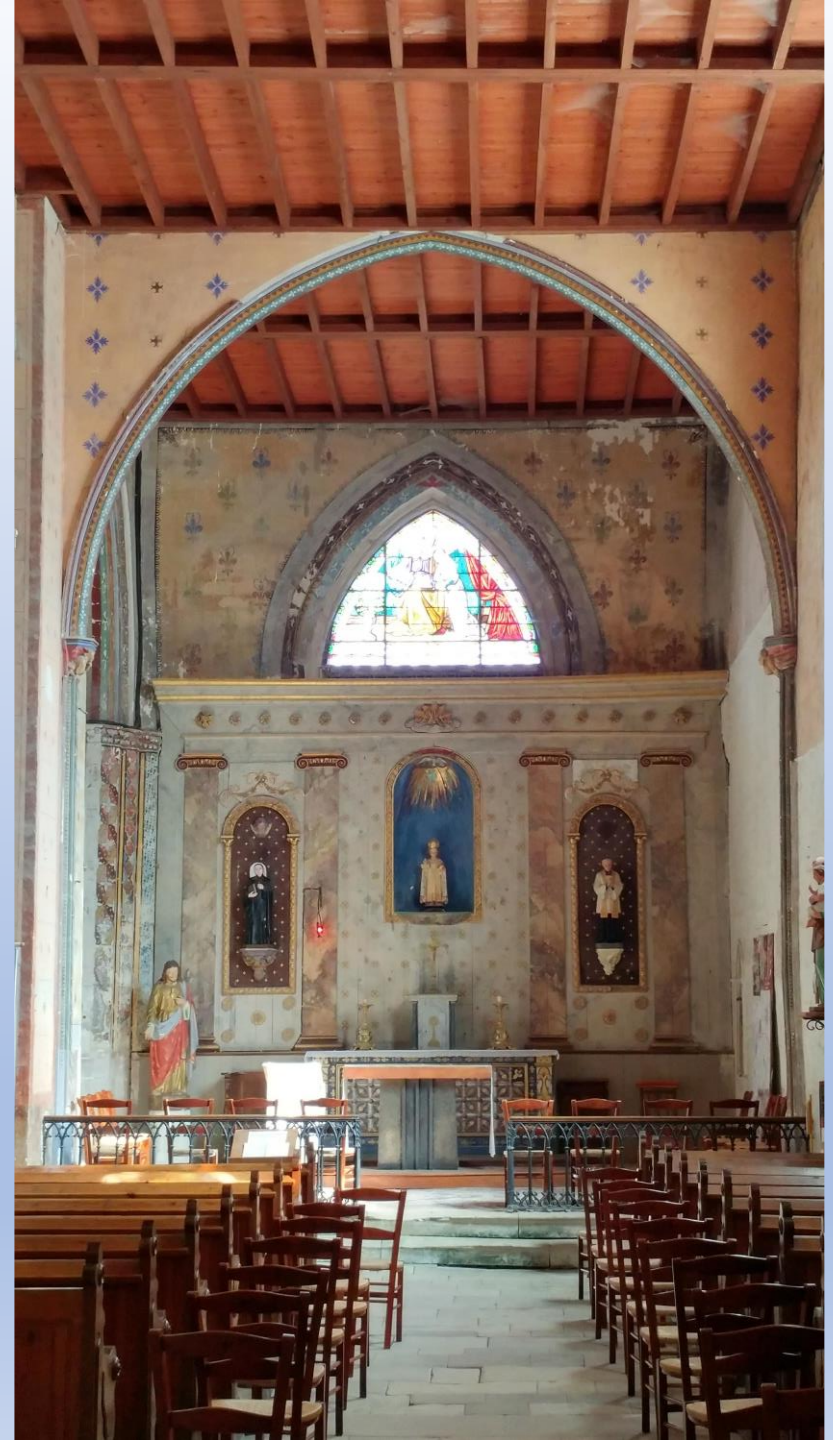
INTERIOR VIEW OF EGLISE ST PIERRE

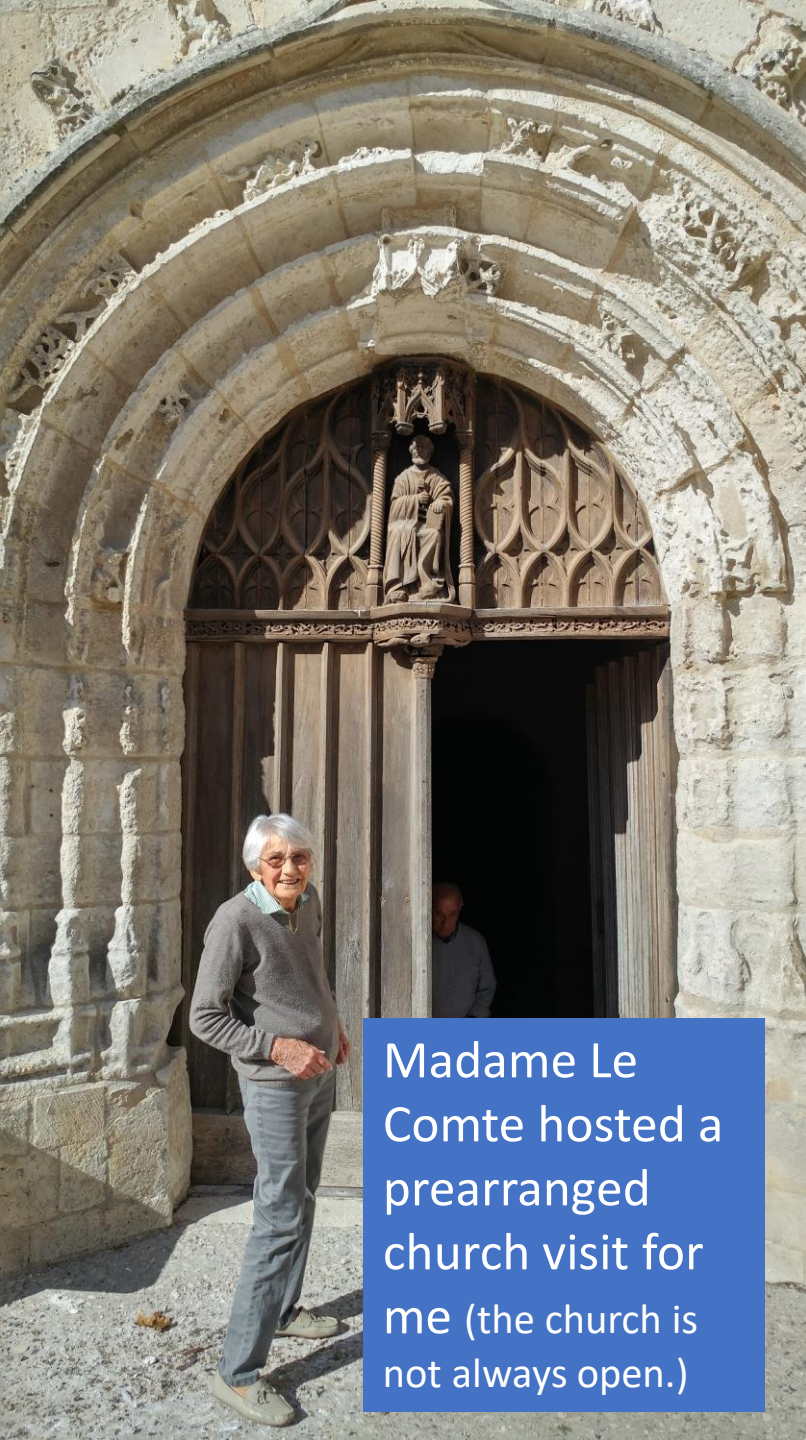


There are 3 altars in the church



This is the original altar of the church –note the ceiling and pillars





Madame Le Comte hosted a prearranged church visit for me (the church is not always open.)



Baptismal corner of the church for centuries



Baptismal urn date unknown (but not 17thC)



Madame Le Comte and her husband –met me and shared their knowledge of the church. Madame Le Comte did not speak a word of English –her husband pitched in with key English words when he could. After my visit I watched them walk away arm in arm –very sweet.

To the right is the old entrance to the original church, Madame Le Comte thought it quite possible it was used during the 17th Century by Francois Meloche and his family.



EGLISE ST PIERRE HISTORICAL INFORMATION



The church of Saint-Pierre was that of the priory founded, in 1015, by the Viscountess Adegarde or Hildegard, wife of William IV, Duke of Aquitaine.

The church was mentioned for the first time in 1111 in a charter of the Abbey of NOUAILLE which, under the protection of the Counts of Poitou, named the priests of FRONTENAY.

The church Saint Pierre was built between the 11th and the 12th century. The bell tower was completed in the twelfth century, the time of Eustache CHABOT, passionate lady for architecture, which had the reputation to bring out splendid churches as did, in his legend, the fairy Melusine. From this period, today the Romanesque Bell Tower and two bays of the nave remain.

Looted and largely destroyed in 1346, at the beginning of the war One hundred years ago, by the men of Lord DERBY, Duke of LANCASTRE, who ravaged Poitou, the church was restored, in the XVth century, between 1451 and 1466, by the successive bishops of SAINTES, Louis and Guy de ROCHECHOUART whose Coat of Arms are visible on the facade of the bell tower. By royal authorization, the village was then fortified and the church with a bretèche bell tower. It was badly damaged, a little more than a century later, in 1569, by a fire perpetrated by the Protestants during the Wars of Religion.

The western part - the nave - was not raised: the high Gothic vaults collapsed. They were replaced in 1635 by simple ceilings. The church was rebuilt extending to the east in the form of a large rectangular room divided into three vessels and ending in a flat chevet with three large windows. The flat chevet was common in the reconstructions of that time. It was technically simpler and less expensive to make than Romanesque bedside tables. There remain as witnesses the arches forming the traced choir, the departures of vaults, some butts on the dripping walls but the Gothic structure is now included in massive and ugly square pillars which isolate the central vessel from the collaterals,



Top: Mairie (Town Hall) Frontenay Rohan-Rohan
Front view left, back view right.

Left: Cemetery with church in background.
Francois Meloche's father was buried here in 1696.
In France the graves are "re-cycled" once a family
stops paying for the upkeep.



Some more blue trimmed buildings, in Frontenay Rohan-Rohan

Some older buildings on outskirts of FRR





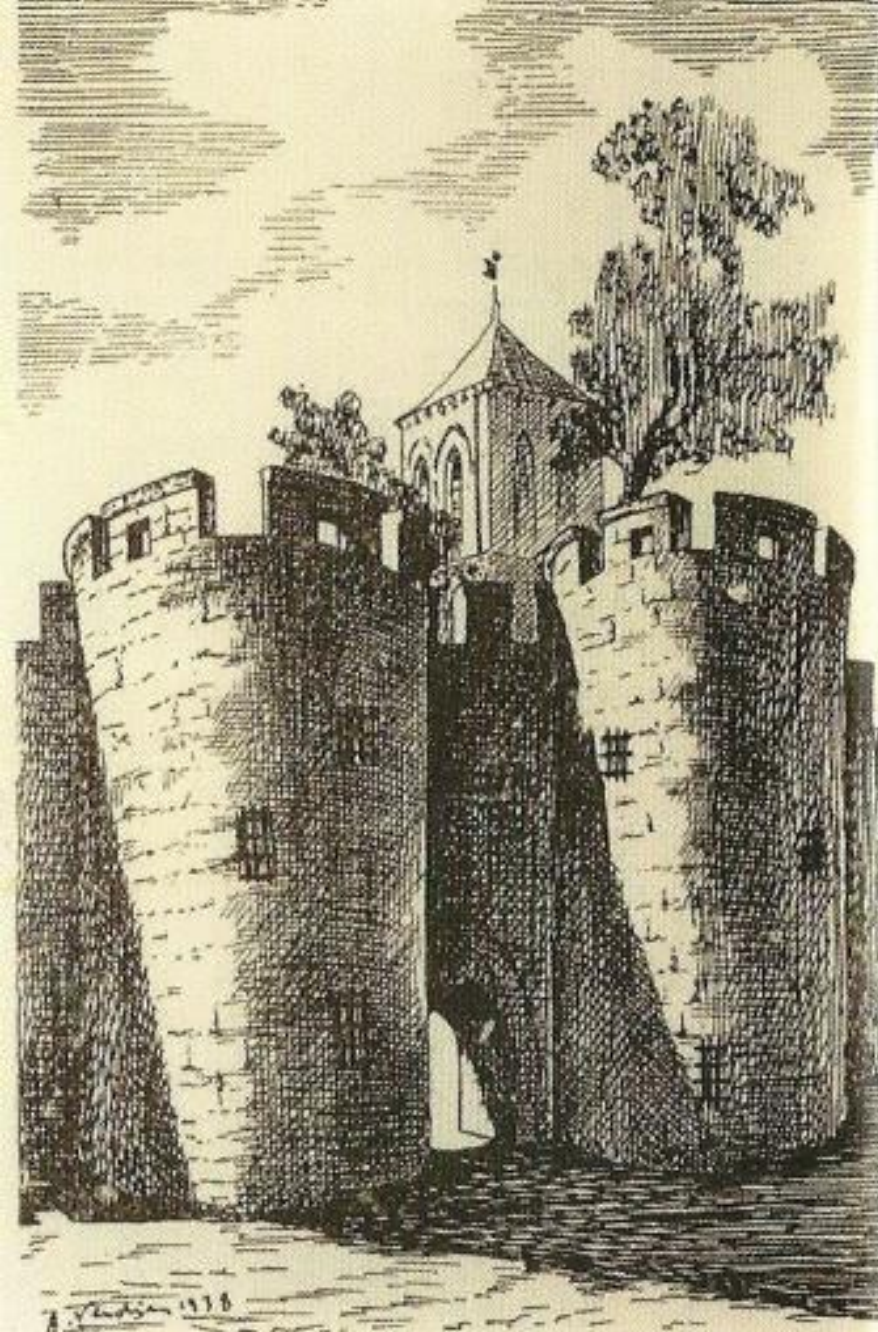
AERIAL VIEW OF FRONTENAY ROHAN-ROHAN. THE AREA OUTLINED IN RED ROUGHLY CORRESPONDS TO THE LOCATION OF THE WALLED FORTRESS IN THE MEDIEVAL AGES (see next slide)

FRONTENAY ROHAN-ROHAN

HISTORY

The city is first named Frontenay in the Middle Ages. It belongs then to Lusignan. During the revolt that Hugues X of Lusignan foments against Alphonse de Poitiers and his brother Louis IX in 1242, the city is taken by the royal army after a siege of fifteen days. In retaliation, the walls are razed, and the city is then called Frontenay-l'Abattu. At the time of the revolution the commune takes again its name of Frontenay. In 1897 it is renamed Frontenay-Rohan-Rohan.

During the battle of 1242 the walls of the medieval fort are razed. The town is known as Frontenay l'Abbatu for almost 500 years. In French "Abbatu" means beaten down. Note the Church tower in the center of this image.



FRONTENAY

Reconstitution de l'entrée de la place-forte en 1242

Source: Previously on the village website (2018) at <https://www.frontenayrr.fr/>

FRONTENAY ROHAN-ROHAN TODAY

LOCATION: Frontenay Rohan-Rohan is located 10 km from Niort, 8 km from Frontenay Rohan-Rohan, 30 minutes from La Rochelle and one hour from Poitiers.

POPULATION: 2018 –just under 3000.

ECONOMY: The town of Frontenay Rohan-Rohan(FRR) is located in a predominately agricultural region (grain and livestock). Due to its proximity to Niort, the majority of active FRR people work in Niort, including the many insurance companies that are located there, which earned Niort the title of “capital of insurance”

When I stayed in FRR there were no hotels or restaurants available within the town. I travelled to Coulon (about 20 minutes drive) which is located on the edge of the Marais Poitevin for dinners each night. I stayed at Le Logis de Faugerit (see pictures below) which is located about 3 km from the center of the town, this is an historic mansion built in the 15th century.

