

THE CHURCH OF SAINT-CÔME

During D-Day



Did you know?

The church of Saint-Côme-de Fresné was the first in Europe to ring its bells to celebrate the liberation!



This picture was taken after the D-Day Landings. 'La voie Panoramique' the road which nowadays connects Asnelles to Arromanches, did not yet exist. British troops, landing onto our beach by one of the floating roadways of Mulberry B Harbour, passed in front of the church and crossed the village by the 'route de la Mer'.

Throughout the ages, ringing the church bells did not just have a religious meaning. The sound of the church bells warned the population of imminent danger and exceptional events, coming from land or sea.

Mr. Hamon, the church sexton, was well aware of this important role of the bells.

Read his amazing story on the reverse of this sheet.

You might also be interested in visiting:

★ **2 remembrance stones** : Walk down to the beach, taking the 'chemin du Rotoir'. At the bend, go straight ahead. At the cliff, against the fence, you will find a stone in memory of the spot where one of the floating roadways of Mulberry B Harbour came ashore at the beach of Saint-Côme. A second remembrance stone is situated next to the Lifeguard's Station, in memory of la piste anglaise, which brought the troops ashore at low tide.

★ **the so-called 'Whale'**, once part of the floating roadway of Saint-Côme, and recently inaugurated at the eastern village entrance (coming from Asnelles).

Mr. Hamon and his act of bravery ...

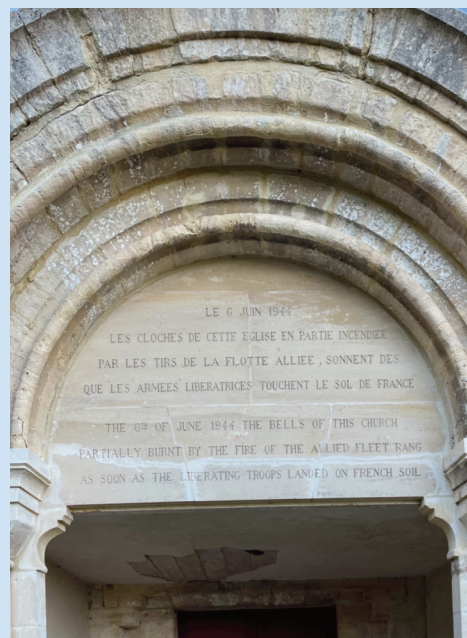
It is June 6th, 1944. The D-Day landings of the allied troops, awaited for such a long time, have begun. At sunrise, the allies arrive from the sea and come ashore on French soil. It's the begin-ning of the liberation of the European continent. The Germans do not give up. All day, there is heavy artillery fighting, the loss of human life is enormous. The church of Saint-Côme is hit by allied artillery fire, partially destroying its roof. At that moment, Mr. Albert Hamon, sexton of the church, finds the courage to climb the charred beams, assisted by some people from the village. He climbs into the bell tower and rings the bells, thus celebrating the beginning of a free Europe. It's an act of true courage: the Germans are still there, resisting! Right after the war, an inscription was engraved on the main entrance of the church to com-memorate Mr. Hamon's heroic deed.



After your visit, don't forget to visit Mr. Hamon's grave, right next to the church, and to pay him tribute.

The inscription was inaugurated at the end of the 1960s by Mr. Raymond Triboulet, first deputy-prefect of Free France and of Bayeux, and also president of the D-Day Committee.

The picture underneath shows the inauguration ceremony, in the presence of local community leaders. Mr. Triboulet is standing next to the parish priest Father Gouée.



At the end of the 1960s, once the 'voie Panoramique' between Asnelles and Arromanches was built, a second inscription was engraved on the north façade of the church, clearly visible for all passers-by.

The information sheets available while visiting the church, were developed by the Le Blanc Moutier Association. Our objective is to keep our church alive, value its historical and cultural importance and contribute to its restauration, in close collaboration with the local authorities.

Please help us, make a donation !