

Hunston's Carmelites in Normandy, 1830-1871

The "English" Carmelite community were established for over 40 years at the re-purposed Hotel Sivard de Beaulieu in Valognes, near Cherbourg, Normandy. That was their last "permanent" home before they moved into their purpose-built Hunston convent, to become the Chichester Carmel.

I have impertinently and gratefully copy-and-pasted this article from the Clos du Cotentin project website:

<http://closducotentin.over-blog.fr/article-hotel-sivard-de-beaulieu-69850955.html>

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Post begins:

March 21, 2011

Hotel Sivard de Beaulieu

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Charles Antoine Sivard de Beaulieu, from a bourgeois family established in Valognes since the 17th century, was locally one of the major figures of the revolutionary period. Born in 1742, he was a lawyer and assessor in the bailiwick of Valognes, then president of the court. In 1774, he bought the ennobling office of king's secretary and also became lieutenant general of the bailiwick of Cotentin, then mayor of the city in 1790. Suspected of intelligence with the enemies of the Republic, he was part of the batch of 19 people from the district taken to Paris on July 15, 1794 to be judged by the Revolutionary Court. We remember that, having broken a wheel on the way, the convoy did not arrive at its destination until the day after the fall of Robespierre,

saving the lives of the representatives of the city considered the most fiercely monarchist in all of Normandy. Not too vindictive, Sivard de Beaulieu later rose to the rank of Baron d'Empire and was elected deputy for La Manche in 1818.

From 1830 to 1871, the hotel housed English Carmelites, who, for the needs of their community, had a chapel built in 1837. On August 5, 1871, the hotel was sold for 80,000 francs to the nuns of the Refuge de Caen, who housed young girls and children. The growing number of "refugees" led them to build dormitories, a linen room and an infirmary, put into service in September 1872. The classrooms, refectories and dormitories, as well as the chapel, were totally ruined during the Allied bombings of June 1944. The hotel itself was burned down, losing a wing. The current chapel, in the Reconstruction style, was rebuilt in 1959 by MM. Isnard and Epaud, architects.

The current facade on the street was initially the facade on the garden, the layout of the road to Bricquebec having been modified since. Its elevation is articulated around a central avant-corps treated in freestone, and delimited by bossed chains. The set is surmounted by a large triangular pediment adorned with an armorial stone left pending. A horseshoe-shaped porch provides access to the front door. The latter is topped with a semi-circular lintel adorned with a projecting key. All the windows are covered with a simple straight lintel. A horizontal strip highlights the first floor. Bull's eye windows illuminate the attic. Several old postcards show the old gate destroyed in 1944, which once opened onto rue Saint-François.

[by] Stephanie Javel/Julien Deshayes

21 mars 2011
Hôtel Sivard de Beaulieu

Le 2 octobre 1739 Laurent Antoine Sivard, sieur des Noires Terres, achète pour la somme de 20 000 livres à Bernardin Morin, une propriété située à Valognes, nommée "la terre des Noiremares ou du Haut-Pirou". Cette propriété comprenait une maison avec "cuisine, salle, cellier, écurie, pressoir", et chambres et greniers au dessus. L'acte de vente précise également que le "grand corps de logis", couvert d'ardoise, était précédé d'une cour avec porte cochère et environné d'un jardin, d'un verger et d'autres pièces de terre. Cette propriété figure sur le plan Lerouge de 1767. Elle occupait assez précisément l'emplacement de l'actuel hôtel Sivard de Beaulieu. Vers 1765, Charles-Antoine Sivard, fils de Laurent-Antoine Sivard, augmente son héritage par l'achat d'une nouvelle propriété, nommée le manoir de Beaulieu, qui dépendait depuis 1479 au couvent des cordeliers de Valognes. Selon l'abbé Jean Canu, il aurait fait bâtir l'hôtel actuel vers 1782.

Charles Antoine Sivard de Beaulieu, issu d'une famille de bourgeois établie à Valognes depuis le XVIIe siècle, fut localement l'une des figures majeures de la période révolutionnaire. Né en 1742, il fut avocat et assesseur au bailliage de Valognes, puis président du tribunal. En 1774, il acheta la charge anoblissante de secrétaire du roi et devint également lieutenant général du bailliage du Cotentin, puis maire de la ville en 1790. Suspecté d'intelligence avec les ennemis de la République, il fit partie de la fournée des 19 personnes du district conduites à Paris le 15 juillet 1794 pour y être jugées par le tribunal Révolutionnaire. On se souvient que, ayant cassé une roue en chemin, le convoi n'arriva à destination qu'au lendemain de la chute de Robespierre, sauvant in extremis la vie aux représentants la ville estimée la plus farouchement monarchiste de toute la Normandie. Non trop rancunier Sivard de Beaulieu accèdera par la suite au rang de baron d'Empire et fut élu député de la Manche en 1818.

De 1830 à 1871, l'hôtel abrite des Carmélites anglaises, qui, pour les besoins de leur communauté, font construire une chapelle en 1837. Le 5 août 1871 l'hôtel est revendu pour 80 000 francs aux religieuses du Refuge de Caen, qui abritaient des jeunes filles et des enfants. Le nombre grandissant des "réfugiés" les conduit à construire des dortoirs, une lingerie et une infirmerie, mis en service en septembre 1872. Les classes, les réfectoires et les dortoirs, ainsi que la chapelle, ont été totalement ruinés lors des bombardements alliés de juin 1944. L'hôtel lui-même a été incendié, perdant ainsi une aile. La chapelle actuelle, de style Reconstruction, a été reconstruite en 1959 par MM. Isnard et Epaud, architectes.

L'actuelle façade sur rue était initialement la façade sur jardin, le tracé de la route de Bricquebec ayant été modifié depuis. Son élévation s'articule autour d'un avant-corps central traité en pierres de taille, et délimité par des chaînes en bossage. L'ensemble est surmonté d'un important fronton triangulaire orné d'une pierre armoriale laissée en attente. Un perron en fer à cheval permet l'accès à la porte d'entrée. Cette dernière est coiffée d'un linteau en plein-cintre orné d'une clef saillante. Toutes les fenêtres sont couvertes d'un simple linteau droit. Un bandeau horizontal souligne le premier étage. Des oeils-de-boeuf éclairent les combles. Plusieurs cartes postales anciennes montre l'ancien portail détruit en 1944, qui ouvrait jadis sur la rue Saint-François.

Stéphanie Javel/Julien Deshayes

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