

# A French Wine and Cheese Tour



In the districts of Beaujolais,  
Maconnais and Annecy.

Andrew Gardner & Simon Holloway.  
August 1968



## Introduction.

Our Secondary School: Wycliffe College in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire offered Travel Grants each year to several boys (the school is now mixed) who intended to visit another country and take part in some adventure of discovery or a physical challenge. Andrew Gardner and Simon Holloway applied for and received a Travel Grant to enable them to visit a part of France on their way back from a Tetbury District Scout holiday in Corsica in August 1968 for ten days. As Simon's father was a Printer and also a connoisseur of fine French wines, it seemed like a good idea to visit one part of France that produced great wines – the Beaujolais district, just north of Lyon. For variety, we also planned to visit around Lake Annecy to the East of Lyon and on the way towards Geneva. We had prepared a careful budget and as Scouts, we were prepared with camping equipment, including a tent, sleeping bags, stove and changes of clothes and cameras. We travelled by foot or caught rides from locals where possible but concluded our journey by train. The weather was mixed as sometimes it was boiling hot and at other times the rain came down 'like cats and dogs' and on one occasion, almost at the peak of a mountain, it snowed – in August. However, we enjoyed some surprise encounters, warm hospitality, rich generosity from many local French people and met some interesting people from a variety of nations. Our training through the scout movement helped us plan our route, be resourceful, make wise choices about safety, budget well and cook our own food. Both Andrew and Simon had completed their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award and Queens Scout Award and Andrew had represented our District Scout Company at the Scout Jamboree in Idaho, USA the previous summer. We were up for an adventure and a challenge. Our O level French was most useful and we were able to communicate reasonably well with the local people in Cafes, Restaurants, Shops and at the Degustations (Wine Cellars) where we tasted the wines of the district.

One condition of the Travel Grant was that we prepare a report of our travels so we divided up the days so that Simon wrote up about the Wine Tour and Andrew wrote up about the rest of the tour to Annecy and onto Geneva. After more than 50 years, the Journal has been retyped and edited for a new generation to inspire them to 'Take an Adventure' and write it up afterwards.

## The Geography of the Region.

Beaujeu is located around 10 km North West of Lyon. The **wine** takes its name from the historical Province of **Beaujolais**, a wine-producing region. It is located north of Lyon, and covers parts of the north of the Rhône département of the Rhône-Alpes region and southern areas of the Saône-et-Loire département of Burgundy.

The Monts du Beaujolais extend southwards from the valleys of the Gosne as far as the distinct west-east structural depression of Seuil De Tarore. In the Higher Parts – Mont-St.Rigaud (3,321 ft) – porphyries and granulites are found.

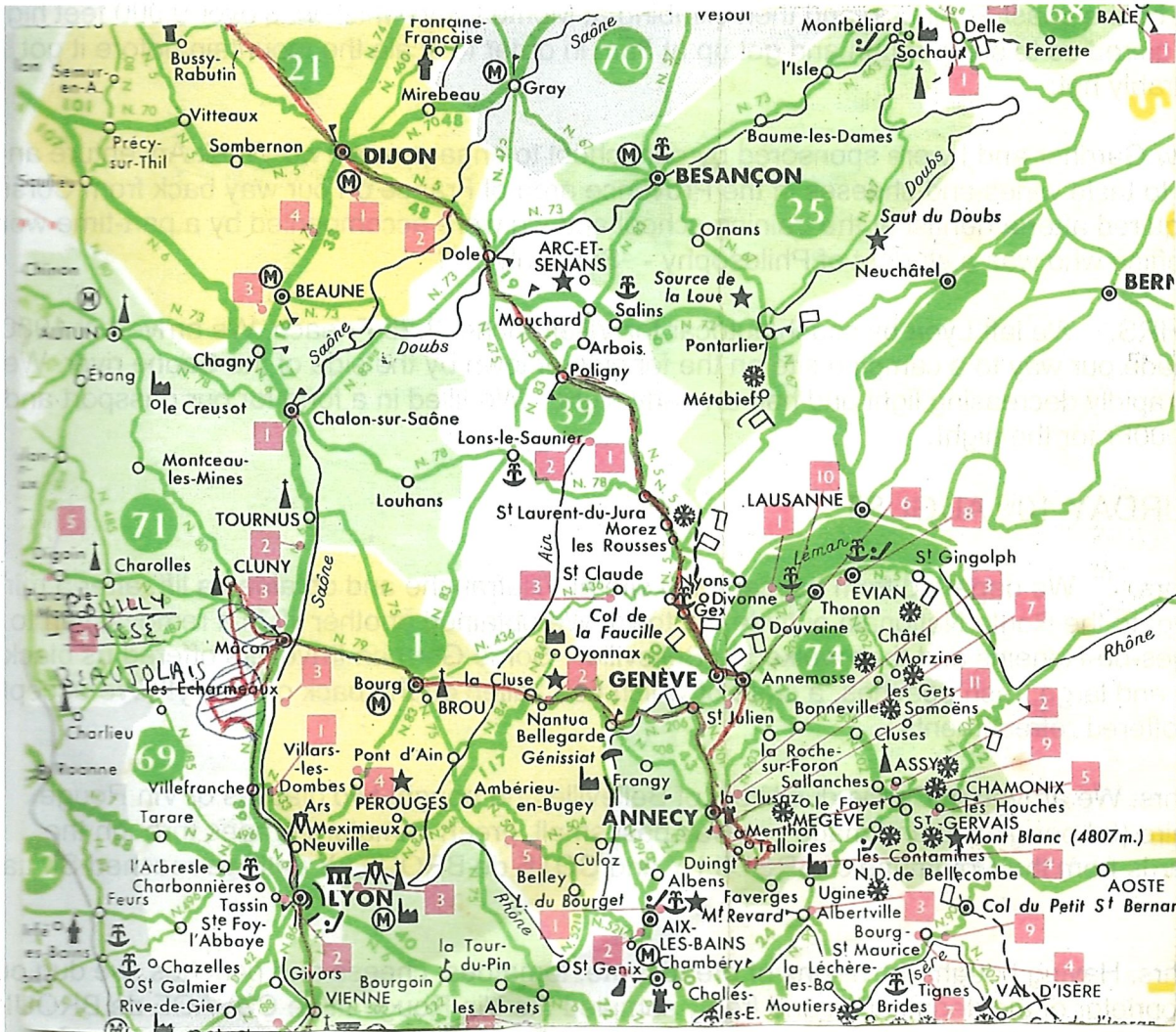
The Beaujolais district is much dissected by a well-developed pattern of valleys, most run North to South following fault-lines and leaving smooth-topped ridges between them. Long valleys of the Azergues forms a broad gently sloping re-entrant into the heart of the uplands. The radial pattern leaves a substantial upland area, the Plateau de Poule in the heart of Beaujolais.

There is a contrast between the granite uplands, Jurassic slopes descending to the Savone and the broad valleys. Uplands covered with thin soils, carry rough grazing, considerable tracts of gorse scrub, and pine plantations. The Cote on the East has long been devoted to the production of the celebrated Beaujolais wines, although this had been less of a monoculture since the

phythoxena ravages (explained later). Orchards, fodder-crops and small fields of cereals diversify the agricultural landscape.

The main valleys are quite densely inhabited; large farms and hamlets can be seen to about 2,500 feet. Wooded or pasture-covered slopes rise to rounded ridges, while the sheltered village is surrounded by orchards, vineyards, little fields of arable and patches of meadowland. The reason for the relative density of population is surprising industrial activity.

For centuries, textiles have been made on a domestic basis, first wool, then silk and cotton. Many small towns have factories subsidiary to the big concerns in Lyons, as at Tarore, Thizy, and Amphepins. Special cotton fabrics are made, and numerous local specialisations are evident.



**MAP of the REGION:**

**JOURNAL ENTRIES.**  
**PART ONE – A WINE TOUR of BEAUJOLAIS and MACONNAIS.**  
**Simon Holloway**

FRIDAY 9<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.

1600 HRS. We arrived at Lyons from Marseilles by train and said goodbye to the party of Scouts from our Tetbury District including many from our own Wycliffe College Scout Troup. We had been on Corsicadventure – a ten day scouting holiday in Corsica with two main activities of Scuba Diving by the coast at Ajaccio and then climbing at Monte Cinto which was over 9,000 feet high and required us to sleep rough and get up at 5am in order to scale the mountain before it got unbearably hot.

Andrew Gardner and I were sponsored by our school to engage in a Two-Week Adventure and we chose to taste wines and cheeses in the Provence area of France on our way back from Corsica. We inquired after a dentist at the training school and we were accompanied by a part-time worker in an office who was a student of Philosophy - 'Suddenly....'!

1800 HRS. We left Lyon by coach/autocar for Villefranche. 3.25 Fr each. We arrived at 1900 hrs and made our way to a camping site on the far side of town by the side of the Saone river. We ate in the rapidly decreasing light and had an early night. We filled in a form for our passport and paid 3.00Fr for the night.

SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

0830 hrs. We departed from the camping site at Villefranche and obtained a lift, after 5 minutes walking, to the Route Nationale outside the town. We obtained another lift in a removal van to St. Georges-de-Reneins and then walked to Belleville. Some German travellers offered us black coffee and large fresh peaches, a crate of which had 'fallen off the back of a lorry!' We accepted the proffered refreshments.

1015 hrs. We arrived at Cercie due West of Belleville and bought two glasses of Vin Rouge ordinaire (8d per glass!) and made our way past small, green immature grapes through the vineyards from the Commune of BROUILLY and COTE de BROUILLY until we reached St. Lager

1230 hrs. Having bought provisions of bread, pate, tomatoes, cheese and peaches, we dug out the proprietor of the degustation and freely sampled the Vin Rouge at Le CUVAGE de BROUILLY.



VIN ROUGE  
1 glass each. Cote de Brouilly 1967  
1 glass each. Brouilly. 1966

We preferred 1967 for its taste, body and bouquet. It was more 'Corse'.

1340 hrs. We walked up to Mt. Brouilly but found La Chapelle de Brouilly shut. There was a good view but it was too hazy for photographs. The wooden hut degustation there was also shut. OUT OF SEASON?!

1450 hrs. We took a rest at a Café Restaurant du Pont des Samsons by the road for Beaujeu. We had two limonades.

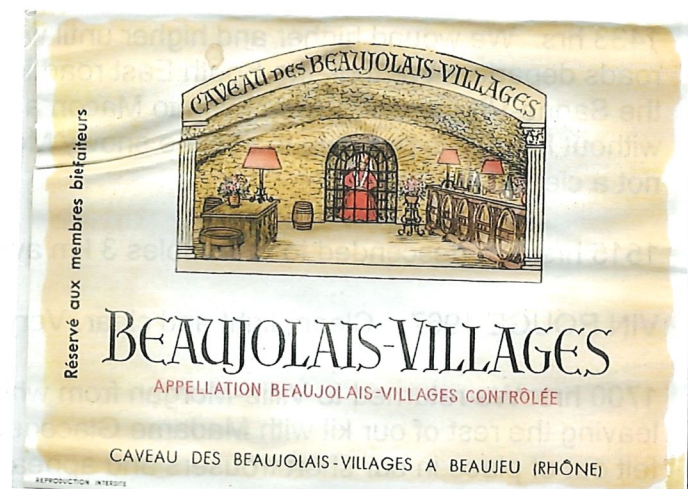
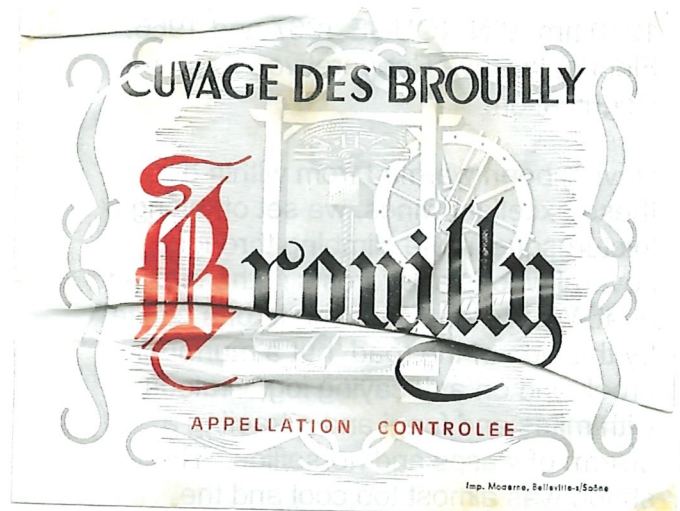
1545 hrs. Nous avons deguste a la Caveau a Beaujeu.

VIN ROUGE. 1967. Last Recolte (harvest).  
Much lighter than before  
VIN BLANC. 1967

We walked from Beaujeu, the centre of the district, once the seat of the Sires of Beaujeu, the overlords of the district. It still keeps its pleasant motto: 'A tout venant – beaujeu' (to all who come – beauty and joy), and the whole area indeed offered us a welcome in smiles and wine, through the weather was changeable. We passed through the vineyards from which the wines of the BEAUJOLAIS – VILLAGES obtain their grapes, through Regnie to Villie-Morgan, just 10km from Beaujeu.

1900 hrs. Having tried in vain at several houses, we eventually found a house with 'NOTAIRE' on a plaque outside. At first, we thought that some dignified (perhaps slightly eccentric) writer must live there but after some exploration, la femme agee – that, as I discovered, la Vielle dame, which is impolite – showed us an area of grass on her lawn on which we could camp for the night. Later, we found out that Madame Glacoque's daughter was the Notary but was away at present.

After a brief look at the fair in town, we had another early night.



## SUNDAY 11<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.

1100 hrs. Wine tasting at Villie-Morgan.

VIN ROUGE 1967. Villie-Morgan. A pleasant taste, not so long-lasting. The least enjoyed so far. 3.50 Fr for 1 bottle of Vin Rouge 1967

1200 hrs. We arrived at Fleurie and were directed to the Caveau where we had to pay 0.60 Fr each for a glass of red wine.

VIN ROUGE 1967. Fleurie, le Caveau... It was strong and thick, Corse. The year 1964 is the best recent year for red Beaujolais and this year will be a little late after a bad harvest because of too little sun in the summer months.

1210 hrs. VIN ROUGE 1967 and 1966. Fleurie, le Cave Cooperative Degustation.

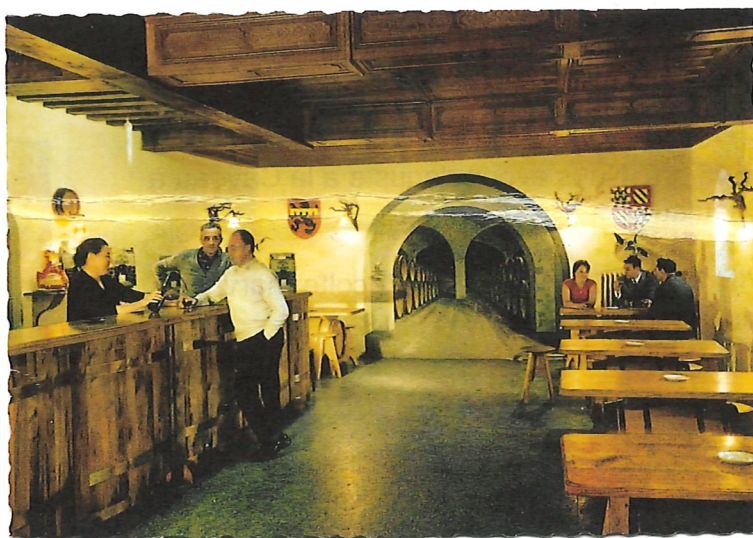
Having been warmed from within by these excellent wines, we set off along a 'picturesque' route climbing through several woods and forests in the blazing heat. We rested in the shade of a copse by the side of the road, but a murmuring brook and on a decaying log, virulous with mites and fungi and attracting a swarm of wasps and horseflies. The shade was almost too cool and the stupefying closeness hit us as we again entered the sun's domain.

1433 hrs. We wound higher and higher until we reached the Col de Durbrizes from which six roads departed. We took the South East road leading to Chiroubles but first consumed the view of the Saone-Rhone valley from Lyon to Macon and Jura far on the eastern horizon. On a clear day, without haze, it is possible to see the snowy Mont Blanc, pinnacle above the rest of Europe. It was not a clear day.

1515 hrs. We descended to Chiroubles 3 km away and found the Degustation.

VIN ROUGE 1967. Clean, light and clear. Very pleasant and much appreciated after such a walk.

1700 hrs. We returned to Villie-Morgan from whence we had departed with one light rucsac earlier, leaving the rest of our kit with Madame Glacoque. A carnival or fete was on in the village and we felt out of place in our short trousers and appearance as 'les vrais voyageurs'. Coachloads of children from as far as 30km away had come to the fete. Dodgems were the favourite attraction but at 10 Fr for 6 goes (records) was beyond our means. There was also a merry-go-round and



shooting stall and even a dance hall, but again we had a strict budget of 22 Fr per day to keep, so we observed only!

1900 – 2100 hrs. Now suitably dressed, we entered a back room of le 'Relais du Caveau' and sat down for our first proper meal since we left Corsica. We had the Porte soir Prix net 12 Fr as follows:

**Andouillette du Pouilly**

- A special meat dish with sauce of the district with a crispy, battered layer.

**Jambon au beurre**

- Ham which looked almost like smoked salmon, with saltless butter, gurkins and mustard

**Fricossie de champignons**

- A full plateful of mushrooms each

**Coq au Morgan**

- Chicken in a dark, very rich wine (Morgan) sauce

**Fromage**

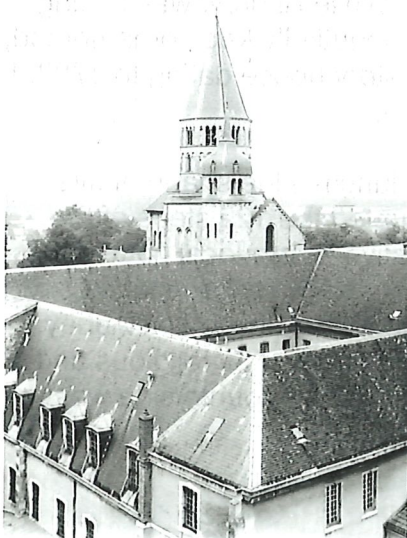
- Something similar to Stilton, and Camambert

Also, we had 1 bottle of **Vin Rouge Morgan** at 4.50 Fr.

Having shown our ignorance about Andouillette, every French man and woman came to our aid, amidst a bout of laughter and goodwill. We were warned that if we drank too much wine our ears would become red and possibly our noses also!

There was no reserved atmosphere with furtive glances to the next table just to make sure that there was not someone you knew in the same room. Everyone was determined to have a feast, to spend as long as possible on their favourite past-time and by the time coffee was served, we were all firm friends. Andrew's brother now had a pen friend, with the possibility of an exchange with a Parisien family and we had a bed for the night in a little village 30 miles away!

So we went back to collect our belongings from Madame Glacoque who was not annoyed at being disturbed at the late hour of 10pm and she was deeply touched that we had seen her beautiful garden and so had sought to camp in it – or so she was led to believe! However, we bade our



Some views of Cluny



farewells and promised to send her a postcard from England and set off – all six of us – in a heavily laden Renault 4 in an unknown direction approximately North West. Two hours and several nerve-rending corners later, we arrived at Mazille in the Bourgogne. We slept well and in luxury on two renovated camp-beds in the loft of the very old house, the previously stone roof had just been replaced by a modern tiled one. Water was drawn from a well at the bottom of the garden.

### Another view of Cluny:

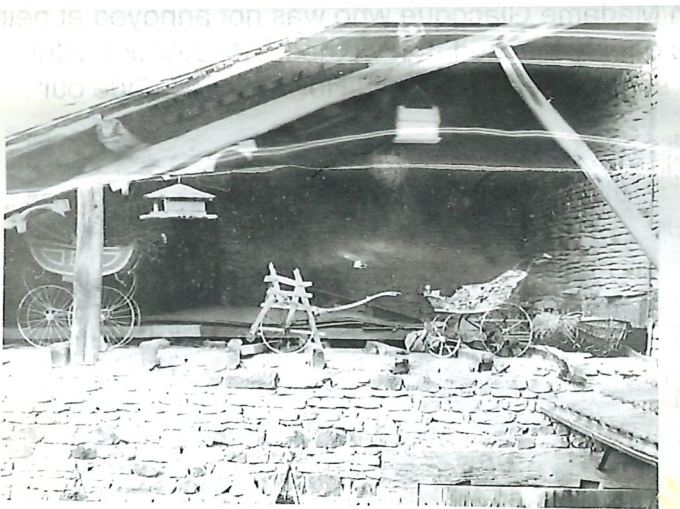
MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

0730 hrs. I rose and made a cup of tea on our gas stove just to show our patriotism and later we were invited down to a French breakfast with a large bowl of coffee (made with hot milk) and several pieces of gateaux. On that wet, but glistening morning we walked through this little Bourgogne village and every track was bordered with exquisitely



lichened walls of granite and sandstone. Some bore fossils and this was the first time that we had seen any enclosed gardens almost like 'English Country gardens'.

At a general sort of shop, the 18 yr. old daughter enquired after a dentist for Andrew and though officially closed for their long summer holiday (similar to the August Bank Holiday only longer) a Chirugien Dentiste in Cluny agreed to see Andrew who was, of course, 'tres mal aux dents'. We were invited to survey the wondrous abode of the grandmother of this French family who lived at a place called 'Papillon' (butterfly). And everything was in the shape of a butterfly – except the house itself. Weathervane, chair, table, mats, railings, prams of wood and iron were scattered around her antiquated rooms with trophies, stuffed animals, musical instruments, dolls from Africa, Asia and Europe. The garden was a joy in itself, beautifully kept and enough to make any keen gardener envious.



After a soupçon of white wine in a glass taste-vin, we were driven to the relatively unspoilt religious and cultural centre of the district – Cluny. While Andrew was seeing the dentist in a beautifully kept, ornamented, antiquated five story house dating to 1783, I did the shopping.

1400 hrs. After lunch in the shade of five cedars, we mounted the 122 steps of the Syndicat d'Initiative where local pottery was displayed on each of the seven stories and had a good view of the village and Abbey, which provides a union of all religious and

sects of the world. Cluny is on the edge of the wine-producing district and the countryside was very similar to England. This area was known for its beef production.



1615 hrs. Degustation au Caveau a Milly-Lamantine.

VIN BLANC 1967 – cool, refreshing, we liked it very much.

1645 hrs. Chateau de Byonne (very near to Milly Lamantine)

Privee – exclusive. Appellation Macon Sologny. J. Thomas, Proprietaire a Sologny

Un Taste-vin. de ROSE. 1961.

And ROUGE 1961. No etiquette – c'est INTERDIT!



We were unable to obtain a wine label from this privately owned degustation and the proprietor was even more alarmed when he learnt that Mr. P.A. Holloway is a printer. For some reason he thought we wanted to copy his wine label design!

1750 hrs. We walked to La Roche-Vineuse, a small village also on the route from Cluny to Macon in the true Maconnais.

VIN BLANC 1967. Macon La Roche-Vineuse. Refreshing, but all wines in the Pouilly-Fuisse district are very similar.

VIN ROSE 1967. Beautiful colour – like diluted blood with a touch of orange.

In this village, our reception was good and everyone was most helpful. We camped in a park, sheltered from the wind, with convenient drinking and washing water nearby. A neighbour kindly gave us half a loaf of bread as we had run short and many people talked with us – not only about the weather.

2045hrs. Later, after our meal of spaghetti, soup, cheese, bread and yoghurt, we went to a little bar restaurant and started our evening with a half-litre bottle of vin blanc ordinaire. Then Andrew and I had a local concoction – a Tomate, which we had also tried in Corsica, but had not understood of what it consisted until the moment when three French boys of the village joined us and enlightened us.

TOMATE = PASTIS + GRENADINE + EAU.

Pastis is a form of aniseed which turns milky when water is added.

2130 hrs. The French boys : George, Jean-Pierre and Alain, invited us to have a drink with them at their youth club – which was in the process of being built – and we duly accepted. How could we refuse when they had brought a superieur wine especially for us – Vin Blanc de Bussieres 1964. So, we walked to their uncompleted youth club which happened to be in the same park as our tent, so we would not have far to walk. Having no glasses, we drank from the bottle and they kindly insisted that we had most of the wine since we were their guests.

In their one large, undecorated, beamed ceiling, upstairs room with no windows and no chairs but a cold concrete floor, we had a pleasant evening. We were joined later by Christian and Jean-Paul who lived just 100 yards away and they insisted that we tried a little of their 'local whisky'. So, accordingly they went out in search of Marc de Bourgogne but they were unable to find any then and returned with a glass of GUIGNOCET – Famille de Peches. GUIGNOCET = CERISES +

MARC + SUCRE. This was a very strong cocktail and I could only sip it. Accordingly Andrew had most of it and seemed to acquire a taste for it.

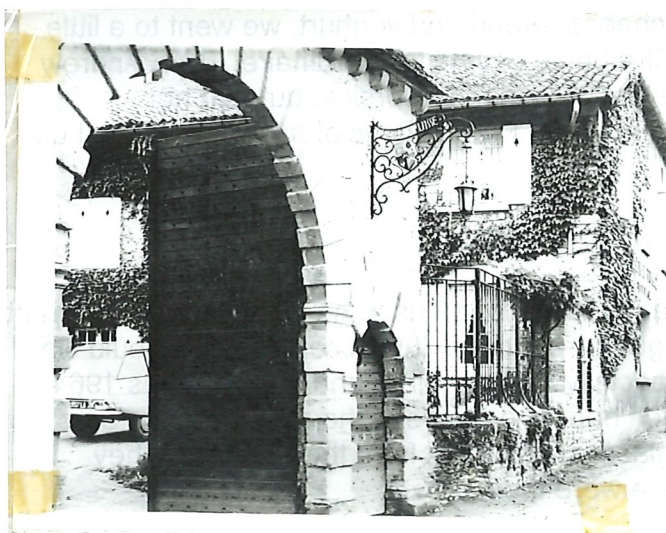
Later in the evening, they were able to find just one glass of MARC, which is 50% alcohol and is made from the grappe or stem of the grape, whereas Maconnais wine is made from the grume – the fruit. The grape stems are pressed and distilled and eventually yield the Marc de Bourgogne. The Pinot Chardonnay grape is the best for this district and the aristocratic wines are those with the appellation Pouilly-Fuisse label and the best of it comes from the tiny area around the hamlet of Fuisse. It is very pale with a slight greenish tinge and can be drunk young, though it is comparatively long-lived compared with Beaujolais. They are clear, refreshing wines, most suitable with fish, chicken or cheese, with the 'fragrance of young nuts dipped in melon'.

## TUESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

We set off again on la route de Pouilly-Fuisse via Bussieres and Pierredos and, having climbed several thousand feet, we arrived at a Degustation at Vergisson. But this time, the rain was bucketing down and, having almost given up hope of finding our refresher, we asked at an innocent-looking farmhouse and found that it was the Degustation!. We descended to the cellar, tasted a taste-vin of VIN BLANC 1967 POUILLE-FUISSE served by a young girl and saw her father and brother labelling last year's wine – a self-contained family business.

1130hrs. We left soon after our refresher in the rain on route for Pouilly and Fuisse. But by the time that we reached the hamlet of Pouilly, we were soaked through. There were no shops or even a degustation so we had to continue as far as Fuisse – the centre of this wine district. We arrived at dinnertime so found a shop open and went in to have a meal on the patio of the house, sheltered from the wind and the rain and we were able then to change our clothes also.

Fuisse was fairly dead when we were there but is obviously a tourist attraction and a huge coloured, illustrated map of the district was displayed on the side of one building. The church and various chateaux of doubtful origin but seemingly Norman, the latter with four pinnacle towers and a red slate roof, diversified the architecture of the village. Fields of vines stretched in every direction on the gentle undulations culminating in a small hill, a succession of which extended for



about 35 kms, with an average width of from  
1. 10 to 15 km, along the right bank of the river Saone.

The whole area of the Pouilly-Fuisse is dominated by a remarkable rock formation – the Roche-de-Solutre which is gently sloping on one side and a sheer cliff of jutting rocks on the other. This rock has a history attached to it that prehistoric man used to drive scores of horses along the gently sloping side and recently (in 1950) during excavations, the skeletons of over a thousand horses have been found here. No doubt unwanted humans were also condemned to die a heightly death for in a small archaeological

museum we found a complete human skeleton, teeth of various monsters, flints, arrowheads and the like, as well as all the bones of a horse.

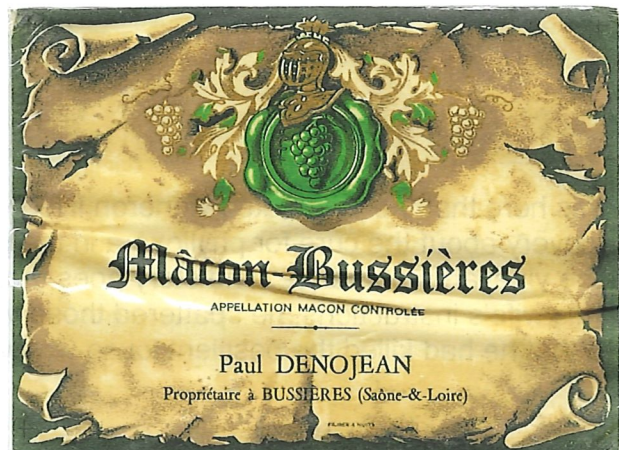
## The Roche-de-Solutre:

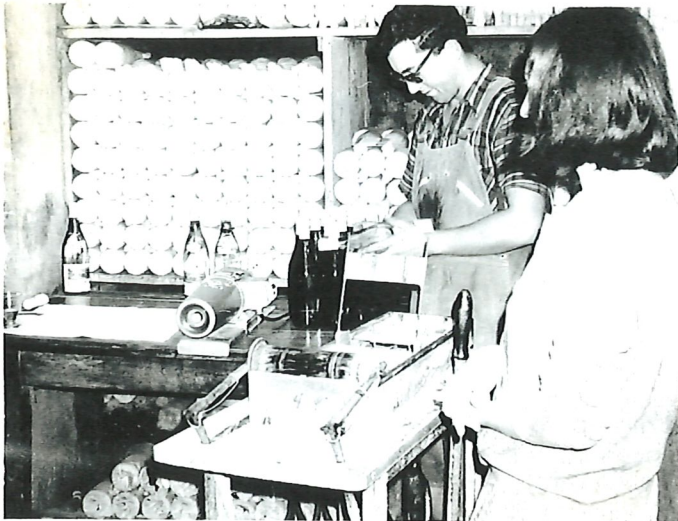


We also tasted some of the VIN SUPERIEUR – Pouilly-Fuisse which is 7 Fr per bottle. It has a green/yellow colour, nutty taste and an excellent bouquet. This was our last Maconnais tasting town before Macon itself, the city of good wine and good food – the home of Lamartine.

After having been taken as far as la Maison Maconnais des Vins, which is very much a pseudo-degustation where you have to pay for your wine (true degustations provide free samples), we decided that since the official camping site was 2 km away towards Dijon, we would make our way back to the Beaujolais region and conclude our wine-tasting with a day amongst les vins superieurs.

1800 hrs. At this time, we set off along the Route Nationale and by very good fortune we were transported as far as 'la maison blanche' – a small town 13km south of Macon from whence we could make easy progress to Moulin-a-Vent, Cru Chenas and Julienas. We arrived at La Maison Blanche towards dusk and after buying our supper, we found shelter in the village washing hut which was merely two large and two smaller stone washing tubs with concrete space around them





and a wooden roof. On top of the tent and clothing we put our sleeping bags and spent a night nearly open to the elements. It is very seldom in a holiday of the sort that we had tried to plan that everything goes exactly to schedule or that you do all those things which you set out to do, but this is mainly because so much is left to chance and luck in meeting the right people that very often you see and do things which you would not otherwise have thought to do. For Andrew and myself, by a chance meeting in a Café in Morgan, we were able to see Cluny, part of Bourgogne and tasted the Maconnais wines. Of course, we had to rearrange our plans almost daily but tried to

keep within a broad network of ideas and let the rest come or not as it will – each day new faces and places were in store for us and it is amazing how friendly you can become with French people in a very short time – sometimes almost too short a time! However, by returning to the Beaujolais district we were fulfilling our previous intentions of visiting most of the major wine producing villages and degustations of Beaujolais – including les vins superieurs.

#### WEDNESDAY 14<sup>th</sup> AUGUST

We had an early start and in sunshine and rain made our way to Romaneche-Thorins where we spent a few minutes ponderously gazing at the magnificent marble columns, white stones and crib of the catholic church. In sunshine we ascended to the ancient and vrai Moulin a Vente, which is in fact 'sans Vent', now because the Vent was too strong. Beware of a simulated, touristy copy with Sails, which can be found by the side of the Route Nationale.

#### The Moulin a Vente:



It was here that the celebrated vigneron lived who made the discovery about the cure for phylloxera in the plague of the 1870s which destroyed three-quarters of the vineyards of France. The story goes that, in flinging away a bucket of boiling, soapy water, on his wife's instructions, he spattered those vines nearest his kitchen door and was delighted to find that he had killed the pestilent louse who was ravaging all of France's vineyards.



Une femme agee kindly opened up the Degustation when we arrived and explained that two communes rivalled each year for the 'appellation' (official recognition) in Moulin-a-Vent. This year Romaneche-Thorins had won and Chenos had lost. The good years for Moulin-a-Vent are:

1952, 1957, 1959, 1962, 1964, 1966, 1967.

But after five years, the wine does not improve with keeping so should be drunk when it is young.

VIN ROUGE 1967, Moulin-a-Vent was definitely the best wine that we had tasted so far. It was smooth, noble, de la noble, friend a boire et tres bouquite, avec la couleur rubis.

In a few fleeting glimpses of sunlight, I took photos of the famous windmill and the view to the eastern horizon.

1100hrs By this time, we had walked to the Degustation a les Deschamps for tasting CRUCHENAS. This red

wine was again smooth and rich with a slightly fishy taste. In French, it is described thus:

*' C'est une gerbe des fleurs deposees dans une corbeille de velours. Recolte sur un sol essentiellement granitique possede des qualites remarquables par sa finesse son fruit et son velours. '*

The proprietor explained that these wines were 'les superieurs' simply because of the soil which was well stocked with small stones and essentially granite based. The special climatic conditions which prevailed gave the maximum of sun on certain slopes – but all this is mainly a matter of opinion, according to several men whom we met. They preferred Morgan, Fleurie or Chiroubles. Our proprietor also showed us the quickest route to Julienas which we hope to reach before closing time (between 12noon and 1400hrs – French Lunch break is sacred!)

### Julienas Wines:

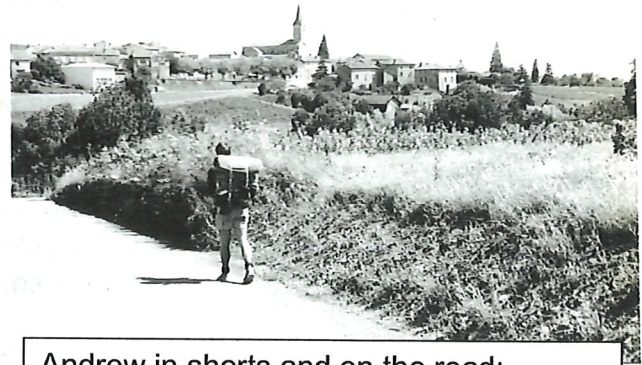


We did reach there just in time. At Julienas we tasted wine inside a magnificent old church – Cellier de la Vieille Eglise – with a huge mural signifying all the joys that are had at harvest time with song and dance, drunkenness and debauchery. Somehow, it seemed out of place in what was supposed to be a church. We left and just made the Cave Cooperative where we could obtain the etiquettes before they closed. We came to a huge and magnificent mansion obviously catering and having rooms for very rich guests but in our shorts, we again felt out of place.

After a lift to 4km from Macon which was given to us just 20yds from the Cave Cooperative by a Frenchman who worked in Parish producing wine labels, we had lunch and set off again on the road out of Macon towards Geneva. We walked wearily on the hard road surface for 90 minutes in

blazing heat, until we were just past a little town called 'La Madeleine' and had almost given up hope when a car with an Israeli identification plate stopped ahead and Andrew said 'Run'. So, we ran and were greeted by the words " *Hey guys, are you English?*"

It was an American, born in California, driving his father's car from the family home in Portugal to his father's abode in Geneva to avoid tax on the car and living in Brighton, studying at a Teachers' Training College attached to Sussex University. With him was a French boy who was travelling to the Swiss Alps for mountaineering work and they became our travelling companions as far as St.Julien. We were glad not to be out in the rain, which was now falling or trudging our way up the slopes of the Jura but having passed through the rain, it eventually caught up with us and it was just starting to rain when a French girl stopped for us. The young and especially students, like this girl who was studying law at Grenoble University, were very sympathetic to us but in general hitch-hiking is very difficult in France, for many hold the view that you should only go to where you have to or can afford to go. But if we had done that there would have been little spirit of adventure. However once is enough, never again!



Andrew in shorts and on the road:

Having discussed many political and social topics with this girl, who was very anti the student riots, we eventually arrived at Annecy where we purchased a large-scale map of the area and were driven a little way out of the Centre of Annecy, until we reached an uncompleted garage and showroom, where we slept for the night!

And so, we entered Stage II of our holiday, again not knowing exactly what was in store for us.

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## INTRODUCTION by Andrew Gardner

This essay describes the perambulations of Simon Holloway and Andrew Gardner in the summer of 1968.

We were both leaving school having completed our A Levels and were about to embark on adult life –starting with work experience and University.

But before these momentous changes we volunteered to help out with a camp in Corsica organised by Gloucestershire Scouting.

Andrew had learned sub-aqua while at school and was helping as a dive leader and Simon was helping with the cross country activities and climbing Monte Cinti.

Simon had planned a trip to explore the Beaujolais wine district and to discover parts of country around Annecy.

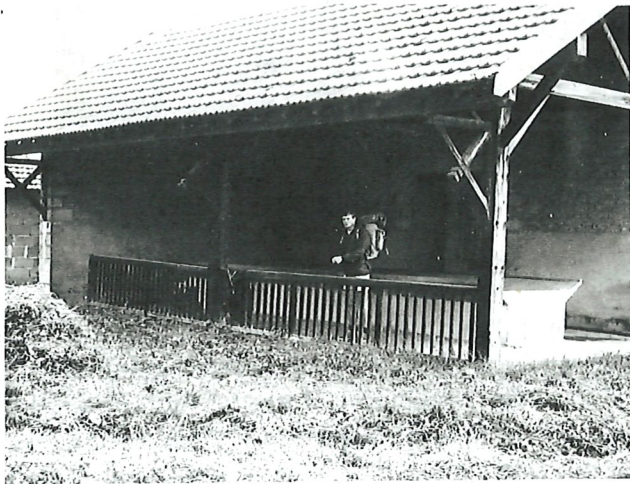
To that end we parted company with the Scouts in Marseilles, on their return journey to the UK, and headed out on our adventure.

The following is a day- by- day description of our journey.

We experienced culinary delight, sampled many wonderful (and some not so wonderful) wines, experienced the warmth and friendship of the French people and found out that August in the South of France can be very wet!.

## JOURNAL ENTRIES PART 2. HIKE LOG COMMENCING THURSDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST. Written by Andrew Gardner

A rather dusty night was spent in the unfinished garage but the bright sunshine in the morning



gave us a chance to dry some of our kit. We walked the couple of kilometres into Annecy and tried to change our traveller's cheques to replenish our meagre supply of French money. We found all the banks closed because of the holiday and even the travel agencies that will normally change money, although open, refused to cash our cheques. We then embarked on an almost equally futile quest for a dentist, learning there was one dentist open, but only at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. We resigned ourselves to our fate and had our lunch on the edge of the lake.



However, we had the good fortune to meet two French girls while we were having our meal and having deposited our rucksacks at one of the numerous cafes, we set off with them to see the town. We first visited the Maison des Jeunes – this was much like a glorified Youth Hostel with relatively cheap accommodation (7 Fr per night) and a very varied array of entertainment. There was a collection of art pieces by local children of all ages and much of it was of a very high standard. We inquired at the information desk about changing money and at last success, we were told that in the Casino (a large building situated on the edge of the lake with a dance floor, cinema and gambling casino) we could exchange our money. Having successfully changed our cheques, we set out together to find a suitable camping site following the signs to the municipal camp site. We eventually reached it perched high above the town but on the wrong side of the town to be of much help.

1700 hrs. We returned for our rucsacs and had a drink. As 5 o'clock was fast approaching, we set out to find the dentist as we had previously only been given a map to find his surgery. We parted company with the two French girls – **Mylene and Ginette** – and Simon shopped for food while I visited the dentist.



We set out to find a campsite in Albigny only 1 km out of Annecy. Most were packed with holiday makers but eventually we found a small space and cooked an early evening meal. We then returned to Annecy to sample one of the local liqueurs (rather expensive) although very pleasant. I don't think that I have acquired a tongue for liqueur – they all seem alike to me. We then tried our luck with a French film. At least, the words were in French but the film was originally a British film 'In Enemy Country'. Simon used the technique when he could not understand the French of attempting to lip read the English, while I preferred to sit back and get the overall meaning of the French words rather than getting the precise meaning of each word.

On our way back to the campsite, we met some Americans. They had been studying French in a local College at Grenoble and were now staying with a local family. One of the Americans returned with us to our campsite and we talked for quite a while learning that he had worked in Paris as a masseur, so I volunteered for some treatment. He worked for heaven knows how long on my shoulder and back and I must admit that the next day I felt no different.

FRIDAY 16<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.



We arrived at the 'Telepherique' at Veyrien and decided that we would leave our kit at the bottom of the mountain and climb on the cable car (Telepherique). The view on the way up was magnificent; we could see both ways along the lake and right over the town of Annecy away to the hills of the Jura many miles behind. We arrived at the top 1252 metres high from where we had the view westward to Mont Blanc that could be seen clearly between the wisps of white cloud. We then walked northwards along the ridge of the mountain and descended by the northern face traversing across it halfway down so that we ended up just above 'le Petit Port'. The side of the mountain was covered with conifers but we had the chance of many outstanding views on the way down.

We proceeded along the road back to Veyrien, picked up our kit and waited for the shops to open after lunch before we could buy our own. We



ate our meal in the grounds of the 'Marie' (town hall) at Veyrien overlooking the lake and wrote several cards to relations and friends.

We set off rather late in the afternoon and walked along the main road through Menthon St Bernard and Echarvine and then by a side road to Pirroix. We used a track to reach St. Germain instead of the road that bent back on itself. The going was very hot and the hill a fairly good gradient. We arrived at Verd for early evening and searched for a camp site. We met a Frenchman and asked if we could camp on his ground and he explained to us in no uncertain manner that we could not but went on to explain that campers had been here before and that due to rain they had had to dig water channels and generally ruined his ground. He also told us that they had been Germans and he asked if we were also. When we replied that we were English, his tone seemed to change and he seemed more apologetic, saying we could not camp on his land because of the damage but there was a place only a short way up the road. We had our evening meal in a small café at St. Germain; we were its only customers and therefore had excellent service. The food was good but we were so famished that I think we could have eaten anything.

## SATURDAY 17<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.



We woke up to the sound of rain, cooked our breakfast and waited for the storm to pass. We decided to pack and found that the tent was beginning to leak. Rain on and on and no visible break in the clouds. We eventually succumbed to the storm and Simon went in search of a dryer place of rest. He returned absolutely soaked but said that we could rest in the dairy (Fromagerie). So, we managed to dismantle the tent and ran for the cover of the fromagerie, both by this time very wet.

When we arrived, we watched the milk in a giant copper bowl being separated in a centrifuge and the filtrate used as milk, while the residue was used for making the local cheese – a rather expensive but renowned cheese in France. The butter was also being made in a large barrel that was revolved every so often and the water it was suspended in was changed. The rain kept falling and at lunch we were invited to join the family – Mother, Father and Daughter. The meal was magnificent. We started with ham and butter then massive mushroom omelettes, haricot beans and of course all three of the local cheeses to finish off – Tomme, Guichelet and Chasselos.



The afternoon was almost as bad as the morning but by 5 o'clock the rain had stopped and we were given a lift to the valley between Verrel and Rovagny to the beginning of the path up to the Chalet de l'Aup. The walk was very steep through the thick forest and the water left from the rain on the plants soaked us once again. The change was incredible from earlier in the day. Then the sky had been dark and overcast but now there was hardly a sign of clouds just a brilliantly blue sky. The chalet was situated in a small 'col'; there were two buildings - the farm house and the barn. We were shown up into the hay loft to spread our bedding and to find a group of about 30 young children (before the days of Safeguarding legislation!). We had our evening meal in the farm house and afterwards made our way to the loft. The children eventually quietened down enough for us to doze off but then a party of teenagers arrived who were extremely full of the joys of life and what with the cows with their bells in the stables below and the high-spirited newcomers, we did not sleep until 4 am. We had a very poor night's rest – but, as we discovered afterwards, this is the normal practise for anyone who wants to climb a mountain the following day!

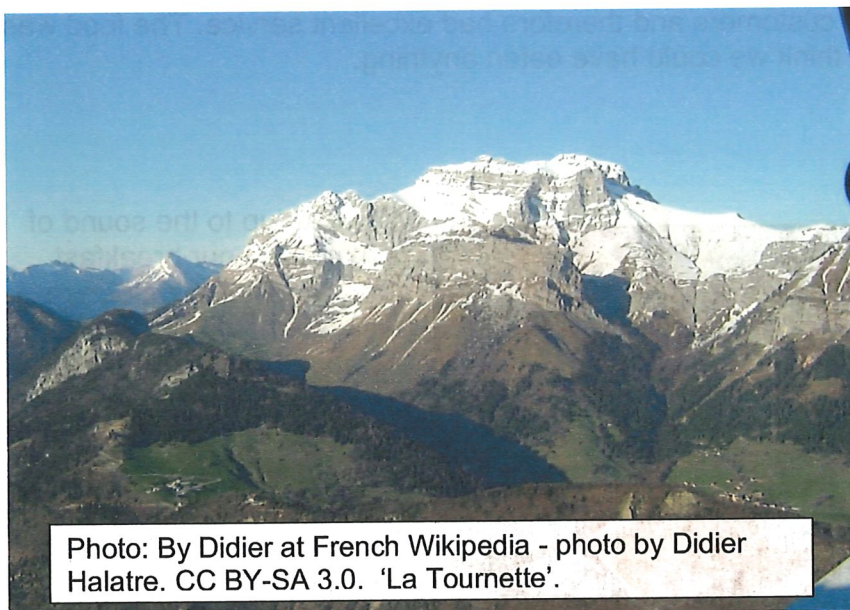


Photo: By Didier at French Wikipedia - photo by Didier Halatre. CC BY-SA 3.0. 'La Tournette'.

## SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.

Our intention had been to climb 'La Tournette' the previous day, but the weather had stopped us in our tracks. But this Sunday morning was magnificent. There was a clear sky all round and an easy climb, so we thought. The first part of the climb was very short zig-zag up the mountain then on reaching a large outcrop of rock there was an almost horizontal traverse to a Chalet called the 'Refuge de Blonay' (height 1835 m or 1777 m, there

being two contrary opinions!). The chalet had been served by a cable car, so that all goods could be transported up, the path being too steep, but unfortunately this cable car had collapsed and we were to pass the crushed remains of the trolley later in the day on our return to Verd.



We had left most of our kit behind at Chalet de l'Aup and only carried food, cameras and waterproof clothes. We decided as it was only a 30 minute ascent that we would leave the rucksack behind but carry extra clothes and cameras. We had a look at the weather before we left and there was a bank of very thick clouds coming towards us from the Annecy direction but still a fair way off. We decided that we would climb reasonably quickly just in case, but there was quite a lot of scrambling to start with and the paths were rather slippery, but at least there were arrows to show the way. We reached well over 2,000 metres (La Tournette 2351 metres) when the clouds started descending and then

there was a rift of opinion. One wanted to proceed at full speed while the other wanted to retreat, but after only a few minutes visibility dropped rapidly and it started snowing gently at first and eventually very much heavier. Visibility was down to below 20 yds so we bid a hasty retreat that

would have been impossible without the arrows to guide us. As we descended to the Refuge, the snow turned to rain and by the time we reached cover, we were soaked, yet again.

We warmed ourselves with a bowl of 'potage' (soup) and watched the antics of two local men, who had come to mend the cable car and the female who was in charge of the refuge, who was well and truly drunk. We were told that the weather would last for the rest of the day, so we decided to descend to the Chalet de l'Aut, pick up our kit and return to Verd via a different route. We went South from the Chalet down the valley to a road travelling west over the 'Col de la Forde' (a well-known beauty spot) and caught a lift to Verd from the Col.

We returned to the Fromagerie and were asked to stay for tea. We accepted and had a delightful meal and told them of our intention to go to Menthon St. Bernard to shop and find a camping site for the night. While we were waiting for a storm of rain to stop, we bought some of the local cheese and butter, kindly sold to us at a reduced price. The daughter said that she was going down to Annecy in the car and could give us a lift to Menthon.

1815hrs. We arrived in Menthon and did our shopping and then set out to find a place to rest. Our tent was still soaked from the rain and even though it had been unpacked as frequently as possible to help it dry, it would still not hold out rain. We asked a Mr. Anagain, who owned a farm if we could rest in his barn for the night and although not very helpful to start, soon invited us into the kitchen and told us we could use their cookers. The whole family was very friendly – Mother, Father, son and daughter – but we were unsuccessful in persuading the boy to speak English, which he claimed he had learnt for a few years. We slept for our second night on hay, but this time soundly and without interruption.

## MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.

In the morning, we had our grand petit-dejeuner, as the French called it, and set off for Annecy. We bought souvenirs and I visited the dentist again. It would have made the holiday so much easier if it had not been necessary to visit the dentist every 3 days. We again had lunch near the edge of the lake and much to our annoyance, the weather was now perfect, not a speck of cloud in the sky.

We climbed up the hills to see the Visitation, a magnificent church built by the money of the rich and the poor but there is no need to explain more as the enclosed pictures and leaflets can tell you everything.... (see photo)).



We met a French and an English girl and together we saw round the Chateau d'Annecy. This was a display of life in Annecy from past through the present and into the future. It was obviously constructed by a fairly young and imaginative group of men who spent a great deal of money building some most unusual sets with the aid of some very modern techniques using lighting, sound, mirrors and great deal of photography. It was thoroughly

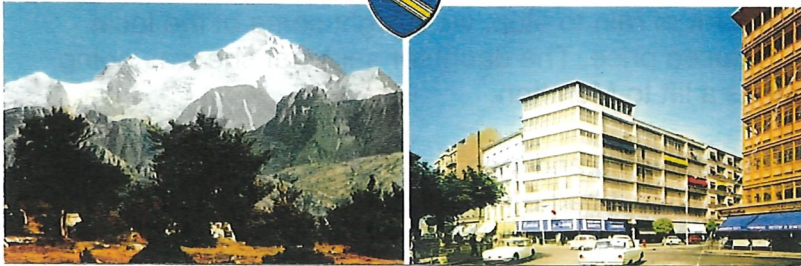
worthwhile and definitely recommended to any visitors to Annecy. The English girl told us of her relief in finding two people who could speak English. She had been many weeks only speaking French and this was becoming intolerable for her. She also told us of our good fortune in not have met any Belgians who speak French so fast that it is almost impossible to understand.



SOUVENIR



D'ANNEMASSE



We parted and Simon and I returned for our kit that had earlier been left in a small café. We had decided to walk out of Annecy a short way and the next day hitch-hike to Geneva. But in the bar there was an old gentleman who hearing that we were British bought us both drinks and asked us where we were going. He told us that he could take us to Annemasse, a town inside France but only a few kilometres from Geneva. We accepted his offer and set off in his car. The car was old and not in ideal condition and

the driver was equally dangerous. At one time he looked in his mirror, saw my face and asked me if I was afraid. We arrived in one piece. He found a hotel and bought us an evening meal and a room for the night. We felt in a very difficult position as we did not want to accept too much from him and yet we had also to be



careful what we refused in case we offended him.



## TUESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> AUGUST.

In the morning, we had a breakfast continental style and our benefactor left for work, paying for our food, lodgings and everything. Another case of love the English but hate the Germans that we so often came across in France.

The border post was only a few kilometres outside Annemasse. We passed through the French post without being stopped but were less fortunate at the Swiss post. The guard decided that Simon's rucksack was suspicious and asked him to unpack. In the morning, it normally takes him 20 mins to pack because he has all the small

items. He did not find any of our diamonds or drugs I am glad to say! We took the tram into the centre of the town and left our kit in a café in the Jardin Anglais next to the lake.

We wandered around the streets of Geneve – they were so much more for the rich businessman or tourist than those you normally see. We had lunch on the edge of the 'Lac de Geneve' in view of the 'Fontan du Jarelin Anglais', a fountain 130 metres high (almost 400 feet). In the afternoon, we visited a display of Icons that was on tour from Italy. This display was most impressive.

1600 hrs. We left the city and had a lift from a businessman over the border who told us that 'hitch-hiking was easy'. We were dropped only 1 km over the border and set off keenly for home. We walked for 1 ½ hours and eventually had a lift from a young parson whose car only just managed the three of us up the foothills of the Jura. He carried us through Gex and up the hill giving us a wonderful view of Mont Blanc in one direction and a red sunset with a white haze in the valleys in the other. We were dropped off at 1850hrs and walked again until 2020 hrs before we found any fresh water and a place to camp.

Note: Gex was the home of Voltaire and has thus a privileged position in France of being able to sell its produce at a much lower price than anywhere else in the country. But alas, we could not stop to buy.



### WEDNESDAY 21<sup>st</sup> AUGUST

We rose early and were on the road by 9am. At 10am, we reached La Rochelles, a holiday centre with hiking or skiing, depending on the season. We met two other English hikers from Shropshire. We walked on and on with no success for a lift and at 4pm, we decided that perhaps the train would be easier. Thanks to careful budgeting and a record of all the money that we had spent, limiting ourselves to 22 Fr per day, we had plenty of money left for our fares. No doubt the generous hospitality given by many French people also helped us save money.

We left from St. Laurent railway station through Dijon to Paris, where we arrived at the 'Gare du Lyon' at 11.30pm and tried to sleep in the waiting room. We were rudely awoken by a guard at some absurd hour to justify our presence in the station but hearing that we were British he left us, while throwing out a Swiss gentleman. Thank heaven we were British!

THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> AUGUST.

We took a bus to the Autoroute and attempted to hitch-hike again. We had one lift from a young student and managed to get as far as Versailles. We tried hitching again but with no success, so we took the train again from Versailles to Le Havre via Paris.

We arrived at Le Havre at 1600 hrs, bought our tickets and decided to have a swim to remove some of the dust. We were accosted by two Mormons who were attempting to convert the French people. They were both very pleasant and intelligent people but so American. The boat left port at 11.15pm and so ends our tour of France.

Simon Holloway and Andrew Gardner.

August 1968

A Wine and Cheese tour of France,  
sponsored by Wycliffe College, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire.



Some extra slides taken from a cable car looking over Lake Annecy



## WINE AND CHEESE TOUR. – AUGUST 1968



### Where is Beaujolais?

Beaujolais is very much the smallest house in the fanciest neighbourhood. It's bordered by Burgundy to the North; the Saône River (which leads to [Côtes du Rhône](#)) to the East; the "Gastronomic Capital of France", Lyon, to the South; and the Monts de Beaujolais (the hills of the Massif Central) on the West.

Beaujolais is just 34 miles long and 7-9 miles wide.

The area is naturally divided into two sections by the Nizerand River. You'll find different soils on each side of the river. This is important to note because [the soil types hold the key](#) to Beaujolais' flavour. There's mostly granite and schist (decomposed rock) to the North and clay-based soils (marl) to the South.

By the way, all of the Beaujolais Cru vineyards are located on the Northern side of Beaujolais.