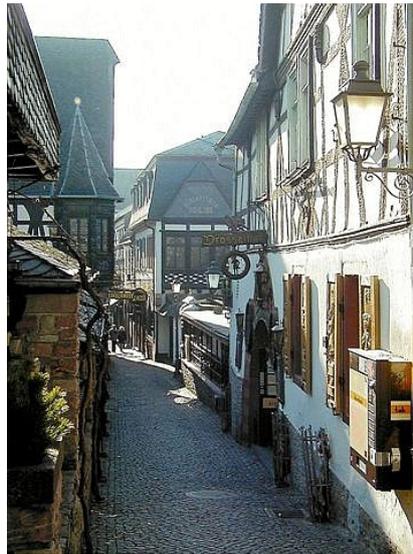


Chapter 52
1958 – 1961
Bannockburn / Summer Vacation – 1959

Having spotted an open-air swimming pool in a large sunny garden location just behind the monument on the confluence ‘peninsula’, we spent the rest of the day relaxing there rather than city sight-seeing around Koblenz. It was really too warm to do much else anyway. The youth hostel proved to be one where we had to wait for ages in the late afternoon before we were admitted; and then only when all youngsters had been attended to. However, it was worth the wait, as its commanding position was awe-inspiring, and its amenities superb.

Day Nine found us setting out by road for Rudesheim and its renowned vineyard slopes. Feeling the need for a change out of our kilts because of the ever-rising temperatures, we donned shorts or slacks and proceeded to ‘thumb’ our way with placards held prominently in order to identify both our nationality and proposed destination. These proved to be disastrously unsuccessful ploys as, for well over an hour, any vehicles that did slow down near our pairings, soon accelerated away again with utter indifference, if not contempt. So we duly called a halt, not just for a comfort stop behind some convenient roadside bushes, but mainly to change back into our kilted attire and discard our placards. Then, after a matter of minutes back on the road, as if by magic, first Jim and Alistair were accommodated in an imposing limousine, and David and I found a welcome ride in a van loaded with cartons of cigarettes. Our ‘chauffeur’ turned out to be one ‘Uwe Mettig’, a delightful and informative young salesman with enough English to make the drive down to Rudesheim very enjoyable indeed.

The four Scots met up again in the town near lunch time, had a snack, then, it being yet early in the day, merely surveyed the small town’s most famous attraction, the tempting Drosselgasse with its promise of incomparable wines in a narrow cobbled street flanked by a convivial abundance of cafes and pubs. However, we vowed to come down from the hillside youth hostel in the evening for a ‘night on the town’.



A grassy spa area caught our attention and the delights of swimming and sun-bathing soon drew us into relaxing mode yet again. And so the afternoon drifted past as we indulged ourselves amidst idyllic scenery with light exercise, snoozing and tanning on the banks of the Rhine.



While registering at the youth hostel in the late afternoon, we were surprised to hear Scottish accents from two ladies ahead of us in the queue. Just to 'prove' it was a small world even in 1959, they turned out to be two Glasgow University students on a similar jaunt to our own. One introduced herself as Christine Duff, and I immediately recognised the name as someone who already had a reputation as an outstanding field hockey player in Glasgow. Suffice to say they were only too happy to accept Scottish male company (*and protection*) when it was suggested that they join us on our proposed wine 'tasting' that evening in the Drosselgasse.

[It was some six years later before I again met Scottish Internationalist, and University 'Blue', Christine when she, as a graduate member, regularly attended the Glasgow University Physical Education Building where I was by then a lecturer. And our reminiscences of that jolly evening, in Rudesheim cemented our continuing platonic friendship.]

Down town we soon discovered that our limited budgets were going to be severely strained by the type of 'Kabinet mit Pradikat' wine offered in the 'tourist trap' hostelrys of the Drosselgasse. However, undaunted, and going 'Dutch', the six of us still managed to 'knock-back' a fair variety, and quantity, of these exquisite liquids, and certainly enough for us later to unabashedly 'entertain', the no doubt sleeping populace, as we sang our merry meandering way back up the hill to the hostel.

Breakfast time next day, the tenth of our trip, brought a reckoning! All four of us, not unsurprisingly, reached the conclusion that we were all but 'skint', and that retreat to the North Sea in 'short order' would be a financial necessity. Thus, 'strapped for cash' as we were, we immediately took the boat trip across the Rhine to Bingen. Thereafter we split up as usual, and, after deciding to wait for each other in Ostende, *[whenever that might be]* we got on the road with our 'thumbs' pointing hopefully westward.

