

PARIS WEEKENDS

法学部

JOHN HAMILTON

Autumn Visit

Recently I have spent two weekends in Paris. The first one was from September 8th to the 12th, 2001. It is easy to remember because it was the weekend of the attack on the World Trade Center in New York which I watched on French television.

Actually this weekend began with a shock for me - before the bigger shock in America. At ROISSY CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT my passport, my money and my cheque book and cards were all taken by a pickpocket. I felt so foolish. Usually when I travel in China I am very careful about this kind of thing. I keep my precious things in inside pockets or trouser pockets half way down my legs, and I never have any problems there. In fact people in China may be poor but they are honest in my experience. But France is so close to England. It doesn't seem like going to a foreign country ... and I broke all my own rules and took no precautions. There was one immigration guichet open for 300 people. I showed my passport and hurried through carrying two bags, both hands full. Suddenly I realised my pockets were empty.... At the police office where I reported the theft, they said that gangs of pickpockets operated all the time. There were

depressed looking young black people sitting on the floor of the police office. The atmosphere was not good. This was my welcome to France.

We stayed in the apartment of friends at 42 Quai d' Orleans on ÎLE ST-LOUIS three floors above the most famous icecream shop in Paris. The sign outside said "Glaces et Sorbets de la Maison Bertillon" and the icecreams were quite delicious. We were visiting Mark Hamilton who was staying in a chambre de bonne upstairs. The apartment was beautifully decorated in French style with a Chinese mural on the wall of the dining room which looked like a picture of the lake at Jehol, today's Chengde 承德 north of Peking. There was an architecture student Thomas St Yves staying in the flat who was very keen on the work of Japanese architects Tadao Ando, Tetsuo Se-



The fashionable drink among students in Paris at the moment

jima and Shigeru Ban. He introduced me to 'Martini on the rocks' which he said was the favorite drink among students in Paris. It has been my favorite drink since then. There was also a girl called Jasmin Areliano visiting from Chicago. Her father was Mexican and mother Lebanese. It seems that these days half the population of Chicago speaks Spanish. (In Chicago you can take your driving test in Spanish, I was told later.) The windows of the apartment looked out onto Notre-Dame which is the most extraordinary building; sometimes it seems like a huge insect, sometimes like a rowing boat, in the mornings we were woken up by the great bells..... echoing along the quais. We walked out and visited the 'Mémorial de la Déportation' below the apartment. It is a memorial to French Jews who were deported to concentration camps during the war. "PAR-DONNE.....N'OUBLIE PAS....." was written on the wall. And from there we took the rue de Bièvre where President Mitterrand used to live, up into the Latin Quarter. I had to go to the British Consulate in the rue d' Anjou to get a replacement passport which I needed to get back to England and a day or two later return to Japan. The British Consulate gave me very good service. They faxed my application and photograph to Peterborough in UK and two days later the new passport was ready. After the September 11th attack in New York I needed the passport to get back into England.

On the Sunday we visited a cousin, Kate de Montjoie, in Suresnes behind the Longchamps racecourse. We had a very good dinner by candlelight. The cheeses - Tomme de Savoie and Reblochon de Savoie were quite delicious as was the Sorbet so much so that I copied down the recipe.

PÊCHES ET GRANITÉ AU BEAUMES DE VENISE (for four)

Le granité: 1/3 de litre de beaumes de Venise,
100g de sucre semonte

Les pêches: 4 pêches blanches et jaunes, 1 citron
jaune non traité, 1 brin de thym frais, quelque
grappe de groseilles

Préparation: 5 minutes Cuisson: 7 à 8 minutes

Le Granité. Verser dans une cocotte 2.5 dl d' eau, ajouter le sucre, porter à ébullition, et lorsque le sucre est fondu, laisser cuire encore 5 minutes à feu doux. Retirer du feu, laisser refroidir, ajouter les beames de Venise, mélanger, verser la préparation dans un bac de glace, mettre au congélateur et laisser prendre les pêches. Couper les pêches en lamelles, les mettre dans un saladier, raper au dessus le zeste du citron, exprimer son jus, en verser 2 cuillerées à soupe sur tes fruits, remuer et mettre au frais pour au moins une heure. Au moment de servir, répartir les lamelles de pêche dans des coupes, ajouter au granité quelque groseilles et un brin de thym.

We were driven back from Suresnes by Henri de Montjoie. Along the quais we passed the place where Princess Diana had hit the pillar and been killed really not so long ago (a breathtaking way to go.) The following day we visited Kate again, this time at her work in La Défense. She is responsible for among other things the art collection of the bank Société Générale. In fact we were up on the 35th floor looking at art works when the attacks took place in New York. 35 floors seemed quite high enough to me. We had wondered how we would get out if there was a fire.

Spring Visit

(for Odette Barral's 80th birthday party

She is still 23 !)

We visited Paris again over the Easter weekend (March 31st to April 4th.) This time Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport was quite civilized. The 1960s modern architecture of the airport is very interesting. We took the bus in to Porte Maillot and walked up Avenue de la Grande Armée to the apartment where we were staying. The party had not been kept a secret but the birthday lady didn't know we were coming. We stayed the first night with one of the daughters Marie Anne. She was actually not there when we arrived but on her way back from a tennis tournament in Grenoble, so her husband took care of us. Marie Anne is a banker and has worked for Banque Nationale de Paris for a long time. As in Japan, banks in France are consolidating. Recently BNP merged with Paribas, so she is working on the BNP side of the BNP - PARISBAS MERGER which is quite a job. "It is difficult to pay their salaries," she said. I sensed a battle in progress. After these mergers there is always a blood-bath. It is called 'restructuring.' (A merchant banker friend in England aged 52 was recently fired by a 26 year old girl.) While waiting for her to come back I watched the television news. Israel had just attacked Ramallah on the West Bank. Chirac in an interview was saying that Israel would never win security by force and I agreed with that. The Presidential election in France was in full swing. At that time it looked as if Jospin was going to win, but nobody was very interested. We were to get a surprise a few weeks later.

The BIRTHDAY PARTY was a lunch on

Easter Monday. Since the birthday lady had had 9 children and we knew all of them, and now all of them were married some more than once, and had their own families, it was great fun for us. I always enjoy speaking French which I do very badly, though it improves as I drink more wine. (Sometimes in France I find myself speaking Japanese!) It was a beautiful day. The garden on the edge of the Parc de Sceaux was full of flowers. A blonde girl was lounging with her black boyfriend on the balcony of a flat across the road... Before lunch I went with one of the sons to the boulangerie in Sceaux to collect about 50 warm baguettes which had been ordered before. Carrying the warm baguettes was like carrying a warm baby. Paris was looking good. Since the great storm went through France a year or two ago, lots of young trees have been planted, and now they are all beginning to look nice. At the lunch I was seated between an artist called Topsy and a fellow 80 year old called Alain Philippe.

That night we stayed with a daughter-in-law Caroline in a flat in Place de Mexico in the 16th. It was on the fifth floor and the lift was not working so we had to be careful not to forget anything when we went out. She had three daughters, Emmanuelle, Sabine and Quitrie and two golden labradors Lena and Gali. We took the dogs for a walk down to the Benjamin Franklin Park which is a dog's loo opposite the Trocadéro. IT WAS SO EXCITING WALKING WITH DOGS THROUGH PARIS. I really felt at home.

The following evening we dined with Alix, another daughter. and her husband Marc, near the metro station Boulogne Jean Jaures. Both of them were ear nose and throat doctors. Marc's father had been a vet in Chad (Chad is 6 times the size of France) so he had been

brought up there. He had done his service militaire as a doctor in Brazzaville. That day was Marc's "JOURNÉE CÉLIBATAIRE" but because we were visiting he came and joined us. Their house was very nice. It had a secret attic concealed behind a bookcase. It was the kind of place where the resistance might have had a radio during the war. There was a plate on the dresser, brought back by Marc's grandfather from China, dating from the mid 19th century maybe, and maybe from Jingdezhen 景德镇 - and on it was an inscription in Chinese. I copied it down but so far I have not been able to find anyone Chinese or Japanese who can translate it. Here it is:

生伏

天	帝	火	十	老
堃	王	召	余	夕
石	典	床	曹	士
非	莫	来	素	九

At dinner Alix was asking why England did not join the Euro. "You can't live next door and not participate," she said. "ARE YOU WITH AMERICA OR WITH US?" "We feel that the British stay out in order to become rich on our back." It was interesting to hear these comments although I don't see things in quite the same way.

We were driven back across the Bois de Boulogne to where we were staying. On the way we saw lots of ladies of the night ('poules de luxe') waiting to be picked up. Many come from Poland and the Ukraine these days I was

told. It was good to be in Paris again.

REFLECTIONS.

My difficulties at Roissy Charles de Gaulle were food for thought. The airport is at the interface between developing and developed worlds. Lots of people from North Africa and West Africa want to come and live in France. Indeed the European Union is also besieged from the East as well. Maybe some lucky man is now using John Hamilton's passport in England, and had enough money to get through the first few weeks with his family. Good luck to him!

After these visits, LE PEN, the extreme right wing candidate, came in second in the first round of the French Presidential election ahead of Jospin. If the French electorate had been a little more lazy he might even have won..... Recently George Bush in America won the Presidential election by a very narrow margin in the Florida recount. Both America and France are mature democracies. But both results make me anxious that in the future really dangerous people could by chance become political leaders. The democratic system can go wrong just by chance... This time was just a warning.

It was good to have a glimpse of life in France after a long interval, and to see friends, and members of a big family, and how they were all getting along. Some had been out of work for a long time, some had divorced and remarried, or not yet remarried, but they were all surviving with sense of humour intact. The food and wine was delicious. They have beautiful children - though not quite so many as in the previous generation. Young lovely trees are coming up to replace those swept away by the hurricane.