

LES TRAVERSÉES D'HELVIA ET BERGUISE



Helvia and Berguise are a very keen pair of explorers, always on the lookout for new adventures, thrills and discoveries.

Inquisitive Berguise flew farther afield than usual recently ... and came back with an enormous bunch of keys.

What a piece of luck, the keys open the doors to countless unknown villages !

They immediately set off in search of adventure down the corridors of time. Heritage, architecture, scenic landscapes, arts and crafts, everything will be revealed ! They can't wait to show you what they have found, so follow in their footsteps!

Helvia is a brave, fearless young woman born on the slopes of the Coiron plateau. Berguise, her faithful ally, follows her everywhere on her adventures.

She's a resourceful adventuress and has an acute sense of observation, which makes her second to none.

Berguise is a winged animal with brightly-coloured feathers and is both caring and inquisitive. Helvia and he are a loveable well-matched bubbly pair !



Good news Berguise,
the key we've chosen
has opened the door to
Rochemaure.

I can see the village in the
distance and I have put on
my 15th-century knight's
attire for the occasion.

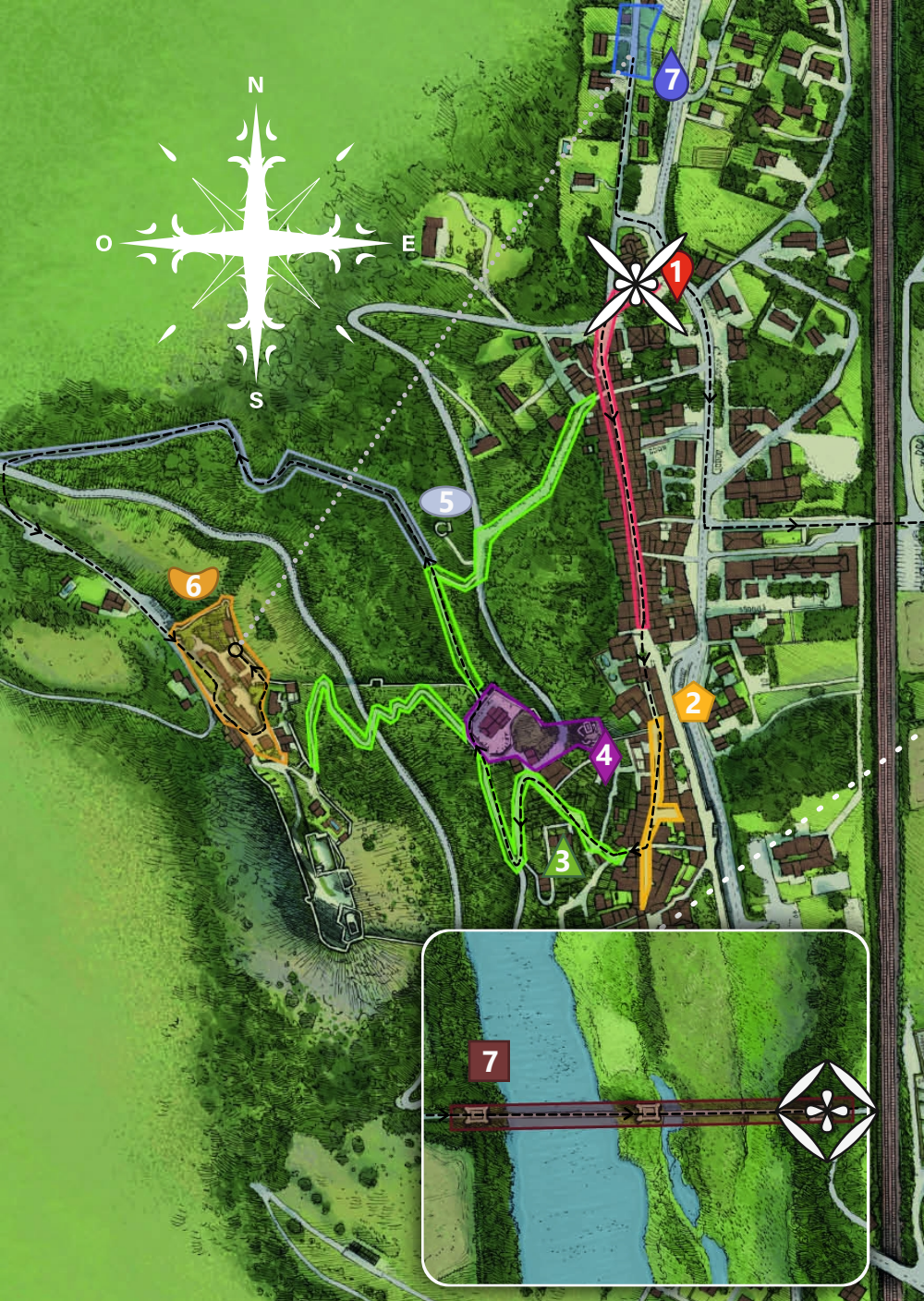
Great ! Let's go
and explore the
village and its
history !



After this adventure,
you'll know all there is to
know about this multi-
faceted village.



*See you at the north car-park near the
church for the beginning of our adventure.*



KEY



Start



Finish



**To the
2nd stage
of the trail**



Trail

THE STOPS



1

5

2

6

3

7

4

8

1 - THE RED STOP



ENTRANCE TO RUE DU FAUBOURG

Helvia : So here we are in Rochemaure Berguise. Just over there is the church built in 1867. Look, here's the entrance to rue du Faubourg which was called « Carreria Bassa » in the Middle Ages.

Berguise : Have you seen this big stone in front of the village Council Offices ?! It's got funny writing on it ...

Helvia : Really Berguise ! It's written in Latin and it isn't just a big stone ! It's a milestone which is nearly 2,000 years old ! Well, a replica anyway. The original is in a safe place.

Berguise : All right, but I still don't know what it was for !

Helvia : A milestone indicates a distance. Between 138 and 161AD, when Antoninus Pius was Emperor of Rome, Rochemaure was on a very important routeway. The Via Antoninus passed through the Helvien capital of Alba. The Romans placed a milestone every 1,000 Roman feet, or 1.478 km to be exact. Rochemaure's milestone indicates 9,000 Roman feet. So I'll let you work out the distance Berguise.

Berguise ! Berguise ! Where are you ?

Berguise : Sorry Helvia, I was listening but I flew a little higher to get a bird's eye view of the street.

Helvia : Let's walk into the village and take a closer look then.

Dear reader : do you know what the grooves on the corner of rue du Faubourg and chemin de Gaudissart were for ?

Planks would be inserted into the grooves to stop water from flooding into the Faubourg during heavy rainfall.



Berguise : All these dwellings are huddled one against the other. It would seem that in the 16th century they were all built to the same sort of plan.

Helvia : What do you mean ?

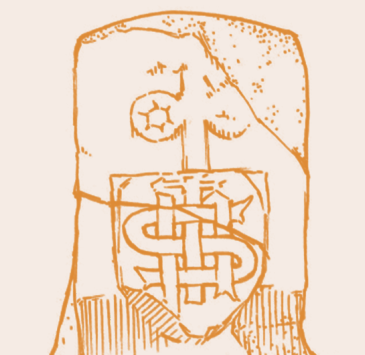
Berguise : Well, look carefully Helvia ! At street level, there was a wide door which allowed access to a workshop, shop or undercroft. To one side, there's another door behind which a staircase leads up to one or two floors. There was sometimes even a loft with a opening onto the street and a pulley system so that you could haul hay or food up there for storage.

Helvia : Some of them look as though they belonged to people with money.

Berguise : Why do you say that ?

Helvia : Well some of the houses have mullioned windows or symbols engraved above the doorway.

Dear reader, can you see the IHS monogram ? It's an emblem formed of several intertwined letters. IHS means « Jesus » or »Jesus, Saviour of Man »



Look carefully at the surprising street names like Rhône street or Fisherman's alley. That's because right up to the 18th century, the Rhône flowed where the present RD86 trunk road is. Who'd have thought it ?!

Helvia : Berguise, I can hear the sound of water splashing somewhere near the small square at the end of Faubourg street. A wash-house maybe ?

Berguise : You're right ! Rochemaure had several fountains and each dwelling was directly supplied with springwater by a gravity-fed network.

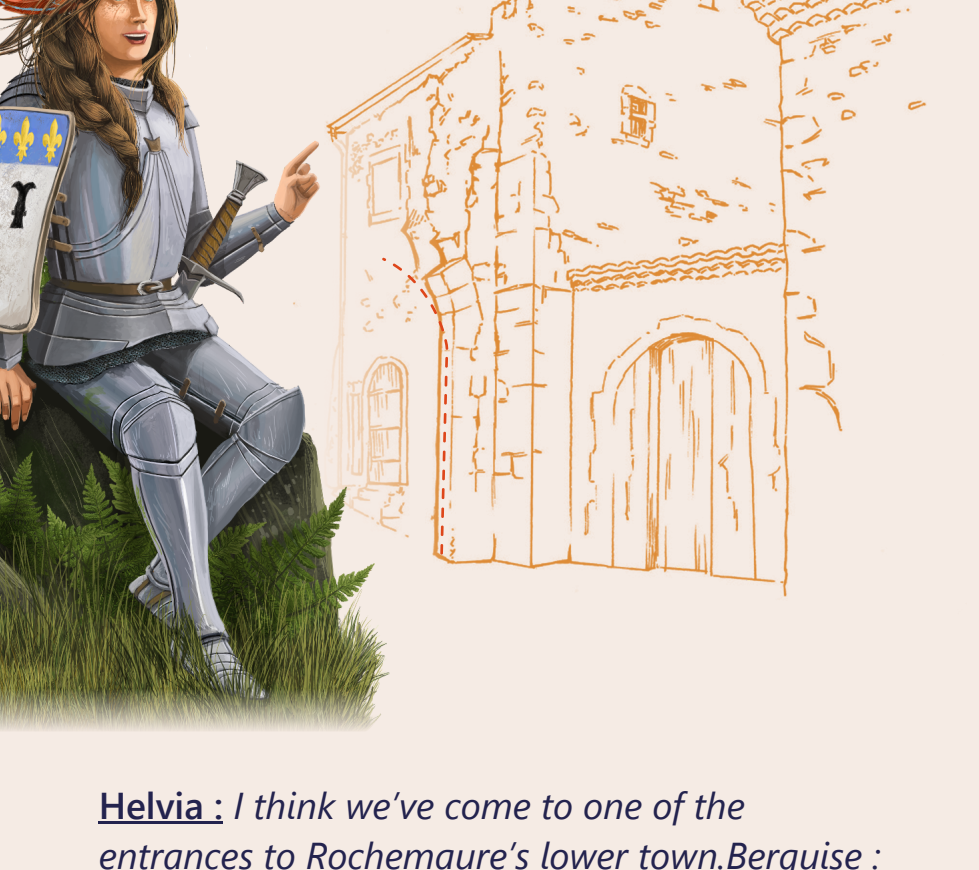
Where do you want to start out on your adventure ?
- Shall we climb the steepish hill ... which has some pleasant surprises in store (next page).
- Or would you like to climb even higher by retracing our steps along chemin de Gaudissart (Symbol **3** on the plan ; green stop : animal and plant life ; Rochemaure's trails ?)



Turn into rue de la Violle, via the first archway as you arrive from the Faubourg.

2 - THE GOLD STOP

LA RUE DE LA VIOLE



Helvia : I think we've come to one of the entrances to Rochemaure's lower town.

Berguise : Really ? But I can't see any gate !

Helvia : A little imagination is called for here

Berguise !

Look carefully at this wall and imagine an archway and gate which was one of the main

entrances to the village. It was called Suchet Gate.

If you look higher up, you can see the

crenellations along the battlements which

completely surrounded the village of Rochemaure.

Berguise : Those walls are just amazing ! I flew

over them earlier and saw they start high up

there near the castle and come right down here to

protect the village. But, hold on Helvia ! That

means that when we were in the Faubourg earlier

we weren't safe from attack !!!

Helvia : That's right Berguise, but no need to

worry! We are out of harm's way now, and just to

make certain let's carry along rue de la Violle ! At

least there, we'll be well inside the walls.

Berguise : Yes let's go ! Helvia, these houses are

as beautiful if not more so than those in the

Faubourg.

Helvia : They are indeed. Apparently in the 16th

century, there were many tradesmen and

craftsmen in rue de la Violle, which at the time

was called « carreria publica ». Those burgers -

that's the name given to someone dwelling in a

borough or town - contributed greatly to the

development of the local economy.

Look carefully : several houses have larmiers or hood moulds, often over the entrance door. They stopped rainwater from trickling further down the house front.



Berguise : Helvia, I can see a belltower in rue de la Violle ! But we've already been past the village church, haven't we?!

Helvia : Yes, but look carefully, the belltower is all

that's left. It belonged to the Penitents chapel

built in 1718. The rest of that disappeared in

1919. If you examine the entrance to the present-

day square, you can see where its arches were.



Berguise : You can also admire the view ! But, who exactly were these Penitents ?

Helvia : It's a long story, so let's just say those

brotherhoods were formed to deepen Christian

faith. Non-ordained or lay followers congregated

to perform certain duties of devotion and

charitable works.

Berguise : I have just found another gate into the

village of Rochemaure, Tourelles Gate !

Helvia : Actually I think its real name is

Tournelles Gate, Berguise. Unlike Suchet Gate on

the north side of the village, this one still has its

system of defences.

Berguise : True, there's the bartizan above the

gate, which enabled you to hurl objects down on

your enemies. And just look at the walls on either

side. Each entrance is really well-guarded.

Helvia : Well well, I see you're getting to be a bit

of an expert on defensive systems. What do you

want to do now ? I've located chemin de

Malbourn which goes right up to the castle. Are

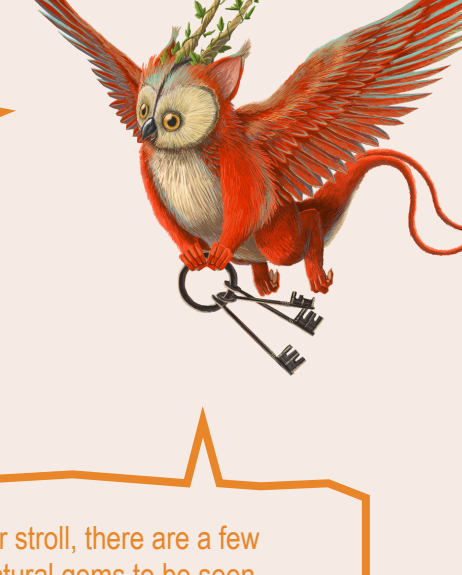
you coming with me ? If so we have to turn back

then bear left. Or maybe you'd rather cool off a

bit at Rochemaure's spring (symbol  blue stop :

the Bernarde spring) ?

There's another IHS crest in rue de la Violle, like the one on page 7. Have you found it ?



On your stroll, there are a few architectural gems to be seen. Sketch : this Flamboyant Gothic housefront dates from the 15th century. Its corner window and the stone carving make it really special.



Emprunte la rue de la Violle, passage sous une première arche en venant du Faubourg



You're on one of the trails leading up to another architectural discovery. Whichever trail you take, you'll see the abundant plant and wildlife here. To respect the environment, please do not disturb the animals or pick the plants.

Helvia : Perhaps we'll meet some animals ? Kites fly far and high during the Spring. You can also see hawks and common buzzards, which are easily recognized from their call.

Berguise : I fancy going for a fly ! I'm going to soar up really high and see if I meet any of them.



The Kestrel



The Black Kite



The Common Buzzard

Berguise : While I was flying around, I noticed there is a wide variety of plant species in Rochemaure.

Helvia : That's true. It's thanks to the soil, Berguise. Plants, bushes and trees here grow well on the fertile basalt soil. Other elements can affect and modify the way they look, such as exposure to sun. Plants adapt to their environment.

Look at the sketches I've done as I've wandered along the different trails.

Viburnum Tinus



Laurustinus is not edible, unlike Bay Laurel.

The Almond tree



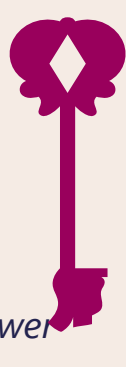
The Common Box



Buxus is widely used in formal French-style gardens.

The almond tree is one of the first to blossom at the end of the winter.

4 - THE PURPLE STOP



THE TOWER OF GUYONS DE GEYS DE PAMPELONNE

Berguise : Why was it built so near to the lower village ?

Helvia : Because it was in direct contact with the major transport routes. There were two : a road and a waterway, both of which were used for the transportation of goods. Remember the names of some of the streets in the lower town, Fisherman's alley and Rhône street.

Berguise : There must have been lots of merchant traffic on the river !

Helvia : There was, and the economic benefit from it was huge. As from the Middle Ages, the lords of Rochemaure set up a tollbooth. Whenever you wanted to cross from one bank to the other, you had to pay a toll.

Berguise : How much would it have cost ?

Helvia : It's not as simple as that. It depended on the era, the social standing of the passengers and the goods they were transporting. For example, someone from Rochemaure might not have had to pay anything or at least less than a « foreigner » would.



Berguise : On my way up I saw a monument. At first, I thought it was the castle. Then when I got closer, I saw I was mistaken.

Helvia : Yes, today, that monument is privately-owned Berguise. It's built on a rock spur of volcanic origin.



Bear left up the road to Notre Dame des Anges chapel

NOTRE DAME DES ANGES CHAPEL

Berguise : Here we are in front of Notre Dame des Anges chapel and its cemetery. There's an atmosphere of peace and respect here. What do we know about its history ?


Helvia : This chapel was already here in the 13th century but the building you see today dates from the late 16th century and is no longer consecrated. It was rebuilt then after being destroyed by Protestants during the Wars of Religion.

Berguise : Look at the top of the belltower, Helvia ! Above the opening on the left, there's a woman's and a man's face. You can even see a date engraved above the woman's : « 1596 ».

Helvia : Oh, you've got good eyesight Berguise. I think the original Roman milestone is here inside.



Berguise : Yes it is, but that's not the only treasure ! There's a replica of the Magic Square, a beautiful 17th-century fresco and the vaults of several families from Rochemaure or the surrounding villages.

Helvia : The names on the tombs are definitely those of Rupismaurian families. Come on Berguise, let's climb even higher and explore the upper town of Rochemaure. Or if you prefer, we can go back down to the lower town (symbol ).

Berguise : No, let's carry on up. I've only just started warming up my wings ! Let's follow the Saut de l'Ane path.

Helvia : OK. Apparently there's a legend about this trail.



On your way up from the village, follow the chapel wall to a turret facing you. Then bear left onto the Saut de l'Ane path.

5 - THE GREY STOP



SAUT DE L'ANE PATH

Berguise : *Helvia, you mentioned something about a legend. What does it say ?*

Helvia : *Are you sure you want to hear it ? It might scare you !*

Berguise : *Really ? It doesn't matter, I'm brave and anyway it's only a story.*

Helvia : *If you say so !*

A long time ago on a cold winter's night, a man who'd had a little too much to drink was being chased by the devil. His small grey donkey was not renowned for being the fastest of mounts. The man was riding up this path and saw the devil coming. Unfortunately, the ravine was close too and they were trapped between the devil on the one hand and the precipice on the other. What could they do ? In desperation, the man decided to invoke Saint Christopher, the patron saint of travellers and strays.

Berguise : *And what happened ?*

Helvia : *Well, would you believe, all of a sudden, the donkey, in a single bound with his master on his back, leapt right up to the top ! Safe and sound !*

Berguise : *You tell a good story really well, Helvia.*

Helvia : *It had assistance from a poem written by Paul Nègre, a poet from Rochemaure. We'll come across the fruit of his quill when we get to the Bernarde spring.*

Berguise : *Personally, I'm no stranger to quills and feathers !*

Helvia : *Berguise, you know you can be tedious sometimes! Look we've almost reached Rochemaure's upper town.*



***Emprunte la rue de la Violle,
passage sous une première
arche en venant du Faubourg***

6 - THE ORANGE STOP



THE LANDSCAPE

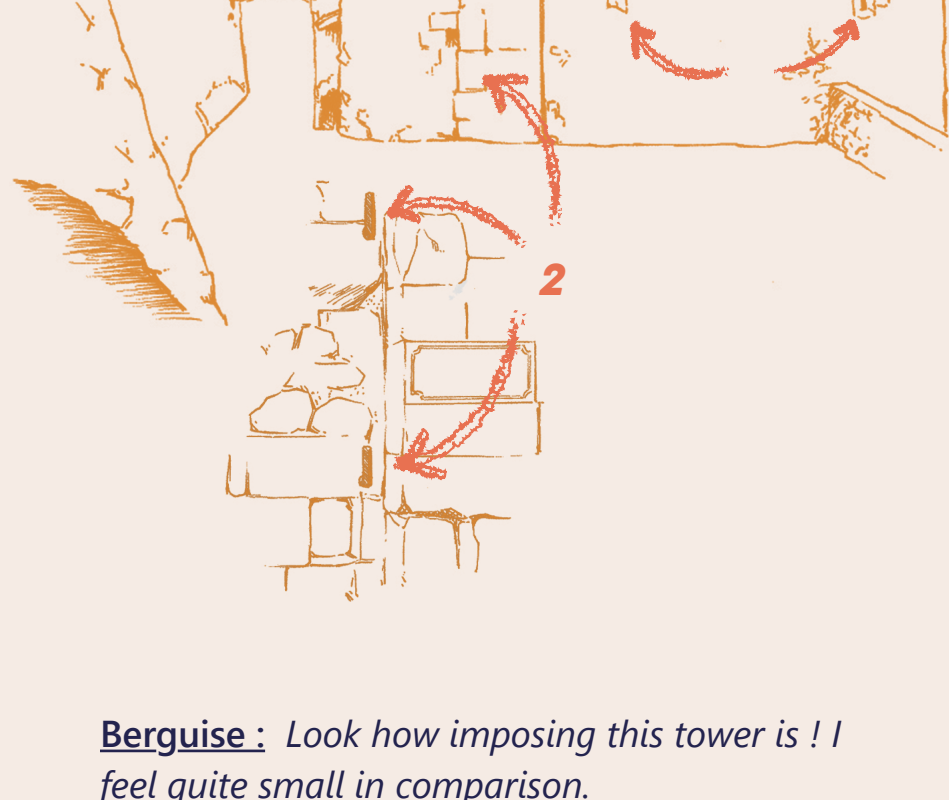
Helvia : Et voilà Berguise, nous sommes arrivés au point culminant de la commune !

Berguise : Sorry, but I have to disagree, Helvia. Look around you. One of the highest points is the Chenavari peak. It's a 506-metre high volcano. This scenery is what has shaped the heritage we see today.

Helvia : What do you mean ?

Berguise : Facing us is the Coiron massif. It was formed millions of years ago and has supplied masons with a black stone called basalt. You can see they used resistant basalt and softer limestone as building materials. The limestone was used for window and door surrounds or arches. Look how beautiful and peaceful it is here ...

It is enchanting ! The people who live in this part of the village have a fantastic view and enjoy peace and quiet too. Let's keep a low profile and respect our surroundings.



Berguise : Look how imposing this tower is ! I feel quite small in comparison.

Helvia : Bise Tower was a watchtower. Its sister, Galade Tower, is further east. The two were linked together by a protective wall we call the battlements or ramparts. We'll talk about them later. Let's take the gentler path.

Berguise : Helvia, we're under attack !

Helvia : What are you talking about Berguise ?!

Berguise : Look ! Facing us ! There are two loopholes and I'm sure I saw something move in the background.

Helvia : What ??? Oh, You mean those slits opposite (1)? They could be deadly in the past. But there's no-one here to attack us today, Berguise ! However, there would have been a gate here. If you look closer you'll probably see the hinges it hung on (2).

Berguise : Yes, I see what you mean Helvia. There was no doubt a really complex system of defence like the one at Tournelles Gate.

Helvia : Yes, no doubt there was, especially as it was the entrance to Rochemaure castrum.

Berguise : « Castrum », what's that ?

Helvia : A castrum is a fortified area centred around a castle and the village and its dwellings. In the 14th century, to get into this part of the castrum, you had to use the trail up Rignas valley. We'll explore that another day. Today, let's get closer to the castle entry.

➡ **Dear reader, there is access to drinking water near the castle entrance gate.**

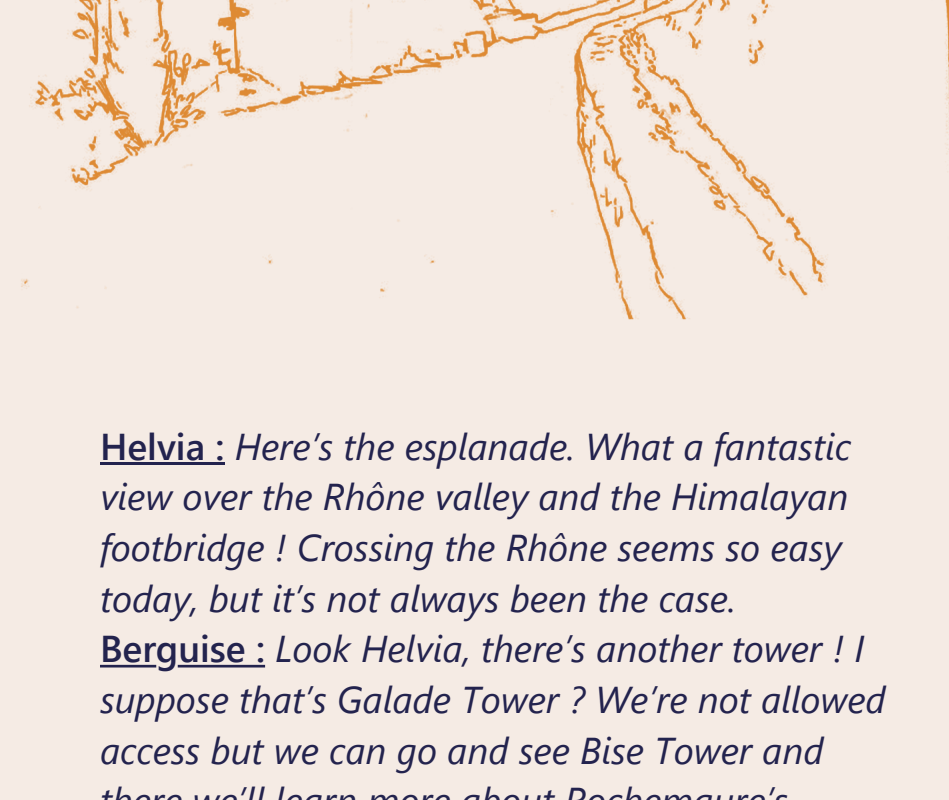
Helvia : Look carefully. Have you seen the oven to the right of the entrance ? It was built in Medieval times.

Berguise : Yes I have. It was the communal oven the lord had built so that inhabitants could bake their bread or food. It has been restored since.

You can visit the castle in the summer months and on special days throughout the year either with or without a guide.



Dear visitor, stroll down the alleyways taking care not to disturb the tranquility of their inhabitants. Follow the battlements to the esplanade.



Helvia : Here's the esplanade. What a fantastic view over the Rhône valley and the Himalayan footbridge ! Crossing the Rhône seems so easy today, but it's not always been the case.

Berguise : Look Helvia, there's another tower ! I suppose that's Galade Tower ? We're not allowed access but we can go and see Bise Tower and there we'll learn more about Rochemaure's system of defences.

Berguise : We're now facing the inner side of Bise tower. Incidentally, do you know why it's called that ?

Helvia : Of course I do . It's because it faces north and that's where the « Bise » wind comes from.

Berguise : That's right ! Do you know that Bise Tower was identical to Galade Tower ? Facing us, there's an opening into the castle courtyard. Archers and crossbowmen were posted inside the tower and could defend it on all sides from the embrasures behind the loopholes. To the right of the tower, high up, you can see the holes for the supports of the parapet walk or hoardings.

Just imagine, a whole garrison could advance along the battlements and into the different towers in order to defend Rochemaure from within.

Helvia : In the 16th century it would appear that there were around 50 men-at-arms here.

Berguise : Let's go down the steps to look more closely at the houses.

Berguise : They are remarkably well-preserved !

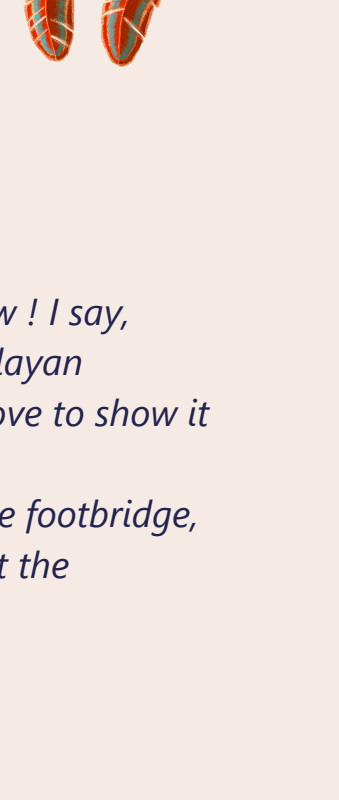
Helvia : Most of the houses in this part of the village have been restored over the past 50 years or so. They stood here in Medieval times but they didn't look like this at that time.

Berguise : I see, the present owners have chosen to restore the buildings in the traditional way.

Helvia : That's right, by re-using the materials they found on site for example. It means the buildings blend better into their surroundings.

Berguise : What a magnificent view ! I say, Helvia, I flew off towards the Himalayan footbridge earlier. It's superb ! I'd love to show it to you. Shall we go back down ?

Helvia : OK, but before we go to the footbridge, I'd like to have a refreshing drink at the Bernarde spring.



There are two ways down :

➡ **To the left of the castle entrance gate, follow chemin de Madame : it's a steep path.**

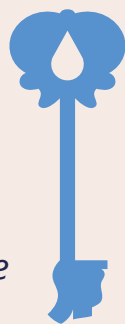
➡ **Alternatively, go back down chemin du saut de l'Ane.**

Either way, follow the signs to the centre of the village and they will take you to rue du Faubourg.

Turn left to return to the car-park near the church.

Then carry straight on to the spring in rue des Fontaines.

7 - THE BLUE STOP



BERNARDE SPRING

Berguise : *Well, there's rather a lot of people here at the spring !*

Helvia : *Yes, lots of people come and fetch their drinking water from Bernarde spring as access is unrestricted. The spring was discovered in the late 19th century by a labourer from Rochemaure called Bernard. It was tapped and in fact supplied part of the village with running water for several decades.*

Berguise : *Didn't it almost disappear ?*

Dear visitor : there are other springs in the village and just up the road there is a bottling plant for water from the Prieuré spring.



Helvia : *Yes it did. In the 1970s, building works damaged the pipes and it could no longer be used. However, Paul Nègre and some other Rupismaurians stepped in and the springwater started to flow again.*

In order to protect the spring and increase awareness amongst visitors, Paul Nègre wrote this poem :

*« Straight from the mountain I do come,
Purity is my companion,
Please do not harm me,
Help yourself graciously,
And sparkling water I will supply,
Unceasingly. »*



see you at the Himalayan footbridge. It's about a 15-minute walk, through the centre of the village then left along allée du Vieux Pont. Otherwise it's a 5-minute drive.

8 - THE BROWN STOP



THE HIMALAYAN FOOTBRIDGE

Berguise : Here we are Helvia, the Himalayan Footbridge ! Now you realise why I wanted to bring you here. Don't you think it's superb ?

Helvia : Yes, it's absolutely amazing ! It's a bit wobbly isn't it, especially if it's windy !

Berguise : Yes, that's because it's a suspension bridge Helvia, but it didn't look anything like this originally.

Helvia : Yes, that's what it says on the information panels over there. Let's go and find out more about it.



Helvia : Well there we are Berguise ! Our tour is over !

Berguise : Already ? There were some beautiful things to see in Rochemaure. I'm really looking forward to some new adventures !

Helvia : So am I ! Let's go, there are so many more villages to explore !

Where will the bunch of keys take us next ? And to what period in history ?

EXPLORE OUR VILLAGES WITH HELVIA AND BERGUISE

LES TRAVERSÉES D'HELVIA ET BERGUISE

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more adventures !*

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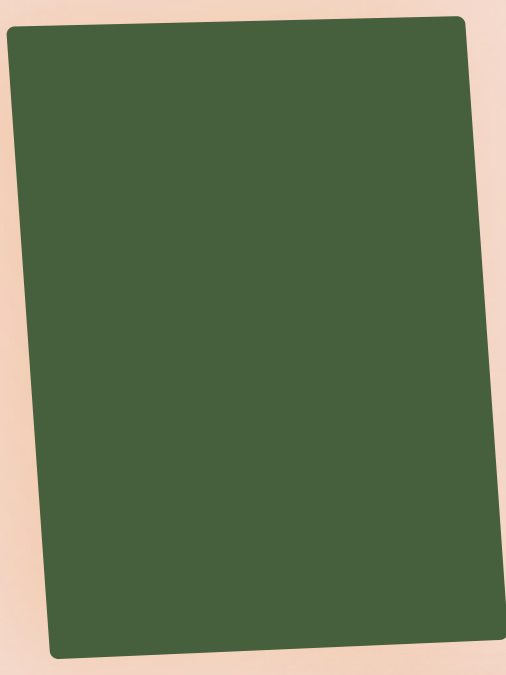
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