

HOLIDAYS - A NEW VENTURE

A few Januarys ago, shutting out the winter gloom, post-Christmas blues and attempting to forget life's unfailling problems, we switched on the telly and drifted into Cliff Michelmores's HOLIDAY wonderland. It was France - not the sparkle and hectic gaiety of a weekend in Paris or the yachts and casinos of the Riviera but the beauty and peace of provincial France, almost unknown to many Britons, where forest and waterway, mountain and pasture unfolded before our eyes, timeless and enchanting.....

All this was available to holiday-makers who were prepared to rent furnished accommodation and feed themselves, and to me it sounded like Utopia - the idea of a stone-built Breton cottage or a Limousin mill had undeniable appeal! I accepted immediately the whole thing would be beyond our means and merely wallowed in longing, but not so the man of the family. He paid attention to the details Cliff Michelmores gave, and afterwards astounded us all by saying, "Right, that's it. We're going to France!"

It is, in fact, astonishingly cheap to rent holiday accommodation in rural France, and more so if one avoids the later July/August period, and in many cases a 'gite' ("zheet") will sleep 6 or 8 for those who prefer to go in a party.

My next dream was of feeding the family on all sorts of French cooking as opposed to endless mince, fish-fingers, egg and chips and the like. That idea faded in the light of very minimal research which quickly revealed (a) there was a dearth of practical books on the subject and (b) it all took so long anyway. I was stubborn however and so my holiday book to guide the self-caterer in France was born.

D.G. Marsden

WORLD WILD LIFE FUND

Mrs D. Cotsell of 5 Courtlands Road, Shipton, is acting as "collecting point" for tinfoil, rings from beer and soft drink cans and stamps off letters. Please help