

POST 1. CAFÉ LA GOUGRA

The construction of the Café La Gougra, begun in 1954, was completed only in 1956, due to the blast of the explosion of 1955 that damaged the building. Known far and wide for its fondues, it is now a place for locals and visitors to meet, those who arrive and those who leave on the postal bus.

Nomadic or sedentary, the community spirit of Anniviers remains an integral part of the heritage of Saint-Jean. Local stories recall the joyful or sad events that have marked the valley of Anniviers. One in particular has marked Saint-Jean.

May 5, 1955 is a date that has not been forgotten. A tragedy occurred three meters from the location of the Café La Gougra, at the time under construction, where a small grocery store opened in 1949.

The companies that had to transport material for the construction of the Moiry dam, needed a sufficiently wide road for their trucks. Until 1952, access to the future site of the Moiry dam was possible only on foot or by mule from Grimentz. A company from Sion stored dynamite for the construction work in a stable along the road opposite the café.

During the evening of May 5, 1955, three men from

CONTACT

Post 1. Café La Gougra
3961 St-Jean

the village returned from a meeting when they saw flames coming out of the stable. Firemen, like most men in the village, they rushed to try to extinguish the flames. Then came the explosion. Two of them were badly burned, while the third died in the blast, which shattered the stable and the nearby barn that contained the harvesting machine. Debris scattered far and wide, burning surrounding shingle roofs, completely destroying the small shop and a tearoom (which was open in summer).

What happened ? The truth was discovered later : gasoline was stolen in the depot, a cigarette butt was thrown on the ground, the building ignited and the two guilty parties slip away...

This dramatic event is evoked with emotion even today, all the more intensely that the entrepreneur from Sion involved, who had no right to store explosives in the village, got off without a severe sentence.

> Next post

Our friends who are returning to the village indicate the direction to take for the next location on the historic tour. We walk along the main road toward Grimentz, to the path that climbs on the right.