



Sacavin Courier



NO. 59 SUMMER 2011

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A portrait of Derek Sheen presented to him on his retirement as Grand Commandeur.

Our thanks to Fouad Ghali for the photographs in this issue of the Courier and also to Felicity Bellamy and John Foley who each contributed an article.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your attention is drawn to the increase in annual subscriptions advised by the Trésorier at this year's Annual General Meeting. As from 1st January 2012 the rate will be £25 per person, or £37.50 for a couple.

This comes after many years during which the rates have remained unchanged. Unfortunately, administration costs have risen to the level where they now significantly exceed subscription income. The increase is therefore necessary to correct this situation.

COMMUNICATION

Currently, the method by which Sacavin members are notified of forthcoming events is by post, via the Royal Mail. However, the expense involved is considerable and seems likely to increase. For those that have it, E-mail offers a cheap and speedy alternative.

Consequently, we would like to use e-mail wherever this is possible. If you are agreeable to receiving Sacavin notifications by this method, please send an e-mail indicating as such to the Chancellor, John Ingram at the following address: ingram7oaks@btinternet.com.

We should point out that there is no compulsion in this, we will continue to use the Royal Mail for those who prefer postal communication. Our intention is only to save money where possible.

We should also caution against anyone signing up for e-mail delivery who has problems operating the system or fails to make regular daily checks for mails. Also, most notifications will come as pdf files, attached to the e-mail. You should be able to read and print these. It is our intention to request acknowledgement for each communication and, because we realise that with age these things become more difficult, annual confirmation that a member wishes to continue using e-mail for a further year.



One further matter relating to electronic communication. There has been much talk in the media about the eventual phasing out of cheques. Our hope is that this is still some way off. However, it would be helpful if you could also indicate whether you have arrangements for electronic banking, and whether you would currently be happy to pay for your participation at Sacavin events in this way.



SPRING LUNCH & AGM at QUEEN'S CLUB

For most organisations, the AGM is unlikely to inspire much interest amongst members. Large turnouts are generally restricted to the likes of international banks or oil companies, where protests over huge bonuses or fury at environmental pollution draw angry crowds. Fortunately, such criticisms cannot be levelled at the Sacavin.

Nevertheless, our AGM was remarkably well supported with just short of 70 people making the journey to London's Queen's Club, nearly double the normal attendance. The timing may have had some bearing. The success of last year's Summer lunch had influenced the decision to move the AGM to midday from its traditional evening setting.

However, there was something else, rather special, about this year's AGM. Derek Sheen, our Grand Commandeur for the last sixteen years, was retiring and many of his old friends were there to give him a good send-off.

The weather was kind to us too. A gloriously sunny day at the start of what was to become, for England, the warmest and 6th driest April on record since 1910.

So, for one final gathering, with his back to the sunlit window in the Committee Room, Derek took the chair and opened the proceedings. Agenda items were dispatched with customary efficiency until we arrived at "Election of Officers". This election, he reminded us, is prefaced by the statement that the Grand Commandeur is appointed by the Grand Conseil in France. Then Derek let us into a secret! He had never seen written confirmation that his own appointment had ever been authenticated. It was always assumed that France had given tacit approval

and, thankfully, for all those sixteen years, there had never been a problem. So it was, he continued, that when Geoffrey Wheal was nominated as his successor, he was determined to have written confirmation of France's agreement. Enlisting the help of Délégué Angevin, Michel Leterme, the necessary confirmation had been obtained, in writing and signed by the Grand Maître.

Geoffrey had served Sacavin superbly well as our Sénéchal, he said, and proved a distinguished Chairman of the Management Committee for the past five or six years, effectively the power behind the scenes. With that, Derek invested Geoffrey with his Grand Commandeur's collarette and offered him his warmest congratulations and good wishes for a long and successful term of office.

Délégué Angevin Michel Leterme had sent a tribute from Angers. This was read out and it seems only right to reproduce it here.

Inducted into our Confrérie in 1973, Mr Derek Sheen became Chevalier, then Sénéchal of the Commanderie de Grande Bretagne and later, in 1995, its Grand Commandeur. Since then we have been pleased to say that we want to congratulate him on his efficiency and gusto to champion our fair France, the Loire Valley, Anjou and its fine wines.

Amiability, integrity, uprightness and fulfilling one's commitments, such are the values that Derek has always wanted to share with all of us. La Confrérie

des Chevaliers du Sacavin pay tribute to its honorable confrère, and wish him a long, happy retirement from his present glamorous mission!

We do hope to see him again in Anjou as often as possible. We shall also be looking forward, of course, to seeing you all, friends of the Commanderie, under the leadership of your new Grand Commandeur, Geoffrey Wheal.

Greetings from all the members of our Confrérie and long live Derek, and long live his dear wife Hazel.

On such a perfect day, serving Vin d'honneur outside had seemed an inviting prospect but this was not to be. There were others at Queen's Club who had also been praying for fine weather too and now that it had arrived were busy resurfacing the balcony. As a consequence, we adjourned instead to the President's Room. No one seemed to mind, the sun still poured in through the windows.

One reason we continue to hold our AGM at Queen's Club is their catering arrangements. These are consistently good and this year was no exception. A great lunch indeed and amongst the wines was one kindly provided by Christine Muggleton and Jane Berger, Anjou Villages Brissac Château de Putile. Each of these ladies had donated a Methuselah, won in succeeding years at the Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers. It was a real pleasure to help them drink it!



John & Christine Muggleton with, by the time this photo was taken, an empty Methuselah!

We turned to Commandeur Owen Collins, another long-serving Sacavin, to propose a toast to Derek and Hazel and to present Derek with a portrait of himself in full Sacavin regalia, painted in oils by the daughter of Chevalier Sid Price, Karen Brandon.



Commandeur Owen Collins makes the presentation

In expressing his thanks, Derek made reference to the appropriateness of Owen making this presentation, the most complete link between past and present though his esteemed father-in-law, George Wilks whom he succeeded as our Chef du Protocole. Dear George, he said, did so much in the early days to establish Sacavin to be the force that it is. He expressed himself delighted with the message from the Grand Maître and also very pleased with the way that our relations with France had so improved since Michel Leterme and he had become firm friends. He was only sorry that ill health had prevented Michel from attending the AGM himself. He described the current state of Sacavin as "lively and imaginative", with regular events that were interesting and not too numerous. Attendances, sometimes a sell-out, speak for themselves, he said.

In his closing words, he paid tribute to Hazel for her unfailing support and encouragement and added that it had been a great source of pride and pleasure to be part of a wonderful membership. He thanked all past and present members who had offered their friendship and support so unstintingly.

SPRING LUNCH & AGM



The President's Room at Queen's Club



David Cousins & Joan Bintcliffe



Valerie Ingram & Robert Aitken-Sykes



Margaret & Trevor Harris



Sheila & Adrian Macintosh



Robert Holland & Margot Boss

THE SACAVIN CHALLENGE



Graham McKowen, Sue Holland & Ray Lindley



John Perry & Philip Wood



Michael Gray, Sheena Perry & Stuart Craggs



John Foley with Hazel & Derek Sheen



Lucy & John Gallon
with John & Diana
Whitcutt



Clockwise from the left: Graham & Janet Macfarlane, Tony & Anne Moore, Geoffrey Wheal and Michael & Ingrid Gray

THE SACAVIN CHALLENGE

'OUT OF AFRICA' vs LA BELLE FRANCE

Dinner and Winetasting at the National Liberal Club

On Wednesday 2nd February, 72 members of Sacavin and their guests gathered again in the august surroundings of the National Liberal Club to participate in Chapter Four of the Grand Sacavin Challenge. The Challenge was to distinguish the various wines on offer and to make a judgment of them. This time the French wines from the Loire were playing the champions of South Africa, hence 'Out of Africa' versus France.

Naturally, the vin d'honneur was sparkling Saumur which was served in the gentlemen's club atmosphere of the reading room: oak, leather and blazing fires. Then we repaired to the Dining Room where the nine tables of 8 were laid out. Des Holland, as Echanson and Chef de Cuisine, presented the challenge and asked that guests should try each pair of wines in the two glasses at each place, one of which was thoughtfully marked with a red dot to ensure there would be no confusion when the table discussed and voted on each wine. This would prove to be very useful after a few of the wines had been tasted (and drunk).

The menu comprised a salmon starter followed by delicious roast duck with orange

and lemon sauce, a plate of five Loire produced cheeses and then apple tart with coffee and mints. The staff served these courses at a leisurely rate so that the excellent food and wine were able to be fully appreciated.

Each table appointed its own sommelier who poured the wine and later acted as chairman when the votes were cast. (Particularly useful on our table was that we had His Honour Martin Reynolds as our sommelier: he was used to summing up juries' opinions !). Lively discussions ensued on the merits of the wines which were served without labels and simply marked with an 'A' or 'B'.

Overall results were:

Wine 1 & 2 :	Saumur Champigny Chenin Blanc 2008	60 votes
	Bellingham Old Vine Chenin Blanc 2007	53 votes
Wines 3 & 4:	Sancerre Rouge 'La Jouline' 2007	57 votes
	Newton Johnson Pinot Noir 2009	55.5 votes
Wines 5 & 6:	Anjou Villages Brissac 2006	57 votes
	Raats Cabernet Franc 2007	51.5 votes
Wines 7 & 8:	Coteau du Layon Chaume	61.5 votes
	Astra Noble Late Harvest 2009	53 votes

(One table mislaid its results; hence the total votes discrepancy).

Thus the Loire wines totaled 235.5 votes versus 213 votes for the 'Out of Africa' wines.

Nevertheless, all the wines were of excellent quality and all were appreciated.

The general verdict was that this was a highly enjoyable occasion, full of our Sacavin friendship and, as to be expected, really well organised. We all look forward to a similar opportunity in 2012.

John Foley



SUMMER LUNCHEON at CREEK COTTAGE

Sacavin members and guests (66 in all) came from far and wide to enjoy the delights of Essex on a summer's day. Some of us began with a visit to Beth Chatto's garden near Colchester, while others joined the party in Des & Sue Holland's garden at lunchtime.

Beth Chatto's garden proved a hidden gem, which she and her late husband began in the 1960s. The garden has just celebrated its 50th anniversary. Throughout the garden there was an aura of peace and tranquillity, with harmonious plantings and clever use of coloured foliage as well as flowers.

There are water gardens, a reservoir, a woodland area and the famous gravel garden which was created in 1991 and has never been watered since! So in this age of water conservation it is extremely interesting to see which plants can survive happily. The plant centre was divided by climatic conditions, which was very clever. It included sections on dry garden plants, bog garden plants, shade loving plants etc etc.

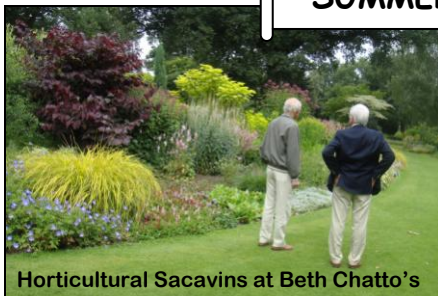
Sacavin members on the other hand do enjoy being fed and watered and the day did not disappoint on that front! Des & Sue Holland generously welcomed us to Creek Cottage, where their garden looked immaculate, and a large marquee awaited our wine tasting.



The Vin d'Honneur proved a most interesting organic English sparkling wine from Davenport Vineyards in Rotherfield, East Sussex – Limney Estate 2005 made by Will Davenport, who is currently one of the most widely acclaimed English winemakers. The wine has been acclaimed by Jancis Robinson. It was a blanc de blancs made from the reichensteiner grape. We enjoyed delicious canapés, which fortified us for the six wines we were about to taste.

Mary Mudd of Carters Vineyards then gave us a comparative tasting of Loire wines versus

SUMMER LUNCHEON at CREEK COTTAGE



Horticultural Sacavins at Beth Chatto's



Barry Collins, Tessa Hollingsworth & Graham Macfarlane



John & Sheena Perry with Mary Mudd



Laura Garner, Janet Macfarlane & Doris Gill



Terry Hatton with Brenda Collins



Sue Holland in her Japanese garden, with Laila Ghali



Mary Mudd begins the tasting



Elizabeth Edey, Ray Lindley & Gillian Ridler



Jackie Bilitch, Michael Growther-Watson, Tessa & David Hollingsworth



Robert & Cylvean Aitken-Sykes



Derek & Hazel Sheen with Des Holland



Stuart Craggs & Margot Boss



Our Grand Commandeur, Geoffrey Wheal, thanks our hosts



Liz Bond with her staff, Sophie & new recruit Fouad Ghali

English wines. We started with a Touraine 2010 from Domaine des Chezelles. (£12). This was a delicate Sauvignon (12% ABV) classic of the Loire. We compared it to an East Anglian Regional Wine, Carter's Bacchus 2010 (£8.50) (12% ABV). This Bacchus won English Wine of the Year. The wine had only been bottled in March and it was full of green aromas and marzipan.

The next pair were rosés. Firstly a Rosé d'Anjou 2009 from Calvet (£6.49) (10.5% ABV). Made from Cabernet Franc, this was variously described as having "a bubblegum nose", to being a taste of the 1960s and quite sweet. The wine had had 16 hours on skins which contributed to its rosé hue (or should I say rosie hue?!) Discussion ensued as to the merits of Anjou Rosé and the way it is perceived today. Its partner was another East Anglian Regional Wine – Gold Medal winning Giffords Hall Rosé 2010 (£12) from Suffolk. The wine had substance and a long finish, and was a good example of English wine making. The wine maker was from New Hall, and the grapes came from mature vines. The rosé was a blend of Madeleine, Angevine and Rondo grapes, the Rondo being a deep red which gives the wine its clear crystal pink colour. It was felt that price could be a prohibitive factor for this wine despite the fact that we had enjoyed it.

Now on to an interesting pair of reds. Firstly a Chinon 2009 from Domaine du Colombier (£7.99). Being the birthplace of Rabelais this wine is close to each Sacavin chevalier's heart! It is made from Cabernet Franc, (for which the French name is Breton) an ancient vine whose parent grape is Cabernet Sauvignon and was brought to the Loire by the Romans before vines reached Bordeaux. Cabernet Franc has a thinner skin than Cabernet Sauvignon and can achieve good sugars. The English red was impressive. Another East Anglian Regional Wine – Carter's King Coel 2008 (£8.50) (10.5% ABV). 1996 was the first year of red production at this vineyard, this wine being made from the Rondo grape which is high in sugar, with a very earthy characteristic. Other

grapes in the blend were Dawnfelder (a dark skinned grape of German origin) and Dunkenfelder. The Dunkenfelder has colour in the flesh as well as the skins, so it is useful to give colour to red wine. It was created by German viticulturalist Gustav Adolf Froelich, and has a rustic earthy taste. The wine had been aged in French oak barrels for a year.

After all these delights we then dined on a sumptuous spread prepared by Liz Bond, who is very well known locally. One of the highlights was a superb ballontine of duck stuffed with port fillet, sherry, sage & parsley. A fine spread of desserts was to follow – with some being saved for the boating party (7 of us) who left temporarily to enjoy a trip up the Brightlingsea creek.

We saw oyster catchers, egrets and lots of seagulls as well as the busy working harbour. There were large piles of woodchippings destined for Sweden, and several windfarm boats which serviced the offshore windfarm locally, as well as clinker built boats and fishing smacks. One of our party had seen a Thames barge that morning too. On Sunday evening I saw local children enjoying crabbing off the pier. We were regaled with several local stories during our boat trip, and Brightlingsea certainly seems to have had a colourful history, being one of the Cinque Ports.

We also saw Bateman's Tower built 1883 by John Bateman for his daughter who was recuperating from consumption. It is at the entrance to Brightlingsea Creek on the river Colne. The tower was used during the Second World War for the Royal Auxiliary Observer Corps. It was restored in 2005 with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Back on dry land we repaired to Creek Cottage for further liquid refreshment and our delicious desserts. In our absence, Geoffrey Wheal had spoken for us all in thanking Des and Sue for their marvellous hospitality, and all those who had contributed to our enjoyment of the occasion. Several chevaliers

stayed in Brightlingsea that evening and strolled along the harbour. Some even imbibed non alcoholic evening drinks, as Rabelais had cast his magic so strongly at lunchtime!

This summer luncheon proved a marvellous occasion for all who attended. We learned more about English wines, Essex, Beth Chatto's garden and enjoyed the friendship and camaraderie for which the Commanderie du Sacavin is renowned.

Felicity Bellamy



Fay Landau



Fay Landau LLB, MBE, died peacefully on 23 April, aged 85. She had been ill for a number of years. A doyen of the Sacavin, Fay was inducted as long ago as 1977, at the Chapitre de la Foire d'Anjou in the Portman Intercontinental Hotel. She had many friends amongst our members.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Fay had to leave school at 14. She became a shorthand typist in a firm of solicitors. Her ambition at the time was to become a policewoman. After the war, with the support of the principal of the practice, she completed her education with an LL.B from the University of London and was admitted to the Roll of Solicitors in England and Wales in October 1949. For a woman in those days, that was a big achievement. By 1951 she had started her own practice in Bloomsbury and later moved to Lincoln's Inn Fields. In 1975 she moved home and her practice to Brighton.

Fay's achievements in her long and distinguished professional career have been formidable. She was a member of the fledgling committee that was the beginning of the Solicitor Sole Practitioners Group back in the early 1990s. She was appointed Hon Secretary of the Group and in 1998 was elected Chairman. In the legal world she is probably

best remembered for being one of the longest serving directors and a Past Chairman of the Solicitors Benevolent Fund. In 2000 she was awarded an MBE in recognition of all the work that she had done for that organisation.

Fay had many other interests, notably opera and the theatre. She loved vintage cars and was renowned for travelling all over England in an ancient Morris Minor. The Sacavin was not her only connection with the world of wine. She was also a former Chairman of the Solicitors' Wine Society. Well qualified therefore to serve on our Management Committee which she joined in 2000 as Déléguée Générale, becoming an Officier in 2001. She was instrumental in the organisation of a number of successful Sacavin functions, most recently a tutored tasting of Fine Burgundy Wines at the In & Out Club in 2006. Fay is remembered as a much loved and highly respected member of both the Sacavin and the legal profession.



Anthony Baker

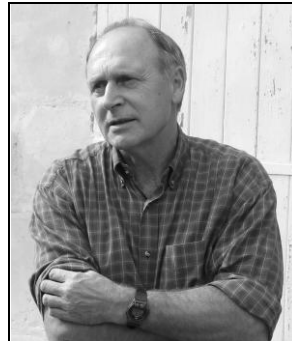


*On the right, Tony Baker & Hazel Sheen.
Derek Sheen & Celia Baker to the left*

Seasoned members will remember Tony Baker who died peacefully in Adelaide, Australia in June, aged 87 years. Following on from his father, who founded a substantial Bedford/Vauxhall dealership in Dorking, Surrey, Tony developed a similarly important Renault dealership in nearby Horley, the Horley Motor Co. Together with his wife Celia, he attended many functions during his 12 years in Sacavin, before they left for a new life with their family in Australia in 2006. His memory will be forever treasured by Hazel and Derek Sheen, because it was Tony who introduced them to each other.



Yves Lambert



We were much saddened to learn that Yves Lambert died of cancer on 30th June aged 63. We first met him at our 2005 Chapitre in London. Then, during our 2008 Loire excursion, we visited him at his Domaine de St-Just. He gave us a most warm welcome, despite being in the middle of the harvest, and subsequently invited us all back to his house at St-Cyr en Bourg for a tasting.

Yves only started in the wine business in 1996 following a career with Axa Bank in Paris. His enthusiasm for this new occupation was obvious, and clearly infectious as his son Arnaud had joined him in the business in 2006. We have enjoyed his excellent wines at

several of our functions. Yves' passing is a great loss, he was in at the beginning of a new adventure with the vineyards of Château de Brèze, which he and his son took over running in 2009. Our sincere condolences go out to his family.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 14 September 2011** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Visit to Dalmore & the Scottish Highlands **Wednesday 28 to Friday 30 September 2011**
Calling letters were dispatched in May



Management Committee meeting **Friday 21 October 2011** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Chapitre 2011 at Vintners' Hall **Tuesday 22 November 2011**
Calling letters to be dispatched in October



Sacavin Challenge Chapter 5 **Tuesday 14 February 2012**
Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place
Calling letters to be dispatched late December

