

Commanderie de Grande-Bretagne de la Confrérie
des Chevaliers du Sacavin d'Anjou



Sacavin Courier



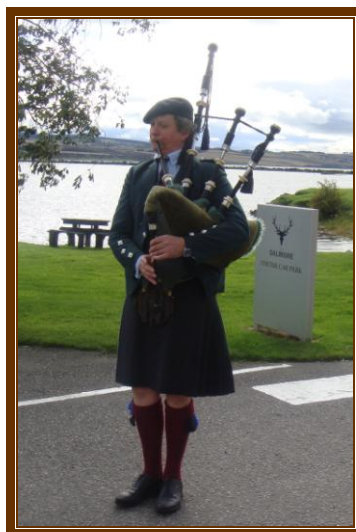
NO. 60 WINTER 2011

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Piper Duncan McIliverie plays on the banks of Cromarty Firth

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

The editor apologises for the fact that, due to a bout of ill health, this edition of the Courier is late.



VISIT TO DALMORE & THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS

**"LUCEO NON URO" - I SHINE NOT BURN
THE DALMORE MOTTO**

We were honoured at the 2010 Chapitre by the presence of Commandeur Daphne Mackenzie, the indomitable widow of our first British Grand Commandeur, Lt. Col. Hector Mackenzie, and our principal guest Richard Patterson.

Richard Patterson is the Master Blender of Whyte and MacKay, the current owners of Dalmore Distillery who have been so generous to the Commanderie in the supply of Dalmore single malt whisky for our Chapitres.

At the Committee Meeting following the Chapitre it was decided that a visit by Sacavin to Dalmore was long overdue. Des Holland, in his role of Echanson, took on this formidable task and, in conjunction with Richard Patterson, planned a visit for early Autumn 2011, to fit in with the Master Blender's busy international itinerary.

The four star New Drumrossie Hotel – some three miles south-east of Inverness – was selected as our base. This was an excellent choice as the hotel was extensively refurbished and extended in the mid-1990's. It stands in 12 acres of landscaped grounds with superb views over the Moray Firth to the north.

A few of us arrived a day early which was just as well for Des and Sue Holland. They had a convoluted journey involving five trains and a hold up at Peterborough meaning they only just arrived for our informal dinner instead of in the afternoon.

Other members continued to arrive on the 28th by plane and car in time for the vin d'honneur at 7pm. At this point the local Scottish party arrived, including Commandeur Daphne, Chevalier Christopher who had travelled from Skye and the Master Blender in full Clan dress. In all, 28 members and guests

sat down at five tables in the exclusive Moray Suite where Geoffrey Wheal as Grand Commandeur welcomed everyone. Commandeur Daphne responded with – in gaelic – “a thousand welcomes” and reminded us of the part Hector had played in the Commanderie from its inception until his death in December 1988.

Following grace by Chevalier Christopher we enjoyed a splendid five course dinner which reflected the traditional cuisine of the Highlands including tattie soup, haggis, neeps and venison with wine, whisky and coffee.

After dinner the Echanson thanked the Chef for this excellent meal following which Richard Patterson was invited to speak. He gave an instructive talk on the history of distilling in Scotland and its development into the truly global industry it is in the 21st century. The outbreak of phylloxera in the mid-19th century was fortuitous for distilling in Scotland due to the lack of French wine in Britain. He then gave a brief history of Dalmore Distillery, which was founded in 1839, out of capital accumulated in China by Jardine Matheson through the Opium Wars period. It was fascinating to learn that Chevalier Christopher's great grandfather took a tenancy of the distillery in 1867, a direct connection which lasted until his father's death in 1988.

DALMORE & THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS



Geoffrey Wheal with Daphne & Christopher Mackenzie



A feast of single malts!



Willing student
Robert Timperley



Janet & Graham Macfarlane with Diana Whitcutt



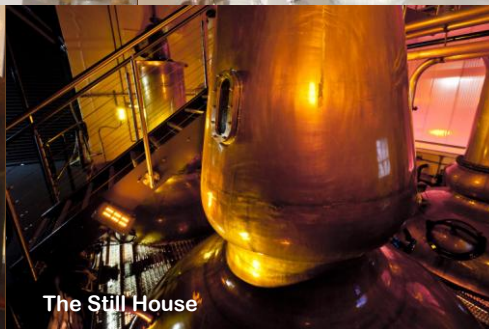
John Whitcutt & Margaret Harris



Laila & Fouad Ghali with Marie Foley



Richard Paterson
& Shirley Zangwill



The Still House



Francis Gould, Des & Sue Holland
& John Whitcutt



Martin & Valerie Hart, with Trevor Harris



Just part of the splendid "light lunch"

The Mackenzie connection continues, however, as the Dalmore logo reflects the fact that a distant forebear of the Clan saved King Alexander III from being gored to death by a stag. The King then permitted the stag's head to be portrayed on the Clan's coat of arms. A limited edition of old blended single malt Dalmore whisky is marketed under the name of Alexander III.

Richard then proceeded to give a master class in the art of single malt whisky tasting which is where we realised we were in the presence of the doyen of Master Blenders who is known in the trade as "the Nose"!!! His first action was to pour a small tot of whisky into a small glass which bore a remarkable resemblance to the Anjou hanap glasses we use for inductions. After swirling this around it was ceremoniously dumped onto the floor and replaced with a larger tot of the same spirit to ensure absolute purity – and the undivided attention of his audience!



Richard Paterson introducing us to Dalmore's finest.

Richard had arranged a spectacular display of all the Dalmore whiskys on a side table including some very special bottles and then generously allowed us to taste these. A rare treat indeed! The variations in the spirit are obtained by blending spirit from various aged oak casks from Bordeaux, Spain, Portugal, California and the deep south of the USA – clearly the art of the Master Blender. In fact, Dalmore holds the world record in price for a single bottle of rare whisky.

Next morning, after a sumptuous breakfast, we boarded a small luxurious coach to head 25 miles north to Dalmore. First we by-passed Inverness via the spectacular Kessock suspension bridge over the Moray Firth to the Black Isle – actually a fertile promontory – hence its name – between the Moray and Cromarty Firths. We crossed the latter on a 19th Century iron bridge and then drove along the north shore of Cromarty Firth to Dalmore Distillery. Located deep in the Highlands, the distillery is perfectly placed to take advantage of the natural resources nearby, from the waters of Loch Morie, found high in the hills which overlook it, to the golden barley of the rich coastal soils of the Black Isle. Here we were greeted by Duncan McIliverie, a renowned Scots piper playing the pipes on the banks of a tranquil, but misty, Cromarty Firth – an evocative sight.

Richard Patterson had assembled the full team and, after his own welcome, we were split into two groups to tour the Distillery. Our group was guided by Morag Swanson, one of the Distillery's ambassadors who provided me with a description of the distillation process. Copies are available on request.

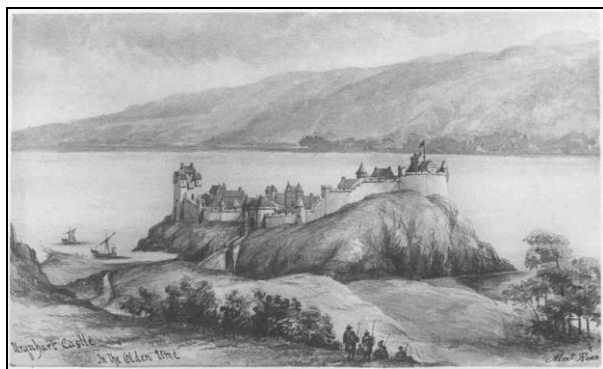
My own impressions were:-

1. The black mould on the external walls and roofs of many buildings – an organism living off the spirit vapours, "the Angels' Share", from distillation. 2% of the spirit is lost during the first five years and then eases off as the oak casks become saturated.
2. The enormous size of the vats into which the malted barley is poured to make an almost porridge-like mash.
3. The shining copper stills one part of which dates back to 1874.
4. The gorgeous all-pervading smell of spirit throughout the distillery.
5. The range, age and origins of the various barrels in which the spirit is stored for many years.
6. The River Averon which originates high in the mountains of Easter Ross and rushes past the Distillery. This provides a

constant supply of pure moorland water to it via a leat.

7. The high quality of the visitors' centre, newly upgraded and refurbished, with its shop and tasting room; then upstairs the board room and hospitality suite.
8. The Master Blender's individual welcome to each visitor linking this to our birthdays. Mine, apparently, is "The Day of the Commemorator". Is "The Nose" also clairvoyant?
9. The "light lunch" – a splendid cold buffet with wine and whisky – an equal to our unforgettable Loire equivalents!
10. The generous gift of a bottle of 12 year old Dalmore whisky to each couple plus additional gifts to the Grand Commandeur, the Echanson and Christopher Mackenzie.
11. The gift of Richard Patterson's book with Gavin D Smith entitled "Goodness Nose". This book recounts not only the life of a working legend but the history of Scottish whisky in all its fascinating detail.

After lunch, with many thanks to our hosts, we left by coach to Urquhart Castle, a romantic ruin on the north shore of Loch Ness. I subsequently read that one of its owners translated Rabelais' writings in the 17th Century. Unfortunately one had to be a dedicated hill walker to visit this castle, which none of our party, after that buffet lunch, could contemplate.



Urquhart Castle, as it stood prior to its destruction in 1692.

Plan B was then adopted; a visit to nearby Drumadrochit where the late 19th Century hotel has been converted into the Loch Ness Visitor Centre which explores the myth of the famous monster. After an hour we drove along the northern bank of Loch Ness crossing the Caledonian Canal and the River Ness, on the outskirts of Inverness, to arrive at the Culloden Battlefield.

I was surprised that the battle took place on the vast Drumrossie muir, only some two miles as the crow flies from our hotel, Culloden taking its name from the hamlet and manor house close by. There is now an impressive low rise modern exhibition centre built in vernacular materials on the site where the story of the 1745 Rising is dramatically presented.

Back at the Drumrossie Hotel we again dined in the Moray Suite, but with fewer numbers, at one large table. After the Selkirk Grace an excellent three course dinner was served in a convivial Sacavin atmosphere. This table arrangement was retained for breakfast the next morning after which the party broke up. Some returned south with stop-overs, others left to tour the immediate area and our party to travel to Wester Ross before flying back.

Our thanks must go to Richard Patterson and the staff at Dalmore for their generosity and welcome, Daphne Mackenzie for her enthusiasm in promoting this visit and especially Des Holland for his hard work in organising a very successful event. One that Sacavin should repeat without waiting a further quarter of a century.

**John Whitcutt
Ecuyer**



CHAPITRE HECTOR MACKENZIE

at Vintners' Hall

Vintners' Hall was the setting for our magnificent Chapitre to honour Hector Mackenzie. His widow Daphne and son Christopher were with us. A total of 84 Chevaliers and their guests, including five of our fellow Chevaliers from France dined in the splendour of Vintners Hall.

The Grand Commandeur inducted six new Chevaliers into the Order with a fanfare of trumpets after we had all enjoyed a fine Bouvet Ladubay as the Vin d'Honneur. Chevalier Ray Lindley was elevated to the role of Officier for his diligent service within the Sacavin, particularly in his role as Trésorier.

The inductees will all bring welcome new skills to the Order. We welcome them warmly and share with you their attributes:-

VALERIE HART - Valerie's mother was half Tuscan Italian so she had a fine grounding in the love of Italian wines, and how to appreciate the finer qualities of wines from all over Europe. Valerie had a career in medical research, then as Asbestos Officer for Camden Council. One of her main hobbies now is singing. She lived in America for a time and enjoyed their wines too. Latterly she very much appreciates the Loire wines and is keen to try new styles and vintages.

RUTH WYMAN - has had a very strong interest in wine since 1993 when she began entering wine and food competitions with marked success; studying wine tasting; and becoming a member of a wine tasting club. Ruth was a Personal Assistant retiring from the Royal Society in 2007 having looked after the Vice Presidents. Her main interests include a love of wine as well as opera, ballet, theatre, and travelling.

GEORGE REYNOLDSON - is a retired philosophy teacher having worked in the UK and Australia. He has a house in Provence and is well placed to enjoy French wines not only from the Loire. His love affair with France began in 1957 on a student camping trip and he has savoured their wines ever since.

He remembers with pleasure the first time he tasted a fine white Sancerre with Daniel Reverdy, and some very rare good reds.

CHRIS LEWIS - Chris studied electronics, worked at Plessey and then with PA Technology in Cambridge, whilst travelling extensively in Europe and the Far East. He and his wife Kathryn have a long-term interest in wine and food, having studied to Diploma level (one down from Master of Wine). He is a keen member of the Confrérie de la Chaîne des Rôtisseurs. He has house in Boulogne and maintains a residence in Pisa, and speaks French, German and Italian.

MAX BRITTAIN - Max is a professional musician as well as being a visiting music teacher at Eton College. He set up the Contemporary Guitar faculty 20 years ago. One of his main hobbies is the love of wine. His professional travels have enabled him to enjoy many European wines in situ, as well as those from Australia and New Zealand. His favourites from the Loire include Muscadet de Sèvre-et-Maine and Touraine.

JOHN REES-JONES - another fine musician, John was Head Chorister in Bath Abbey, classically trained as a cellist and then began playing the double bass and bass guitar in the late 1970s. He has worked extensively in the theatre, cabaret, studio and jazz fields. He was a member of the late Humphrey Littleton's band. He has played jazz extensively all over

the world and is in Who's Who in British Jazz. He is a lover of white wines, and particularly enjoys Sancerre so is very keen to further his knowledge of the Loire treasures.

Vin d'honneur

*Saumur Brut Cuvée Saphir Bouvet-Ladubay 2009
90% Chenin, 10% Chardonnay*

Menu

THAI CRUSTED SALMON & CRAYFISH SALAD
With a Basil & Lime Dressing

~*~

*Cour-Cheverny Domaine de Montcy 2007
Organic, 100% Romorantin*

~*~

PHEASANT BREAST

*Stuffed with an Apricot Forecemeat
Fondant potatoes & Roasted Root Vegetables, Port Reduction*

~*~

*Touraine, Pascal Pibaleau, L'héritage d'Aziaum 2009
70% Côt (Malbec), 25% Cabernet 5% Gamay*

~*~

CHEESE BOARD

*Jervaulx blue – made from the milk of Wensleydale cows
Winner of 3 Gold Stars at the Great Taste Awards 2010*

~*~

*Anjou Villages Brissac 2008 Domaine Montgilet
100% Cabernet Franc*

~*~

VANILLA & FIG BREAD PUDDING
Served with Hazelnut Ice Cream

~*~

*Coteaux du Layon Fleurs d'Erables 2010
100% Chenin Blanc*

~*~

COFFEE & CHOCOLATES
Choice of Cointreau or Dalmore Single Malt

After Grace said by Chevalier Christopher Mackenzie we enjoyed a memorable line up of wines carefully selected by our Chef de Cuisine & Echanson Des Holland along with a wonderful dinner. Des spoke to us about the wines at the beginning of dinner. He also thanked Andrew Watt, Searcy's Catering Manager for all his fine preparations.

Des said he had searched for wines which were a little bit different, and this certainly proved to be the case. Few of us had heard of the Romorantin grape which came to the Loire 500 years ago. He suggested we keep some of this wine to enjoy with our cheese, at room temperature. The match was remarkable and well worth savouring as the wine tasted quite

different. The Touraine was full-bodied and impressive, from a 15 hectare vineyard between two famous castles. The Anjou Villages was from a vineyard established in 1880 with 1.5 hectares, and now 37 hectares under vine, still in the same family. The Coteaux de Layon is from a 13 hectare vineyard which has been organic for 20 years. The wine was not so sweet as some, and matched the "figgy pudding" perfectly.



Sacavins at dinner in the splendour of Vintners' Hall

After dinner our good friend Major Steven Marcham MBE, General Manager of the Vintner's Company spoke to us about the Royalty of the Swans. He also presented Des Holland with a memorable bottle as a mark of their special working relationship for Sacavin. Steve told us that records show Vintners owning swans since 1509. Swans were a prized source of meat in Tudor times, and their quills were used for writing. Goose quills were cheaper, but swans quills were said to last as long as 50 goose quills. Queen Elizabeth I preferred to write with a swan's quill. The Vintner's Company and the Dyers are both keepers of the Queen's swans. These days the Vintners Company provides financial support for the two main swan sanctuaries on the Thames: Swan Lifeline at Cuckoo Weir in Eton and the Swan Sanctuary at Shepperton. He finished by reminding us of the Vintner's Company motto "Wine exhilarates the spirit" or "Vinum exhilarat animum".

Délégué Angevin Michel Leterme then spoke to us in his impeccable English, bringing greetings from the Loire, along with fellow

CHAPITRE HECTOR MACKENZIE



Trumpeters two



Elizabeth Peroz, Laure Pertus & Geoffrey Wheal



Stewart Francis, Philip Wood,
Michael Hindley & Graham McKowen



Raymond Harris & Jane Goodman



David Darlington & Mark Berger

David Hollingsworth



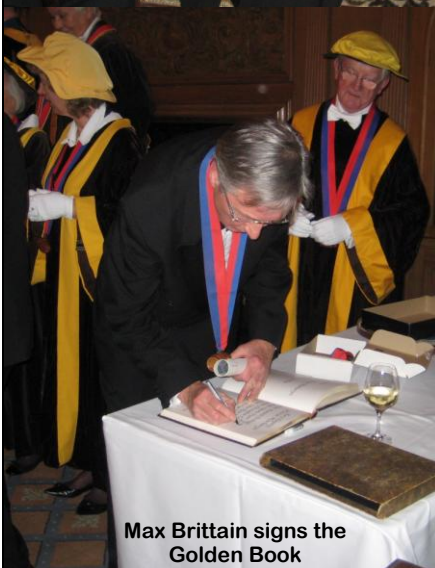
Michel Leterme & Monique Christiaens



Christopher
& Daphne
Mackenzie



Jill Hollingsworth, Laurence Kauffman &
Alison Marsden



Max Brittain signs the
Golden Book



The newly inducted:
Christopher Lewis, Valerie Hart, Ruth Wyman,
John Rees-Jones, Max Brittain & George Reynoldson
with the Grand Commandeur

Chevaliers Elizabeth Peroz, Monique Christiaens, Mary Yvonne Mabit and Laure Pertus. Others would have loved to come but the vendange is the busiest time so he asked us to please think of those friends who are preparing wines for us to drink in future years. He brought us glad tidings that the growers have made an outstanding vintage which the vigneronns had not dared to hope for. He then spoke of his great admiration for Hector Mackenzie and his courage in June 1944. He said he was proud to pay homage to Daphne's valiant husband. He said all French Sacavins liked reading the Courier and congratulated John Ingram in this regard and the English Sacavins on our numerous activities. The Confrérie and the Grand Maître Pierre Aguilas conveyed its support and regards to us all.

Our Grand Commandeur spoke next, sending good wishes from Derek Sheen, and good wishes to John Ingram and Ernest Lee who were unable to attend due to ill health. Geoffrey spoke fondly of Colonel Hector Mackenzie who became the Sacavin's Grand Commandeur forty years ago succeeding Robert Cointreau. He held this office until his death in 1988, 17 years being a continuous record. He served on active service in North Africa, Sicily, and at the D Day Landings. He was awarded the Military Cross. He ran three fine malt whisky distilleries, including Dalmore and Whyte & McKay, and lived in Scotland. He always attended our annual Chapitre, and to Hector, Sacavin was almost family. Richard Patterson, the Master Blender of Whyte & McKay described him as the epitome of a senior army officer, and a charming and likeable man. He was Chieftain of the Highland Games.

Hector generously welcomed Sacavin members to Dalmore with his wife Daphne. His influence remains to this day, not just in the Single Malt served our Chapitre dinner, but in many other of our traditions. We had dedicated this Chapitre to his memory. Geoffrey welcomed Hector's widow Daphne, and described her as a legend with an

indomitable spirit, along with her son Christopher. He spoke of the very warm welcome Sacavin members had had on their trip to Scotland in September particularly at Dalmore with especial thanks to Richard Patterson, and also to Des Holland for his excellent organisation.



The Grand Commandeur, Geoffrey Wheel

Geoffrey also welcomed our inductees and reiterated that the essence of Sacavin is the friendships which one makes and the good fellowship we all enjoy. He hoped that our new Chevaliers would maintain and enhance these qualities which we so prize.

Geoffrey mentioned plans for 2012 including a visit to the Loire in the autumn for which groundwork had already been prepared by John Foley and his wife Marie. We shall be staying at Azay-le-Rideau. In February 2012 we shall be holding the ever popular Wine Challenge at the National Liberal Club.

Finally Geoffrey gave our Chef de Cuisine and Echanson Des Holland a very well earned thankyou for such a fine evening, along with the Chef du Protocole Alastair Bellingham.

George Reynoldson replied on behalf of the inductees. He thanked Sacavin and said that

he reflected a true passion and curiosity for the production of vines. He spoke of dining in Haut Provence and being given a digestif from the Loire made from Rouge Douret or Binet Rouge apples and called The Rouge. This is in fact a calvados from the department of Eur et Loir named after the rivers Eur and Loire. He had never heard of it and was pleasantly surprised. He closed by quoting Monsieur Claude Clardel, the poet and dramatist who said that wine is the teacher of good taste. It also enlightens our understanding.

So a magnificent evening was brought to a close with the renewal of friendships and the forging of new ones. I never realised quite how much work goes into preparing such an

occasion and making it all so special. As an author's aside – whilst staying at the Vintner's Hall overnight that night two Chevaliers were roused from their slumbers at 3.30am to the sound of the fire alarm – not what you want to hear after a Sacavin dinner!! Luckily Steve Marcham was on the premises, and we gathered on the ground floor whilst the building was checked. We returned to our beds at 4am. I wonder what Rabelais would have made of that type of disturbance after one of his feasts!

**Felicity Bellamy
Adjointe**



Doris Gill



It is with much sadness that we report the death of Doris Gill. Doris, or “Dot” as she was known, was, along with her late husband Fred, one of that intrepid group of northern Sacavins who, many years ago, used to pilot their own aeroplanes to Angers to participate in the annual Rallye Aérien International des Vins et Chateaux d'Anjou. In fact she was inducted in Angers.

However, in 1972 she and her husband emigrated to what was then Rhodesia, where a sister and brother-in-law had a farm. They bought a bungalow there and Dot continued in the profession she had embarked upon in England, that of radiographer. They continued flying and their friends, Leslie & Laura Garner remember various occasions visiting the Gills, when they were taken to see the countryside from the air. In recent years

Dot had been spending the summers in England with members of her family, before returning to Africa for the winter. It was the Garners who were instrumental in ensuring her return to the Sacavin two summers ago, when she joined us for a lunch at the National Liberal Club. Her death occurred in November, just after her return to her house in Zimbabwe. We will miss her lively and enjoyable company.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 17 January 2012** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Sacavin Challenge Chapter 5 **Tuesday 14 February 2012**
Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place
Calling letters were dispatched early January



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 29 February 2012** at
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Spring Lunch & AGM at Queens Club **Saturday 14 April 2012**
Calling letters to be dispatched at the end of February



Excursion to the Loire **Tuesday 16 to Sunday 21 October 2012**
(Includes Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers, Saturday 20 October)

