

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



Sacavin Courier



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Excursion to Azay-le-Rideau, (page 3)

Le Grand Livre des Confréries, (page 9)

Le Chapitre Jubilé Royal, (page 11)

Obituaries, (page 15)

Dates for your diaries, (page 16)



Le Chapitre des Vendanges
Greniers St-Jean à Angers, Octobre 2012

Our thanks to Alastair Bellingham, Fouad Ghali, Martin Hart, John Muggleton and Sid Price for the photographs in this issue of the Courier and also to Felicity Bellamy and Ernest Lee who each contributed an article.

EXCURSION TO AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

MONDAY 15TH TO SUNDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2012

Rain! And more rain! In consequence an assortment of rainwear, from capes that had apparently done service in the jungles of Java to a golf umbrella advertising the company paying one chevalier's pension. And yet when we look back on this visit in a year or so, that surely will all be forgotten, buried under a heap of happy memories of a fascinating historic hotel, splendid food, charming vigneron and some great wine. This excursion was the first under the command of our new Chef des Expédition, John Foley. He and his wife Marie can surely be proud of themselves, for their organisation proved faultless and we offer them a huge "Thank you!"

Azay-le-Rideau, the town on the Indre river John and Marie had chosen for our base, was quite enchanting with its narrow streets overhung with ancient corbelled and timber-framed houses and a stunning château dating from the early 1500s. Somewhat bizarrely, we discovered a British red telephone box just next to our hotel, although with no chance of phoning home at local British rates as there was no phone in it. The hotel, Le Grand Monarque is one of the many Relais de Poste that were established in the 17th century at distances of 7 leagues apart along the main highway to Paris. Or so we were told by M. Eric Pech, the ever-attentive manager. The mail was carried in coaches pulled by horses driven by "postillons". These gentlemen wore big heavy boots, giving rise to the name "bottes de 7 lieues" or, as we think of them in English, "7 league boots". M. Pech went on to describe the hotel at the end of the 19th century. In those days it had a dozen rooms with running water supplied by a pump, paraffin lights, stoves and fireplaces for warmth, pitchers and bowls for washing and, a great luxury at the time, a communal bathroom where water was heated by a brazier full of burning charcoal and then poured into the bathtub.

The intervening years have seen one or two improvements. The Grand Monarque today has 25 air-conditioned bedrooms, each with en-suite facilities and our party occupied them all. Something that hadn't changed, it would seem, was the early morning call we had from the nearby parish church, where the bell was tolled some 30 times at 7 o'clock each

morning. As a consequence, nobody was ever late for our coach!



Arrival at Le Grand Monarque

Maybe we should have been a little concerned about the food. A few days prior to our arrival, the Daily Telegraph had run a story under the headline "Foamy sauces and egotistical chefs - Nigella Lawson gives withering verdict on French cuisine"! Perhaps the good lady should try dinner at Le Grand Monarque. There was nothing foamy about their sauces and the chef remained out of sight in the kitchen working culinary miracles, delivered to our tables each night with great charm and efficiency.

Some even preferred the accompanying wines to those we tasted during our vineyard visits and, indeed, went on to purchase them from the hotel's supplier. Perhaps this just proves the point that to appreciate good wine it is best consumed with food, not on its own. Or was it just that the wine at our tastings was often far too cold?

Those of us with long experience of British Sacavin trips to the Loire would, perhaps, have noticed something different this time. On previous visits we have seen a gradual acceptance of the benefits of modern technology in wine-making, yet one always had the sense that the overall approach was still dominated by tradition and the practices passed down from generation to generation.

This time there was a real sense that modern expertise was in the lead. The most obvious sign of this was the age of the vignerons we met. On average, perhaps somewhere in their late thirties and all, it would seem, with formal oenological qualifications.

Ideas such as the use of ceramic diffusers as a means of oxygenating the wine, in preference to oak barrels, seemed to be gaining more general approval. And perhaps the most intriguing procedure demonstrated to us was a sediment removing machine for sparkling wine. Forget the process of freezing the bottle neck. Instead, the bottle is locked upside down in a frame which is then set so that its temporary cap is whipped off and the bottle spun upright at just the speed necessary to expel the top inch or so of liquid that contains the sediment and no more. It is then topped up and a cork inserted ready for its final fermentation. Our Délégué Général, Ernest Lee was presented with the result. We await his evaluation.

Our first call on the Tuesday was to La Closerie de Chanteloup, some 50km north east of our base and just down the road from the Lycée Agricole et Viticole d'Amboise. Any romantic thoughts our members might have harboured about the life of a vigneron were dispelled as we stood in the drizzle listening to our host, Frédéric Plou. With remarkable stoicism he described the atrocious weather they had suffered in recent weeks and its damaging consequences. A whole month's rain had fallen just that Sunday and, shortly before we'd arrived, they'd managed just one hour's picking before giving up again for the day. 50% of their crop had been lost and M.

Plou feared they would manage no red production from Cabernet Franc this year, although maybe some rosé. For those vines they had intended to pick by hand, they were now using machines, to make good use of the few dry opportunities. What attracted our sympathy all the more was learning that M. Plou and his colleagues had only taken over the 22 hectare domaine five years ago and, while not yet marketing their wines as biodynamic, they were into the critical third year of growing by organic means and this was now threatened.

Nevertheless, the visit was interesting and informative. Grolleau, a grape that had rather gone out of favour is making a comeback, as evidenced by the plantation immediately facing the domaine buildings. And in the production unit, we were shown a vat full of Gamay grapes fermenting whole and unpressed. These tasted beautifully sweet. As the juice drained away it would be filtered and, we were told, used to make a mellow Beaujolais-style red.

However, the wines we tasted were those more typical of the region. A Touraine Sauvignon Blanc 2011, a Montlouis-sur-Loire Chenin Sec 2011 called L'essential, an Amboise Rouge 50% Cabernet, 50% Cot (Malbec) 2010 named Félix, another Amboise Rouge 100% Malbec 2010 and, finally, a sparkling Chenin Blanc méthode traditionnelle labelled Cuvée Marie Louise. The last mentioned was named after M. Plou's grandmother and beguiling enough to persuade your reporter to buy some.



Château d'Amboise

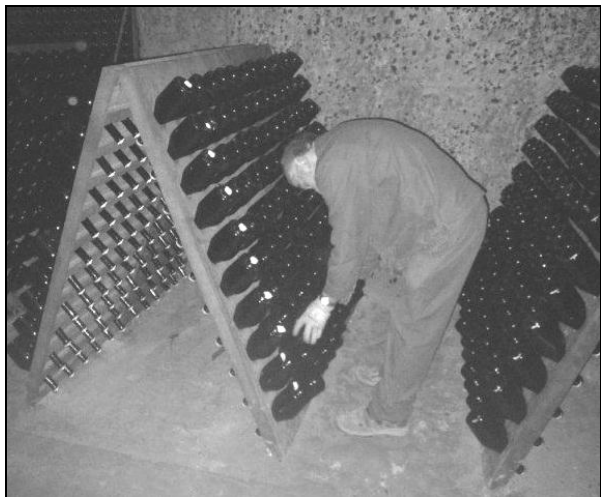
Our lunch was taken in the magnificent dining room of the Lion d'Or in nearby Amboise,

EXCURSION TO THE LOIRE



overlooking the Loire and in the shadow of the spectacular château. Supposedly a light lunch, but gastronomically superb, and necessitating a short sight-seeing excursion in the coach afterwards, to sleep it off!

Our return journey took us through Vouvray. We stopped near the town to visit the Cave des Producteurs de Vouvray where we were to reflect on the Chenin grape in all its vinous guises. Initially this took the form of a video, illustrating the work of the vigneron, season by season. Matthew, our guide, then took us on a tour of the cellars. These are man-made caves, deep underground and extending to 2 ½ km, originally quarried out to provide the building stone (tuffeau) used throughout the Touraine. Quite sufficient to store the producer's 4 million or so bottles, a few of which we caught a glimpse.



A ridler at work. Our Ecuyer was impressed.

Formerly, Matthew told us, Vouvray was known only for still wines, including dessert. But since the founding of the enterprise in 1953, now involving some 40 producers, they have also made sparkling wines and this is now a major element in their production. Some of these we were to taste but we started with a volume manufactured still wine, "La Javeline" 2010, which was then contrasted with the more specialist and limited "Confidence Sec", which had spent 2 or 3 years in oak barrels. Then came two méthode traditionnelle, "De Chanceny Brut" and "Rendez-Vous Brut", followed by two dessert wines, "La Javeline" Moelleux 2011 and "Cuvée 50" 2003.

On Wednesday we had to make an early start. The darkest hour is just before the dawn, or so we are told. It was certainly dark. Quite black and very wet too, as we scuttled across the gravel courtyard of our hotel in the direction of breakfast.

However, by the time we boarded our coach again it was daylight although still very overcast. This time our destination was 30 km to the west, and was totally devoted to the grape Cabernet Franc. St-Nicholas de Bourgueil was our first port of call, where we were to visit La Domaine de la Chopinière du Roy. Our welcome by Sophie Ory was interrupted by rain, so she took us down a slope at one corner of the yard, lifted an up-and-over garage door and called us all inside. It was no garage. Instead we found the entrance to a cave stacked with barrels which extended some distance beneath an adjoining field of vines.

Here Sophie gave us a few details. The A.O.C. St-Nicolas-de-Bourgueil covers some 1,100 hectares, of which 22 are La Chopinière du Roy. Sophie's husband is the 8th generation of the family to be producing wine there although the present buildings date from 1985. They plant 5,500 vines per hectare and, she estimated, each plant is attended to some 50 times a year. Which sounds like a lot of work. However, they employ only one assistant, otherwise relying on her husband, brother-in-law, father-in-law and a great uncle aged 80. Yet some of their vines, at 87-years old, even predate this uncle, and they are still making wines from them, an oaked red called Cuvée Coquelicote.

Apart from just two full days of reasonable weather, the rain had meant the harvest had had to be gathered on various odd mornings or afternoons. However, August had been sunny there so, by-and-large and given the conditions, they were content with the quantity and quality of the grapes harvested.

Back in the main building we tasted 4 wines. Two A.O.C. Bourgueil, Cuvée Rosé 2011 and

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 Cuvée d'Antan and two A.O.C. St-Nicholas-de-Bourgueil, Cuvée Ludovic Rouge 2011 followed by the previously mention Cuvée Coquelicot Rouge 2010.

Then it was back in the coach. However, that wasn't the end of our visit. Sophie, driving a small Renault van, led us across the valley to the entrance to a huge labyrinth of caves extending to some 4 hectares. Within these, many local producers stored their wine.



*The entrance to the producers' cave at St-Nicholas-de-Bourgueil*

We were to visit the section belonging to la Chopinière du Roy. That meant following Sophie on foot in semi-darkness through winding passages over a rough stone floor, one torch in front, another at the rear, for some 400 metres, until we came to Sophie's own cave, secured by a steel barred door. Not for those of a nervous or unsteady disposition. Unlocking the door, she ushered us into a brightly lit cavern, furnished with ancient tables, barrels, the odd empty bottle and various other vinous objects, the debris perhaps of a party from some earlier epoch. All quite creepy, as everything was covered with a blanket of white mould of which Miss Haversham would have been proud, and yet Halloween was still a fortnight away. However, it turned out that the "party" had taken place merely a month earlier and, in that atmosphere, the mould grows incredibly quickly. Yet the place was surprisingly dry, and cool rather than cold. Fortunately Sophie's torches were equipped with long-life

batteries and everyone made it safely back to the coach.

It was then only a short drive to Le Moulin Bleu. There we were served another superb lunch while admiring the view down across the valley to Bourgueil and the Loire beyond.

In the afternoon we visited the Domaine du Petit Bondieu at Restigné. Our young host, Thomas Pichet represents the 7<sup>th</sup> generation in a family of vigneron managing this 18 hectare domaine. While referring to the harvest which they had finished two days earlier, he mentioned some revealing statistics. Where hand-picking is involved, 25 people would be employed to pick 2 hectares. Yet one person, driving a mechanical picker, would be able to harvest 5 hectares in the same time. Over the next hour or so we were to be treated to a tasting of wines involving both practices and, indeed, contrasting wines made from grapes grown on the lower gravelly terraces with those from the clay-limestone further up the slopes. Again, this was all Cabernet Franc. Cuvée Vendôme was representative of the machine picked lower terraces, from vat to bottle quickly enough to be in the shops by Spring and to be enjoyed young. Cuvée Petit Mont came from 40-year old vines demanding more individual attention on the higher slopes and would mature in barrels for some 11 months before bottling. Cuvée des Couplets, of which we tasted several vintages attracting various awards, came from 80-year old vines grown in a favourable area on some exceptional clay-limestone soil. This would age well, we were told. Also from the higher slopes came their Cuvée des Brunetières. The barrels were from Pomerol, where they had already seen two years of use. Apparently still good for another three years at the Petit Bondieu, but the oak effect diminishes.

Which brings us to Thursday. 20km south west of Azay-le-Rideau lies Chinon. As representative of that great A.O.C. we were to visit Domaine Charles Pain, just to the east of the town in the village of Panzoult. It was dull and, yes, raining again as we arrived, although

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a wagon full of freshly picked grapes parked by the entrance suggested some earlier activity. Boarding the coach, M. Pain guided us to a most extraordinary cave set in the cliffs overlooking the Vienne valley. This had been renovated in 1995 by the association of Chinon producers as a venue for functions. M. Pain is Vice Chairman of the association, with which we immediately felt a kinship on hearing also that Rabelais is its patron.

Assembled deep inside the cave, in front of a stone fireplace that would have done credit to some baronial hall, we listened to M. Pain as he described, with great passion, the production of Loire wines, from the river's source to its mouth. He then turned to those of Chinon. We'd noticed the broad corridors between the vines. By well established custom, he told us, vines in the area were planted 1 metre apart in rows 2 metres wide. And the many stretches of Cosmos flowers we'd come across were deliberate plantings, as reserves for insects needed particularly when producing wines organically.

When, in 1987, M. Pain took over his vineyard, it extended to just eight hectares, mostly Cabernet Franc but with a few Chenin. He has since expanded it to 46 hectares, in Panzoult and four other villages, with a variety of terroir on both banks of the Vienne. Two styles of red wine from the two major soil types had been developed over the years. Cuvée du Domaine, from sand and gravel slopes, which he characterised by its freshness as the expression of the Loire, a gourmet wine, fruity, able to blend into any meal. In contrast, Cuvée Prestige from the higher siliceous limestone and clay area, was the essence of Chinon, a powerful wine, bold, capable of aging many years. He described a very individual way of making a dry, fruity rosé, particular to his family, the complexities of which may have escaped most listeners. However the name, Rosé de Saignée might give a clue. And, having planted more Chenin vines on south facing slopes, M. Pain takes hand-picked grapes and turns them into a delightful Cuvée Blanche.

We tasted all of these and a number of our party were clearly impressed. However, what happened next convinced many more that our Chef des Expéditions had cleverly left the best until last. A country style lunch at Domaine Charles Pain to accompany more of the wines we had just tried, with flat bread cooked for us in a huge wood-burning oven. The bread we split and filled with a choice of sardine pâté, pork pâté and garlic & herb butter. At last, that craved for "light lunch", although faced with a constant supply of fresh bread straight from the oven, many over-indulged. A little ironic, perhaps, that some will remember Monsieur Pain for his bread as much as for his wine.



Flat bread ready for baking

Quelle surprise! That was only the starter! A regional dish of shredded chicken then arrived, served with those flat white beans so loved by the French. Quite delicious although it helped if one remained ignorant as to which bit of the chicken was being eaten. A log of goats' cheese followed, locally produced and characterised by a straw running down the middle with the maker's name printed on it. At this point M. Pain surpassed himself. He had carefully decanted a magnum of a 1996 Chinon and this he offered as an accompaniment to the cheese. We felt very honoured.

Finally, there was Tarte Vigneronne. A simple yet scrumptious affair, thin slices of apple laid on puff pastry, covered with wine conserve and dusted with icing sugar. On enquiring how the conserve is made we learnt that white wine

is mixed with red grape juice and the liquid then rendered down until it jelled.

Thus replete, we returned to Azay-le-Rideau, free to enjoy an afternoon exploring the town and its château. Despite the rain, some of us may well have done just that. Others will have found the attraction of a few hours sleep rather too much to resist. How else to prepare for another dinner at Le Grand Monarque, this time preceded by Vin d'honneur generously provided by Ecuyer Richard Ridler and Gillian, his wife, so that we could join them in celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary.



Richard Ridler bearing "Golden" refreshment!

It is very satisfying to give an account of such an enjoyable group excursion. What makes it



Richard & Gillian continuing their celebration at the Chapitre des Vendanges.

all the more so is that it did, in fact, end on a positive note. As seems traditional now, on the Saturday night we were able to join our French colleagues at the Chapitre des Vendanges in the medieval hall of the Greniers St-Jean in Angers. When it was over in the early hours of Sunday morning and we came outside again, the rain had finally stopped. Although there were puddles to play hop-scotch around as we negotiated our way back to the IBIS hotel, it still made for a refreshing and enjoyable walk along the banks of the unseasonably swollen and fast-flowing Maine river.

JMI



LE GRAND LIVRE DES CONFRERIES DES VINES DE FRANCE ONE OF AN OCCASIONAL SERIES ON SCAVIN ARTEFACTS

This handsome publication was gifted to the commanderie by John Braun, who attended the committee meeting of 5th March 2009 for that purpose. The compendium was accompanied by (a) a book of wine-themed songs, "Chanson de Vin" and (b) a menu card of the Angers chapitre of 20th September 1969.

Le Grand Livre (author Fernand Woutaz) states that 3,000 copies were printed and were individually numbered, but no number is visible on this copy. 76 confréries are treated in this volume, the Sacavin d'Anjou being No. 49. There is a pull-out page illustrating the robes of each confrérie: the Sacavin robe appears to be purple in its principal colour, but in the text (p206 et seq) this colour is referred to as "brun-sarment-de-vigne", i.e. "vine brown".

What follows is a translation of the highlights of the Sacavin entry:

The Chapitres of this Confrérie are spectacular: they are held in magnificent cellars built in the 12th century by the Plantagenet King of England, Henry II, who was also Count of Anjou. There is a plaque over the entrance, announcing “Ci sont sacres les illustres Chevaliers de Noble Ordre du Sacavin”.

The procession of Officers is in keeping with the splendid setting – their robes are in vine-brown velvet with golden trimmings, set off by white bow ties and gloves. They wear Rabelais-style hats, and collarettes of red and blue (the colours of Anjou) from which miniature barrels (the “sacavins” of their title) are suspended. The Angers Chapitre is held in January, to coincide with the Foire aux Vins d'Angers and a chapitre takes place in Saumur, to coincide with the Foire aux Vins de Saumur, at the end of February. Another chapitre is held in the Château de Brissac, on the last Saturday in November, to coincide with the “Rallye aerien des vins”.

Aspiring members of the order are required to swear the Rabelaisian oath “Quand mon verre sera plein, je le videray. Et quand il sera vide, je le pleindray”.

Ernest Lee



CHAPITRE JUBILÉ ROYAL

AT VINTNERS' HALL

A glittering array of 64 chevaliers and their guests assembled for our chapitre at Vintners Hall on 20th November. The Grand Commandeur welcomed us and then appointed two new officers amongst our order.

Richard Ridler joined Sacavin in 2000, rejoined the committee in 2009 and was made Ecuyer last year. He organised a very successful trip to Bristol in 2007 which included a marvellous wine tasting at Averys. He is planning our trip to the Wye Valley. He is also in charge of all our artefacts, and it is important to know they are in good hands. Where would we be without a flogger one asks?!

John Foley joined Sacavin in 2006 and came onto the committee in 2008. He became Chef des Expéditions last year. He planned our trip to the Loire in October with great professionalism. It was Napoleon who said time spent in reconnaissance was seldom wasted, and this certainly proved to be true. Our stay in Azay-le-Rideau was ideal, the trips to the vineyards well chosen and light lunches were memorable. Sacavin is fortunate to have a square peg in a square hole.

We were delighted to welcome three new chevaliers to the order: Gaynor Reynolds, Karen Thomas and Brian Thomas. They were duly inducted by the Grand Commandeur after the trumpet fanfare.

Gaynor Reynolds has been an eminent occupational therapist, as well as having three sons. She developed a system for the rehabilitation of people with enduring mental health problems, a model replicated in the UK and Europe. Since retirement she has served on the board of Westminster MIND, and was chairman of the British Institute for Industrial Therapy. For 35 years Gaynor served as a magistrate in the Youth Court.

Gaynor and her husband Martin owned a Dutch barge for over 20 years and have

travelled gently through Europe. Hence her taste changed from genever to wine! Now they own a cottage in Languedoc and Gaynor enjoys learning about the wines from the local area. Gaynor has developed a keen interest in wine and has attended many Sacavin events including a visit to Angers.

Karen Thomas grew up in the wine world (her father being our very own Des Holland). She studied in Lancaster and Manchester and after Unilever she now teaches in Buckingham. Her first memories of wine were selling Don Cortez and Nicolas during a holiday job! She has travelled extensively in Europe and expanded her wine tasting knowledge. She even reported to Des that at a conference she had tasted a very nice red – Chateau Mouton Rothschild!

Her first Loire visit with her teenage daughters took in a couple of vineyard trips, including tasting a sparkling red from Saumur. This has now become a family favourite when entertaining. She is very much looking forward to future visits to the Loire and is very pleased to become a chevalier.

Karen's husband, Brian Thomas hails from Scotland and now lives in Northamptonshire. He is sales manager for Varilux spectacle lenses, so his clarity of vision will help us to focus on all we imbibe at Sacavin events! He was introduced to wine by his Italian mother when she mixed it with water for him to enjoy at a young age. He remembers going to Italy with a 5 litre container of Scottish water, and returning with 5 litres of wine from his uncle's farm. The Glasgow airport staff knew them as the only people in 2000 years who could turn water into wine!

CHAPITRE JUBILÉ ROYAL



Tim & Jill Hollingsworth, Mark Berger, Laurence Kauffmann, David Hollingsworth & Krystyna Lee



Max & Susan Brittain with Martin & Valerie Hart



Felicity Bellamy
A rose between two horns?!



Veronica & Frank Halliwell



A welcome for our three new chevaliers, Gaynor Reynolds, Karen & Brian Thomas



David Hollingsworth & Madeleine Forster



Mark Berger listens as Des Holland describes the wines



Ann & Sid Price with Ernest Lee



Grand Commandeur
Geoffrey Wheal



Steven Marcham



Chris Lewis, Tessa Hollingsworth,
Jane Harvey & Peter Vidler

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Brian met Karen 31 years ago and began to develop a more sophisticated wine palate. They have enjoyed wine tasting in France, most recently including Buvet Ladubay. Once in Corbières he bought some wine from Domaine du Brian! He enjoys the wines of the Loire and is enthusiastic about the principles of Sacavin.

After Commandeur John Whitcutt said grace, the Chef de Cuisine enlightened us as to the wines we were about to enjoy. He also thanked the chef and his team for what proved to be an excellent dinner. Firstly we had already partaken of the Crémant de Loire Pol Robert Thomas. This was predominantly chenin blanc with a little chardonnay. The wine was aromatic, smooth and fruity and held its bubbles well.

Next we were to enjoy Domaine du Gué Carroir, Dyckerhoff 2010 Appellation Reuilly. From the river Cher near Bourges and Quincy, this estate is family run under biodynamic principles, producing excellent sauvignon blanc. It has a delicate grassy fragrance with aromas of blackcurrant, grapefruit and citrus, hints of peach and apricot on the palate and good acidity.

Then we would savour the Domaine du Clos Rousseley, Anthologie du Clos 2009, Appellation Touraine. This red also comes from the banks of the Cher between the castle of Chenonceau and the village of Ange. This wine was chosen by you as it was voted the outstanding red on Valentine's Day at the Sacavin Challenge Five. It would match well with the venison. Made from old vines, cabernet franc, malbec and gamay, these organic grapes are handpicked and the wine is matured in French oak for 8 months. The palate is balanced, full and subtle with soft tannins, which will continue to improve for another 6/7 years.

Our dessert wine was to be Coteaux du Layon Domaine de la Belle Angevine 2010. Chenin has been cultivated in France for almost 1300

years but only since the 1980s has chenin's position as a classic and noble grape been fully recognised. This wine is pale gold, with a powerful, complex and aromatic nose. It is rich and pleasant in the mouth with notes of apricot, quince and grapefruit. It has a lingering finish.

The commanderie is extremely grateful to Chris Lewis for his help with the wines. It is greatly appreciated.

After dinner and the loyal toast, Major Steven Marcham MBE spoke about the Vintners' Company, which he entitled Tales from the Wine Bin. He described a couple of colourful characters at Vintners over the years, including Claret the Vintners' cat from 1963.

Claret was responsible to the Beadle for keeping the rodent population at bay. Before effective central heating Claret liked to make himself at home in one of the large golden rose bowls on the plate stand to enjoy the warmth of the spotlights. The staff put Claret out before functions, but one night they forgot. He slept until the pipers began to play, and as they approached he leapt out of the rose bowl, ran the length of the table, and knocked over glasses, candles etc and out through the kitchen into the night.

The toastmaster reported it took 30 minutes to reset the table and refill the glasses! Sadly Claret was sacked along with one of the staff who left in protest. These days Vintners have a pest control contract!



*Claret the Cat immortalised in effigy at Vintner's Hall.*

Steve told us that by next year there would be a fine new ceiling at Vintner's Hall which we will be able to admire at our next Chapitre.

In his speech the Grand Commandeur welcomed us, and most especially Derek Sheen and Madeleine Forster. He spoke of the many celebrations of 2012, tonight being our modest tribute to Queen Elizabeth II's Jubilee. He told us that sadly our Délégué Angevin Michel Leterme is suffering heart problems but is on the mend and that he sent us best wishes as we do to him. He spoke of our Sacavin events in 2012 being well supported. The AGM and Chapitre in Angers were attended by record numbers. We sadly lost Howard Davies, Michael Forster and Graham McCowan this year, and we will always remember them with affection.

The fifth Sacavin Wine Challenge proved very popular, comparing wines from Loire to wines from the Americas. This was another great success for Des Holland. In the summer as a new departure, Felicity Bellamy organised for 46 of us to gather at the National Gallery for an in depth tour of a selection of paintings linked with wine, given by erudite art experts. This event proved very popular. We then repaired to the National Liberal Club for a delicious lunch.

Our Loire visit in October was a great success, with 46 people enjoying a trip expertly organised by John Foley and his wife Marie.

The Grand Commandeur thanked Laurence Kauffman for her helpful translations, and Jane Berger for her behind the scenes negotiations with the French chapitre. We celebrated the Golden Wedding of Richard Ridler and his wife Gill whilst in France which was a very happy occasion.

In 2013 we have Wine Challenge No. 6 in January, a trip to Wye valley in May and possibly a lunch at the National Liberal Club with jazz later in the summer, so plenty to look forward to.

We all look forward to getting to know our three inductees, now new chevaliers. The real essence of Sacavin is the friendships they will make, with good company, and fellowship. I know they will enhance our confrérie, and we welcome them wholeheartedly.

The Grand Commandeur thanked Steve Marcham and his team at Vintners Hall for a splendid dinner, and for Steve's fascinating talk. He thanked Des Holland and Alastair Bellingham for their hard work to make the evening such a success.

So another memorable evening drew to a close with the essence of Sacavin being brilliantly and sparkingly kept alive by all chevaliers and their guests.

**Felicity Bellamy**



## Graham McKowen

With sadness we report the passing of Graham McKowen. He was a Chevalier for 3 years. He will be remembered for his friendly personality and willingness to join in our social events. Graham was born in the North of England and found his way to Brightlingsea via Sheffield where he was a partner in a business manufacturing labelling machines. Having sold the business to a Harwich based company, they wisely retained Graham and he settled in Thorrington where he soon established his own business. Graham labelling was successful for many years and he rejected many offers to sell his business passionate to protect the 45 staff of local people.



Graham was a widower for some years, caring for Shelley and Christopher, following the death of their mother Paddy at an early age. As they became able to take more care of themselves, he was able to enjoy his interests in rugby, cricket, tennis, sailing and to travel the country in his vintage E Type.

A life change occurred when he met and married Anna, with whom he shared many interests. They travelled extensively, sailed from Brightlingsea and continued to visit Brecon Beacons to listen to jazz concerts. He enjoyed music and sang as member of the Motley Crew. Being part of the Anglian Mafia he was founder member of Brightwine and Red Rose, specialists in drinking wine and testing culinary delights of its members.

RJL

## Pat Salzedo

We bring you the sad news of Pat Salzedo's passing on 24<sup>th</sup> September last which, co-incidentally, was the birthday of her late and distinguished husband, Leonard who died in 2000. Pat and Leonard were both legendary contributors to Sacavin Grand Bretagne from its early days in the seventies.



Pat was inducted at the Chapitre du Printemps, Vintners' Hall on 14<sup>th</sup> March 1978 and from 1981 she was, initially, minute secretary and, subsequently, Chef d'Historiographie (Archivist) until her retirement in 1998. Although effectively Chancellor, she was never afforded that title but such was the quality of her contribution that it became the benchmark for future holders of that rank. With her cheerful approach she served the Management Committee consistently and with distinction for that period and her knowledge of Sacavin and Chevaliers was encyclopaedic.

Her talents were not confined only to Sacavin and she been clerk to her local Parish Council and, in her career, General Secretary of the Society of Cosmetic Scientists and later the International Federation. In 1993, following her retirement, she took up her studies again and graduated from Birkbeck College with a BA in English.

By general consent, her contribution to Sacavin was both immense and impressive and we were extremely fortunate to have her as a colleague.

The Ancien Grand Commandeur and Hazel attended her funeral service at Bramcote, Nottingham and we extend our deep sympathy to daughters Susie and Caroline (also a former Chevalier).

DCS

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 15 January 2013** at  
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Sacavin Challenge Chapter No.6 **Tuesday 29 January 2013**  
 Wine tasting over Dinner at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place  
*Calling letters dispatched early December*



Spring Lunch & AGM at Queens Club **Saturday 16 March 2013**  
*Calling letters to be dispatched early February*



Excursion to the Wye Valley Wednesday 15 &amp; Thursday 16 May 2013



**With this Courier come warm wishes from the Management Committee to all Commandeurs, Officers, Chevaliers and their families for this Christmas and the coming New Year. Rabelaisian greetings to you all!**