



Sacavin Courier



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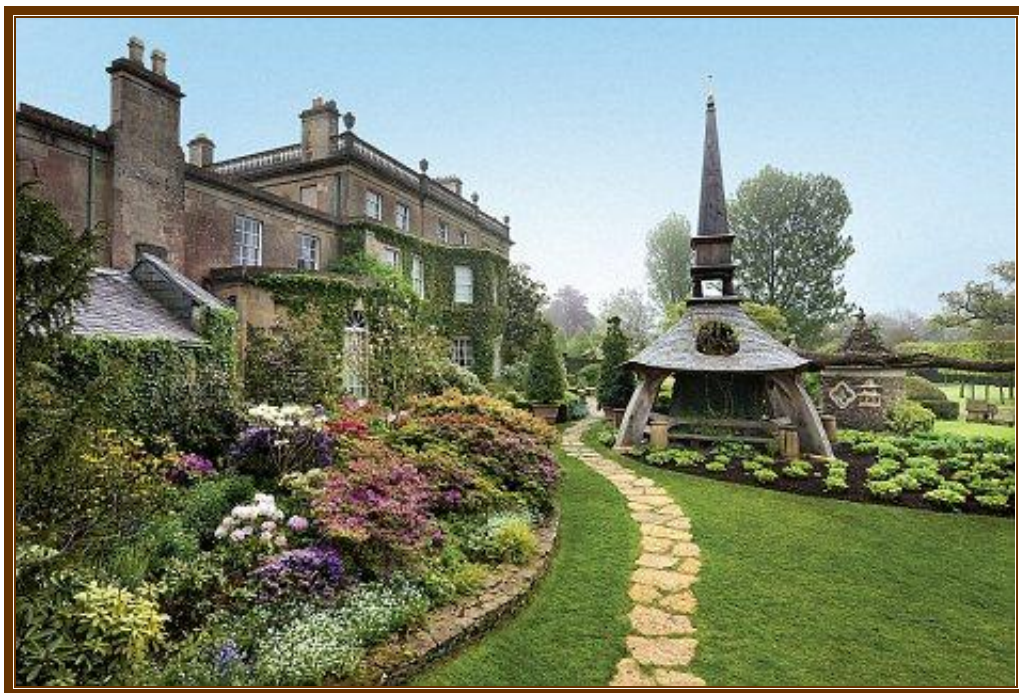
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In the Garden at Highgrove House.

Visit to Highgrove Gardens & the Cotswolds

Monday 9th & Tuesday 10th September, 2019

Richard Ridler had kindly organised many eventful trips to the west of England and this, his last event, a tour of Highgrove Gardens and a taster of the Cotswolds, was amongst his most memorable. Our thanks go to Richard and Gillian for all their efforts and organisational skills for this event and for those over the years.

Twenty six Sacavins arrived at the Bear Hotel, Rodborough Common, on a wet and dismal day. There they were greeted by two quiet and elderly residents: one, an eight-foot stuffed grizzly of unknown heritage and the other a Himalayan brown bear which came to an untimely end at the hands of Lt. Monkton in 1881.



The Bear Hotel, Rodborough Common

Crossing a cattle grid – remember the Common – was the entry to a large car park which, interestingly also contained a small vineyard. The hotel, which had been recently completely refurbished, provided us with comfortable well-furnished bedrooms and other residential facilities. The Library Dining Room overlooked the Common on one side and had a fine view of the Pain Valley on the other. However, even Perseus would have had to scratch his head on the very many different ways of navigating the hotel.

Vin d'honneur was served at 6.45 pm in the Garden Room – our now customary Bouvet Ladubay followed by pre-ordered menus in the Library Dining Room. Two wines were served with the meal; a South African Chenin Blanc, and a red wine from the Touraine. Both the food, service and, of course, the wines were excellent.

The following day, after a leisurely breakfast, we were taken in a space age looking coach on a short tour to the old Cotswold wool town of Painswick before driving the short distance to Highgrove for lunch and a conducted tour of the gardens. Richard felt we should not miss the viewpoint from Prinknash Abbey so on the way to Painswick our driver, with consummate skill, navigated his vehicle/spacecraft to this point. The view from Prinknash was stunning despite the fact that, although the clouds had lifted, there was still a lot of mist in the air. The Cotswolds were set out as if seen from an aircraft, with a clear view of the River Severn, the Forest of Dean and with the brooding presence of the Brecon Beacons in the far distance.

On arrival at Highgrove the security guard, looking at the coach, enquired whether Darth Vader was sat somewhere at the back. Security cleared, we were taken to a large dining room where we were served a very tasty butternut squash soup, a variety of sandwiches previously ordered, and a choice of dessert – a lemon posset with fresh berries or a rhubarb crumble with double cream.

Once properly assembled we met our guide, Penelope Coghlan, who ushered us into a small room for a short introductory recording by HRH welcoming visitors to his garden. It was from here that we entered the garden proper via the Indian Door, named because it originally came from a Hindu temple.

This is not a garden of manicured lawns or of large borders with tiered herbaceous planting, perennials and annuals. Rather it is a garden broken up into many “rooms” each with different themes and all reflecting the view that nature should not be controlled but accommodated in a different way. This

philosophy is most evident with the house where a large wisteria and parthenocissus have been allowed to grow at will, even obscuring and covering many of the windows. However, there are several viewpoints; one from the steps at the side of the house permitting views along the length of the garden.

Each of these “rooms” contain many different features such as the Carpet Garden, Southern Hemisphere Garden, Cottage Garden, the Sundial Garden, the Autumn Walk, the Woodland Garden and the Walled Garden – this last was part of the original house. One notable feature is the oak pavilion which is effectively an oak church spire constructed on the base of a Cedar of Lebanon which had to be felled for safety reasons in 2007. Another notable feature to be found in the Woodland Garden is the two opposing classical temples made from green oak. Also, a stumpery made from the upturned roots of a number of large trees. HRH has received many gifts over the years of pots, amphorae, two large Chinese water jars and busts of various people, including stone from the restoration of UK cathedrals: these have been incorporated into the gardens at various places. Penelope was particularly impressed that we were able to identify at least one of the busts, that of Richard Chartres the Bishop of London. The Woodland Garden also contained a very fine sculpture by the American artist, Fred Hart, which, to my mind, seems to have been inspired by the dancers in Botticelli’s Primavera and is dedicated to the murdered daughters of Czar Nicholas.

The dominant colours in the garden are blue and purple with very many hydrangeas and hostas: the latter a particular challenge in a wholly organic garden. Control is by the liberal release of nematode worms which are a parasitoid of snails and slugs. The garden employs eleven full time gardeners and two students. The head gardener is a lady.

The house itself, which is a Grade II listed building, was originally built in 1796/8. After many vicissitudes, including a major fire, the estate was purchased by Maurice MacMillan, the son of the former Prime Minister Harold MacMillan, for £89,000 in 1956. It was

subsequently purchased by the Duchy of Cornwall in 1980 for, it is thought, between £800,000 and £1million.

On arrival back at the Bear and in one of the hotel’s conference rooms, Fiona Shiner and Jeremy Mount of the Woodchester Valley Vineyard and Winery presented us with a tasting of their wines. It was done this way given the considerable difficulty of attempting to get the coach to the vineyard. Fiona was an owner and Jeremy the oenologist with very considerable experience of wine making in France, Germany and New Zealand. The vineyard produced some 176 tonnes of grapes a year and of the order of 100,000 bottles of wine.



Jeremy Mount & Fiona Shiner

In addition to a welcoming glass of a delicious white wine, we tasted five of Woodchester’s wines. The first pair were compared as a lesson in “terroir”. Both were 100 percent Bacchus, of the same year and used the same production method. However, one included grapes from an area with a very different soil structure. Opinions differed on which was preferred, but all agreed the wines were quite distinct. The third wine was a 2018 Sauvignon Blanc and we were informed that only three vineyards in the UK grew this grape. To my mind it tasted like a good Sauvignon Blanc from the Marlborough region of New Zealand. The fourth wine was a 2018 Rosé made from 100 percent pinot noir grapes. A difficult grape to perfect but one Jeremy has fully mastered. The final wine was Woodchester’s sparkling wine, their 2016 Reserve Cuvée, produced using the three champagne grape varieties (pinot noir, chardonnay and pinot meunier) and using the traditional champagne method. We all agreed it was a fine wine.

Sid Price

Chapitre des Vendanges

Saturday 12th October, 2019

Not having attended a Chapitre in Angers since 1994, I was very pleased to enjoy such a special occasion once more, together with Max Britain, Jane Berger, John and Christine Muggleton, Chris and Jan Powis. We walked across a new footbridge over the river Maine on a fine autumn evening, to assemble in the wonderful museum of Jean Lurcat. We had the chance to admire his 1960s collections of ten tapestries of le Chant du Monde. It is displayed in the large Salle des Malades of the ancient Hôpital Saint-Jean.

Having donned our Sacavin robes in a room below the Greniers Saint Jean, we assembled outside and processed up the cobbled street, being led by the fine trumpeters with their wonderful long hunting horns. As well as Sacavin members from France and the UK, there were also members of the Chinese Sacavin with their Grand Commandeur Tom.



The Greniers St-Jean

We entered the twelfth century Greniers Saint-Jean. Until 1870 it was the grain and food store for one of the oldest hospitals in France, the Hôtel Dieu d'Angers, founded at the behest of Henry II Plantagenet (King of England), who had already set up similar institutions in Le Mans and in Normandy.



Salle des Malades, within the ancient Hôpital Saint-Jean

Beneath the grain store, the vast cellar, which originally had two floors, housed the hospital.

The Great Plague epidemics forced the grain store to be used to house the sick as well. From the 17th to 19th century the hospital could accommodate up to 500 patients. Classified as historic monuments in 1862, the buildings were acquired by the town in 1868.

However, the hospice commission had, in the meantime, rented them to a brewer who used them until their transformation into a wine museum in 1932, which Sacavin visited two years ago. Since 1954, the old grain lofts have been used for some prestigious shows, performances and receptions. Restoration carried out between 1992 and 1994 brings to life the remarkable architecture of the cellars.

Surrounded by such glorious history, we enjoyed the Chapitre des Vendanges, where about 30 new chevaliers were created, both from France and also from China. Just before dinner our talented chevalier, Max Brittain entertained us all by playing some fine jazz tunes on his guitar, which he had brought over especially for the occasion. There was also an intriguing wine tasting table at which one could test one's taste-buds! After dinner we enjoyed dancing to a live band.



Angers is a delightfully elegant town, with good museums and excellent restaurants too. It is certainly well worth considering for a long weekend in the autumn. This proved to be a most successful and enjoyable trip, and reinforced our friendship with our Sacavin friends in Angers.

Felicity Bellamy

Chapitre Les Deux Belles Dames

Tuesday 19th November, 2019

Sixty-four Chevaliers and their guests met in the splendour of Vintners Hall in the City of London to celebrate the 2019 Chapitre Les Deux Belles Dames. We began with the Vin d'Honneur, served in the Hall's Drawing Room, and which was a Langlois -Château Crémant de Loire Blanc Brut, following which our Trumpeters sounded the familiar fanfare inviting everyone to gather in the Hall's Court Room for the ceremony of the Chapitre. A second fanfare by the Trumpeters announced the arrival of the Grand Commandeur and her Officers, accompanied by our two visitors from France, as they processed into the Court Room.

The Grand Commandeur, Felicity Bellamy, welcomed everyone to our Sacavin Chapitre des Belles Dames, ironically on International Men's Day and noted that Sacavin should congratulate itself on celebrating the empowerment of women. She continued this theme by noting that whilst the first wine orders were established in France in the late Middle Ages, with Sacavin being revived in 1904, and founded in the UK in 1969, ladies have served on the committee in recent years. However, it is only very recently that in France we have a lady Grande Maître, Laure Pertus, and also now a lady Grand Commandeur here in the UK. Moreover, Felicity was pleased to advise that of the six inductees this evening three are ladies and warmly welcomed them all.

The Grand Commandeur then announced that she had one promotion to perform within the Sacavin Management Committee and she invited Sid Price to step forward.

Sid was inducted into Sacavin in 2009 at the Chapitre du Singe in Vintners' Hall, joined the Management Committee as Adjoint in 2014 and was appointed Second Halberdier in 2019. She described how, since 2013, he has been contributing articles to the Courier, starting with our Herefordshire expedition, and very many others since then. Sid had organised the very successful excursion to Aldeburgh and the Suffolk Coast in 2017 and has provided many photos, acted as stand-in Committee minute taker and given us many entertaining and thoughtful graces for our dinners. He may potentially organize coach transport to Sancerre in May 2020. We are very grateful for all Sid's dedication to Sacavin

and it was a great pleasure to promote him to Officier.

The Chef du Protocole was then requested to summon the six candidates for Sacavin membership and the induction ceremony began. Sid Price read out citations on each candidate, as follows.

Andy and Eileen Gilbert proposed by John Foley and seconded by Marie Foley: Andy and Eileen met at Leeds University where Andy studied law and Eileen English and History. After university Andy became a barrister and finally a solicitor. He worked for British Rail as their last Head of Litigation prior to privatisation in 1994. He left to join a City law firm, Kennedys, becoming a board member. He retired in 2014. Eileen became a teacher, working initially in local schools and finally at the Tring Arts Educational School, where she taught English and History. Eileen retired from teaching in 2010. They have been married for over 40 years and have three daughters, Kate, Elizabeth and Frances.

They last visited Anjou about 20 years ago but have spent more holidays in France than anywhere else. They love the beautiful countryside, the ancient towns, the good food and wine and, of course, the French themselves.

Anne Moore, proposed by Grahame Macfarlane and seconded by Tony More: Anne met Tony when he was a student at what is now De Montfort University in Leicester, where Anne has deep connections with the City where her father was a maths professor at the University. They married in 1969 and moved to Pinner where Ann worked at

HIGHGROVE VISIT

Highgrove House

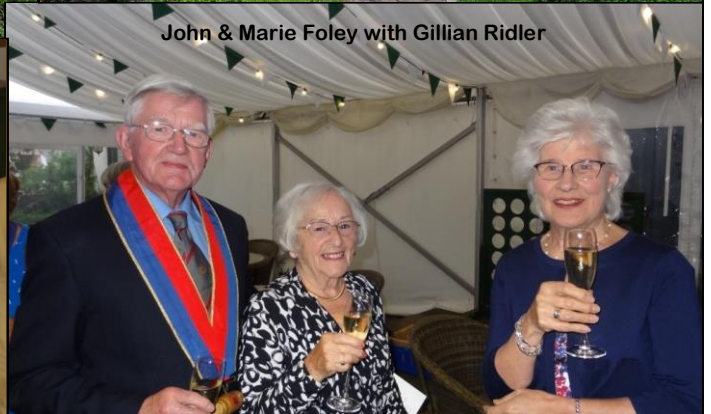


The Garden at Highgrove

Richard Ridler, Jane Berger & Geoffrey Wheal



John & Marie Foley with Gillian Ridler



CHAPITRE DES VENDANGES

Assembled for the Chapitre des Vendanges in the Greniers St-Jean



Max Brittain, Jane Berger & John Muggleton



A little sightseeing before the great event

City where her father was a maths professor at the University. They married in 1969 and moved to Pinner where Ann worked at Selfridges; rapidly moving up the management chain within the organisation.

Her first foreign holiday with Tony was on a camping trip to Brittany: where she got to know something of France, but not its wines. This was followed up with a holiday near St Tropez. The following year her daughter, Rebecca, was born.

After Rebecca came Abigail and the four of them would take many driving holidays in France. One trip which is particularly memorable to Anne is that on a long drive along the Atlantic Coast, when Tony was tired and needed a stop, they spotted a Round Table Roundel outside a hotel near Montpellier. The Manager was a member. Rebecca and Abigail were quickly whisked away to bed and Anne and Tony had a great evening with their newfound friends: enjoying much good wine. Anne's love of France and French wines has continued ever since.

Chris and Janet Mote: Chris and Janet were proposed by Tony Moore and seconded by Graham Macfarlane. Chris has been a member of the Round Table for over 40 years and subsequently in the 41 Club. He is married to Janet and they have three children - Alex, Vicky and Greg and three grandchildren. Chris qualified as an osteopath in 1978 and has been running his own business in Pinner since then. He also was commissioned into the Territorial Army serving as a Major in the Signals Corps. He is currently Chairman of the local Army Benevolent Fund. He has also served as a Magistrate at Uxbridge and for the last 25 years has been a local Councillor for Pinner South for the London Borough of Harrow, where he is currently the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Adult and Older People.

Janet who has Italian ancestry is married to Chris. She has been a popular local teacher for many years and now works as and when required, often at short notice. She has been much involved with the Ladies Circle and is still with Tangent, where she is currently the Treasurer.

With Chris she is much involved in local politics and is currently a Councillor for Headstone North for the London Borough of Harrow where she is the Shadow Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Young people.

She has accompanied Chris to a number of Sacavin functions and, like her husband, is looking forward to increasing her knowledge of the Loire and its wines.

Michael Purton: Mike was proposed by Max Brittain and seconded by Martin Hart. Mike was born in London and was educated at Watford Boys' Grammar School and the University of Surrey.

He was a boy chorister in the Watford Parish Church Choir where, alongside the young Sir Andrew Davis and the composer Bob Chilcott, he studied Recorder, Piano and Violin before taking up the French Horn.

He became the Principal Horn in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and on graduating in 1973 became Principal horn in Manchester's Halle Orchestra. From there he became the Senior Horn Professor at the Royal Northern College of Music where he now teaches Recording.

It was not all music: whilst at Manchester he founded the North Cheshire Wine Society and was a keen member of the Willoughby's Wine Club.

In 1986 he changed career to work in education and as a classical recording producer. Highlights include being Director of Music at Benenden School for Girls, Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion at Trinity College of Music and Principal of Bromley Youth Music Trust.

Since 1987 he has recorded for many top labels, both in the UK and in Europe, a huge range of chamber, orchestral and vocal music. He has also recorded for military bands including the complete works of Sousa. He has almost finished recording the complete solo piano music of Schumann.

Mike has been a member of the Savage Club since 1992 and is a keen Morris Dancer, loves

railways and has recently started learning the Great Highland Bagpipes. When his family was still young, he visited the Loire enjoying the food, wine and châteaux.

Announced by a fanfare from the high Gallery, the new Chevaliers were led to their places to dine. An innovation for this year's Chapitre was the use of round tables of eight persons each, which was considered an improvement on previous arrangements entailing long tables.

Sid Price said grace, and our Sénéchal, Dr John Muggleton described the wines being offered at dinner.

Menu

DEVONSHIRE WHITE CRAB
cucumber and cherry tomato, lemon mayonnaise,
lemon verbena cress

~*~

Domaine de Petit Clocher Anjou Blanc 2018

~*~

CONFIT OF DUCK
dauphinoise potato and caramelized chicory,
buttered winter greens, blackberry jus

~*~

Chateau de Putille Anjou Villages Cuvée Prestige 2017

~*~

CHEESE BOARD
a selection of English cheeses

~*~

VINTNERS' BERRY MESS
seasonal berries, jasmine meringue, viola flowers

~*~

Château la Tomaze Coteaux du Layon 2018
Atomes Crochus Bio

~*~

COFFEE & CHOCOLATES

~*~

Choice of Cointreau or Dalmore 15-year old Single Malt

The Grand Commandeur welcomed Chevaliers and guests and in particular welcomed, in French, our Grand Maître Laure Pertus who has come from Angers together with the Déléguée Angevine, Véronique Jérosme, as follows:

"Je suis très contente que vous êtes chez nous ce soir. Nous avons grande amitié entre nous maintenant, et cette chose est très importante pour Sacavin en Angleterre. Je me souviens votre Chapitre des Vendanges à Angers en

octobre, quand vous avez nous donnez une grande accueil. Merci beaucoup pour une belle soirée. Vous pouvez voir que nous avons 6 chevaliers nouveaux cette année, et que Sacavin en Angleterre est en bonne santé!"

Continuing the theme of women in wine, she opined that most historians agree that wine was indeed discovered by a woman, and often left out of the history books are the ancient stories of goddesses of wine, most of whom came into being centuries before Bacchus and Dionysius. She added that moving forward a few thousand years, France has long been known for its wine widows, particularly those in Champagne such as Lilly Bollinger and Veuve (or widow) Clicquot who worked in her winery until she was 89. In the US now about half the graduates in California's top oenology programmes are women. In Europe there are many significant women in the wine industry now. Bouvet Ladoüx for example, where we have the fourth generation Juliette Monmousseau, and also in the Loire Valley Wendy Paillé of Domaine Pithon-Paillé. She advised that, in Bordeaux, some of the top 100 wines in the world are created by women, for example Philippine de Rothschild of Mouton Rothschild, or Sandrine Garbay of Château d'Yquem.

She thanked all the staff here for their hard work, and once again making Sacavin so welcome, and advised we have already booked our Chapitre at Vintners Hall for next year on 24th November 2020. She also extended a very warm welcome to our six new chevaliers, in the hope they will enjoy being active members of Sacavin in the future.

She spoke of some of the exciting events already lined up for 2020, starting on January 29th with a Wine Call my Bluff evening at the National Liberal Club. Our AGM at Queen's Tennis Club is on Saturday 4th April, where we always enjoy the most excellent lunch. After that our Chef des Expéditions, John Foley has planned a wonderful trip, visiting vineyards in Sancerre from Monday 11th May – Saturday 16th May, with the added opportunity, possibly, of travelling by coach from the UK. In the autumn we have another new occasion planned, on Wednesday 16th September. It is to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Field

of the Cloth of Gold when Henry VIII met King Francis 1st of France in the Pas-de-Calais, along with a retinue of 6000. It will be a veritable Rabelaisian feast.

Our Chef des Beaux Arts is busy researching the music of the period, along with dishes of the day; We may well have a professional actress in period costume to give us even more of a flavour of the time. Our Chapitre in 2020 is on 24th November, and it will round off a very busy year for Sacavin.

She also welcomed and thanked all who are guests of Sacavin Chevaliers, particularly Major Steve Marcham, General Manager of Vintners' Hall for his continued support and help to Sacavin. She also expressed pleasure in the fact that no fewer than eight members of her family were attending the Chapitre, as guests, and in honour of her late father, Bill Leyland,

who had become the eighteenth member of Sacavin in 1970, and doubtless would have been very proud to see his daughter appointed the first lady Grand Commandeur of Sacavin in the UK.

She then invited our Grande Maître Laure Pertus to speak on behalf of our confrères in France. Speaking French, she thanked our Grand Commandeur, fellow Chevaliers and Vintners Hall and staff for the splendid wine and food at this year's Chapitre. She also mentioned the sad death of Michele Leterme who had, until recently, been Délégué Angévin.

Ann Moore then spoke on behalf of the new inductees, appreciating the excellent wine, food and companionship of the Chapitre and looking forward to attending future Sacavin events.

Duncan Burnett



The Field of the Cloth of Gold.

This year's September event at the NLC will celebrate the 500th anniversary of an extraordinary meeting which took place in Northern France between Henry VIII and Francis I of France.

For just over two weeks in the summer of 1520 the two kings, each with a retinue of around 6,000 courtiers, nobles, knights, clergy, servants, artisans and labourers, engaged in the greatest, most conspicuous display of wealth, culture and courtly sports that Europe had ever seen.

They were accommodated in tents and pavilions that were dressed in luxurious fabrics, especially the cloth of gold that gives the event its name.

This jointly-hosted tournament was accompanied by extravagant displays of hospitality and chivalric bonhomie.

Our Tudor-inspired menu and Loire wines (not of 16th Century vintage!) will emulate, albeit on a much smaller scale, these Anglo-French festivities.

Unfortunately, Royal permission to roast a swan has been refused, and swords, lances and chargers will have to be checked in at the cloakroom, but we are sure Chevaliers will enter into the spirit of this Anniversary tribute.



Henry comes a cropper in a Royal wrestling match

Max Brittain

And the Trumpets shall Sound.

Looking through back numbers of the Sacavin Courier, reports on each Chapitre never fail to mention the work of our two trumpeters. Rightly so, as their stirring renditions of our former Chef des Beaux Arts, Leonard Salzedo's Fanfares and Ceremonial March play a vital role in shaping our Induction Ceremony and adding to the grandeur of the occasion. The same two ladies have been playing for us for the last twelve years, so it is high time we acknowledged the importance of their contribution to our Chapitres in greater detail. Last November, just before they began their opening fanfare, in a brief interview they told me a little about themselves and their professional careers

Claire Duncan first played for our Chapitre in 1991 while studying at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Although she never met the composer, Claire does remember meeting Leonard's wife on several occasions. Claire started her musical journey on the cornet at the age of eight, winning a scholarship to the GSM ten years later.



Claire and Lorraine

Lorraine Temple has been part of our trumpet team for the last twelve years, but her first study instrument at the Royal Academy of Music was trombone.

Like Claire, her musical career began as an eight year-old, playing in a Salvation Army band. After graduating from the RAM, Lorraine worked predominantly in West End musicals, touring the United Kingdom's theatres with shows like South

Pacific, Brigadoon, Barnum, Oliver, The Lion King, and Miss Saigon.

Claire's professional career has involved performances with the London Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, although she and Lorraine now concentrate almost exclusively on teaching in schools in the Greater London area.

Lorraine is Head of Brass at Whitgift School in Croydon. Claire is also on the staff -

"I'm just a lowly trumpet teacher."

"One of my team," jokes Lorraine.

Both are dog-lovers, keen to show me photos of their handsome Weimaraners.

"I expect they need lots of exercise," I say.

"Yes", Lorraine agrees, "but they need sofas more!"

Neither Claire nor Lorraine seem to spend a great deal of time on their sofas, however, as sporting activities occupy what little leisure time they have.

Claire in particular has an impressive record of competition in various endurance sports such as Ironman triathlons and *five* London Marathons. She has also cycled from John O' Groats to Land's End, raced 24-hour time trials and swum the English Channel!

We are indeed fortunate to benefit from the professionalism and loyalty of these two fine musicians. Long may it continue!

Max Brittain

CHAPITRE LES DEUX BELLES DAMES

Gillian Griffiths with Ann & Sid Price



A welcome to Vintners' Hall from the Grand Commandeur



Our new Chevaliers, L-R: Andrew & Eileen Gilbert, Janet & Chris Mote, Anne Moore & Michael Purton



Chef du Protocole Robert Aitken-Sykes keeping tabs on proceedings



Ruth Wyman to the left, Rosemary Burnett on the right, as the assembly awaits the serving of dessert.

Derek Sheen 1930 – 2019

Our Grand Commandeur for 16 years until his retirement in 2011, Derek died on 13th August. In so many ways, he embodied Sacavin, carefully safeguarding its traditions and values with a firm approach while ensuring that nothing should detract from its good-natured Rabelaisian inspired tenets.



Inducted as long ago as 1973, in Angers, at a time when Robert Cointreau was Grand Maître, he quickly became involved in the running of Sacavin. By 1983 he was Chancelier, with duties which then included (his own words) ordering, handling, use, storage of and, above all, commenting on the wines at functions. Together with the late Nicky Kyriakides, he organised several excursions to France, the last of which in 1991 showed that he wasn't unreasonably restrained by custom, as it was to Alsace. At the 1995 AGM at Clerkenwell's Bleeding Heart Restaurant, he took over as Grand Commandeur on the retirement of Chris Wilkinson.

Derek was born in Catford, South East London, with a brother Michael coming onto the scene three years later. Sadly, however, his mother died of tuberculosis when he was only five. Two aunts, separately, looked after the two boys for a while, but they were reunited in 1939 when they settled with their father on the Isle of Wight for the duration of the War.

Trained as a chartered secretary, Derek's first job was with Marley Tiles in Sevenoaks. However, the wine trade beckoned in the form of his father's company, Burton Sheen, based in Dorking. As well as bottling its own wines imported from France and Spain, it also owned several off-licences in the south. He ran the enterprise until 1974, when he joined Rawlings Voigt whose cellars were sited underneath Waterloo Station. Somewhat noisy as his own office was directly beneath platform 1!

Derek's childhood on the Isle of Wight kindled a love of both steam railways and the sea. No surprise then that holidays with his first wife, Joyce and their children, Simon, Lily and Martin were spent on the island, or down in Devon, the attractions there being the Dart Valley Railway and the ships in Dartmouth and Salcombe harbours. But he was drawn to French holidays too, by his interest in wine and also in history, whether it be the ruined Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches or the tombs of Henry II, Eleanor of Aquitaine and their son, Richard the Lionheart at Fontevraud Abbey near Chinon. Pursuits broadened by his involvement with Sacavin.

He was a member of The Rotary Club of Dorking and Kennington, serving as Treasurer and President. A keen sportsman, he had played football for the Old Bromleians and, early on, supported Charlton before switching to Crystal Palace. A member of the MCC, his summer weekends were spent following Kent in the glory days of Messrs. Cowdrey, Knott and Luckhurst. Church was important to him too, attending regularly and acting as a sidesman.

But it is as our Grand Commadeur that most of us knew him, during which time he inducted a total of 71 new members including, in 2000, his second wife, Hazel and, in 2006, her son-in-law, Francesco Cusimano. By nature he was very sociable, always cheerful and with a mischievous glint in his eye that suggested an underlying humour to the most formal of occasions. That Sacavin flourishes today has much to do with Derek.

Michel Leterme 1930 – 2019

In the year we happily dedicated our Chapitre to the two ladies now presiding over Sacavin, one French the other English, we also said a sad “Goodbye” to two stalwarts of the old order. We have previously mentioned our own Derek Sheen. Over in Angers there was another, Michel Leterme, whose devotion to fostering good cross-Channel relations is largely responsible for the friendship that exists today. Michel became our Délégué-Angevin in 2008 but had acted in that position unofficially for a decade or so before that. He and Derek became firm friends, something perhaps echoed in their both dying in their 90th years, Michel, just 6 weeks after Derek, on 27th September.



Michel was born in Armentières, Nord-Pas-de-Calais. He was known, mischievously, to claim the legendary Mademoiselle of the bawdy WW1 song as his grandmother! His career was in education. Soon after graduating, he was teaching French at a school in Launceston, Cornwall and this certainly encouraged his love of English, which he spoke and wrote very well. In more recent times, he became Associate Professor at the University of Angers. He had a nautical background too, as a Frigate Commander in the French Naval Reserve. Awarded the Ordre des Palmes Académiques, he was also an Officer of the National Order of Merit. And, for 38 years, Michel was an active member of the Angers-Cité Lions Club. He had a passion for music and the arts, delighting in the playing of family and friends and, as his Christmas Letters would record, derived much

pleasure from such favourites as the Vienna and Venice New Year concerts. His daughter, an actress, in recent years performed the classic French play 'Athalie' by Racine in, amongst other university towns, Cambridge.

Many of us remember the warmth with which Michel would welcome us to Angers and the enthusiasm with which he sought out features of French life to entertain us, from lunch in an ancient barn or while cruising on the River Sarthe, to experiencing Anjou's obscure version of bowls, La Boule de Fort. Regularly attending our London Chapitres with his companion of recent years, Monique Christiaens, his “Message from Angers” delivered with humour and fellowship endeared him to everyone. A true gentleman, in every sense of the word.



Brenda Collins 1932 - 2019

Brenda, the wife of former Chef du Protocole, Owen Collins and daughter of the late George Wilks, erstwhile Chancelier and also Chef du Protocole, died on 12th November 2019.

George Wilks was the Headmaster of a London School and at the outbreak of war in 1939, the school, along with Brenda and her mother, was evacuated to Brightlingsea. When it became apparent that the east coast was not, perhaps, the safest place to be at that time, they were moved to Ross on Wye where they remained until the end of the war. Returning to Ilford, Brenda went to Wanstead County High School and with her family, attended the Gantshill Methodist Church where she became an active member of the Gantshill Operatic and Dramatic Society and also assisted with running of one of the two Guide Companies.

Owen also attended the Gantshill Methodist Church and he and Brenda were married there in 1955, starting their married life together in Abridge before moving to their house in Ilford that had been previously occupied by Owen's parents. In the following years, they moved to West Hyde, before settling at "Oakwood" in Brightlingsea in 1972. Oakwood soon became a venue for family gatherings with fireworks down at the bottom, barbecues in the wood, legendary Easter Egg Hunts and weddings.

Whilst bringing up five children, Brenda still found time to be a member of the Ladies Circle and she was part of "Welcome Wagon" which is an organisation offering friendship to people new to an area. She always welcomed everybody, for a meal, a night or as long as was necessary. Even, once, after listening to a concert in Perranporth, she invited a whole brass band into the garden for tea.

Holidays were taken in Cornwall, Wales, Pitlochry and included an epic cross channel sailing voyage, often with long standing friends when it never rained. The family was told it was "a clearing up shower" and if they were bored they were sent out to "make a friend." Brenda believed she could cure any childhood

illness with an extra jumper, an early night or a good meal.



Brenda loved to cook and followed complicated Cordon Bleu recipes which if there were left overs, these would find their way into school packed lunches the following day, until there was a plea to have Mothers Pride in Tupperware "like everyone else."

But Brenda was not like everyone else. Amongst other things, she would pack more children into the back of a car than would be legal now; she managed to run herself over; she saw two lads trying to break into her car one night and chased them off without even waiting for Owen to wake up; she spent her 60th Birthday racing round the track at Snetterton.....much slower than she did on the road; she would cook meals for the freezer without labelling them so sometimes the pie fillings were unexpected.....

Brenda joined Sacavin at the Chapitre de Quatre-Vingt Quinze at the Butchers' Hall in 1995 and she enjoyed the events and the various visits she made to the Loire and Burgundy.

When the children grew older, Brenda became busier. With a friend she started a cooking service called "Just Eat" before setting up a shop selling unusual ladies fashions. Brenda was such a big presence that even in her last years, when she could not take such an active part in family life, with Owen's great care she was still at the very centre of it. Brenda will be greatly missed by Owen, her children, her grandchildren, her great grandchildren and indeed all who knew her.

Richard Ridler
from notes provided
by the Collins family.

Our thanks to Martin Hart, Sid Price, Christine Muggleton & John Ingram for the photographs in this issue of the Courier.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES



What Wine was that – True or False **Wednesday 29 January 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place

Calling letters were dispatched 12 December 2019



Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 10 March 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Spring Luncheon & AGM **Saturday 4 April 2020**

The Queen's Club, West Kensington, London W14 9EQ

Calling letters to be dispatched at the end of February 2020



Visit to Sancerre and its environs **Monday 11th to Friday 15th May 2020**

Calling letters to be dispatched at the end of January 2020



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 10 June 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 8 September 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Field of the Cloth of Gold **Wednesday 16 September 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place

Calling letters to be dispatched early August 2020



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 11 November 2020**

The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place at 11.30 am



Chapitre 2020 **Tuesday 24 November 2020**

Vintners' Hall, City of London

Calling letters to be dispatched early October 2020

