



Sacavin Courier



NO. 77 SUMMER 2020

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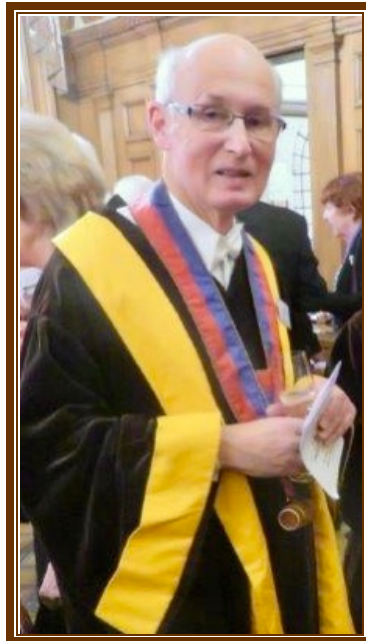
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After seventeen years and thirty-three editions, John Ingram has handed over production of the Sacavin Courier to Max Brittain. Max will attempt to maintain John's high standards!

Reflections of a former Courier Editor

They waited until dinner was over. It was a very good dinner, the chefs at Le Clos de Bénédictins had done us proud and the Loire wines were both delicious and plentiful. It was still just light outside, and the Grand Commandeur suggested a gentle stroll to aid digestion. Somebody mentioned a small aerodrome nearby, across the fields behind the hotel, in the direction of Saumur. Maybe we should take a look.

It was a warm evening and, in the twilight as we wandered down the lane leading to the airfield, fireflies danced in the hedgerows and cicadas buzzed noisily in the telegraph wires above us. Maybe I should have suspected something was afoot when I found myself amongst several of the Sacavin executive. Or had they found me? After all that food and wine, and now the magic of the French countryside, most of what was discussed remains very hazy in my recollection. Looking back on it, however, it seems that at some point conversation must have touched on any technical skills I might have had.

What I do recall is their mentioning the post of Halberdier, charged with providing an honour guard for the Grand Commandeur. It was currently vacant and offered to me. The following morning, I learnt that I had accepted. It was a privilege indeed and a role I was happy to fulfil as it had no requirement for computer or desk-top publishing skills.

So, in 2002, I was elected to the Management Committee as Second Halberdier. Yet, just one year later I was editing the Courier! As I remember it, we never did find that Aerodrome.

The brainchild of John Braun, the Courier's inaugural edition was published in 1980. For the first few years it was edited by George Wilks. There followed a long period under the charge of Pat Salzedo, whose devotion to Sacavin is well demonstrated by the quality of the journal's content and its breadth of coverage. Typewritten, Roneo printed and stapled at one corner, it included the same topics we see today, but enhanced by numerous articles related to

Anjou, Rabelais, the Plantagenets and, of course, food & wine. She remained at the helm until 1998. Then it was the turn of Peter Bouch, with a career in publishing, thus bringing with him skills to take the Courier into the brave new world of Information Technology.

Sadly, Peter was only able to apply those talents for a few years, as the onset of aphasia forced him to retire from the Committee and, ultimately, the Sacavin itself. So, in fact, my appointment as his successor was more by the occasion of his ill health than anything planned back in Saumur. I did, however, see something of the direction Peter was intending to go with the Courier. A first step was to include photographs, black and white to start with as colour was expensive. As a one-off, our 2003 excursion to Ancenis spawned a colour supplement, written by Des Holland, which was so well received we decided to involve some colour photos in the Courier itself. In a limited way initially, but in 2006 we went just a bit mad!

This was a time of great change in the printing world, as hi-tech equipment was developed which was more efficient and brought down the cost. A friend of mine in the business bought a German machine with huge capacity and, what appeared to be, infinite printing permutations. He paid a fortune for it but he had great ambitions. Our next three Couriers were printed with colour on every page!

But it was too good to last.

My friend wasn't charging enough, his marketing didn't match his ambition and, what put him and so many other UK printers out of business, Poland's entry into the European Union in 2004 led to an increasing amount of

business going there, where it was both cheaper and quicker to print than in Britain.

With the help of a small, boutique, printer in Sevenoaks and a compromise, just two inside pages in colour, we managed to have each issue since then printed at an affordable price. Another change has been, from 2005 onwards, to have the publication bound as a magazine, and you may have noticed that the colour pages are, in fact, the same piece of A3 paper separated by the spine. Again, that keeps the cost down.

After 33 issues, it is now time to hand over to Max Brittain, whose kind offer to “have a go”

was gratefully received by his fellow Committee members, me in particular!

It is time for fresh ideas and I know he has plenty. Not least, how to fill a Courier when all our functions are in abeyance. Quite a challenge for one’s first shot but I’m sure he’s up to it

It was certainly a daunting prospect for me all those years ago. Peter Bouch was a professional, viewing the Courier as a Sacavin institution with standards to be maintained. It has, of course, evolved with the passage of time but I hope, if he were to see it today, he would still recognise it as the magazine he once edited.

John Ingram



Which Wine Was That - True or False?

The National Liberal Club, Wednesday 29th January 2020

Forty seven Sacavins and their guests attended the dinner at the National liberal Club. Unlike our previous wine challenges, which were designed to test our knowledge of Loire wines by comparing them with wines from another region, this evening drew its parallels from a popular show: “Call My Bluff”. But more of that below.

We met, as on previous occasions, in the Old Smoking Room, where Vin d’honneur was served, the wine being our old favourite, the Crémant de Loire, Bouvet Ladubay, Saumur Brut Saphir.

Vin d’honneur : Bouvet Ladubay Saphir

Dinner Menu

Terrine de Campagne



Tagine of Lamb

Cous Cous



Nougat Parfait



Coffee & Chocolates

Many Sacavins will remember visiting Bouvet in the Summer of 2018 during our Golden Anniversary visit where we had a conducted tour of the wine-making facilities and an explanation of the processes involved in producing their crémant. I was not surprised to hear from one of the guests that he thought the wine was better than any recent champagne he had consumed.

From the Old Smoking Room, with its many overhanging portraits of the great members of the Liberal Party, we proceeded to the Lloyd George Room where we were seated on seven round tables set out in fine white linen and glistening with glasses ready for action.

Each of the tables was provided with detailed descriptive notes for four white wines, four red wines and three dessert wines. However, not all the descriptions were to be taken at face value: some were true but others, like election promises, were definitely economical with the truth or even complete porkies.

Our Echanson, John Muggleton, ably explained the rules of engagement. In front of each member and guest were two glasses for white wine, two for red wine and one for the dessert. The paired glasses stood on coasters marked A and B for the white wines, C and D for the red and S for the dessert wine. We were then poured from unmarked bottles throughout the evening particular wines into the lettered glasses.

All we had to do, besides consuming what was in the glass, was to decide which of the wines listed in the descriptive notes was actually the wine in the lettered glass. A lot of fun, but not as easy as it seems, judging by the conversation on our table which, using a democratic voting system, managed to score about the same as the UK in the Eurovision Song Contest.

However, like Malta or one of the Baltic States in the above competition, Table 6 managed a clean sweep, the team correctly naming all the wines. The winners were each awarded a well-earned prize of a Fizz Keeper.

This table of oenological experts comprised John and Val Ingram, Julia Bellingham, Richard and Judith Bellingham and Elias Kulukundis.

For the record, here are the wines we were hoping to identify:

Wine A Domaine des Génaudières, Coteaux d'Ancenis AOC, Malvoisie 2018

Wine B Woodchester Valley, Culver Hill, PGI English Regional Wine 2018

Wine C Armonico, Gran Seleccion, DO Terra Alta, 2015

Wine D Château la Tomaze, Avant-Garde, Anjou AOC, 2018

Wine S Lebreton, Les Rochelles, Coteaux de l'Aubance AOC 2018

It was a fun evening much enjoyed by Sacavin members and their guests, with good food, thanks to the National Liberal Club and an excellent selection of wines, thanks to our Echanson, John Muggleton.

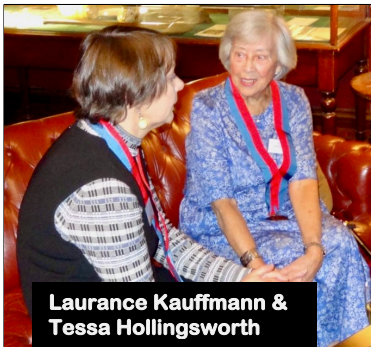
Our Grand Commandeur, Felicity Bellamy, gave thanks to the National Liberal Club for hosting the event and to all those Sacavins attending, particularly John and Christine Muggleton for all their hard work in making the evening a success.

Sid Price



Our Echanson explains the rules

Which Wine Was That?



Laurance Kauffmann & Tessa Hollingsworth



David Longstaff & Gillian Griffiths



Marie Foley & Jan Thurlow



Felicity Bellamy



Chris Powis



The Victorious Judith & Julia Bellingham



Valerie & John Ingram celebrate victory with Elias Kulukundis

Getting to know Laure Pertus

Grand-Maître de la Confrérie des Chevaliers du Sacavin

Laure Pertus succeeded Pierre Aguilas as Grand-Maître in 2017. Many of us will have met Laure at our Chapitres in 2018 and 2019. She also attended our AGM last year in support of Felicity Bellamy's promotion to Grand Commandeur.

The following biographical outline was kindly provided by Laure and translated by John Ingram.

Laure was born on June 19th 1960 in Angers. Her parents had an umbrella factory there, a family business dating back to 1864. As a teenager, her parents introduced her to wine. For them, each bottle tasted had always been a precious thing to share with good company. At the time, little red wine of Angevin origin was drunk, mostly sweet white wines: Chaume, Quart de Chaume and Coteaux du Layon, Aubance and, grudgingly, Sauterne, considered by the Angevins, with bad grace, as less interesting



Her maternal grandfather, born in Chaume, had a small vineyard in Saint Aubin de Luigné, in the heart of the Coteaux du Layon. He was a cooper, filter maker and producer of brandies.

It was there that Laure took part in her first harvest, on the sloping plot planted with Chenin.

"In the evening, I came home to my grandfather, who made succulent caramelized apple compôte for me, so I have fond memories of it, apart from the aches due to the low height of the vines."

During her youth, when it came to sports, she followed the family tradition: hockey and swimming. However, while her father and aunts were regional champions, it was not the same for her, preferring outings with friends.

After a degree in philosophy, she obtained a diploma in Information and Communication Sciences at the University of Paris IV. Then she moved to Paris for 10 years, where she worked in a large financial institution, Caisse des Dépôts. She was responsible for communication in the Group Insurance department and subsequently for direct marketing operations.

In 1992, back to Angers, everything accelerates: two babies the same year, resumption of the family business, then opening of a second store in La Baule. The umbrella factory had meanwhile become a garden furniture business.

In 2009 Laure joined a charity, "Samaane Sénégal", founded by a doctor friend. She was Secretary General from 2013 to 2016 and made several trips to Africa, where she twice took her children, Charles and Clara. Together, they discovered another universe.

Charles is now an Engineer at the Ecole des Mines in Nancy and a Doctor in Material

Science; Clara is a doctor and psychiatrist at the University Hospital Centre of Angers.

Laure was inducted into the Confrérie des Chevaliers du Sacavin on September 28, 1996. Her sponsors were her father, Pierre Pertus, himself a Chevalier since 1969 and Maurice Escher, then Grand-Maître. She was very impressed by the place (in the cellars of the Greniers Saint Jean) and by the men of the Grand Council, in their magnificent outfits.

In 1996, there were no women among the dignitaries and only a few women Chevaliers. Indeed, we should remember that it was not until January 23, 1961 that the first woman was inducted into the rank of Chevalier and that it was in 2007 that the first woman, Professor Penneau-Fontbonne, entered the Grand Council, thanks to Pierre Aguilas.

In 2010, Laure was the third woman to be elected to this noble Assembly, and even if, according to Pierre Aguilas, parity will not be reached until 2040, she was elected Vice Grand-Maître in 2013 and Grand-Maître in 2017.

"I am very happy and proud to be the first female Grand-Maître and to have been chosen by my peers, the vast majority of whom are men. I believe that what counts is the desire to get things done, to be forward thinking and constructive, whether one is a man or a woman. Nevertheless, I am aware of the obstacles to be overcome by women (and men) so that they can take their place in public life and in honorary roles."

"Like many women, I tended to avoid the limelight. In addition, wine has a special place in French culture: it is a vector of values, it is part of cultural identity, it is a noble product associated with historical heritage, even sacred, therefore a male tradition. This is why I was very moved to be

chosen among the candidates. I am also very happy that Felicity Bellamy is the first female Grand Commandeur in Great Britain."

Laure likes to taste wines from different regions or countries, but has discovered in Anjou absolutely magnificent red and white wines which she likes to share and promote. She hopes to have the opportunity to continue working for a few years for the wines of Anjou and Saumur, within this wonderful Confrérie and with the support of her partner, Pierre de Coquereaumont, architect and teacher at the School of Architecture Paris Val de Seine.

She wishes us to renew our sincere and loyal friendship, and to re-state how much she is always very happy to meet you, in London or Angers, in Great Britain or in France.

"As I write these words, we are suffering the restrictions of an unprecedented situation that has enveloped the whole world."

"We will come through these terrible times, probably a little changed but, I am sure, always with the desire to meet around a glass (or two) of friendship."

Laure Pertus



The 2020 AGM Report

As we were prevented from gathering at Queen's Club to conduct the 2020 AGM, Sacavins were invited to vote via e-mail or letter on just five proposals set out in a much-simplified agenda: this to comply with the statutory requirements of our constitution.

The 41 members who responded voted unanimously to accept all five; namely that:-

1. The 2020 AGM be carried out in this way.
2. The 2019 Audited Accounts be accepted.
3. All present members be re-elected to the management committee.
4. Julia Bellingham be elected to the committee.
5. Richard Edwardson be re-appointed as Hon. Auditor.

Jane Berger retired from the committee after eleven years of valuable service. She was inducted at the Chapitre des Vendanges in Angers in 2006, and was made Ecuyer in 2014.

Grand Commandeur Felicity Bellamy adds this appreciation of Jane's contribution to Sacavin:- "Jane introduced us to Christian Papin and his wines. She has acted as interpreter on numerous occasions in France and in the UK. As our Délégué Britannique, she organised tickets for the Chapitre des Vendanges each year in Angers, obtained the Sacavin engraved goblets for our 50th anniversary, bought maps, French and Anjou flags, and renewed our supply of Sacavin ties."



"When I was Echanson, she organised a tasting and buying trip for me in Angers, prior to our 2018 expedition. She proved invaluable in sourcing wines for us, sometimes collecting wine from Langlois in Saumur and driving home with bootfuls of wine to store in her garage until it was needed."

"We sent Jane a garden centre voucher for £100, as she wished to buy a large pot to house a new rose her son gave her. We are most grateful for all Jane has done for us and we look forward to welcoming her to future Sacavin events."

Getting to know Felicity Bellamy

As a companion piece to the Grand-Maitre's article, we asked our Grand Commandeur to tell her story.

My life journey to becoming Grand Commandeur of Sacavin UK

I was brought up in the countryside of North Buckinghamshire, the eldest of 5 children. My father was a chartered surveyor for Aylesbury Brewery Company, so wine had always been at the family table as I was growing up. He worked his way up to become Managing Director and then onto other echelons within Allied Breweries. He was Chevalier number 18 when he was inducted into Sacavin in 1970.

I trained as a secretary, working first at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, then the BBC. Then I spent two years in Rome, where I really began to enjoy wine for the first time, with Frascati becoming a firm favourite. On returning to the UK I joined Saccone & Speed, which was the wine and spirit arm of Courage Brewery

I began there as secretary to the Managing Director of UK Sales, and then I went on to become a Marketing Assistant. This involved editing two in-house magazines, arranging and attending wine talks and generally promoting the range of wines we sold. I did some wine exams, and also A Level Italian. I interpreted for them with several of our Italian suppliers. I married in 1980 and lived in Northamptonshire.

I moved on to work within Aylesbury Brewery, setting up the James Pettit Private Cellar, which was a mail order wine company, both for the pubs and for the general public. This involved sourcing a wide range of wines, producing a wine list and running tastings.



All of this proved hugely useful for when I came to set up my own wine business, Nene Valley Wines, in 1982 shortly after the birth of my first son. Nene Valley Wines gave me a wonderful *raison d'être* for trying many new wines each year. I kept the business local to Northamptonshire, whilst bringing up three boys. I had an office and a purpose-built wine store at home. My year began in January with a series of trade tastings, usually in London at such venues as the Commonwealth Institute, the Royal Horticultural Halls, Olympia, the cellars of the Café Royal and such like. This was a marvellous opportunity to try wines from all round the world and chat to producers. I kept copious notes on every single wine I tried. I used to feel it was a luxury when I did not have to comment on a wine I was drinking – I could just drink it and enjoy it!

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By June I had chosen all my wines, and once the boys had returned to school in September I published my annual wine list. There followed a big wine tasting in November in the Northampton & County Club in central Northampton. My suppliers would attend. Then I ordered and delivered the wines well in time for Christmas. I usually had a Spring tasting as well, showing fewer wines, and sometimes teaming up with say, an asparagus grower, an artist or a small garden centre. For the first 10 years I also did hampers and wine gift packs at Christmas, which proved popular and profitable.

I retired in 2012 having really enjoyed running my own company for such a long time, and learning all about so many interesting wines, as well as meeting lots of people.

As my mother died young, I accompanied my father to many Sacavin events in the 1970s. Thence began my love of the wines of the Loire, and the great pleasure to be derived from the camaraderie of the Sacavin Chevaliers. I became a Chevalier in November 1982 and felt very proud to join their ranks. I joined the Sacavin Committee in 2011, having already been approached a few years earlier, but at that stage I had too many family commitments. I soon began contributing articles to the Courier, then

organising one or two events such as a tutored wine-themed tour at the National Gallery, a similar event at the Wallace Collection and a talk on antique wine glasses. I have never wavered in my commitment to Sacavin, and I have that same sense of loyalty to this day. I was thrilled and honoured to become Grand Commandeur in April 2019.

My aim as I guide Sacavin in the UK through the next few years, is to further the enjoyment and sales of the wines of the Loire, whilst bringing greater understanding to sensible wine drinking. I have a deep desire to add a charitable focus to Sacavin to help those with alcohol-related problems. I am keen that we hold several events each year where we can enjoy Loire wines, both in formal surroundings such as Vintners' Hall, and also more informal venues. The events held by Sacavin UK in the 1970s were often much more informal.

I also wish to further enhance our great friendship with Sacavin in Angers, by encouraging more Chevaliers to attend some of their events and get to know their members. Our fiftieth anniversary trip to Angers surpassed our expectations in very many ways. We were welcomed with open arms. Sacavin camaraderie is the most wonderful thing to treasure.

**Felicity Bellamy**



## "Bin Ends"

- Much excitement this Spring at the launch of 'Kylie' – Miss Minogue's own brand of French Rosé, yours for £9 a bottle at Tesco. She rolled up her sleeves and got involved in designing the label and choosing the bottle shape, but probably drew the line at shaking off the stilettos to do a spot of treading.  
Sadly, Jane Macquitty's review is less than encouraging – "... a coarse, surly, sweet yet bitter disappointment." Oh well.....
- Is mine the only copy of 'Maxwell's Guide to Food and Wine' to survive the highly suspicious fire at Poundland Press, its esteemed publisher? It contains some highly contentious assertions as to the original meaning of words and phrases now 'appropriated' by the food and wine sectors. Here are a few examples :-

Champagne (n. medical) = Hypochondria

Botrytis (n. medical) = Chronic pain in the backside

Decanter (v. equestrian) = to slow to a trot

Celery (adj. general use) = dark and damp



### Brian Amor 1935 – 2020

Brian died peacefully, at home, on March 27<sup>th</sup>. He was inducted in 2014 at the Chapitre Royaume Uni, proposed by H.H Judge Martin Reynolds, his friend since their first day at Oxford University. In his career with Wiggins Teape, Brian worked extensively in Europe, becoming fluent in French, German and Italian, with a consequent love of their wines. A later appointment with an American company allowed him to sample and enjoy Californian wines.



Martin Reynolds recalls a summer trip around France and Spain in Brian's ancient open-top Austin 7. "We went through Angers, little realising that it would later become our spiritual home. Going up the hills from the Loire in a very heavy rainstorm, the car suffered a catastrophic breakdown. We were able to turn and freewheel down to an hotel we had passed about five miles previously. The storm had flooded the hotel and deprived it of electricity, but in true French tradition the restaurant kept going with the waitresses

having to remove their shoes and stockings. We were brusquely told that there was no room at the inn, but we decided that the restaurant looked too tempting. After a delicious steak Bearnese and a bottle of Gevrey-Chambertin, the hotel decided that we had sufficient taste to pass muster and offered us a bed for the night."

Brian was a keen sportsman, also enjoying the theatre, music and, of course, good food and fine wine. Sacavin will be the poorer for his passing.

## Des Holland 1937 - 2020

Des died on the 7<sup>th</sup> April after a long illness which forced his resignation from Sacavin in 2019. He had served as Chef de Cuisine since 2004, taking on the additional role of Echanson in 2008. Inducted at the Chapitre du Millénaire held at Vintners' Hall in November 2000, Des was promoted to Officier in 2005 and became Commandeur in 2009. In addition to supervising many lunches, dinners and AGMs, he catered for 13 Chapitres, and provided wines for 9 of them. He instigated a very popular series of Wine Challenges and, along with Sue, held two splendid lunches in his garden at Creek Cottage.



Former Trésorier Ray Lindley recalls:-  
 "Some twenty years ago a group of Brightlingsea lads formed a wine tasting and drinking group called Bright Wine. One of the members was Des Holland. He came to us as very knowledgeable in wine and had worked in the business many years. Over the years he proved his worth. He had an exceptionally detailed knowledge of virtually all wine producers - no argument!"

"In time all our members joined Sacavin. Des rose quickly through the ranks. He became responsible for our meeting venues and he made long term arrangements with Vintners Hall, the Liberal Club and the Queens Club. His Wine Challenges were great fun and were an indicator of just how much our members really knew about wine."

Des presided over eight of these events, and it would have been nine but for ill health.

His development of training programmes for the Wine and Spirit Education Trust, enabled many students to gain WSET qualifications.

He also spent three years on the Fund Raising Committee of the Wine and Spirit Benevolent, now the Drinks Trust.

Our present Chef de Cuisine Sid Price remembers Des as "a very generous man who liked to meet and entertain friends and relatives. A firm fixture on the calendar for the fortunate was Des and Sue's Christmas drinks. Whilst Sue would be serving up delicious hot canapes Des would be found discussing the merits of a particular wine he was serving."



Lunch at Creek Cottage, 2004

What Des achieved in his period of office was quite amazing. Sacavins were very fortunate to benefit from his service to the Confrérie and his knowledge and love of Loire wines



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*Our thanks to Sid Price and Martin Hart for the photographs in this issue, and to John Ingram for his help and advice.*

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES**

In this difficult time of coronavirus, we do not know how our events may be run in the future, with social distancing having to be practised for some time yet. Your committee met via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> June and decided to postpone the Field of Cloth of Gold dinner on 16<sup>th</sup> September on the grounds of how safe social distancing could be achieved. Also many members who may be in the vulnerable category for coronavirus may not wish to travel to London.

**Nevertheless, we remain alert for the prospect of a return to a more normal life.**

We still aim to hold our Chapitre on 24<sup>th</sup> November. We have booked the National Liberal Club for an evening event on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021, to be either the Field of Cloth of Gold celebration or a comparative wine tasting.

We have plans afoot for virtual wine tastings, and virtual tutorials on favourite wines, as well as regular Sacavin news bulletins of our progress towards future events.

Wisely, throughout lockdown the government deemed that wine shops were essential, and they have remained open! Be assured, fellow Chevaliers that Sacavin remains open and we will be uncorking new wine ideas for you over the coming months.

‘Lorsque mon verre sera plein je le viderai et lorsqu’il sera vide je le plaindrai.’

Rabelaisian Greetings

**Felicity Bellamy**



Management Committee meeting **Wednesday 8 September 2020**



500th Anniversary of The Field of Cloth of Gold **16 September 2020 Postponed**



Chapitre des Vendanges, Angers **Saturday 17 October 2020**



Management Committee meeting **Tuesday 10 November 2020**



Chapitre du Drap d’Or **Tuesday 24 November 2020**

Vintners’ Hall, City of London

*Calling letters to be dispatched early in October 2020*



Dinner with Wine Tasting, **or** Celebration of the Field of Cloth of Gold  
The National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place **Wednesday 20 January 2021**

*Calling letters to be dispatched mid December 2020*



Spring Luncheon & AGM **Saturday 3 April 2021**  
The Queen’s Club, West Kensington, London W14 9EQ

*Calling letters to be dispatched at the end of February 2021*

