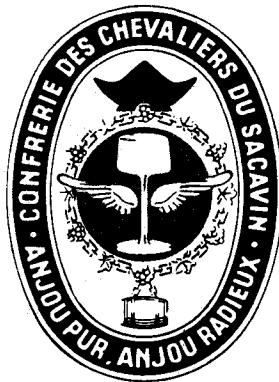


SACAVIN



COURIER

COMMANDERIE DE GRANDE BRETAGNE DE LA CONFRERIE DES CHEVALIERS DU SACAVIN D'ANJOU

No 5.

Spring 1982

Before we leave behind all thoughts of last year, we would like to dwell on two remaining items.

CHAPITRE DE LA BOUCHERIE

The Induction Ceremony and Dinner on Thursday 12th November last was our first occasion in the premises of the Butchers' Company. Their impressive new Hall - replacing two earlier buildings - proved a very popular venue and was filled to capacity by members and their guests. The proceedings were further enhanced by the presence of M. Robert Breheret who was making his first appearance before the English Chapter as the new Grand Maître. He and the Grand Commandeur, Col. Hector Mackenzie - very ably assisted by Chef de Protocole George Wilks - conducted the Ceremony at which the following new Chevaliers were inducted:-

R.S. Clements - who has spent a lifetime in the car industry including appointments in Continental Europe from which developed a love of the culture and, more especially, the wines of France, particularly those of Anjou.

F.G. Coe - who received early training in the ways of the stock exchange and the distributive trades which he later put to great effect in the bottling of many casks of Anjou wine. These have remained an abiding interest.

E.J. Holloway - with professional involvement in both surveying and valuation, has developed an appreciation of all things of quality, such as the wines of Anjou.

S.E. Holmes - Duties on behalf of the Customs & Excise aroused an early appreciation of the Loire wines with those from Anjou being the most favoured.

G. Martin - after service with the RAF, has given a long service to wine both in its marketing and in training in its appreciation. Needless to say, the wines of Anjou have figured prominently in this programme.

R.R. Stewart - is another distinguished solicitor to join the Commanderie and further his interest in the wines of our region.

A magnificent Dinner had been arranged by the Chef de Cuisine, Cyril Saper - with the Roast Beef of Old England actually traced back to Scotland! - and was accompanied by some excellent wines chosen by Chancellor Chris Wilkinson who also

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provided a commentary, during the meal, upon the recipes and vintages. A further distinguished visitor present on 12th November was M. Yves Cariou, the secretary of the Confrerie.

The recommendation that we use the Butchers' Hall came from 2nd Halberdier Frank Moody. At the end of Dinner and after speeches of confraternal greeting by the Grand Maitre and the Grand Commandeur (with M. Emmanuel Drion giving a simultaneous translation of the former), he gave the following account of this historic company and venue:-

The Worshipful Company of Butchers Number 24 on the Role of the Livery Companies of the City of London, is one of the most interesting trades, extracts from Ancient Chronicals kept in the Guildhall Library and British Museum record that business relations existed with other trades. The Company is one of the seven oldest in the City and is mentioned in Stryes edition of Stows Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster (975 AD). Smithfield and the Butchers Company extends for upwards of 1,000 years.

About the year 1377 the Butchers were Sworn before the Mayor to rule their "Mystery" and to see that ordinances were carried out. I quote:

"Best Goose shall be sold for 6d
Best Suckling Pig shall be sold for 8d
Best Capon shall be sold for 6d
Best Hen shall be sold for 4d
Best carcase of Mutton shall be sold for 2s 0d each"

These prices are the first occasion on record of a price control. According to the records, the Mayor of London received "A Boar, price 20/- and an Ox, price 17/-" because he behaved well to the company in 1422-23.

The Arms of the company were granted by the college of Heralds in 1540. Saint Luke is the Patron Saint and, on the 18th October, the annual election of officers takes place.

The Church of St. Bartholomews the Great is where they make their offerings and they then retire to the Hall for dinner, where mighty Barons of Beef, dishes of Brawn, dishes of Leche Lombard, made of Pork pounded in a mortar with eggs, raisins, dates, sugar, salt, pepper, spices, almonds and red wine, the whole boiled in a bladder, are consumed.

After the Great Fire of 1666-67, the Butchers Hall, built then in Pudding Lane and described as a handsome building, was in constant use until 1884 when it was taken over by the Metropolitan and District Railway.

A fresh site at West Smithfield was secured and on the 7th September 1885 was formally opened. This building was damaged by a bomb during a Zeppelin raid on 15th September 1915 and damaged again by a Flying Bomb on the 30th July, 1944. The building we are now in is the result of much hard work and planning and is a credit to the Company.

The Worshipful Company of Butchers really does represent the meat and ancillary trades, every member has direct contact with the Industry, such is its long history from Saxon King Edwy, 975 AD, to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Borthwick memorial glass screen installed to provide a partition between the entrance lobby and the reception area is a memorial to that family, particularly Algernon Borthwick whose tragice death on the road prevented him being Master that year.

The patterns show Spring/Summer/Autumn/Winter, inspired by the late John Hulton whose greatest achievement was the ninety glass panels in Coventry Cathedral.

The Court Suite is panelled in Australian Black Bean, the floor Canadian Maple, the marble fireplace came from Henham Hall, the seat of Lord Stradbroke, and was made in France in 1793. The Great Hall is panelled in New Zealand mellow Southland Beech.

The Tapestry woven at Aubusson took a year to complete. It was given by the Vestey family and has a Butchers Blue border, scenes of Barts Hospital, St. Bartholomews the Great Church, Smithfield Market and St. Paul's, with the Vestey Coat of Arms at the bottom.

On the walls of the hospital are the names of the many who were burnt at the Stake in Smithfield Square and the church of St. Barts is where the Knights Batchelor hold their services. Rahere, who founded this, the oldest hospital in London, is buried in the Church.

It has been a most fascinating task to delve into the pages of History marking the passage of time with its threads of tradition and ancient customs of this The Worshipful Company of Butchers.

1981 ANJOU VINTAGE

The yield from the 1981 Anjou harvest was about a third of that normally produced due to a combination of frost damage in April, uneven development of the grapes in June, a general lack of sun during the summer resulting in a lack of quantity especially for the dessert wines. Intermitten rainful over some vineyards but not others during the harvest further ensured an uneven crop. In spite of these natural hazards, the quality of what survived the rigours of the weather is up to standard, especially for the dry whites and the Saumur Champigny amongst the reds. The better quality red wines should mature nicely by 1985.

The short vintage for 1981 has resulted in a considerable price increase, especially at the lower end of the market. If members have been wondering why Anjou Rose has suddenly become expensive, this is the reason.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The winter brought us snow and ice and a part-time rail strike and these factors undoubtedly had some effect upon attendance at the 1982 AGM - held on 19th January at the Cafe Royal. We were, perhaps, a dozen fewer than last year.

With the Grand Commandeur in the Chair, the members present adopted the reports and made some very constructive points regarding policies and activities. The Minutes of the 1982 AGM were sent to all members just over a month ago. The Meeting was followed by the AGM Dinner for which the Chef de Cuisine had once more arranged an excellent meal and the Chancellor provided wines of comparable quality.

CHAPITRE DU GRAND RASSEMBLEMENT

The possibility of arranging an Induction Ceremony and Dinner in the North as a Grand Reunion of the Northern and Southern Chevaliers has long been debated. The enthusiastic response by those at the AGM to the suggestion that we arrange a Weekend in York this Spring - with an Induction Ceremony and Dinner at Castle Howard as the highspot - encouraged the Management Committee to go ahead with definite plans. In the event, the only date Castle Howard could offer was Saturday 15th May and the only hotel in York able to take our party is the Post House. Nevertheless, all arrangements are made and the Application Forms for the Dinner and Accommodation were sent out with the AGM Minutes.

Just to refresh your memory, the Chapitre du Grand Rassemblement in on Saturday, 15th May, 1982 at Castle Howard, near York. The Menu for Dinner is:-

Fresh Moorland Trout
cooked in a parcel of herbs, spices and white wine
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Lettuce and Nutmeg Soup
- - - - -

Fillet of Beef Wellington
Selection of Fresh Vegetables from the Garden and Tossed Salad
- - - - -

Selection of English and Continental Cheeses with Biscuits
- - - - -

Pineapple Creole
- - - - -

Cafe - Petits Fours
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The cost is £36 per person and this not only includes the Dinner but also the coach ride to and from York, a Guided Tour of Castle Howard, VAT (at £3.75), gratuities, use of rooms for the Ceremony, etc.

A two-day stay at the Post House, York, has been specially arranged for us by our Hon. Travel Adviser, Nick Kyriakides. The cost per person is £49 plus VAT of £7.35 totalling £56.35 and for this we get two nights bed and breakfast - 14th and 15th May - plus one other meal (lunch or dinner) for each day. Nick can also arrange group travel - London/York/London - by either rail or coach provided enough people wish to participate.

Full details of the arrangements were given on the Booking Forms of which further copies can be obtained from the secretary (Pat Salzedo, 363 Bideford Green, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 7TX; office phone no. 01-242 3800). The Management Committee are hopeful that their first attempt to organise a Northern Induction Ceremony and Dinner will meet with all possible support from all our members - north, south, east and west! At the time of writing there seems to be only an even chance of a successful outcome.

EVENTS IN JUNE

June, with its promise of fine, long sunny days is, by tradition, a month in which one longs to get out of the town and into the countryside. The Commanderie shares this feeling and so we are holding two country events at both the beginning and end of June:-

DEJEUNER AMICALE

A Confraternal Sunday Luncheon is taking place on Sunday, 6th June, at Thornbury Castle, near Bristol, in collaboration with our friends of the Solicitors' Wine Society and Artemino. The organisation is being undertaken by the Delege-General, Geoffrey Phillips, whilst the ChefdeCuisine, Cyril Saper and Chevalier Kenneth Bell have, between them, agreed the menu and wines. The Application Form and full details are enclosed with this Newsletter. There are limited places available at the Dejeuner Amicale so early booking is advised.

SUMMER WINE TASTING

The Summer Wine Tasting, organised by Chancellor Chris Wilkinson and his wife at

their charming home, Chough Cottage, Towersey, nr. Thame, Oxon, has become a popular annual event in the Commanderie Calendar. This year it is taking place on Sunday 27th June and will again give Chevaliers and their guests the opportunity to enjoy the fresh air whilst they sample the interesting collection of wines selected by Chris and the excellent buffet provided by Hilary and her daughters. Weather permitting, there is the added attraction, too, of a dazzling display of aquatic prowess by Chef de Protocole George Wilks assisted by the Miss Wilkinsons'!

The Application Form for the Summer Wine Tasting is enclosed with this Newsletter. There is also a limit upon numbers for this event so early booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

AUTUMN INDUCTION CEREMONY

This year's London Induction Ceremony and Dinner will take place on Wednesday 10th November in the Louis and Pompadour Rooms of the Cafe Royal, Regent Street, London W1. All other details, Application Form, etc., will appear with the Autumn Newsletter which is scheduled for distribution in September.

GLIMPSES OF ANGERS - III

The Cathedral of St. Maurice overlooks the narrow streets of the old quarter, its two spires (which are not identical twins) gazing down on the cobble-flanked stone steps which lead up to the main door. Built in the 12-13th centuries, having been started in 1150, it is mainly Gothic and has some fine stained glass - on the left of the nave, over part of the transept and the choir, all of which is of the same age, and the two rose windows of the transept and four large windows which are 15th century, the work of the Angevin glassmaker, Andre Robin. There are tombs of all the bishops, dating from that of Ulger (mid-12th century), as well as of King Rene and his first wife, Isabelle of Lorraine (15th century). The high altar is a fine baroque piece, built in 1757. Opening directly onto the left transept, the bishop's palace dates from the 12th century. A wing was added in the 19th century (fronting onto rue du Chanoine Urseau) when the old facade was restored - not very felicitously - but inside some very fine rooms remain from the 12th century. The sacristy contains a rich treasury.

Other churches worth a visit are Saint-Serge (11th and 12th century) with its elegant choir built in Angevin style, 15th century nave (rebuilt after the 100 Years' War) and sculptured rib-endings: and the Church of the Trinity, with its typical Angevin-style nave without side-aisles (12th century), 15th century crypt and 12th century bronze virgin. It also has a Renaissance steeple, built by the abbe to serve the inhabitants of La Doutre quarter. The clock, of the same period, was built by Jean de l'Espine and a charming sculpted wooden staircase leads to the organ loft.

CORKS

Corks are the simplest, yet one of the most important items in the whole of the winemaker's vade mecum. A cork must be sufficiently elastic to be able to be forced into the bottle neck, sufficiently rigid to hold its shape, sufficiently porous to absorb enough wine to be airtight, sufficiently cheap to be used by the million and sufficiently odourless, tasteless and inert that there could be no danger of contamination of the contents of the bottle. A formidable list of criteria. In the wine areas of southern Europe, the cork oak has flourished for centuries, yet corks were not in general use until after the work of Dom Perignon in the seventeenth century.

Most of our cork is produced in a narrow belt of land stretching through Portugal

Spain and the South of France and along a 1000 mile strip of the coast of North Africa. Cork forests are carefully protected in Portugal, the world's largest producer of cork. The outer bark of the twenty to thirty year old oak tree is stripped off and the inner close-textured bark, which takes ten to fifteen years to build up, is the cork used for bottle corks. Because of the increased use of cork of all grades, in building, in interior decorating, in footwear manufacture, as an insulating material, cork is becoming increasingly valuable as a raw material.

The ancient Greeks occasionally used cork. A jug was excavated in the Agora in Athens complete with a cork plug; the plug had a hole for a knotted string. Corks in Greek and Roman times were just plugs or stoppers. Many Roman amphora and wine jars have been unearthed with corks still in situ. Cork was only one of many materials used for sealing wine jars; gypsum, pitch, paster, a film of oil, all these materials were used simply as convenient stoppers, not as corks are used today, as a necessity, in the various stages of maturation. Indeed, most wine drunk by the common people of Roman times must have been just diluted vinegar. The resources for modern methods were known, corks and bottles of the correct shape, but the knowledge and its application was not adequate, the reverse of the usual progress of technology and knowledge.

Dom Pérignon in the Abbey Hautvilliers discovered that cork could be compressed, could be made to operate more efficiently and could withstand the five to six atmospheres pressure of carbon-dioxide pressure generated by the secondary fermentation in the "methode champagnoise". Without his work on cork, we should not have Champagne, "the King of wines, the wine of Kings".

Until the end of the seventeenth century, plugs of paper, cloth or wood, usually soaked in oil, were used to stopper wine bottles, bottles which were brought to the table and used as decanters. The discovery of the "flush fitting" cork and its use with modern cylindrical bottles enabled wine to be laid down to mature, the cork being kept from drying out and shrinking by being in contact with the wine in the bottle. The slow maturation can take place without the possibility of air entering and converting the alcohol to vinegar.

The tight, flush fitting cork required the invention of the cork screw or bottle screw as it was first called. The first implements were claws or pincers to grip the projecting corks, or awls for piercing and levering corks. The modern screw with a wide flat thread is a seventeenth century invention.

With the advent of modern hygienic technology and new sterilization methods, it is rare to find a cork which has given the wine a "corky" taste. A cork may occasionally be flawed and break in the drawing, but usually this is the fault of the operator. No harm is done, the "floaters" can easily be removed.