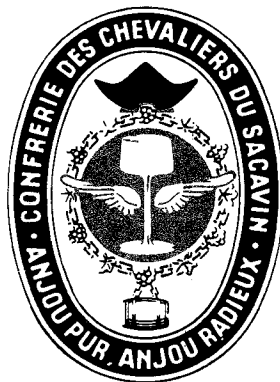


SACAVIN



COURIER

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

No. 12,

Winter 1986

Our disappointing summer has given way to a very severe winter with snow and ice for most of us. There was a lovely, mellow Indian Summer betwixt, however, which coincided with our biennial visit to Anjou. This was from 27th September to 1st October 1985 and was supported by 23 Chevaliers, with their friends and families. The most senior member of the British Commanderie taking part in the visit was our Chef de Protocole, George Wilks, and he records this description of their adventures:-

1985 Visit to Angers and Saumur. - Despite the milling crowds at Heathrow, there was an air of pleasant anticipation among the Sacavin party waiting for the take-off early on Friday morning. From the early departure right through the visit, that anticipation was justified. How could a tour organised by Nicky Kyriakides and Derek Sheen be anything else but successful?

The coach which was to transport us throughout the visit awaited us at Nantes and we quickly moved into the pleasant and varied countryside of the Loire Valley, passing through many of the characteristic villages of the mellowed, honey coloured local stone, on our way to Angers and Saumur. After a short luncheon stop at the village of Varades, we moved on to Clos de l'Aiglerie in the valley of the Layon. Here we were enthusiastically received by Pierre Gousset, himself a Commandeur of the Order. He led a conducted tour around his property. The sun-baked vines were loaded with fine bunches of grapes, ready for the harvesting that would start in a few days time. It was soon evident that the grapes were as good for eating as they were for wine making. The visit to the cellars where M. Gousset entertained us with an account of the history of the vineyard, was followed by a tasting of two delicious wines, Coteaux du Layon 1982 and 1972 vintages, wines with a high alcohol content and a unique piquant sweetness. Still in brilliant sunshine, we continued eastwards past Angers, along the river valley to our hotel, the Hotel Campanile, pleasantly situated in the hills about 3 Kms. south of Saumur.

Saturday was again brilliantly sunny. After a short tour of the older parts of Saumur, we went on past the troglodyte dwellings to the winery of Gratien et Meyer. The cellars were built into the limestone cliffs, and the miles of galleries store millions of bottles of sparkling wine prepared by the 'methode Champenoise'. The entrance to the cellars opens from a wine terrace from which a splendid panoramic view of the Loire valley is obtained. The tasting which followed the visit to the winery was equally 'panoramic', covering all the wines which Gratien et Meyer produce. M. Seydoux, a senior director, accompanied our group throughout the visit.

In the afternoon, some of the more active members did a lightening tour of Saumur while the less energetic sun-bathed on the hotel terrace, enjoying the view of the expanse of the wide valley and, on the distant hilltop, the famous Castle of Saumur.

In the evening, the whole party went to the annual Vintage Chapter of the French Confrerie, this year named 'Chapitre d'Hippocrate' as, in Angers, a medical Congress

was being held. The Chapter was held in the oldest hospice in France, Ancien Hopital Saint Jean, built 1174--1185 by Henry II, Plantagenet King of England, and Comte d'Anjou. After an exposition by the Mayor of Angers, on the famous tapestries of Jean Lurcat "Le Chant du Monde", the company walked through the cloisters to the old 12th Century cellars in which the Induction Ceremony was to take place. The procession of officers, fully robed in medieval splendour with flaring torches throwing flickering smokey yellow light on the points of halberds and the polished brass of the long trumpets, was a fascinating sight as, in the moonlight, it wended slowly through the courtyard down to the stone vaulted cellars. Here the familiar Ceremony of Induction took place, and thirty-one Candidates were Inducted into the Order. After the final trumpet fanfare, the large company moved into the courtyard on the warm St. Martin's Summer evening to take Vin d'Honneur Coteaux du Layon 1973. The Banquet was arranged in the fine, vaulted, Grande Salle des Greniers St. Jean and was of the standard we have come to expect of the French Confrerie, excellent food with excellent wine to accompany each course. During the Dinner, the Grand Maitre, M. Sorgniard spoke, welcoming all those present, especially representatives of the British Commanderie. Our own Chef de Protocole made a suitable reply. We returned to the hotel in the early hours and some of us were entertained in each others rooms with further libations to Bacchus and Rabelais. (Optime, is the only comment to that!).

On Sunday morning the concession of a later start was given, as some members were feeling just a little fragile! We made the long journey to Tours, to the modern, large hotel, the Novotel Sud, on the outskirts of Tours. The afternoon visit to the Chateaux Chenonceaux gave us an opportunity to see a castle built in 1513 during the French Renaissance, built on the foundations of an old mill. It is still beautifully maintained; a 'fairy tale' castle with the ancient Tour des Marques, with beautifully formal gardens commanding extensive views over the wooded, surrounding countryside.

Our last day was a strenuous one, we drove to Sancerre and to Pouilly-sur-Loire. The four hour drive took us through varied country until we reached the vine-covered hillsides around Sancerre which stood up against the sky, visible for miles before we finally began to chart the slopes. We visited the Clos de la Poussie. The vineyard was created by the monks of Bue Abbey, using the terraces of an enormous Greco-Roman amphitheatre to hold the soil which now nourishes the Sauvignon grape. The name Clos de la Poussie stands out white against the green background of the cultivated amphitheatre. Here we had some fine Sancerre blanc de blanc, its delicious flowery aroma and flavour enhanced by local goat cheese and inimitable French bread. The Pinot Noir red Sancerre was also presented. After the tasting, M. Shiel took us around the property, emphasising interesting points of its history and viniculture, a very enjoyable, instructive visit. From Sancerre on to Pouilly-sur-Loire, first to a small elegant property at Les Loges where M. Bully welcomed us and we were enabled to compare the aroma and taste, the unique goût de terroir of Pouilly Fume with the Sancerre of Clos de la Poussie. Our series of visits was concluded by a rather hasty visit to Les Berthiers, to the winery of Michel Redde for a tasting of his Pouilly Fume. We arrived back at Tours in the late evening after a very full day and the prospect of an early start for the long but pleasant drive back to Nantes for the flight home.

The whole group had a most enjoyable time. The organisation both for travel and for the various visits was perfect and everything went without a hitch. The weather was ideal and our favourable impressions of the Loire which we already had were further enhanced; we appreciate even more the scenic beauty, the gastronomy and the excellence of its wines. Our thanks to our indefatigable organisers and to our knowledgeable and genial coach drive Jean-Marie de Lorie.

From this account, it is obvious that the Commanderie's 1985 Visit to Anjou and Saumur lacked nothing, unlike an early Plantagenet who, seemingly, lacked almost everything, as Chevalier Marie-Terese Baird now tells us:-

King John - John Lackland lacked not only in lands but in a lot of other things: loyalty, love, courage, faithfulness and manners, to name only a few.

He was born in Oxford on 24th December 1167, the youngest and least loved son of Eleanor, wife of Henry II. Physically stunted and unattractive, he grew to only just five feet and had a very ugly face. It can be said that he lacked entirely in that 'je ne sais quoi' his brother Richard obviously possessed. By the time John was born, his father's cake had been cut up and shared out amongst his brothers. Henry was to have England, Normandy and Anjou, Richard had been given Aquitaine by his mother, Geoffrey, following his betrothal to Constance, received Brittany and there was nothing left for John. His father is reputed to have daubed him 'Jean-Sans-Terre' and the name stuck. Yet, oddly enough, John was his father's favourite and remained so to the bitter end when his betrayal of Henry hastened his departure from the world.

Historians have positively heaped abuse on John: selfish, vain, cruel, vindictive, tyrannical, violent, slothful and idle. To his credit, he was said to be 'capable' and 'a reader'. He was also fond of music, and quite inordinately fond of the good wines of Anjou. A man who reads books, enjoys music and drinks good wine can't be all bad.

Eleanor had no affection for him and, immediately after his first birthday, he was despatched to the Abbey of Fontevrault, as an 'oblate', that is a child who is destined for the religious life. His upbringing turned him into a very unreligious man indeed and gave him a lifelong dislike of clerics. He liked shocking them. For instance, when Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, remonstrated with him about his sins and showed him a picture of Hell's fire, John laughed in his face and swung him around to see a picture of Heaven. "Let's look at that instead" he suggested "because that's where I am going" implying by his tone that the bishop could make his way to Hell by himself.

A French chronicler of the time remarked that John had inherited all his brother's faults and none of his qualities. But he does seem to have shown really good taste in his choice of wines, and this at a time when a chronicler wrote that 'English wines can only be drunk with closed eyes and clenched teeth'. Under the Angevins, wine, formerly a luxury had become a necessity of life. Every year, a 'wine fleet' of forty vessels sailed to England from Poitou. The royal accounts during John's reign show an enormous consumption of the better wines that the English palates were getting used to. When on the road, fifteen waggons were needed to carry John's barrels of wine, and, having decided that wine was too expensive in England, he made a law that red wine should be sold 'not above fourpence a gallon' (!) and white wine 'not above sixpence'. The immediate result of that law, according to Roger of Howden, was that the land was now filled with drunkards who, on sobering, became 'exceeding weary'.

Apart from drinking wine and reading books to the tune of the lute, John wasn't doing much. His father Henry II had made him a knight and sent him to rule over unruly Ireland. Unfortunately, John and his peers, kept cheerful by the ample wine reserves, found the sight of the rough Irish chieftains in their 'cloths' and wild beards an irresistible sight and indulged in such orgies of laughter that Henry wisely called them back after only eight months in the Emerald Isle.

Betrothed to Isabella of Gloucester at the age of 9 (presumably having been expelled from the Convent by now) John married Isabella when he was twenty-one. The marriage was long and unproductive. John obtained a divorce on the monotonous grounds of consanguinity (he and his wife shared a great grandfather, Henry I). The divorce was granted very easily because at the time of the marriage, Archbishop Baldwin had forbidden the couple to 'cohabit'. It just took them a long time to obey, that's all.

John, over the years, promised several times to marry Philippe-Auguste's tiresome little Alys, not so little now and getting a bit long in the tooth. Again Alys was left on the shelf when John turned his attention to the daughter of King Sancho of Portugal. An impressive 'embassy' was sent to Portugal to negotiate the deal. Strange to relate, the discarded wife, Isabella of Gloucester, took to freedom like a duck to water and, in fact, remarried twice. Still waters

While negotiations were under way in Portugal, John met and fell in love with Isabelle, the twelve-year-old daughter of Audemar of Angouleme, and snatched her away from her legitimate 'betrothed' Hugo de Lusignan, thus making an enemy for life. Another

enemy was now old Sancho in Portugal who had not received as much as a Telex saying 'Sorry, can't make it'. John was very expert at making bad blood that way.

John became King after Richard's death in Chalus. He was crowned at Westminster on 25th April 1199. Twenty-one fat oxen were eaten at the Banquet after the ceremony, seventeen prelates, ten earls and 'many barons' were doing the eating. It adds up to a rather monstrous steak for each. John was said to be very fond of eggs. For one fairly routine run-of-the-mill banquet, he ordered 20 oxen, 100 pigs, 100 sheep, 1500 chickens and five thousand eggs. Who are we to scoff at Mrs. Beeton and her now legendary words 'take a dozen eggs'?

John was very greedy. One evening, having just received information about some serious conspiracies amongst his barons, he exclaimed 'By God's body, not one of my barons is on my side. The matter looks ugly' then stormed off to eat his dinner. An explosion of Angevin temper never did put a Plantagenet off his food. Philippe-Auguste, who had always held the firm opinion that John was 'mentally deranged', rejected absolutely his right to the throne of England and championed instead the very young Arthur of Brittany, son of John's older brother Geoffrey who had been killed in a tournament. Hugo de Lusignan, who had befriended young Arthur (the plot thickens) absolutely agreed with the King of France and became his staunch supporter.

Did John murder Arthur? That remains one of History's secrets. John went to France in 1203, captured Hugo de Lusignan and Arthur, then rather foolishly released Hugo but kept Arthur. Arthur's mysterious death in Rouen sent shivers down the spine of dear old Shakespeare, but the facts remain obscure. One chronicler affirmed that King John, in a state of mixed fury and drunkenness, took his 17-year old nephew on a boat on the Seine, ran his dagger through him and threw him overboard. The body was found by a fisherman and secretly buried in Rouen. In fact, no-one has ever been able to discover what really happened to Arthur, except that he 'disappeared'.

On entering the Norman capital town of Rouen, John was received with 'coronets of roses' and presented with the Ducal Lance which Butter-fingers promptly dropped with an almighty clang, thus setting the pattern for the often farcical aspects of his reign.

Thirty pounds were spent on the Coronation Robes of the new Queen, who is said to have looked exceedingly frail and young next to her husband, now firmly set into his third spare tyre. The couple spent Christmas at Guildford, then embarked on an exhausting journey north, windswept, weather-beaten and braving the wolf-infested Pennines. Poor wee lass.

John and Isabella were married for seven years before she produced the future Henry III on 1st October 1207. It was generally considered that the hold-up in production had been caused by some initial malformation in the bride. It was obvious to all that the King couldn't be faulted as he had appeared 'most diligent'. On 13th January 1200, Philippe-Auguste and John had met at Le Goulet on the Seine and agreed a treaty. The King of France recognised John's right to Anjou and Maine. In return, John gave back the Vexin and abandoned all claims to Berry and Auvergne. King John went back to England. It has often been said that his all-consuming passion for his child-bride was the main cause of his neglecting his affairs in France. Accordingly to Wendover, a contemporary chronicler, John lost Normandy 'between the sheets finding his delights with his young wife' whilst his castles were toppling all over France.

Isabelle gave John two sons and three daughters, a good mixed-batch at a time when daughters were used as credit cards between countries. In spite of John's infatuation, their marriage was said to have become very much a case of 'sauce for the gander, sauce for the goose'. Both were said to be promiscuous and unfaithful. Within five years of Richard's death, John had lost Anjou and the capture by the French King of Richard's beloved Chateau Gaillard in 1204 marked the loss of Normandy. John, only mildly dispirited, muttered "Let it be, let it be. One day I shall get it all back". By the summer of 1204, John had lost the entire Norman heritage bequested by his ancestor, the Conqueror. Only in Gascony, in Bordeaux and Bayonne traffic with England was left open for the sake of the wine trade.

In England at this time, French was still the language at the English Court, but towards the middle of the thirteenth century a faint beginning of vernacular

literature made its first appearance. One of England's great politicians was a Frenchman by birth and by upbringing, Simon de Montfort. John's biggest 'gaffe' was, of course, to quarrel with Pope Innocent III, a mistake that was to cost him dearly. Innocent, a shrewd lawyer, had been enthroned at the very early age of 37. He was, intellectually and politically, a force to be reckoned with and King John lived to regret bitterly having pitted his limited wits against those of so powerful an adversary. Innocent III favoured the noble and intellectual Stephen Langton for the See of Canterbury. John denied him entry. The Papal Interdict of 1209 followed promptly and a few months later John was excommunicated. In France, Philippe-Auguste 'riaît dans sa barbe' as one might say. King John was, in fact, by far the most anti-papal monarch of England, far more so than dear old 'Enery-the-eighth-I am-I am' because John's fights with the Pope were not induced by the sins of the flesh, but by a deep vicious hatred.

There can be no doubt about John's viciousness and cruelty. One rather reckless hermit having prophesied, after a dream, that John would reign exactly fourteen years and not a minute longer, was summoned to the Presence and encouraged to recant this blatant heresy, but the honest fool stuck to his story and was thrown into Corfe Castle to be eventually dragged to Wareham and hanged. The poor creature would have done better to keep his dreams to himself.

John's cruelty was often pointless. He threw Mathilde de Braose into prison with her son because she had been unable to raise the 40,000 marks levied on her estate which was then confiscated. That should have been enough but mother and son were left to starve methodically and slowly. Seventeen days later, they were found dead and, horror of horrors, it was evident that the poor demented mother had survived son and had started nibbling at him in a mad attempt to survive.

There was also a certain clerk named Geoffrey of Norwich who rather carelessly expressed the opinion that it was doubtful that the clergy could or should continue in the service of an excommunicated King. John had the unfortunate babler put in a cell where he could 'neither stand nor lie', with a crushingly heavy mitre rammed onto his head, then left to starve to death in this very uncomfortable position. There is no doubt that John had more than his fair share of the infamous 'Devil's Spawn' legendary heritage. At the same time he passed very odd laws. He forbade the slaughter of all birds. Psychiatrists could tell us that sadistic people often enjoy this maudling sentimentality about animals and especially birds.

But John also had his share of the Plantagenet 'remorse-syndrome' and addiction to ostentatious penance. Once, having indulged in eating meat on a 'fast' day, he atoned for his sin by personally distributing large sums of money to one hundred paupers, who must, henceforth, have been looking forward with glee to their monarch's next binge.

Beaten in war by the King of France, in diplomacy by the Pope, betrayed and mistrusted by all his barons, John was not sitting pretty. An all-round loser. A contemporary chronicler wrote 'All men bear witness that, not since the time of Arthur, was there a King who was so greatly feared in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and so little loved'.

This is not the place to write about the better-known events of King John's reign, such as the Barons' Rebellion, or the signing of Magna Carta in Runnymede, a treaty which all parties knew only too well they could not or would not adhere to. So abhorrent was this treaty to the King that he had to swallow his pride and appeal to Innocent III to relieve him of his oath, which the Pope did. By coincidence John then installed Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury, but showed his resentful fury by confiscating the bishops' considerable estates. On 12th October 1215, John stood on the banks of the river Wellstream which flowed into the Wash, on the borders of Norfolk and Lincolnshire. The King and his suite having crossed safely just before the tide turned, now stood and watched the perilous progress of their long train of baggage loaded with gold, silver, candelabras, phylacteries, jewels including those of the Coronation Regalia and some of Eleanor's best bits of jewelry. They watched the whole lot being slowly sucked down into quicksands. One result of this tragedy was that the next King, Henry III was crowned, not with the crown but with a small circlet of gold lent by his mother.

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As if the loss of this luggage in the Wash wasn't enough, the King of France, bent on destroying the last of the Plantagenets, now decided to invade England and claim the throne for himself, through his wife, Blanche de Castille, grand-daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. King John fought back valiantly, showing for the first and the last time that he had, after all, inherited some of the courage of the Plantagenets. While celebrating a victory in King's Lynn, he stuffed himself with peaches and new cider, obviously a lethal combination. He did, all the same, take to the road again, although dreadfully ill with dysentery. By the time he reached Newark he had to give up and take to his bed. King John died on the 18th October 1216, aged forty-eight.

No sooner was the King dead than his enemies, like a flock of vultures, heaped abuse upon him. 'Agnostic, wanton, slothful and cruel' said one. 'Nature's enemy' declared another, 'the worst tyrant on record' assured Gerald of Wales. 'A man of superhuman wickedness and a cruel tyrant' was another of those unlovely obituaries. 'With John's foul deeds all England's stinking, as does Hell where he is now sinking' wrote a rotten poet. First monks, then chroniclers and later historians have, however, left a bewildering image of his character. 'A capable monarch but Nature's very enemy' 'Perhaps the ablest of the Angevins but cruel and vindictive' 'A man who inherited some of his father's genius but a diabolical maniac' 'An industrious King but a bungling military strategist'

And yet and yet Following in the footsteps of a brother always 'in absentia' and a father concerned only with France, John, to the English, John with all his faults and shortcomings was the first King they could look upon as being entirely their own.

His heir, Henry III was a 'very pretty little knight' aged 9. In 1242 he was to go on a so-called 'Crusade' to try and regain his lost heritage in France but was defeated by Louis IX, who had replaced Philippe-Auguste on the throne. The treaty of Paris in 1259 was to confirm the total dislocation of the Angevin Empire and the start of the Hundred Years War, but that's another story.

With Henry III, who was the last to bear the name, we say good-bye to the Plantagenets.

We, too, bade good-bye to the summer excursion to original Plantagenet territory but, in acknowledgement of the wonderful hospitality extended by our French colleagues, special tribute was paid to them in the:-

Chapitre des Angevins - which took place on Tuesday 19th November at a venue new to us - the Ballroom of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London W1. The Dorchester was expected to be, for us, the ultimate in venues - and so it proved. The Ballroom exuded an almost fairy-tale splendour with its crystal chandeliers, its mirrors and its gilt. It is, indeed, a very elegant room and was further enhanced by the fantastic ice sculpture as a superb centre piece in the middle of the room depicting the Sacavin logo - winged hanap portrayed with the correct colours, exactly as appearing on the letterheads. It was a most imaginative and skilful art-piece prepared, on our behalf, by the Banqueting Department of the Dorchester - a gesture for which the Commanderie is truly appreciative.

The evening began with the Induction Ceremony - conducted by our Grand Maitre, Col. Hector Mackenzie - with Chef de Protocole George Wilks as a most effective Master of Ceremonies, assisted by the Officers, in the Welcome to new Members of the Order who were:-

John Brooks - Banqueting Manager at the Dorchester and the architect of our superb Dinner, for whom the influence of the Plantagenets, their region and their wines has obviously had great effect,

Owen Collins - Civil Engineer involved with the purification of water - let us hasten to add - for purely oblationary purposes, imbibing being confined to wine and especially that from Anjou. He is son-in-law to our Chef de Protocole - need one say more!

Eddy Keon - born in France but now Anglicised and domiciled in Britain, Restaurateur of a most outstanding establishment 'Les Artistes Gourmands' in Nottingham, another notable region of Plantagenet culture and history.

Richard Nemeth - another second generation Sacavin, son of an illustrious father and, in his own right, a marine broker and tenor of no mean distinction, very approving of the wines of our region.

Noel Rooke - a distinguished practitioner in the wine trade itself, with a special inclination towards those of Anjou and Saumur.

Ian Taylor - a Solicitor, a veteran of the Territorial Army, whose sallies into France are now confined to investigating the qualities of the wine and especially those of Anjou and Saumur.

Harold Way - who, over the years, has participated in many of our events and who now finally takes on the mantle of Chevalier. In his business life, he is involved in the very worthy cause of manufacturing aids for the disabled.

Madeleine Wickham - who is a Nursing Officer and is well experienced, therefore, in the therapeutic effects of wine, and especially those from Anjou.

A splendid Dinner followed, complemented by a wonderful selection of wines from our region, chosen by our Chancellor Derek Sheen, who commented on their qualities in relation to the food served in the various courses. As a pleasant interlude, a group of minstrels rendered songs of the period to an appreciative and sympathetic audience, as they wandered round the tables.

Later on during the evening, the Grand Commandeur praised the excellence of the arrangements made by the new Chef de Cuisine Norman Billington, to the great applause of those present. In acknowledgement of the outstanding hospitality extended to the British Commanderie during the Autumn visit to Anjou and Saumur, very Special Guests for the occasion were M. Pierre Gaté, Chef de Protocole of the Confrerie, M. Yves Cariou, the Confrerie Secretary and M. Pierre Gousset, who had hosted one of the tastings during the recent Anjou Visit.

After this, six members of the Management Committee were promoted from Chevalier to Officier:-

Mr. D. SHEEN	Chancellor
Mr. N. BILLINGTON	Chef de Cuisine
Mr. P. MORLEY	Ecuyer
Mr. M. HARRIS	Treasurer
Mrs. P.M. SALZEDO	Chef d'Historiographe and secretary
Mr. N.C. KYRIAKIDES	Chef de Voyage

There were so many nice touches at our first event at the Dorchester - for which much praise and deep gratitude is due to Norman Billington and John Brooks. One of the most evocative was the Medallion of our logo - winged hanap and motif - rendered in icing sugar, pale blue and white - as a background to the serving of the petit fours at the end of the meal. A very imaginative touch, and one that set the seal on an unforgettable evening on all counts - in the quality of its presentation and the excellence of the cuisine.

With 1985 giving way to 1986, we are still awaiting with pleasant anticipation our next event which is our traditional first activity in any year, in other words the:-

Annual General Meeting and Seminar - This is taking place a little later this year - on Tuesday 4th March - in the Orchid Room of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London W1. (NB - Enter by the Ballroom entrance). The Seminar being held in conjunction with the AGM has 'Colour' as its theme with a lecture of popular appeal followed by a tasting of six or so wines of our region in which their colour is explained as an important factor. The AGM and Seminar Programme commences at 3.30 p.m. with tea and sandwiches being served whilst the participants register. At 4 p.m., the Grand Commander will Open the Seminar and then Chancellor Derek Sheen, as Chairman, will introduce the contributors. Firstly, Derek Wheeler, director of a cosmetic manufacturing company

Elite Assembly (who supply Marks & Spencer with some of their products) will explain how, to a very large extent, colour is in the eye of the beholder. After this, Anthony Hern, Writer on Wine, will give a conducted tasting on judging wines by their colour. The Seminar is scheduled to finish by 6.20 p.m. in good time for the AGM to commence at 6.30 p.m. The AGM Vin 'Honneur will then be served (approx. 7 p.m.) followed by the AGM Dinner.

Bookings for the AGM/Seminar and Dinner are going well and a satisfactory attendance is anticipated. Nevertheless, the capacity at the Orchid Room is more than adequate so additional numbers can be accommodated. It is not too late for members to plan to come, with guests if they choose. They should phone Derek Sheen (Office: 01-643 7286, Home: 07372 21381) or Pat Salzedo (Office: 0582 26661, Home: 0525 371126). The cost is £24 per person inclusive which is not an unreasonable price considering the food and drink being offered in an extremely pleasant setting, so if you would like to, phone in to confirm a booking.

Even before the AGM, the nights are beginning to draw out, assuring us that the ice and snow will eventually go, to be followed by Spring and Summer. For late Spring/early Summer, this year, a really outstanding event is being planned, the:-

Sacavin Visit to Scotland - taking up the insistent invitation so graciously extended by our Grand Commandeur and Daphne, a visit to them in Invergordon and surrounding countryside is planned for the late Spring/early Summer. Dates await final confirmation but are likely to be the second or third week in June. Hector and Daphne themselves are arranging the itinerary but travel is being dealt with by Chef de Voyage Nick Kyriakides. Present plans are for a Friday to Monday visit with a hotel in Inverness as the base. The Booking Form, etc., for this event will be circulated by the end of March, beginning of April.

Before Summer finally ends, Sacavin will take the opportunity for another visit to the countryside, this time a:-

Wine Tasting at Lamberhurst - This is on Saturday 6th September. The tour has been arranged by Senechal Chris Wilkinson and will last from 3.30 p.m. until about 5.30 p.m. during which time both the winery and cellars will be visited. Coach travel is being arranged - although members can make their own way there if they prefer. Coach departure will be from Lincolns Inn Fields or Kings Cross at 1.30 p.m. Dinner at a restaurant en route is being planned for the homeward journey and arrival back at Lincolns Inn Fields is expected by about 10 p.m. Depending upon requirements, other pick-up points for the coach will be arranged.

The year has hardly begun and, already, we are making plans almost to its end! The final event of 1986 will be the annual Induction Ceremony and Dinner. The Ballroom of the Dorchester has again been reserved. The final date, however, awaits confirmation but will either be early or mid-November.

As a footnote, and reminded that we have commenced a new year, Active Members should note that the annual subscription of £5 (£7.50 spouse rate) became due on 1st January. Those who do not pay by Banker's Order and who have not yet paid up are very kindly requested to send their remittance to the Treasurer as soon as possible now:-

Mr. Malcolm Harris
Harris, Kafton & Co
28 Bolton Street
London W1Y 8HB

For other matters, the secretary can be contacted:-

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Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 7TX